

# **Jallalla! Community building to bring back together what should have never been separated**

decolonial and radical care practices towards the art and life regeneration in the context of the artist-museum encounter, making our story anew

*Master Thesis*

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## **Abstract**

The objective of this study is to investigate the impact of caring practices and community participation on the process of dissolving colonial legacies and promoting frames that serve everycommunity when engaging in decolonizing ethnological museums. This study aims to explore the ways in which artists, museum institutions, curators, policymakers, and society at large might play a role in establishing environments that emphasize the welfare of communities and embody a collaborative and fair approach to the process of decolonization. The present study investigates the issue of accountability in the process of decolonizing ethnological museums. It explores the involvement and impact of many actors, such as artists and museum organizations. The application of decolonial method encompasses the examination of power inequalities, the repercussions of coloniality, and the imperative for transformational reform within these establishments. Artists from the Global South actively conceptualize and participate in the process of decolonization within ethnological museums. They employ various theories, practices, and decolonial frameworks to contest the prevailing influence of the Western Museum Paradigm. The study investigates the matter of representation and the involvement of artists, museums, and wider social attitudes in promoting more inclusive and equitable depictions of art and culture. The research will also examine the rationale behind the widely accepted assumption of the separation between art and life, considering that indigenous knowledge systems do not recognize such a division. This research emphasizes the need of participating in pluralistic dialogue as a strategy to achieve authentic representation within the decolonial discourse. The complexity of this undertaking is inherent, as it is influenced by the delicate interplay between geopolitical and historical power dynamics.

**Keywords: Art, Decoloniality, Museums, Repair, Care, Community Building, Carefuturism**

## Declaration of authorship

I, Benazir Basauri Torres, born the 10<sup>th</sup> of September 1990, in Lima, Perú, hereby declare,

1. that I have written my Master Thesis myself, have not used other sources than the ones stated and moreover have not used any illegal tools or unfair means,
2. that I have not publicized my Master Thesis in my domestic or any foreign country in any form to this date and/or have not used it as an exam paper.
3. that, in case my Master Thesis concerns my employer or any other external cooperation partner, I have fully informed them about title, form and content of the Master Thesis and have his/her permission to include the data and information in my written work.

Aalborg, Denmark, 1 of September 2023

.....  
Place, date



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## Glossary

This thesis prioritizes the story being told by the ones who lived it, everyone telling their own story. Terms that are self-given have been given priority.

***Abya Yala:*** The concept emerged toward the end of the 1970s in Panama, a Kuna Tule territory. Abya Yala in the Kuna language means “land in its full maturity.” The Kuna believe that there are four cycles of life that have developed the planet earth: Kualagun Yala, Tagargun Yala, Tingua Yala, and Abia or Abya Yala. Today, we are living in the last cycle of life. The Kuna employ the term Abya Yala to refer to the American continent in its totality. After listening to this story, Takir Mamani, the Bolivian Aymara leader, and Tupaj Katari, one of the founders of the indigenous rights movement in Bolivia, suggested that indigenous peoples and organizations use the term Abya Yala in their official declarations to refer to the American continent. Since the 1980s, many indigenous activists, writers, and organizations have embraced Mamani’s suggestion, and Abya Yala has become a way not only to refer to the continent, but also a differentiated indigenous locus of cultural and political expression. (Del Valle Escalante, 2014)

***Aesthetics Of Access:*** The term refers to the aesthetics surrounding accessibility. It refers to a practice in the performing arts: accessibility is built into art production from the outset and with an artistic ambition, rather than added after the fact. One condition is that disabled artists are involved in the process with their expertise. (Diversity Arts Culture, n.d.)

***America:*** This term refers to the continent, not just the United States of America.

***Anti-Racism:*** Ibram X. Kendi, the founding director of American University’s anti-racist research center, popularized the concept with his 2019 book *How to be an Anti-Racist*. In it, he wrote: “The only way to undo racism is to consistently identify and describe it—and then dismantle it” (Kendi, 2019, p.10).

***BIPOC:*** Black and/or Indigenous People of Color, it is a self-designation.

***Black Lives Matter:*** Born within the African American community, this human rights movement fights systemic racism and violence against Black individuals. It ignited with the #BlackLivesMatter hashtag on social media after George Zimmerman's acquittal in the 2012 shooting of Trayvon Martin.

***Campesino:*** Latin American rural working class. This includes agricultural wage laborers (*jornaleros*) and small landholders (*minifundistas*).

***Community of Origin:*** Mostly used in collections management and museums, this term refers to the original communities/community members from whom artifacts were acquired and their descendants. (Brown and Peers, 2003)

***Cultural Colonization:*** It involves the colonizer's effort to wield control over other nations' values and viewpoints using cultural tools like media, language, education, and religion, primarily driven by economic motives. The colonizer promotes their own culture as superior, attaching power to its assimilation.

***Critical Race Theory (CRT):*** An academic and legal framework that denotes that systemic racism is part of society—from education and housing to employment and healthcare. CRT recognizes that racism is more than the result of individual bias and prejudice. It is embedded in laws, policies, and institutions that uphold and reproduce racial inequalities.

***Damage Imagery:*** Visuals, texts/narratives, or data used to highlight inequities that are presented without appropriate historical and sociopolitical context. Damage imagery can be corrected by explaining systemic and historical barriers and focusing on solutions within the communities that are the subject. (*Diversity, Equity and Inclusion: Key Terms and Definitions*, 2021)

***Decolonial:*** refers to a cultural and academic project, which can be consumed in spaces of art, culture, and education. (Hinderer Cruz, 2023)

***Descolonizar:*** In the Latin American context this refers to a process that tangibly and actively fights colonial legacies, it is an action with real impact.

***Equality:*** Evenly distributed access to resources and opportunity necessary for a safe and healthy life; uniform distribution of access to ensure fairness. (Equality and Equity of Access: What's the Difference?, 2007)

***Equity:*** The guarantee of fair treatment, access, opportunity, and advancement, while at the same time striving to identify and eliminate barriers that have prevented the full participation of some groups. The principle of equity acknowledges that there are historically underserved and underrepresented populations, and that fairness regarding these unbalanced conditions is needed to assist equality in the provision of effective opportunities to all groups. (Glossary of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Terms, n.d.)

***Eurocentrism:*** The practice of using Europe and European culture as a frame of reference or set of standard criteria from which to view the world. Eurocentrism favors European cultural norms and excludes the realities and experiences of other cultural groups. (Glossary of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Terms, n.d.)

***Decolonization:*** in this thesis, decolonization will always be referred to as an ongoing process, not in the past, but alive and current.

***Geopolitical privilege:*** refers to the inherent advantages, benefits, or favorable positions that certain countries, entities, and individuals hold due to their strategic geographic location, political influence, resources, or alliances. This privilege grants them greater control over international affairs, trade, security, and other global dynamics, often contributing to their advantageous position on the global stage.

***Global North/South:*** These terms signify the global division between North and South based on geography, history, economics, education, and politics. Regions like North America, Europe, and parts of East Asia (formerly first world countries) control resources, emphasizing disparities in wealth, education, and more. The Global North holds power, while the Global South (formerly

third world countries), rich in resources and population, faces exclusion. (Glossary of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Terms, n.d.)

***Institutional Racism:*** Describes how institutional practices and policies yield varied results among racial groups. Although these policies might not directly focus on any particular racial group, they inadvertently favor white individuals, leading to disadvantages and oppression for People of Color.

***Jallalla:*** Jallalla is an Aymara-Quechua word that calls for the celebration of life through unity, harmony, and well-being; it is the recognition of a collective desire to realize aspirations and dreams. (Jallalla – Healing and Reclaiming Indigeneity Through the Arts, n.d.)

***Latina or Mestiza:*** terms not supported in this thesis, since they represent the erasure of our native people origin.

***More than human:*** Refers to the fact that human life and non-human life is connected and codependent, the term sheds light on how inseparable those two concepts are. Hence, environmental degradation significantly impacts global health and climate change, affecting the entire human population.

***Mobility privilege:*** Mobility Privilege refers to the advantage or freedom that certain individuals or groups enjoy when it comes to moving around geographically. This privilege allows them to travel, migrate, or relocate more easily due to factors such as their nationality, economic status, or the ease of obtaining visas. People with mobility privilege can access various opportunities, experiences, and resources in different parts of the world without facing significant barriers.

***Othering:*** When a group or a person distinguishes itself from another group by describing the non-self-identified group as different and alien. This typically occurs within an existing power imbalance: those labeled as different face discrimination, leaving them with limited avenues to counter the labels attributed to them. (Diversity Arts Culture, n.d.)



**People of Color / PoC:** The term People of Color (in the singular Person of Color) is a self-designation of people who experience racism. (Diversity Arts Culture, n.d.)

**Political colonization:** Ended historically, unlike the colonial legacies that are still going strong

**Post-colonial:** unrecognized term, colonialism never ended, we are currently facing its legacies.

**Race:** A social construct that artificially divides people into distinct groups based on characteristics such as physical appearance, ancestral heritage, cultural affiliation, cultural history, ethnic classification, and the political needs of a society at a given period of time. (Glossary of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Terms, n.d.)

**Safe Space:** a place where individuals belonging to marginalized groups can exist freely and liberated from the influence of any system of oppression.

**Underserved:** Used to describe people who have limited or no access to acceptable and affordable resources or services, including disaster behavioral health services. The term should be used carefully and, where possible, specifics should be provided (e.g., people who are medically underserved, people living in Health Professional Shortage Areas). (Glossary of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Terms, n.d.)

**White Centering:** Putting one's feelings as a white person above the POC causes one is supposed to be helping. White centering can manifest as anything ranging from tone policing and white fragility and outright violence. (Glossary of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Terms, n.d.)

**White Fragility:** Coined by Robin DiAngelo, it is used to describe the privilege that accrues to white people living in a society that protects and insulates them from race-based stress. DiAngelo argues that this builds an expectation of always feeling comfortable and safe, which in turn lowers the ability to tolerate racial stress and triggers a range of defensive reactions.

(Glossary of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Terms, n.d.)

***White Privilege***: an invisible package of unearned assets. Refers to the unquestioned and unearned set of advantages, entitlements, benefits, and choices bestowed on people solely because they are white. White people who experience such privilege may or may not be conscious of it. (Glossary of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Terms, n.d.)

***White Saviour***: refers to the action of white individuals aiming to rescue or assist non-white individuals, often in the Global South. These actions are often driven by negative assumptions, such as the belief that they know best and that local communities lack the ability to help themselves. However, these actions can be self-serving, intended to boost the saviours' own image or ego.

## Foreword

In 2019, the concept of decoloniality became a pivotal point of engagement for me, when I moved to Europe for pursuing my first master's degree in Weimar, Germany. This new phase as a migrant prompted an extensive reconsideration of my positional context, personal identity, and overarching life trajectory. The initial catalyst for my exploration into the realm of decoloniality was a conversation with my twin sister, who introduced me to the concept. This initial encounter marked the start of my involvement in workshops, conferences, literary works, scholarly articles, and collaborative initiatives focused on the multifaceted discourse surrounding decolonization. Drawing from this experience, I resolved to channel my efforts into developing research concerning the intersection of artistic endeavors and the tenets of decoloniality. My specific focus centered on the theme of decolonizing the museum, putting emphasis on the interactions between artists from regions of the Global South and museums in Germany and Austria. The underlying objective of this research endeavor is to attain a more profound comprehension of the intricate interconnections that underlie the dynamics among artists, museums, and the principles of decolonial thought and practice. This thesis endeavors to weave together an array of perspectives derived from lived encounters with coloniality and the discourse of decoloniality within distinct histories, in this context, emphasis was placed on elevating marginalized voices, given that these voices have historically borne the weight of underrepresentation and neglect, a trend that persists to the present day. In recognition of his instrumental contributions to the lexicon of decolonial thought, I extend my gratitude to Aníbal Quijano, whose introduction of the concepts of coloniality and decoloniality has catalyzed critical reflections on the pervasive influence of colonial power dynamics. I want to give thanks to the groups, movements, communities, and thinkers who are planting seeds of life in different places, especially those coming from various parts of Abya Yala and from the edges and spaces outside the dominating modern/colonial/capitalist/heteropatriarchal system. I'm also grateful for the chances to participate in these struggles and to engage in discussions and thinking together. The concept and actions of decoloniality presented in this thesis don't aim to give all-encompassing solutions or grand plans for freedom, and certainly don't intend to propose new abstract ideas that apply everywhere. Instead, I am greatly interested in connections. I seek to explore how histories and

lived experiences of decoloniality, including my own, can come together in conversations. These conversations create insights that cross borders and challenge both the power imbalances of colonialism and the demands and harm of certain modern ways of thinking and doing things.

I want to deeply acknowledge and thank all the Indigenous, Andean, BIPOC, and racialized people who paved the way for me to access the spaces I occupy now, where I pursue happiness with agency and freedom in territories far away from Lima, Peru, the place where I was born. I want to thank my twin sister, Yanisse Basauri Torres, for welcoming me when I first landed in Europe, and for believing in me when I was close to giving up. Your brightness, love, companionship, and incredible strength are greatly appreciated, thank you for inspiring me, thank you for your unconditional support, thank you for being *la pionera* in our trip to Europe and decoloniality. I wish to express my deep gratitude to my supervisor Elizabeth Jochum who provided me with essential feedback in a way that it encouraged me and shared criticism in an edifying way that allowed me to optimize my research process, thank you Elizabeth Jochum for being the supervisor I needed. I would like to express my gratitude to the four extraordinary individuals who participated in an interview with me: Imayna Cáceres, Lemba de Miranda, Fabiola Arellano Cruz, and Paloma Ayala, their contribution is greatly appreciated and is a crucial component of this master's thesis. Warm thanks to my MediaAC family, it has been an exciting journey and I am happy we went through these two years together, thank you for sharing knowledge, guiding and feedback Wendy Coones, Ana Peraica, Morten Søndergaard, Ryszard Kluszczynski, and Alessandro Ludovico, thank you for the community we created Alexis Ibarra, Laura Palma, Laura Amaya, Joy Panaligan, Fareeha Hussain, Katsiaryna Suryna, and Cece Manzano, I treasure your love and warmth. I wish to thank Jesper Thiemer for being a safe place for me in Denmark and for our mutual and growing support.

Finally, I want to thank my family, my mother Iris, my grandparents Magda and Alberto, my uncle and fellow artist Alberto, and to my niece Sol for grounding me and being my source of power.

## Introduction

The research will explore how caring practices and community engagement play a role in dismantling colonial legacies and fostering more inclusive representations. This encourages an investigation into how artists, museum institutions, and other stakeholders could contribute to creating spaces that prioritize the well-being of the communities involved and reflect a collaborative and equitable approach to decolonization. Through this lens, the research will offer a more holistic understanding of the dynamics and challenges in the encounter between artists from the Global South and the Western museum paradigm during the decolonization process. An important aim of this research is to explicitly acknowledge the question of responsibility for decolonizing ethnological museums, inviting an examination of the roles and contributions of various stakeholders, including artists, museum institutions, curators, policymakers, and broader society from a place of equality. The question deems necessary an exploration of the power dynamics involved in the process of decolonization and the ways in which different actors negotiate agencies and collaborative practices to bring about transformative change in these institutions. By addressing the question of responsibility, the research will shed light on the complexities of decolonizing ethnological museums and the shared efforts needed to foster more inclusive and equitable representations of cultural heritage, following a decolonial approach question that addresses issues that remained unquestioned for too long of a time will be made, such as “Who is the museum for?” “Can a colonial institution from birth decolonize itself?” and “Do we need a museum?” By emphasizing the "Western Museum Paradigm," I seek to acknowledge the historical and colonial context in which ethnological museums were established and continue to operate. This framing invites an examination of power imbalances, colonial legacies, and the need for transformative change in these institutions. Further questions to be explored are: How do artists from the Global South envision and engage in decolonization within ethnological museums? What theories, practices, and decolonial frameworks do they employ to challenge the dominance of the Western Museum Paradigm? And most important, can this encounter take place from a place of equality? This encounter represents a disruption to Western narratives and revolves around “How do artists' works and perspectives disrupt traditional Western narratives in ethnological museums?”, “How do they challenge the historical portrayal of non-Western cultures as "other" or "exotic"?”. This inquiring eventually touches on a fact that is

highly criticized nowadays, the issue of representation, or better referred to as the issue of lack of representation, through a series of interviews with artists from the Global South who have had encounters with European museums in the German-speaking world, this thesis dwells on queries such as: In what ways do artists from the Global South contribute to redefining representation and inclusion in ethnological museums? How do their artistic expressions challenge and expand how art and culture continue to be portrayed in European museums? And, ultimately do these artistic interventions change positively the core of the institution in a decolonial way or are they only accepted if they do not interfere with the nature of the museum and can be absorbed to benefit their institutional image, but without representing a real change in the institution itself, as a new form of extractivism and corporate colonialism. By framing the research question with a decolonial angle, my thesis delves into the complexities of decolonizing ethnological museums and encourages a critical examination of the role of artists, museums, and broader societal attitudes in fostering more inclusive and equitable representations of art and culture. Furthermore, reaching the final chapter that touches on care and community building an essential question will also be addressed: Why do we take the art and life separation as a given? In indigenous knowledges there is no separation of art and life, this means that there is no need to go to a museum to experience art, since it is part of life and can therefore be accessed at any desired time. As mentioned before, there is no one way to achieve or attempt decoloniality, and therefore it is significant to pluralize the conversation, to have real representation in this discussion, which due to geopolitics and border controls is a complex topic that is further explored in this text. This thesis encompasses content of a particularly sensitive nature, which includes potentially triggering subject matter, particularly for marginalized racialized communities. Readers are encouraged to exercise self-care while engaging with the material.

## **1. Wound: our story. It was never a penacho, it was always a crown**

This thesis intends to expand on a topic that crosses my persona in many ways. The topic is *Decolonizing the Museum*. This topic is emotional, complex, and intricate, and touches and interweaves various fields, actors, knowledges, humans, non-humans, worlds, and cultures. In order to acquire practical knowledge and firsthand experience pertaining to the subject of Decolonizing the museum, I engaged in a two-month internship at an ethnological museum. The museum in question is referred to as the RJM, which stands for Rautenstrauch-Joest-Museum. The internship commenced on the second of May and extended through the conclusion of June 2023. The subsequent paragraph of this thesis presents a case study of the RJM.

The Rautenstrauch-Joest-Museum located in Cologne, Germany, has undergone transformations since Dutch anthropologist Nanette Snoep stepped in as director in January 2019. This case study aims to delve into the museum's mission, collection, previous exhibitions or interventions, and its level of engagement with issues of decolonization. Moreover, it seeks to assess the museum's readiness and openness to hosting an artistic intervention focused on decolonization. The RJM of Ethnology opened in 1906. The sum of 3,500 objects hoarded by Wilhelm Joest, son of a sugar manufacturer, form the collection of the museum, which was funded by Adele Rautenstrauch in memory of her brother and her husband, Eugen Rautenstrauch. The museum houses around 65,000 objects from every continent but Europe and Antartida. Over the years, the museum has faced challenges such as damage during World War II, leading to the construction of a new building in 2010. The ethnological museum introduced a new way of exhibiting World Cultures; instead of organizing displays based on geography, it presented a theme-based format, which, for the time, was groundbreaking. This shift meant a new standard for anthropology and ethnology museums globally, as a result, the RJM was awarded the Council of Europe Museum Prize (2012), and that same year it was nominated for the European Museum of the Year Award (EMYA) and admitted to “The Best in Heritage” Excellence Club one year after. The production of provenance research and collaboration with countries of origin for restitution are part of the museum's agenda. The first evidence-based action was the restitution of a mummified toi moko head returned to Aotearoa/New Zealand in 2018 after 110 years of keeping the human remains as part of its collection. As far as coming to terms with the colonial past is concerned, the RJM plays a pioneering role in Germany. In 2004, the museum held its first major exhibition on the German genocide in Namibia. Almost twenty years later, the current museum director, who was awarded the 2022 Kenneth Hudson Award

for institutional courage and professional integrity, lands in the middle of a storm. Relevant exhibition examples are: "Rausch und Realität" (Intoxication and Reality; 1981), "Die Braut" (The Bride; 1997), and "Männerbünde" (Fraternities; 1998). These exhibitions, curated by Dr. Gisela Völger and Dr. Klaus Schneider, wished to showcase the museum's attempt toward exploring complex societal and cultural themes. In 2004, the museum held its first major exhibition on the German genocide in Namibia: Namibia Deutschland ("Namibia Germany"). The new permanent exhibition inaugurated in 2010, developed under Dr. Klaus Schneider's leadership, shed light on the colonial history associated with the RJM's collection. This seeks to demonstrate an effort to acknowledge and interpret the colonial contexts of ethnographic artifacts.

Almost twenty years later, the current museum director and mother of three children, lands in the middle of a crisis. Snoep has been a pivotal piece in centering the debate on restitution, reparation, and addressing colonial legacies at the heart of the RJM. She is the daughter of a feminist and art critic mother and a Jewish and former museum director father; the director is now leading the way in the field of decolonization of ethnological museums and the restitution of cultural objects stolen from the Global South. Her experience includes 16 years, until 2014, being Head of the historical collection of the Musée du Quai Branly, in Paris and the management of three Ethnological Museums in Saxony in February 2015. The RJM has sought to amplify diverse voices and foster a more pluralistic approach, the museum has hosted lectures and discussions featuring personalities such as Felwine Sarr, Ciraj Rassool, Amber Aranui, Achille Mbembe, Esther Muinjangué, and Bénédicte Savoy. These engagements with scholars, activists, and experts from various regions have enriched the museum's perspective and helped address decolonial concerns. Nevertheless, the museum staff are predominantly white, European people. In the Department of Curatorship and Collection, the people holding positions of power are all white and European, Dr. Clara Himmelheber, a white and German woman, is the expert for the Africa Collection, Dr. Anne Slenczka, a white, European woman, is the expert for the Americas Collection and the same happens in the case of the Asia Collection, whose expert is Dr. Annabelle Springer. Among the staff, the only BIPOC person holding a position of decision-making authority is Dr. Fabiola Arellano Cruz, Director of Education and Mediation, who has held this position since August 2022. There is a lack of representation of marginalized communities in the museum's team, especially and overwhelmingly in the positions that are making the decisions from inside the institution.



As part of the open-door policies led by Snoep, The RJM has created open spaces for dialogue and exchange. The establishment of "DIE BAUSTELLE" in December 2019 reflects the museum's commitment to fostering togetherness and creating a platform for community engagement. Additionally, the launch of "The Shadows of Things #1" series in September 2020, exploring the histories and provenance of objects from the RJM collection, demonstrates a willingness to delve into complex issues surrounding colonial acquisitions. Considering the RJM's commitment to addressing its colonial past, engagement with diverse voices, and initiatives centered around decolonial perspectives, the museum appears open to hosting an artistic intervention on decolonization. The major special exhibition, "RESIST! The Art of Resistance," exemplifies the museum's readiness to collaborate with artists and activists, presenting exhibits and historical documents that explore anti-colonial resistance (Resist! Die Kunst Des Widerstands – Rautenstrauch-Joest Museum, n.d.). The Rautenstrauch-Joest-Museum in Cologne, Germany, has displayed efforts to address its colonial past and engage with decolonial perspectives. Through its mission, collection, previous exhibitions or interventions, and involvement in promoting pluralism and diverse voices, the museum has demonstrated an openness to hosting an artistic intervention focused on decolonization. Further research and analysis, including interviews and document reviews, will provide a comprehensive understanding of the museum's potential for such an intervention and its impact on visitors, artists, and the broader community. In the next section, I present a thematic analysis of qualitative interview data obtained from the four aforementioned participants' perspectives on decoloniality and decolonizing the museum.

There is relevant and diverse research and theories made on the scope of the topic addressed in this thesis. When it comes to literature about *Decolonizing the Museum*, there's a relevant and up-to-date book called *Across Anthropology: Troubling Colonial Legacies, Museums, and the Curatorial* by Margareta von Oswald and Jonas Tinius. This book, published in 2022, is a significant contribution to the ongoing and intense discussion about *Decolonizing the Museum*. It is available for free in a digital version, responding to the wish of the editors for it to be accessible beyond institutional boundaries. An important aspect of this project is the human constellation that it involves, which extends to artists, activists, ethnologists, and curators, there was an aim to include different perspectives from inside and outside European institutions, beyond the German context, including big but also small institutions. It is also intergenerational, the fact that the book acknowledges that various agents and fields overlap, which points out how these conversations are taking place outside the discipline and museums, is referred to in the book as trans-anthropological. The first contributor, Indian-US

American anthropologist, Arjun Appadurai dwells on how museums in Europe became sites where a profound misunderstanding of both the European self and the colonized, objectified other was fostered. (Appadurai, 2020), in the same way Sarah Demart poses important questions about how activist movements engage with museums, her research explores the dynamics between these two actors, Demart points out the appropriation of activist expertise by museums, for which activists don't receive fair compensation, Nanette Snoep, director of the RJM, Rautenstrauch-Joest-Museum, which is presented in this thesis as a case study, also contributes in this publication and acknowledges that ethnographic museums are slowly opening their doors to a broader public, greatly because of public pressure and their position in the eye of the storm, she also points out to the discussion about ethnographic museums and art museums. According to Snoep, her experience in Germany has led her to perceive a greater degree of hermeticism in the disciplines practiced within universities and museums, the primary purpose of the ethnographic museum is to curate and present ethnographic exhibitions, rather than art exhibitions. The museum landscape in Germany encompasses two separate categories, namely ethnographic museums and art museums. Nevertheless, she comments that this is slowly melting together. *Across Anthropology* is a significant work in the current debate, it contains many insights of significance, it is also important to address that this is a book edited by two white authors for a white public, due to the way it is presented and the people included as contributors, people who the authors deem important and key elements for this conversation, predominantly white people, a group who continues to hold a position of power in the museum context, this overrepresentation comes as no surprise. For this thesis, this book is helpful to form a painting of what the museum as institution signifies to Europeans, to people who have devoted their life and forged a career based on that, and that now see their life work criticized, which creates a disruption and influences themselves and their cultural policies. The editors see the selection of the voices featured in the publication as a first step, a first iteration, a work to be completed. It is part of a larger move between scholarship and curatorial and artistic practices to recognize, name correctly, and address the legacies of European imperial powers. The importance of this publication lies in it shedding light on how interconnected the fields of contemporary art, curatorial practice, and critical anthropology are.

In 2020, ICOM (International Committee for Museology), launched the *Decolonising Museology* Series. All volumes are Open Access and can be downloaded through their website. The most recent publication of this series is from 2022, titled “Decolonising the Curriculum / Descolonizar el currículo” it deals with relevant topics for this thesis such as decolonizing ethnographic and World Cultures Museums, with an

emphasis in the complicities involved and the possibilities for collaboration that could lead to a healing, another point addressed is decolonizing and indigenising museum studies in Aotearoa, New Zealand, ultimately the publications also refers to the possibility of community museums to operate as spaces of decolonised university learning. This publication responds to the need of museums to respond to, include and engage with perspectives of underrepresented communities, it is of special significance the incorporation of methodologies from various global regions and diverse backgrounds in museology. The next source comes from the collaboration of Afterall and Museu de Arte de São Paulo Assis Chateaubriand (MASP) that examines new artistic and curatorial practices that challenge colonial legacies in art, curation, and art criticism, titled "Art and Decolonization" this project generates knowledge, a product of it is an essay by Brenda Caro Cocotle titled "We Promise to Decolonize the Museum: A Critical View of Contemporary Museum Policies", where the author has a clearly critical view to the drive to decolonize the museum and scrutinizes it. Cocotle identifies three lines of discussion: firstly, the narrative of national museums and their ties to historical discourse, memory, and shared identity; secondly, the portrayal of minorities and marginalized groups; and thirdly, the formation, possession, and administration of collections. Cocotle states that despite good intentions some actions fail to have a real impact on how the museum operates:

“The value assigned to a whole set of activities and expressions that had until then been considered ‘low-brow’, ‘popular’ or aligned with minority groups did not result in opening up spaces of representation at the level of decision-making in museums and exhibition centres. Likewise, no real mechanisms for revision at the level of collection and exhibition policies were devised; even when a culturalist approach was privileged, the attitude remained largely top-down and reliant on the vision of ‘experts’. (Caro Cocotle, 2019, p.5)

As a result of the Annual Conference of the Museum Ethnographers Group held at the Pitt Rivers Museum in 2018, Laura Van Broekhoven produced a paper that focuses on decolonizing museum practices and collections, with a spotlight on the UK where the topic gained prominence. The shift towards decolonization gained momentum, with institutions like the Victoria and Albert Museum, Tate, and British Museum engaging in discussions about the colonial legacy and decolonization. The paper highlights artist Leo Asemotas work, which reflects on the Benin collections in Oxford. Asemota talked about how history can seem broken into pieces, and even when we're closely connected to it, we often only see parts. European museums like the Pitt Rivers Museum store collections from different histories, and during curation, some perspectives are highlighted while others might be hidden or less emphasized.

The paper sheds light on the Dutch context as well, Simone Zeefuik and Wayne Modest write about the language used by many museums and how it is often exclusionary:

It is a language that creates or carries categories of us and them, we and they, based on a presumed understanding of who is Dutch and who is not. Such language talks about (and seldom, sadly, with) Black people and other people of colour, making clear not only who is involved in creating such exhibits but also who is expected to view them. Perspectives matter (Zeefuik and Modest 2018, pag. 38).

Another paper that resulted from that conference and was featured in the same journal, the *Journal of Museum Ethnography*, No. 32, is one by authors Erna Lilje and Alison Clark. The significance of this paper is addressing the limitations certain measures that seek to adopt strategies that enable museums to engage in the decolonizing project have, like updating displays and public programs to reshape narratives and perspectives for visitors, some limitations are due to time and budget. The paper focuses on how a certain project had some success, the reason for this was that it was integrated into the core activities, had dedicated hours and a duration of five years. The paper states that this level of commitment for indigenous research might be difficult for most museums within their regular budgets and spotlights that supporting indigenous creators and researchers has not only strengthened relationships between museums and specific individuals but also extended to broader communities and the public in their home countries. (Lilje, E., & Clark, A., 2019)

This thesis has drawn from decoloniality-centered sources to delve into the theme of *Decolonizing the Museum*, which provided essential references to illuminate the exploration ahead. Frantz Fanon is a pivotal point of reference regarding decoloniality. Fanon supported the decolonization struggles occurring after World War II and remains among the most widely read and influential among decolonial thinkers. Fanon, like Quijano, positions race in the center of decolonial aims, arguing that much of modern, Western thought either does not discuss race at all or considers race as an add-on to the larger discussion of Western subjectivity. Fanon's first work *Black Skin, White Masks*, published in 1952, was an effort to articulate a radical anti-racist humanism. This book dwells on the oppression of colonized peoples and calls for a new understanding of humanity. The anti-colonial cultural theorist writes from his own experience, as a relatively privileged Martinican citizen of France, in search of his own place in the world as a black man from the French Caribbean, living in France. Later, in 1961,

*The Wretched of the Earth (Les Damnés de la Terre)* emerged as a significant work that delves into a psychoanalytical examination of the dehumanizing impact of colonization on both individuals and nations. He also explores the broader implications of establishing a social movement aimed at decolonizing not only individuals but entire communities. The title of the book draws inspiration from the opening lyrics of "The Internationale," a French anthem of solidarity. Both works have shaped this thesis from its origin. As briefly mentioned in the foreword, the labor of Aníbal Quijano, Peruvian thinker, to provide terms to clearly address decolonial aims and fights is vital, Quijano's analysis delves into the profound impact of coloniality on modern society, challenging the conventional understanding of colonialism as a past phenomenon. By examining the enduring legacies of colonialism in contemporary structures and systems, sociologist and humanist thinker Quijano's work sheds light on how colonial power dynamics continue to shape institutions such as museums. Moreover, Quijano's framework of coloniality offers a nuanced perspective on the complex interplay between power, knowledge, and culture. His exploration of the colonial matrix of power unveils how hierarchies, racial classifications, and cultural domination persist in the present, influencing the ways museums operate and represent diverse cultures. Thirdly, incorporating Quijano's work strengthens the decolonial lens through which this text analyzes and critiques museums. His insights provide a theoretical foundation for understanding the asymmetrical power relations embedded in the museum space, guiding my examination of how colonial legacies perpetuate Eurocentric narratives and marginalize Indigenous, Black, and other racialized and marginalized communities. Lastly, Quijano's ideas present opportunities for transformative action. By illuminating the entanglement of coloniality and modernity, his work is an invitation to reimagine museums as sites of decolonial praxis. This provides the possibility to explore strategies for challenging dominant narratives, promoting inclusive representation, and amplifying marginalized voices within the museum context, at the same time his research enriches the understanding of the ongoing effects of colonialism, provides a critical framework for analyzing museums, and inspires possibilities for decolonizing practices within these institutions. The work of Gloria Anzaldúa has provided the necessary frames to enable me to tell my own story and share the experience I had in the two months I spent as an intern at the German ethnological Rautenstrauch-Joest-Museum, in the aim to add relationality to this thesis. Autohistoria (self-history), is a concept coined by Anzaldúa, her approach prompts critical self-examination and offers theoretical tools to grasp self-knowledge and understanding others. Her concept of Autohistoria, especially in later works, provides a profound epistemological view of these ideas. This term underscores that self-knowledge, akin to other knowledge, is shaped socially and relationally. It also

highlights the need for both challenge and validation, encompassing resistance and productive friction. Andrea J. Pitt analyzes Gloria E. Anzaldúa's discourses of self-writing to look at the link between self-knowledge practices among women of color and structural patterns of ignorance, she emphasizes the political nature of the act of writing by men of color and highlights the importance of considering women of color as competent and credible speakers about their own experiences of oppression, resistance, and their everyday lives. Pitts draws attention to the importance of Anzaldúa's work in the scope of self-affirmation and self-determination, the essay points out that many women of color are frequently denied the right to choose the definitions of their own identities and elaborates on how In "To(o) Queer the Writer" Anzaldúa addresses how people perceive her as a writer and how she is referred to as a "Chicana writer" and "a lesbian writer," when Anzaldúa's own view of her identity as a writer rejects these two identity ascriptions (Anzaldúa, 2009, p.164), Anzaldúa supports her right to identify herself as a "Chicana, tejana, working-class, dyke-feminist poet, writertheorist," but she opposes the normative implications of others calling her a "Chicana writer" or a "lesbian writer." Such labels, according to her, "mark down" her identity. (Pitts, 2016)

In the essay "Gloria E. Anzaldúa's Autohistoria-teoría as an Epistemology of Self-Knowledge/Ignorance" Andrea J. Pitt analyzes Gloria E. Anzaldúa's discourses of self-writing to look at the link between self-knowledge practices among women of color and structural patterns of ignorance, the essay emphasizes the political nature of the act of writing by women of color and highlights the importance of considering women of color as competent and credible speakers about their own experiences of oppression, resistance, and their everyday lives. Pitts draws attention to the importance of Anzaldúa's work in the scope of self-affirmation and self-determination, the essay points out that many women of color are frequently denied the right to choose the definitions of their own identities and elaborates on how In "To(o) Queer the Writer" Anzaldúa addresses how people perceive her as a writer and how she is referred to as a "Chicana writer" and "a lesbian writer," when Anzaldúa's own view of her identity as a writer rejects these two identity ascriptions (Anzaldúa, 2009, p.164), Anzaldúa supports her right to identify herself as a "Chicana, tejana, working-class, dyke-feminist poet, writertheorist," but opposes the normative implications of others calling her a "Chicana writer" or a "lesbian writer." According to her, putting her under such labels is marking down her identity. (Pitts, 2016)

In Kakali Bhattacharya's essay "Autohistoria-teoría" published in the Journal of Autoethnography, the scholar, storyteller, and justice-oriented qualitative researcher leans on Anzaldúa's work and discusses the concept within Anzaldúa's work, autohistoria-teoría, and its relevance in autoethnography. She highlights how Anzaldúa explores spirituality as a way of understanding that embraces multiple wisdom

traditions. By being fully aware of our realities, we can expand our perception and awareness, allowing for diverse ways of constructing knowledge. Bhattacharya sees the significance of Autohistoria in the fact that it allows her to expand how she thinks about autoethnography, as the author employs Autohistoria to argue for methodological, substantive, and theoretical interdisciplinary and cross-disciplinary movements. (Bhattacharya, 2020)

Anzaldúa's Autohistoria serves as a significant contribution to the field of ethnography, particularly in its application as a qualitative research instrument. Moreover, it is imperative to recognize the political dimension inherent in this work. It is an example of decolonial disobedient conservatism, as it wants to preserve the legacies that secure what it means to be a lesbian of color or a Mexican-American alongside the modes of existence that they potentially embody. Both Fanon's and Anzaldúa's analyses are necessary for thinking about delinking to re-exist by preserving the legacies that Afro-Caribbeans and lesbians of color want to preserve. Both arguments are analytic, coherent, and of paraxial empowerment. Both embody decolonial disobedient conservatism: they propose to preserve what each community needs to be able to re-exist, and not to change following the rhetorical trap of Western modernity. The text "Coloniality Is Far from Over, and So Must Be Decoloniality" written by Walter D. Mignolo for Art and Decolonization. This text provides important terms such as Delinking, Dewesternization, and Rewesternization, as well as providing a theoretical grounding and critical perspectives on these topics. Mignolo's work supports this thesis to elaborate on the historical context of coloniality and its impact on art, culture, and museum representations, while also shedding light on the significance of decolonial efforts in contemporary art practices.

In the context of my master's thesis, my conceptual framework relies as well on Nelson Maldonado-Torres' "Ten Theses of Decoloniality", Puerto Rican author who also draws from Fanon's pioneering work, as well as from Aníbal Quijano's work. This thesis specifically utilizes the research conducted in "Decoloniality creates fear" (Maldonado-Torres, 2016). By combining Maldonado-Torres' ideas with insights from previously mentioned thinkers, this thesis explores why the topic has not been widely discussed the way it is presented in this thesis, in the context of decolonization. One reason for the significance of the topic *Decolonizing the Museum* lies in the inherent connection between the museum and institutional power. This topic challenges the museum as an institution that has been rooted in colonialism since its inception. It critically examines the museum's selective acceptance of decoloniality, which often aligns with the institution's own interests and serves to enhance its public image. Despite presenting itself as supportive of migrants, refugees, and an inclusive space, the museum's current existence is intrinsically tied to the perpetuation of colonial legacies. This thesis critically examines the

conventional methods of knowledge production and dissemination, highlighting the discomfort this could create in individuals in positions of authority. Consequently, a persistent phenomenon emerges wherein individuals from the Global North, predominantly white, engage in discussions pertaining to issues that directly impact individuals from the Global South, yet without the inclusion or representation of individuals from the Global South. The apprehension stems from the notion that questioning these entrenched concepts has the potential to unsettle the prevailing systems of authority and knowledge hierarchies. Incorporating this perspective into the discourse on decolonization presents a nuanced challenge that necessitates careful consideration. Moreover, bell hooks provides vital insights into the complex dynamics of oppressive regimes within the context of an "imperialist white supremacist capitalist patriarchy." (hooks, 2014, p.46). Through the feminist author's extensive publications and books, bell hooks skillfully illuminates the interconnectedness of these systems, providing a discursive understanding that is crucial in addressing and dismantling them. Her work not only exposes the underlying structures of oppression but also presents a roadmap for conceptualizing and cultivating the necessary material conditions that foster social transformation. By incorporating bell hooks' writings into my literary repertoire, this thesis gains access to a powerful resource that stimulates critical thinking and promotes social justice in a critical way. Another significant point of reference for this intense debate regarding *Decolonizing the Museum* is the speech by Nigerian author Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie at the inauguration of the Humboldt Forum in Berlin. Ngozi Adichie effectively presents a thesis with clarity and precision, prompting the consideration that European museums possess the requisite knowledge and understanding to undertake the process of decolonizing museums. However, it is apparent that a lack of motivation or willingness impedes progress in this regard. On July 20, 2021, the author delivered a speech in Berlin to an audience primarily composed of white individuals. During the discourse, the author openly addressed the colonial past of Europe in Africa, highlighting acts of atrocity such as genocide, slavery, and plundering. In her discourse, the speaker presents compelling arguments pertaining to the ongoing discussions surrounding the concepts of restitution, reparation, and the appropriate approach to addressing the enduring impacts of colonialism. According to Chimamanda Ngozi, the veracity of a tale is contingent upon its comprehensive narration. She specifically alludes to the teaching of colonial history in German schools, where it is often presented in fragmented form. She further asserts that presenting only a single aspect of the narrative is ultimately an act of deception. The author also effectively highlights the concept of restitution by employing a rhetorical strategy that prompts the audience to consider the situation from a different perspective. Specifically, the author draws attention to a thought-provoking question posed by a German newspaper, which inquires about the rightful location of



Africa's treasures. This question, as the author notes, is rarely, if ever, reversed to contemplate the placement of Germany's treasures, the question “Where do Germany’s treasures belong?” is rarely or never asked. The underlying cause of this issue lies in the inequitable allocation of power, a matter that necessitates identification and proactive resolution. Undoubtedly, the substance of a narrative holds significance; but the narrator's identity carries equal, if not greater, weight. Certainly, it is imperative to consider the question of agency in decision-making processes. Who possesses the authority to engage in public discourse? Whose literary works do we read? Whose regulations do we adhere to? To whom should we direct our attention and heed? Ngozi Adichie adds. The nomenclature of the museum presents some challenges: Why is non-European art often categorized as ethnological, while European art is typically seen as just art? Ngozi’s frame is further applied in the second chapter, when it comes to analyze the encounter of artists from the Global South and ethnological museums in Germany and Austria. *Staying with the Trouble* by Donna Haraway, an anthropologist who has worked in artistic and curatorial contexts and has a major influence in those fields, which is reflected in curatorial texts for contemporary art exhibitions for example, which often mention her work as a reference, there is a significant link between art and anthropology that is interesting for this thesis. There is an important link to Haraway's work in the former mentioned book *Across Anthropology*, especially in the chapter written by Margareta von Oswald, one of the editors. With a major focus on provenance research and the Humboldt Forum, von Oswald draws from *Staying with the Trouble* the fact that it is not possible to discuss the current situation of anthropological and ethnological museums openly without confronting the problems that continue to trouble us. The objective of this thesis is to address colonial legacies in a comprehensive and transparent manner, with a multidisciplinary approach. The intention is to bring conflicts to the forefront, particularly as the fundamental purpose of museums was not initially problematic but has since become a source of disruption leading to confusion, denial, rejection, and various other responses. Self-determination is a crucial element within decolonial praxis and theory as it aligns with the core goals of decolonization – challenging colonial structures, restoring agency to marginalized communities, and reclaiming cultural identities, in that regard Achille Mbembe dwells on local, original knowledge to discuss decoloniality and the systems through which coloniality still operates, in “Borderless World”, Achille addresses the concept of mobility as fundamental to understanding how to further articulate decoloniality (The Idea of a Borderless World, 2023). This thesis is grounded on indigenous knowledges, which for a long time has been seeing and experiencing the world as a whole, without separation or categorization. This thesis centers on that wholeness in

the terrain of art and life, arguing that there is, and there should not be, a separation between art and life. Elvira Espejo Ayca dwells on indigenous Quechua and Aymara knowledges and centers the discussion on that wound, in her text “The Painful Division Of Art Hierarchized And Colonized Us Through The Ideas Of Universal Education”, the Bolivian artist introduces the word *uywañal*, which integrates all mutual creations: the mutual creation of plants, the mutual creation of animals, the mutual creation of subject-objects, and ultimately, the mutual creation of everything. This is a strong stance about the interconnectedness of everything on Earth and the impracticality of dividing the world by categorizations, Espejo rejects the simplification made by some curators when dealing with art, and endeavors to unite practice and theory (Espejo, 2021). This adds to the need to look for new narratives that can successfully be applied to convey art in our current times, in that regard, for Mignolo the objective of decolonial thinking and practice is to disengage from the epistemic presuppositions that have been prevalent in the various fields of knowledge that originated in the Western world during the European Renaissance and the European Enlightenment. The concept of re-existence builds upon the idea of delinking, wherein re-existence refers to the ongoing endeavor to reposition our collective human practices and way of life. (2018)

The outline of this master thesis starts with Chapter 1: *Wound: our story. It was never a penacho, it was always a crown*. This chapter established the foundation for the study by defining the critical concepts of decolonization and decoloniality. Through an in-depth literature review, the groundwork is laid for the exploration within the broader discourse. In section 1.1, "Cross encounters with Decoloniality," I position my experience and include interviews, these conversations add a distinct perspective to the theoretical framework of the thesis. In section 1.2, "I entered a museum in the eye of the storm," I explore my own internship journey at the Rautenstrauch-Joest-Museum from May 1st to June 31 based on Anzaldúa's autohistoria. By positioning my encounters at the museum, I not only provide insights into my personal experience but also present a comprehensive case analysis of the museum's current trajectory in the process of decolonization. This chapter bridges the theoretical and the experiential, setting the stage for further exploration. *Chapter 2: Repair: deep, uncomfortable, heated relations between artist and museum* is the heart of the study, where intricate relationships between artists and museums are closely examined. Drawing from the rich insights from interviews with visual artist Imayna Cáceres, screenwriter Lemba de Miranda, Director of Mediation and Education at the RJM Dr. Fabiola Arellano Cruz, and visual artist Paloma Ayala, this thesis uncovers the complex

challenges and colonial legacies that continue to shape interactions between artists from the Global South and the European, ethnological museum. The decolonial lens used on this thesis brings a critical perspective to these dynamics, revealing the inherent power imbalances within the artist-museum dynamic. This chapter also introduces the main research questions in section 2.1, "Whose job is it to decolonize the museum?" and section 2.2, "Do we need a museum?". These inquiries prompt individuals to contemplate the roles and responsibilities of diverse stakeholders in the process of decolonization. By posing these questions, this thesis contemplates the broader implications of this research on societal questions and the role of cultural institutions in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. *Chapter 3: Care: ternura radical and radical care* focuses on the topic of care, exploring the pivotal role of care within the decolonial discourse. The thesis delves into the often-overlooked aspects of care, particularly its invisibility for marginalized groups. In section 3.1, "Community Building: from us, by us," I emphasize the collective nature of the decolonization endeavor. By spotlighting community building, the significance of solidarity and collaborative efforts are stressed. Section 3.2, "Carefuturism," engages in a forward-looking discussion about the future of the field. The section introduces strategies that prioritize care and community building as core principles in shaping the trajectory of the discourse. Envisioning a future that centers on these principles, the thesis contributes to the ongoing evolution of decolonization within museum spaces. The concluding chapter synthesizes the key findings from each preceding chapter, emphasizing the interdependence of wound, repair, and care, and their indispensable significance within the framework of decolonization. The inclusion of a reflection on the relevance of the research journey and its potential impact on future museum practices is accompanied by a conclusion that provides a comprehensive grasp of the intricacies and potentialities inherent in the endeavor to decolonize museum settings.

In the upcoming section, I will delve into the methodologies employed to investigate *Decolonizing the Museum* under scrutiny, shedding light on the strategic approaches that were utilized to gather and analyze the necessary data. This thesis is qualitative, with a critical approach and a decolonial methodology. I use mixed methods, drawing on conceptual research, and qualitative data drawn from Anzaldúa's autohistoria during an internship of two months at the ethnological Rautenstrauch-Joest-Museum and a series of interviews done with artists from the global South and cultural workers in the museum field. This thesis also applied decolonial methodology, which seeks to recover the lost identities of colonized people by championing self-determination. There is no standard model or practice for what decolonizing research methodology must be, this thesis draws on the work of

Françoise Vergès regarding *Decolonizing the Museum* while analyzing the case study of the RJM presented in this thesis. Throughout history, scholarship has repeatedly dehumanized Indigenous peoples and their culture, perpetuating hatred and discrimination, building on colonial legacies and enabling extractivism. “What knowledge has been made part of academic agendas? And what knowledge has not? Whose knowledge is this? Who is acknowledged to have the knowledge? And who is not?” (Kilomba G., 2008, p.27). “Decolonizing research means centering concerns and world views of non-Western individuals, and respectfully knowing and understanding theory and research from previously “Other(ed)” perspectives” (Battiste, 2000; Datta, 2018; Smith, 2012). Decolonial methodologies are key to producing true universal knowledge, this means knowledge that genuinely represents all communities worldwide, and is not limited to Western thought. For knowledges from Oceania, Latin America, Africa and Asia to not be considered as coming from The Other, and to be involved in the global knowledge production so it can rightfully be addressed as universal we need diverse frameworks and possibilities for knowledge, we need to produce knowledge in a way that makes sense to the global population and fully enables everyone to produce, share and disseminate knowledge so that it serves all communities. In doing so, knowledge production and research would liberate themselves from only being validated according to Western standards in which academia was born. The process of decolonizing knowledge production is a complex and multifaceted endeavor. However, it is crucial to initiate and guide discussions in that direction. In order to achieve this objective, it is imperative to create inclusive environments that foster equitable benefits for all segments of the population, rather than favoring a particular group. If scholars are compelled to produce work within a framework that only caters to a specific segment of the public, it is imperative to acknowledge and strive towards addressing the inherent restrictions to effectuate change. To guide the application of decolonial methodologies in this thesis, it draws from the work of Vivetha Thambinathan, in the article “Decolonizing Methodologies in Qualitative Research: Creating Spaces for Transformative Praxis”, which the activist researcher wrote in collaboration with Elizabeth Anne Kinsella, four practices that can be used by qualitative researchers are introduced: (1) exercising critical reflexivity, (2) reciprocity and respect for self-determination, (3) embracing “Other(ed)” ways of knowing, and (4) embodying a transformative praxis. This thesis applies Exercising Critical Reflexivity, which confronts the need to address power imbalance and invisible power dynamics embedded within research frameworks, which are particularly apparent in studies involving vulnerable populations; if not checked appropriately, researchers possess an unequal power to define, label, and alienate such groups. Therefore, decolonizing research is essential for leveling the power dynamic that exists between researchers and participants. This can be accomplished by practicing critical reflexivity and making it

possible for relationships to include elements of both giving and receiving. (Thambinathan & Kinsella, 2021). Critical reflectivity is powerful for examining researchers' epistemological assumptions that frame the way one views the world and their situatedness with respect to the research. Moreover, embracing reflexivity prompts us to acknowledge that our tendency is often to perceive answers as a sought-after outcome and the ultimate aim of research, disregarding the fact that valuable knowledge can emerge through contemplating questions and dwelling on them. This thesis also applies Thambinathan & Kinsella's approach for Reciprocity and Respect for Self-Determination. Self-determination is a key element in decolonial methodologies, it is the concept that individuals or groups have the right to make their own choices, decisions, and govern themselves without external interference, it is the idea that people have the freedom to pursue their own goals, live according to their own values, and have control over their own lives. This thesis, through decolonial methodologies, argues that self-determination is crucial for academic knowledge production because it fosters an environment where Asian, Black, Indigenous, Middle Eastern, Pacific Islander, multi-racial, and all non-white researchers and scholars have the autonomy and freedom to pursue their research interests, question existing paradigms, and contribute to the advancement of knowledge in their fields. Self-determination is important in academic knowledge production because it enables intellectual freedom. Self-determination allows academics to explore unconventional or controversial ideas without fear of censorship or retribution. This freedom encourages the development of diverse perspectives and the potential for groundbreaking discoveries. Secondly, when researchers are self-directed, they can explore their unique interests and passions, this fosters creativity and innovation and encourages approaches to problem-solving and knowledge creation. Further, it sets the ground for an unbiased inquiry, academic self-determination reduces the influence of external pressures, such as funding sources or political interests, which may compromise the objectivity and integrity of research, researchers can pursue unbiased inquiry, contributing to the credibility of academic knowledge, in a similar way it allows for diverse perspectives promoting inclusivity and diversity in knowledge production, researchers from various backgrounds and experiences can bring different perspectives to their work, enriching the body of knowledge with a wide range of insights. On top of that, it is a way to ensure rigorous research, when researchers are motivated by genuine interest and curiosity, they are more likely to engage in thorough and rigorous research, this dedication to quality enhances the reliability and accuracy of academic findings. Self-determination also brings academic integrity, they can avoid compromising their work for external influences, ensuring the reliability of their contributions, moreover, it fosters interdisciplinary exploration, bridging the gaps between different fields via collaborative research that addresses complex real-world problems such as decoloniality in the

artist-museum encounter. Long-term vision is another result of academic self-determination, researchers can devote the necessary time and effort to study complex issues without being bound by short-term interests. Conclusively self-determination enabled by decolonial methodology would provide freedom for academic growth, by determining one's research trajectory researchers can build on their expertise and make valuable contributions to their disciplines over time. People would develop into self-sufficient subjects who are independent of the values and perspectives of Western cultures. (Kuokkanen, 2000). There is a fundamental need to recognize communities of PoC as global and heterogenous groups as well. Regarding Reciprocity, “giving voice” and “empowering communities”, phrases not unknown to museums discourses when working with marginalized communities, are criticized since they unjustly suggest that these communities alone lack the capability to attain what researchers are able to offer, it is a condescending viewing of such communities as well as inaccurate. Listening allows for open dialog between researcher and participant, Cahill (2007) argues that for listening to take on the power of a decolonizing methodological weapon, it must go beyond its usual biological definition and incorporate an emotional, trusting relationship between people. Delpit (1988) calls for researchers to listen affectively, which not only calls for eyes and ears to be opened, but also hearts and minds. Listening affectively implies accountability, as well as a commitment to growth and space for becoming (McDermott, 2013). It is active, not passive. As McDermott (2013) explains, “if affect is attended to, we may be better prepared to be transformed; we may be better aware of the in-processness of transformation” (p. 224). Respect for self-determination, and efforts toward reciprocity, may help mitigate what Fine (1994) refers to as “a contradiction-filled, colonizing discourse of the Other.”

Transdisciplinary, decolonial, feminist approaches situated within the contours of the qualitative methodological framework adopted in this thesis are applied, the use of interviews assumes a pivotal role as a methodology. This strategic use is substantiated by the thesis's fundamental commitment to ascribing considerable significance to the domains of orality, narrative, storytelling and spoken discourse. This methodological selection aligns seamlessly with the overarching research paradigm, which not only gives intrinsic value to oral traditions, narrative narratives, and spoken dialogues, but also asserts a substantive emphasis on the principles of collectiveness and plurality.

In the realm of the research topic, the methodology chosen plays a pivotal role in ensuring the credibility, dependability, and validity of research findings. The following text seeks to highlight the appropriateness of employing interviews in conjunction with decolonial methodologies that encompass critical reflexivity, reciprocity, and respect for self-determination. These techniques are well-suited for decolonial debates in the arts field, as they effectively reveal obscured power dynamics, amplify diverse voices, and challenge

conventional paradigms. This alignment with research objectives showcases its relevance and significance, they also serve to unveil hidden power dynamics, decolonial methodologies underscore the importance of recognizing and dismantling power imbalances inherited from colonial legacies. Interviews, as a qualitative research tool, facilitate a comprehensive exploration of lived experiences and perspectives. The interviews aimed to uncover subtle power dynamics, allowing for a thorough assessment of the extent to which colonial ideologies continue to influence discourse, decision-making, and representation. The practice of critical reflexivity further supports this endeavor by encouraging researchers to critically evaluate their own positions and biases, ensuring the research process remains free from unintentional reinforcement of colonial tendencies. Adding to this, they foster and advocate for inclusive representation, and do not fall into the illusion of “giving space for marginalized voices”, the foundation of decolonial techniques centers around a dedication to ensuring fair and balanced representation for perspectives that have traditionally been neglected throughout history. Interviews, as a participatory research approach, serve individuals and communities to share their narratives and counter-narratives. By employing open-ended questions and active listening, this thesis sought to be able to engage with participants on a profound level, enabling them to articulate their experiences, knowledge, and perspectives. This methodology facilitates the decentering of dominant narratives, thereby offering a more inclusive and varied portrayal of realities. This aspect is of utmost importance in the research topic of this thesis, where established narratives have perpetuated exclusion. Another noteworthy aspect to consider is challenging conventional paradigms, decolonial methodologies challenge prevailing paradigms that have often underpinned traditional research methodologies. Interviews, when coupled with a decolonial lens, serve as a mechanism to disrupt these paradigms by acknowledging the importance of context, culture, and identity. The interviews were administered to a cohort of four individuals who identify as BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color), migrants, and originating from the Global South. In the instance of one interviewee, their parents are from the Global South. All four participants are currently residing in Europe and are employed within the cultural sector. This deliberate action was undertaken due to the frequent marginalization and underrepresentation of these viewpoints within the framework of Decolonizing the Museum. The principles of reciprocity and respect for self-determination within decolonial methodologies ensure that the research process honors the agency of participants, enabling them to shape the narrative and contribute to the construction of knowledge. This collaborative knowledge creation challenges the Western-centric approach that can inadvertently overshadow local viewpoints. In the context of my research, the fusion of interviews and decolonial methodologies, accompanied by critical reflexivity, reciprocity, and respect for

self-determination, proves to be an apt and powerful approach. This methodology seamlessly aligns with my research objectives by facilitating the exploration of hidden power dynamics, aiming to ensure diverse voices, and interrogating established paradigms. Embracing this methodology allows the research to make meaningful strides in the broader discourse of decolonizing knowledge production, fostering a more inclusive and equitable research landscape.

This thesis critically examines the processes of decolonization within the context of interactions between artists and museums. The study explores the ways in which museums and artists navigate the complex terrain of decolonization, with a focus on dismantling colonial legacies, ensuring marginalized voices to be part of the conversation from a place of equality, and fostering inclusive practices and frames that serve every group. By examining the artist-museum relationship through a decolonial lens, this thesis aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of the challenges, opportunities, and transformations associated with decolonization in the cultural sector. The research involves comprehensive literature reviews, qualitative interviews with artists and museum workers, a text about my own experience at a German ethnological museum as an intern told through *Autohistoria*, and the analysis of a relevant case study, the one of the Rautenstrauch-Joest-Museum. By investigating the perspectives of both artists and museum stakeholders, the study aims to provide insights into the evolving dynamics and nuances of the artist-museum encounter within the broader decolonial discourse.

As the title of this chapter refers too, there is an open wound due to colonialism and colonality, therefore decolonization is not possible without violence, as mentioned by Frantz Fanon in his work *The Wretched of the Earth* “decolonisation is always a violent phenomenon” (1961, p.27), this chapter is about the wound. As a first clarification, I would like to make a differentiation between *decolonization* and *descolonización*. “I make a difference between *descolonización* with S, which is a real tangible and material process and not an academic label. It is also a process that impossibly will take place in a non-violent manner” (Hinderer Cruz, 2023). As a BIPOC, migrant, woman artist from the Global South with Andean heritage, I have lived and witnessed how art and culture play an integral role in shaping society, and how important the stories we are told are, since they can determine our understanding and how we live life. This master's thesis delves into the implications of the artist-museum encounter under the umbrella topic of *Decolonizing the Museum*, moving toward community building and radical care strategies within the artist-museum encounter, with a specific focus on decolonization as a verb and its impact on regenerating the interrelation between art and life, questioning why there is a separation between art and life in the first place.



Making a difference between a cultural and academic project, which can be consumed in spaces of art, culture, education, and a project of a struggle for independence and liberation that is not consumable, it is something that must be done, it is something that must be done together, collectively in community. (Hinderer Cruz, 2023).

Decolonization can easily be absorbed by the museums to benefit their institutional image, but without compromising its real core nature, as long as it does not change anything real, it can fit in a museum or a university, while *descolonización* cannot, as it is about life. *Descolonización* also responds to the need to reimagine and reconceptualize what we understand as European colonialism, which goes against the story told by the colonizer that was imposed as the universal story, the one that portrays Europe as an enlightener, a culture maker, a savior, and a discoverer. Christopher Columbus discovered nothing, as we were always there, Haitian author Michel-Rolph Trouillot examines traditional historical accounts to comprehend the selective remembrance of specific aspects of history over others and notes that “To call ‘discovery’ the first invasions of inhabited lands by Europeans is an exercise in Eurocentric power that already frames future narratives of the event so described. Once discovered by Europeans, the Other finally enters the human world.” (Trouillot, 1995, p.114). Valerie Strauss, in an article from the Washington Post, presents Columbus as a brutal viceroy and governor of the Caribbean islands, a place where he did land and where he committed atrocities against native peoples (Strauss, 2015), ultimately Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz refers to the erasure of America’s original inhabitants and raises relevant points such as Columbus's role in forgetting Indigenous peoples, positioning him as a convenient figure for that was portrayed as the inaugural chapter in American history textbooks, pushing aside the existence and significance of Indigenous peoples, the author also sheds light on the intertwining of colonialism and state-building, and the complex symbolism and impact of Columbus's legacy on American history and identity (Dunbar-Ortiz, 2021). I will also point to the contradictions of how the European Union and west in general are portrayed, touching on the fact that how the European Union portrays itself, highlighting values such as liberty, equality, and freedom, is at odds with how laws, politics, institutions, and bureaucracy approach a certain group of individuals. This group is formed by individuals from the formerly known as Third World countries, who are Non-EU citizens and migrants, and are treated in dehumanizing manners, far from the equality and values that the EU preaches, this group encounters hostility and dehumanizing politics, The ENAR (European Network against Racism) sheds light on human rights abuses, discrimination, and xenophobic violence faced by specific migrants in the EU. They emphasize violations occurring at borders, including police abuse, racial profiling, and detention. The

ENAR also addresses how EU migration policies reflect institutional racism by prioritizing workers based on implicit racial criteria. Their efforts focus on safeguarding migrants' security, and non-discrimination, and highlighting migrants' contributions to Europe's economic, social, and cultural life, which often goes unacknowledged in mainstream media narratives. (Migration - European Network Against Racism, 2023). The importance of confronting the contradiction of how the EU portrays itself and how it treats migrants from the Global South will be expanded upon and is especially relevant for this chapter as the focus will be on the encounter of artists from the Global South and European ethnographic museums from two German-speaking countries, Germany and Austria. To discuss the topic of this thesis *Decolonizing the Museum*, addressing colonial legacies is essential, as these institutions have historically perpetuated narratives that reflect colonial perspectives, and recognizing and rectifying these biases is fundamental to creating more inclusive and accurate representations of history and culture. Colonial legacies, remnants of the past, continue to shape our world today. The imprints of colonialism are evident in economic disparities, social hierarchies, and cultural dynamics. Extractive economies established during colonial times have left many nations dependent on specific resources, hindering diversification and sustainable development. Socioeconomic inequalities persist, often along lines drawn during colonial rule, with marginalized communities facing systemic discrimination. Cultural identities and traditions have been both enriched and eroded by colonial encounters, leaving complex legacies of language, religion, and customs. These lasting effects serve as a reminder that addressing colonial injustices is crucial for achieving a more just and equitable future. A colonial legacy that is especially important to confront in this thesis is extractivism, which, as a colonial legacy, refers to the historical practice of exploiting natural resources and cultural artifacts from colonized regions for the benefit of colonial powers. This practice often resulted in economic, environmental, and cultural imbalances that persist to this day. In the context of the European ethnographic museum's interaction with artists from the Global South, extractivism can manifest as the appropriation of art and cultural expression from the communities of origin for Western consumption, echoing historical colonial exploitation. This encounter may unintentionally perpetuate power dynamics, reinforcing the dominance of Western narratives while diminishing the agency and autonomy of artists from the global South. Addressing this extractive legacy involves fostering genuine collaboration, equitable representation, and respectful engagement to rectify historical imbalances and promote a more inclusive art world. A set of questions arise from this exploration: Is the encounter between artists from the Global South and German and Austrian ethnographic museums happening from a place of equality? Is this collaborative work perpetuating power imbalances rooted in coloniality such as extractivism? It will address decolonization as a personal process, what derives when artists and

museums meet, and it will move on to a key question: Whose job is it to decolonize the museum? It will, as well, close this chapter by questioning the museum itself, do we, indeed, need a museum? By embracing the indigenous Aymara greeting "Jallalla!"—a call for collective well-being and solidarity—I seek to name, address and challenge traditional power dynamics and reframe museums to better fit our current times, extended to the point of questioning the contemporary need for an institution like the museum which is, by nature, a colonial project. This research aims to transcend traditional perceptions of art as a mere commodity or spectacle, instead positioning it as a catalyst for social change, cultural reclamation, interconnectedness, and ultimately present art as not separated from life, in indigenous knowledges, among other knowledges, art and life are considered a whole; and are seen together and not separated from each other. Examining the intersection of decolonial theory, community engagement, and the concept of radical care, this thesis aims to illuminate the potential for artists and museums to actively contribute to the healing and regeneration of marginalized communities and of humans as a collective. Through critical analysis and a case study, I will explore practices, collaborations, and interventions that foster dialogue, representation, and collective agency, ultimately reshaping the artist-museum encounter into a transparent and open process. The purpose of this approach, which will allow for an evaluation of this encounter, is to move closer to answering the question: *Can the museum be decolonized, and by whom?* This text denounces prevailing paradigms, exposes the oppressive foundations that underlie current structures and dares to imagine a future where art and culture are harnessed as potent tools for justice, empowerment, and the restoration of diverse narratives. By dismantling the colonial influences entrenched within the artist-museum dynamic and emphasizing the essential need for revolutionary care, I invite the readers to ardently endeavor to carve out a route towards an art ecosystem that is genuinely inclusive and fair, one that faithfully mirrors the authentic lived experiences, struggles, and aspirations of each community, especially those of marginalized communities and positions the decolonial urge as universal rather than a local. At this moment in the text, I would like to engage with some terms that will be present as this text continues to unfold. In the making of this project, a guiding principle for me was that of telling my own story, as well as promoting and prioritizing listening to voices that could tell their own story. Peruvian sociologist Anibal Quijano describes coloniality as an integral and distinctive component of the overarching structure of capitalist power worldwide, it involves establishing a racial-ethnic categorization of the global populace. This categorization forms the foundation of a power structure, influencing both the tangible and personal aspects of everyday life across various domains and societal levels. (Quijano & Wallerstein, 1992). The text clearly states that coloniality transcends colonialism; “Coloniality was essentially the creation of a set of states linked together within an interstate

system in hierarchical layers. Those at the very bottom were the formal colonies. But even when formal colonial status would end, coloniality would not.” (Quijano & Wallerstein, 1992) and that it expanded, as mentioned, to various aspects; “The hierarchy of coloniality manifested itself in all domains - political, economic, and not least of all cultural. The hierarchy reproduced itself over time.” (Quijano & Wallerstein, 1992, p.550). Moreover, Quijano centers race as one fundamental axis for Coloniality of Power:

Social classification of the world's population around the idea of race, a mental construction that expresses the basic experience of colonial domination and pervades the more important dimensions of global power, including its specific rationality: Eurocentrism. The racial axis has a colonial origin and character ... the model of power that is globally hegemonic today presupposes an element of coloniality. (Quijano, A., & Ennis, M., 2000, p.533)

In this thesis, when I refer to decoloniality I refer to an action, as an active verb, moreover, I refer to the decolonial aim as one that puts race in the center and addresses racism as strictly linked to colonialism. Discussions about race make people feel uncomfortable. I have experienced this head-on as a person who has, many times, been present in physical and digital spaces where related topics such as diversity, racism and internationalization were discussed, as the only non-white person. I know how complex, stress-provoking and anxiety-inducing this topic can be. Nevertheless, I consider that a discussion about decoloniality is impossible without talking about racism and having race as a center. The work of Quijano was a necessary groundwork for discussions about decoloniality, term that he defined as an actional (in the Fanonian sense), praxistal, and continuing perspective, stance, and proposition of thought, analysis, sensing, making, doing, feeling, and being. (Quijano, 2007). This definition will be used in this thesis because it aligns with the angle of this research, decoloniality is about doing, it is in constant movement, it is in the making, it is a verb, an action. Coloniality imposed one view of the world, that of the Western world, as universal. For instance, in art, European art was set as the canon, and exhibited as high art, whereas non-European art was presented as low art, exotic, and often as craft. The same principle was applied to the production of knowledge, the knowledge produced in the Western world was imposed as hegemonic and universal, and all other knowledges produced outside of that area were labeled as inferior, this is a concept that is very different in the west and in the non-west part of the world. As Quijano refers to this stating that outside of the western world, in all the cultures all systematic production of knowledge

is linked to a perspective of totality, the difference is that in those cultures the perspective of totality in knowledge acknowledges the heterogeneity of all reality (Quijano, 2000).

Andean cosmivision, for example, conceives that all individuals are part of a great mass of living energy that connects us with everything created: Kausay. This perspective of totality means things are seen as whole and interconnected, not isolated pieces. There is an understanding that everything is connected and affects each other, in that way reality is diverse and varied, meaning it has many different parts and aspects. (Cruz, 2018). In contrast, in some Western cultures, the focus might be more on specialization and individual parts, overlooking the interconnectedness and diversity of reality. When certain non-Western cultures create knowledge, they take into account the entire interconnected reality and the diverse elements within it. Quijano postulates the notion of social totality, which not only refrains from negating but rather relies upon the historical diversity and heterogeneity inherent in every community. The concept necessitates the presence of a "other" that is characterized by diversity and differentiation. The aforementioned distinction does not inherently indicate the unequal characteristics of the 'other' or the complete external nature of relationships, nor does it entail hierarchical inequality or the social inferiority of the 'other'. The dissimilarities do not necessarily serve as the foundation for dominance. (2000)

Colonial power created distorted ways of understanding the world, to liberate ourselves from this, we need to engage in a process of decolonizing ourselves and the world around us, and how we understand the world around us and inside us. Quijano mentions that, therefore, the viable option is evident: the eradication of the colonial nature of global authority. The initial step towards achieving intercultural communication and the establishment of a rationality that can claim a degree of universality is the process of epistemological decolonization, which aligns with the principles of decoloniality. This process is essential in creating a space for the exchange of experiences and meanings. The assertion that the distinctive cosmic perspective of a certain ethnic group, even if it is labeled as Western Europe, should be regarded as universal rationality, is fundamentally irrational. This claim essentially seeks to enforce a narrow-minded provincialism under the guise of universalism. (Quijano, 2000). Drawing from Quijano's work this thesis seeks to reaffirm the need to free the way different cultures interact from the negative impacts of colonial history and power dynamics, all people should have the right to make choices about their culture and society without being forced or oppressed, be free to adopt and follow different cultural practices and beliefs if they wish to, this freedom in intercultural relations is connected to the broader process of achieving social liberation, which includes overcoming unequal power structures, discrimination, exploitation, and oppressive dominance. It is important and urgent, in the decolonial

process, to free intercultural relations from historical colonial influences and allow all people to have the freedom to choose, create, and change their culture and society without facing inequality, discrimination, exploitation, or domination. Decoloniality advocates for a more inclusive and equal world where people can interact with each other's cultures in a respectful and empowering way. To emphasize how important this is, this thesis draws from Max Jorge Hinderer Cruz, Bolivian-German writer, curator, and philosopher who revolved around the question “*Decolonize Europe yes or no?*” during the second session of the “Where Are the Oases?” Seminar in the scope of the ninth edition of the PEI (Independent Studies Program) at the MACBA (Barcelona Museum of Contemporary Art). To summarize, the answer is “yes, now, urgently”. To expand on it, Hinderer Cruz states that “If we don't decolonize Europe, and its political allies now we are going to die, right now, we are going to die all of us, just like that.” (2023). To elaborate on this, it is necessary to address the colonial legacies that still allow Europe to have a say in South American politics, to still decide and interfere in the region’s sovereignty. Hinderer Cruz argues that “the best way to decolonize Europe would be to vote for European governments that respect the political sovereignty, cultural sovereignty and food sovereignty of our countries in the so-called Global South” (2023). In order to decolonize Europe, Hinderer Cruz claims to vote for governments that respect political sovereignty, cultural sovereignty, and food sovereignty in the Global South. He goes on to make a special request to respect South America’s own processes of decolonization, making a point on how fragile democracies are in the region since they can easily face external intervention, we elect democratically to only later observe how that election is discredited and a government that will better serve colonial interests is imposed. Latin America has gone through a violent, hurtful, and breaking process of decolonization well before the term was mentioned at a university lecture in Berlin, Boston, or Vienna. Latin Americans have paid, and continue to pay, a high price: we have seen a lot of blood spilled, and, while Decoloniality in South America is, too, an ongoing process it is advanced and was conceived and has been held in a practical way since its creation. These efforts keep clashing with external interventions by the West, who still want to frame the conversation and decide what happens in the Global South, Latin America is the ex-colony that has gone and continues to suffer, the biggest cultural colonialism, which translates into a Eurocentric view to still be very present in our territories.

Bolivia is a very interesting example to paint a picture, in Bolivia, almost half of the population, 41%, is of Indigenous origin. Bolivia stands out in the region for having a significant part of its population willing to identify, recognize and be proud of their indigenous origin, rather than negating or erasing it as colonial fantasies wanted. The phrase “Nos quisieron enterrar, pero no sabían que éramos semillas” (“They wanted to bury us, but they didn't know we were seeds.”) take on new force while

viewing how Bolivians address their colonial past, with concrete measures such as the foundation of the Ministerio de Culturas, Descolonización y Despatriarcalización (Ministry of Cultures, Decolonization, and Depatriarchalization) which is the state entity in charge of the generation, implementation, and supervision of public policies for the recovery, protection, preservation, restoration, promotion, socialization and valuation of the cultures and artistic expressions of the indigenous native *campesino* peoples and nations, intercultural communities of the cities and Afro-Bolivians, as well as decolonization, depatriarchalization, and cultural revolution processes to contribute to the consolidation of the Plurinational State and Living Well, in accordance with the provisions of the Political Constitution of the State. In 2009, Bolivia achieved what Peru and other countries in the region have been dreaming of achieving, in January 25, Bolivia approved the New Political Constitution of the State of Bolivia, what is new in this Constitution is the plurinational and communitarian character, the political administrative decentralization and the system of autonomies (Mision Y Vision – Ministerio De Culturas, Descolonización Y Despatriarcalización, n.d.). The plurinational character has to do with the decolonizing axis as a deconstructive route of the republican, colonial, and liberal state. For tangible actions like this to replicate and expand in the region it is vital for citizens to insist on political sovereignty. The persistence of colonial legacies sustains a relationship of dependency between Latin America and Europe, characterized by an inherent imbalance, whereby Europe continues to derive economic gains from the extraction and exploitation of these areas. One factor contributing to the disparity in wealth between Europe and Latin America is the ongoing economic support provided by the South to the North. This inequitable relationship serves as the impetus for my desire to examine decolonization within a European framework, extending beyond the confines of my own country or continent.

The purpose of this statement is to emphasize the enduring impact of colonial legacies in the Global North, specifically in Europe and more specifically in Germany, as exemplified by the case study of the Rautenstrauch-Joest-Museum. A further supporting point is that the conversations about *Decolonizing the Museum* are being held in the Global North, where people with decision power are still from. All the decisions, all the conversations are happening in the West, in the global North. Regarding *Decolonizing the Museum*, Hinderer Cruz puts forth the idea that “it can be very nice what you see in decolonial exhibitions but decolonization is a lot of work, decolonization is not consumed, we cannot pay at the entrance of a museum the price of decolonization”(2023), notwithstanding the curator positively affirms that every safe space we can get to have these conversations counts concludes the talk by urging

all people to take advantage of these spaces to talk, to breathe and then to put those thoughts and words into practice. (2023)

Throughout this thesis, I draw on the work of several authors. One aim of this thesis is to tell the story of the people from the Global South, as told by the Global South, and to prioritize stories told by the ones that lived them, stories told to me first-hand. Since there is a danger of a single story being told as universal, this thesis seeks to include different voices, in a manner that enables for none to be imposed over others, the focus is set on how they all intertwine and connect with each other, weaving a whole. In addition, this thesis prioritizes orality, preserving stories and information we care about through written words is a Western concept, maybe in Latin America and in other parts of the Global South the story was not meant to be written, but was rather meant to be told through music, through voices, or through stories told from grandmothers to mothers and from mothers to daughters. The idea that to be civilized, a writing system was necessary is a Western-imposed idea, one that was still taught to me as a kid in primary school, civilization refers to a highly developed culture, therefore we were told that our culture was lesser and inferior, that there was a *lack* in us. Nevertheless, the reality is that Peru is one of six "cradles of civilization" worldwide, this means that in Peru civilization arose independently, without external influence. The Andean area was populated approximately 14,000 years ago, and approximately 5,000 years ago civilization emerged. (Larco, n.d.)

Another decolonial thinker that has worked on expanding on concepts vital for the accessibility of this text and to engage in this discussion is Argentine semiotician Walter D. Mignolo, who proposes relevant terms for a discussion with a focus on decoloniality such as delinking, rewesternization, and dewesternization. Dewesternization is a way to delink, dewesternization is not a geographical term, but a political one that refers to all states (corporate states) that are consolidating their economies without adhering to the directives of the United States, the European Union, the International Monetary Fund, or the World Bank. (Mignolo, 2012). Delinking occurs at the level of economic control; that is, political delinking from economic decisions, is a must to delink from the imperial/colonial trap. The author remarks on the difference between dewesternization and decoloniality stating that:

What is important to note here is that dewesternization and decoloniality did not originate in Europe or the US but in the "Third World." "Decolonization" was the term used at the Bandung Conference. Decoloniality is more recent, beginning in the early nineties. But, in general, the vocabulary of decolonization/decoloniality came out of the Bandung Conference. (Relations, 2017)



The Bandung Conference marked the first important meeting of sovereign and aspiring independent nations from Asia and Africa, it took place in 1955, representatives from twenty-nine Asian and African countries gathered in Bandung, Indonesia, to address shared coloniality-induced challenges. The Asian-African Conference was initiated by Indonesian Prime Minister Ali Sastroamidjojo and was an unprecedented event, as never before had leaders from so many non-Western nations come together to find common ground, in a sovereign place, without Western intervention. It is also important to add that each community must build its own narrative toward Decoloniality, for instance, the use of the term dewesternization is more common within peoples that were not directly colonized, but that still suffered under coloniality, whereas directly colonized communities choose Decoloniality more often. Mignolo also notes that the feasibility of global westernization has diminished due to an increasing number of individuals actively opposing assimilation into Western cultural norms. On the contrary, individuals began to re-emerge. This entails the process of determining how to lead one's own life rather than devoting one's time and physical resources to corporations, one's attention and intellectual capacities to the overwhelming influence of mainstream media, and one's energy to financial institutions. (2012) For this debate, the sociologist defines “modernity” as what Western civilization calls capitalism and development, which was coined and treated as the only option by the ones that can profit from it and who end up being benefited and served. He describes rewesternization as recent efforts have been made to maintain this option and to argue that there is no superior option; that capitalism and Western modernity are the best alternatives for the majority of individuals. (Mignolo, 2012). This option is founded on what decolonial thinkers define, describe, and explain as the “colonial matrix of power” or “coloniality” (Mignolo, 2017). According to Mignolo (2017) the colonial matrix of power, CMP, is a structure of management that dominates all aspects of our lives. Two options to delink are dewesternization and decoloniality. Delinking, as in breaking away, from the influence of external powers and regaining control over our own lives is closely intertwined with the process of rebuilding and establishing new conditions and ways of existence that are uniquely ours. If we escape, or, when we escape coloniality, what then? This questioning center the conversation on Indigeneity:

On the other, this issue has stemmed from conversations with Canadian Indigenous artists, curators, and organizers and their insistence in emphasizing indigeneity over decoloniality – that is, that the gesture of decentring and delinking must be accompanied by a process of recentring aesthetic and political indigenous structures. (Relations, 2017)

In this regard it is important to reiterate that every decolonial fight is different and should serve the interest of each community in an autonomous way. The main goal of decoloniality is to “delink in order to re-exist, which implies relinking with the legacies one wants to preserve in order to engage in modes of existence with which one wants to engage” (Relations, 2017), there can not be only one decolonial blueprint, as this would fall in colonial ways. Decolonial thinking strives to delink itself from the imposed dichotomies articulated in the West, which worked hard on creating distinction to classify equal living organisms as inferior humans. (Mignolo, 2017), this is exactly how all systems of oppression operate. Another crucial aspect to consider is that *The master's tools will never dismantle the master's house* (Lorde, 1984), decolonial projects will not be initiated by the ones profiting from them, or by institutions such as the state, the banks, or, one can argue, the museum, this needs to come by real actions by real people. It needs to come from us regaining our power to tribalize, to live in communities. While there is a possibility that they might grant us a temporary advantage in outperforming him within the confines of his established system, it is highly unlikely that they will facilitate our ability to enact substantial and lasting transformation. This fact poses a threat solely to women who continue to perceive the master's house as their exclusive means of sustenance (1984), here Lorde centers the conversation in a context that was attempting to discuss feminism without Black Women, Lesbian Women, and Women from the Third World, which is a failed attempt to talk about feminism since there is no feminism without racialized and queer women born in the so-called Third World, but it is possible to replace the word women for humans to reaffirm that the ones that occupied positions of privilege are less likely to start a factual fight against what invest them with said privilege, this has been proven historically, nowadays, five hundred years after the culmination of political colonialism the order of the world stays the same.

The process of coloniality decayed from the emergence of decolonial responses, that is, responses from people who were not happy to be told what to do and who they are. Today decoloniality is everywhere, it is a connector between hundreds, perhaps thousands of organized responses delinking from modernity and Western civilization and relinking with the legacies that people want to preserve in view of the affirming modes of existence they want to live. (Relations, 2017).

Decolonizing cannot be approached as a local issue as its impact is universal, it affects us all. This thesis proposes a dialogue however it demands one on even ground, an equal conversation between institutions, communities, and artists. A key point regarding the relevance of this body of work worth mentioning is

the aim to go against separation, to reimagine this topic, *Decolonizing the Museum*, anew. This thesis works towards no separations or categorizations and preferably commits to open processes, and cross-field and transdisciplinary work. This thesis prioritizes marginalized voices that have not been heard, especially not in academia, which remains a largely white, Eurocentric, and male-dominated enterprise. Extra effort has been invested in building from theories, authors, thoughts, and discussions that originated in the Global South. This is the reason why a lot of thinkers and discourses in this thesis are from the Global South, this thesis seeks to portray people from the Global South not as the Other but rather from an affirming place. This thesis aims for universal history to be fulfilled, finally completed, finally having all the input, from all the voices that were erased, that were actively oppressed to make a few voices be universal and hegemonic, the voices of white, European men.

A very important resource for this thesis is the interviews I had with artists from the Global South and workers from the cultural field, this allows this thesis to present another side of the story and expand on What do artists think? How do they position themselves? That is basically the groundwork of this thesis. The presence of coloniality is everywhere, it affects all areas of the life of humans and non-humans, including various forms of social, economic, and political control, including policies, nation-state building practices, policing, surveillance, profiling, extractivism, wealth concentration, hate expression, social phobias, and liberal inclusion initiatives, it is a current topic that not only has persisted through the years but is on the rise, and what could happen if it is not stopped is the end of our life and all life on the planet that we now inhabit, this is not an insignificant point and it is urgent to resolve it and address it critically, while at the same time understanding that to do this we need clarity, this is why this thesis contributes in providing a glossary of terms and weaving different agents involved in the decolonial fight, to seek to find clarity in the confusing arena on which coloniality works actively to make us stand. Hand in hand with this, it is important to believe firmly that colonialism never destroyed everything, there were always people who resisted, even though they were actively erased from, wrongly called, universal history. This thesis seeks to find ways to build, regenerate and create from this point of departure.

This thesis emphasizes that it is necessary to address discussions about decoloniality in a collective, inclusive, and open way, sources with an emphasis on this topic have come to me from life, from outside academia, from dear friends, from book club, from feminists groups, from fellow artists, from art exhibitions, from my twin sister, and from people from my affective circle, from safe spaces and from jumping to one author to the other, nevertheless, I am fully aware that this list should be in constant regeneration, it should be seen as a work in action and as an ongoing work which is always willing to

welcome new sources, either academic or from outside academia, this literature review should not be seen as finished, but rather as an open work in progress.

The current state of knowledge in the field has plenty of gaps or areas that warrant further investigation. One of the reasons is that this kind of discussion requires work involving various disciplines and fields. To be able to engage in discussions about decolonizing ethnological European museums we cross disciplines like anthropology, contemporary art, art history, museology, and, as this thesis argues, the need for there to be no barriers between these fields of knowledge. Cross-field work is necessary, another reason why there is a lot of work to do is accessibility, this debate, even though including various actors, continues to be centered in the Western part of the world. This means that knowledge is being produced by the Western, for the Western, this excludes a vital part of the concerned parties in this debate. The difficulty to access information also plays a role, knowledge is being kept locked, and the collection of the museums, even digitally, is not open to everyone, digitalization of the archive and collection of the museums is a key element towards opening the conversation to global participation and requires precedence. It is a recent topic, museums have been nearly 400 years, with the foundation of the Ashmolean Museum in 1683 through a donation of his personal collection by Elias Ashmole. He donated his cabinet of curiosities, which contained various natural specimens, artifacts, coins, and other objects, to the University of Oxford. This donation formed the foundation of the Ashmolean Museum, making it one of the first public museums in the world. In the same way, the first ethnological museum is often attributed to the Royal Cabinet of Curiosities, also known as the Kunstkammer, founded in Kunstkammer, in St. Petersburg, Russia, in 1714 by Peter the Great and it included ethnographic collections, which focused on artifacts and objects from different cultures and societies around the world. It is important to mention that the exact distinction of the first ethnological museum can be challenging, as the concept of ethnography and collecting cultural objects existed in various forms in different cultures and civilizations throughout history. Since these 300 years of origin, ethnological museums have been through several changes and are nowadays involved in a series of questions that point at their very core. In 1793, the Louvre, a former royal palace, was converted into the first modern art museum and is even today the hegemonic representation of a museum, and what lives in our collective imaginary when the word museum is mentioned. The French revolutionary government made a groundbreaking decision to open the doors of the Louvre to the public, showcasing an extensive collection of art, including paintings, sculptures, and cultural artifacts. This historic move marked the establishment of one of the world's first public art museums, laying the foundation for the modern concept of art museums we know today. (The World's Oldest Museums, n.d.)

A relevant concern acknowledged in this thesis regarding the knowledge produced about the field is that it is region-specific, access to it is limited, it is institutionalized, lacks representation, and cross-field research is being done only in recent years. To open up a conversation about those worries, my research seeks to stimulate debates on the futures, frictions, and colonial legacies of museums, art, and artists in Europe during the aftermath of Western colonialism. The aims of this body of text are to enhance the understanding of the readers of historical and contemporary artistic practices related to decolonization and Decoloniality, both within and beyond the realm of museums. The ones that engage in reading this text will critically reassess the terminology and concepts surrounding artist-museum relationships, such as the post-digital archive, object/artifact/sample/'thing', object biography, and agency. Through personal experienced narrated through Autohistoria, a series of interviews, and analysis of case studies, the readers will receive guidance in order to develop their own approaches and critically engage in challenges encountered in their own professional contexts. My thesis relates to a main concern in my practice, but it goes beyond just one field, it goes beyond the art field, cultural studies field, anthropology field, and so on, and touches on life itself, rather than constraining the topic I aim to liberate it from categorization and separation, ultimately questioning why art has been separated from life, while in Andean and indigenous knowledges the separation was never there, we see art as part of life, and life as part of art. My research seeks to bridge to discovering new perspectives or new insights about that main concern through writing. I see this thesis as an ongoing process, in the same way, Decoloniality is an action this writing is a generative tool to gather new knowledge or new understanding of things that we often do not question and take as a given. To tackle such an intricate area of study, this thesis draws on collectivity, I believe that learning from each other is very important, as it is to face questions critically, questions such as: What do we talk about when we talk about Decolonizing? Whose job is it to Decolonize the museum? And finally, do we need a museum? In this text, I am going to focus on the dimensions involved in solving these questions rather than providing final answers for such complex situations. Nevertheless, I care deeply about making certain remarks, an important goal of this writing is to condemn racist violence, put racism in the center of the debate regarding decolonizing, and call out institutions such as the museum, academia, and art on their perpetration of colonial legacies, whether this is done consciously or unconsciously. The readers will expand their knowledge of historical and contemporary practices in the arts that address decolonization, in the museum context and beyond. They will re-examine the terminology of their conceptions and practices in archives' digitization (e.g. post-digital archive, object/artifact/sample/'thing', object biography, agency, etc.). Finally, the research seeks to instigate thought and address cultural hegemony critically within the history of arts and our current perception of

them. My work intends to stimulate new discussions and research on decolonization, decoloniality, and so-called postcolonial studies.

I want to confront question like “Where does the aim to decolonize the museum come from?” And “How do encounters between artists and museums as cultural institutions come to be? “

A primary limitation of this master's thesis is the inherently dynamic and evolving nature of the debate surrounding decolonization. The field of decolonial studies is characterized by ongoing discussions, changes in perspectives, and new insights emerging over time. As a result, the conclusions drawn and recommendations made in this thesis may reflect the state of the debate at a specific point in time, potentially overlooking developments that occur after the research is completed. The discourse surrounding decolonization encompasses a fluidity of definitions, concepts, and methodologies. This diversity can lead to challenges in establishing a standardized framework for analysis. The thesis may need to navigate differing interpretations of decolonization, which could influence the conclusions drawn from the research, to facilitate this a glossary is provided. Decolonization efforts often vary based on geographical, cultural, and institutional contexts, it has a context-specific nature. The findings and recommendations of the thesis might be most relevant to the specific context in which the research was conducted and may not be easily extrapolated to other settings without careful consideration of contextual factors, especially considering decoloniality as it is considered in this thesis: an ongoing process.

Given the ever-changing nature of discourse around decolonization, there is a risk that the conclusions and recommendations of the thesis may become outdated relatively quickly. New insights, perspectives, and developments in the field could emerge shortly after the research is completed, potentially rendering some aspects of the thesis obsolete. Despite efforts to include diverse perspectives, the limitations of time, resources, and access may constrain the breadth and depth of voices represented in the research. This limitation could impact the comprehensiveness of the study's conclusions and recommendations. In conclusion, while the master's thesis "Decolonizing the Artist-Museum Encounter" presents a valuable opportunity to contribute to the discourse on decolonization within the cultural sector, it is important to acknowledge the dynamic and evolving nature of the debate, as well as the potential limitations that arise from this fluidity. The study's findings and recommendations should be interpreted with awareness of the contextual nuances and the ever-evolving landscape of decolonial studies.

In the realm of museum studies, the ongoing conversation around decolonization has gained significant traction. This transformative discourse seeks to challenge and dismantle the historical power dynamics

inherent in the museum space. This thesis stands at the crossroads of this movement, offering a perspective that places the voices and experiences of artists and cultural workers from the Global South at its core. With a particular combination of personal involvement, critical literature analysis, and firsthand accounts, this thesis contributes to the evolution of decoloniality as both a theoretical framework and a practical, collective endeavor.

Central to my research is the insightful and diverse input garnered from interviews with artists and cultural workers hailing from the Global South who base their practice in Europe. With their voices, my research delves into perspectives that have traditionally been marginalized within the discourse. These viewpoints provide a multifaceted understanding of the impact of colonial legacies on museums and how decolonization efforts can be tailored to address the unique challenges faced by these groups.

One of the distinctive aspects of my research lies in my own lived experience as a BIPOC artist from Peru who undertook an internship at a German ethnological museum during the preparation of this thesis. This personal journey lends an intimate and reflexive layer to the work, bridging academic analysis with real-world encounters. My insights from this internship enrich the discussion by blending academic rigor with lived encounters, offering a nuanced exploration of the power dynamics and cultural exchanges that unfold within museum spaces. The literature underpinning my research is deliberately chosen to prioritize authors from the Global South. This approach ensures that the theoretical foundations of my work align with the perspectives of those who have been historically marginalized. By centering decoloniality debates on race and emphasizing its practical implementation, my research aims to guide institutions toward actionable steps in the decolonization process. It highlights that decoloniality is not just a theoretical construct, but a tangible endeavor that necessitates collective engagement and practical transformation. Crucially, my research reframes decoloniality as an action-oriented endeavor that requires collaboration across various stakeholders, highlighting that this collaboration must originate from a foundation of equality. It challenges the idea that decolonization is a mere theoretical exercise, instead emphasizing its transformative potential through practical steps. By involving artists, cultural workers, scholars, institutions, and individuals from inside and outside the museum context in a collective effort, my research paves the way for a holistic approach to decolonizing the museum—one that is mindful of the Global South's contributions and responsive to its distinct challenges. In the evolving landscape of museum studies, my research emerges as a dynamic and inclusive contribution that expands the horizons of decolonial discourse. Through the inclusion of Global South artistic voices, personal experiences, and a practical focus on decoloniality, my work demonstrates the potential for museums to become sites of meaningful change, for the museum to evolve into a place we, the communities, need. As we continue to

navigate the intricate path of decolonization, this research advocates for a collaborative and action-oriented approach that truly transforms museums into inclusive and equitable spaces for all. Finally, the urgency of engaging in the debate surrounding Decolonizing the Museum is underscored by its current trend status. Unlike matters of legislation, trends are transient and often lack the intrinsic political backing that sustains lasting change; trends are not legislated. With the spotlight on this discourse now, there exists a time-sensitive opportunity to harness its momentum for substantial transformation. As trends inevitably shift over the next couple of years, it becomes imperative to seize this moment, leveraging its visibility to initiate impactful shifts in the museum landscape. By capitalizing on the current attention, scholars can propel the decolonizing movement beyond a passing trend and solidify its position as an enduring force of change within cultural institutions.

### 1.1 "Cross encounters with Decoloniality"

Decoloniality is beautiful in its collectiveness. I have a lot of gratitude for the artists, museum workers, and humans outside the museum context that agreed to have an interview together. This resulted in intimate spaces, shared vulnerabilities, mutual support, empowering grace, and willingness to have a conversation. "I am because they are" as said by Tupoka Ogette, an Afrogerman author that will be mentioned in the next chapter. These interviews were conducted while being in the city of Cologne as an intern at the Rautenstrauch-Joest-Museum. The individuals who were interviewed, listed in a chronological sequence, include Imayna Cáceres, a Peruvian visual artist residing in Vienna, Lemba de Miranda, a Dutch screenwriter residing in Cologne and London, Dr. Fabiola Arellano Cruz, the Director of Mediation and Education at the RJM, who was born in Peru and currently resides in Maastricht and Cologne, and Paloma Ayala, a visual artist born in Mexico and currently based in Zurich. The interviews were done exclusively throughout the month of June, namely on the dates of June 6, 12, 16, and 21. The majority of interviews were conducted online using the Zoom platform, and only the one with de Miranda was conducted in person inside the RJM. In every instance, the audio recording was used to further transcribe the interview. Concerning the language of the interviews, only the one with Lemba de Miranda was conducted in English; the rest were conducted in Spanish and later translated into English by myself, as Spanish was the mother tongue of both interviewee and interviewer. I started the interview by asking the interviewees the open ended question "How was your encounter with decolonization?", Imayna Cáceres with who I conducted the first interview, stated:



In reality, I have grown up with many anti-colonial practices, I believe that this is a very common experience in Abya Yala, Latin America, in Peru without a doubt, that we have grown up surrounded by multiple knowledge, both hegemonic and from the margins of the Global South, surrounded by much knowledge about plants, about the agency of plants, with connection also with worlds, as they say here, of the irrational, about dreams, about souls, the world of the spirits, it is like precisely part of my work is to make that revision, how I have grown up, how many people have grown up, that we have always been crossed by anti-colonial, decolonial practices, that above all have always been crossed by the maternal lines of the mothers, the grandmothers and so on, also that has been very influenced by the migrant worlds that inhabit both Lima. (Basauri Torres, 2023, Appendix A)

Imayna Caceres, visual artist from Peru now based in Vienna begins from where we grew up as the starting point for her encounter with Decoloniality, and so does community-based artist Paloma Ayala, who is also from Latin America, she was born in Mexico and now lives in Zurich, “Hey, does it have to do with discourse? No! B\*llshit! It has to do with my family, with the women who have cooked for me all their lives and have taken care of me” (Basauri Torres, 2023, Appendix D). Decoloniality, as argued in this thesis, is personal, it is planted in us and grows and gets carried into our expanded life, the approach we have towards decoloniality spreads to all aspects of our life, including the professional one. Dr Fabiola Arellano Cruz sees decoloniality as global lens:

I was going to tell you the same thing, I can't break it apart either, for several reasons. The first one is because I entered a museum of world cultures with a non-precarious contract, as practically the first person from the Global South, who has a non-precarious contract and is in a position of, let's say, a lot of responsibility, so those two factors have a lot to do with me and my job, that's why I don't dissociate it. In that sense, I think it is almost a little bit revolutionary” (Basauri Torres, 2023, Appendix C)

Arellano Cruz is the only BIPOC person in a power position working at the German ethnological museum. The story we tell ourselves frames us, if we fail to know our own story, there is a part of us that will hurt every time we touch it, “I'm disconnecting myself from my source and my true power. Like, where did my ancestors come from?” (Basauri Torres, 2023, Appendix B) Lemba de Miranda, Dutch screenwriter with parents from the Global South, dwells on how often we negate our origin as a

protection mechanism, as a way to cope with the “white-supremacist capitalist patriarchy”(hooks), only to later find that that is our real protection, “there is an interest in situating themselves to begin with, within their Caribbean contexts, but also as global people” (Basauri Torres, 2023, Appendix D), Ayala goes on about positioning oneself in a broader context. Another fundamental approach, also explored in my research is the concept of decoloniality as one that activates in real life in a practical way:

Not only research because they make it very clear, decolonial feminisms do not only work at a written level and at a research level, they work at an activist level, at a body level, they work at a level where a certain practice becomes part of one, It becomes something that you really use in everyday life. (Basauri Torres, 2023, Appendix D)

One more essential aspect of decoloniality is fluidity, “they were all people who somehow met and exchanged all that knowledge as something very positive” (Basauri Torres, 2023, Appendix A), Caceres shares about an experience she had growing up as a child from a migrant family in the capital of Peru, Lima. Ultimately, De Miranda drew on how important it is to exist as us, which for certain communities is a political act of resistance by itself, “being the full human, you actually are. Not getting eaten up by the/a system. So that's very important to me because I think very much it has to do with my own development kind of like, take all of what you are, rather than, Oh, this is this mold and try to fit yourself in it because it's never going to be comfortable.” (Basauri Torres, 2023, Appendix B)

## 1.2 I entered a museum in the eye of the storm

I commenced an unpaid internship at the Rautenstrauch-Joest-Museum on May 2, 2023, as part of my master's thesis research. To accomplish this, I relocated from Aalborg, Denmark to Cologne, Germany. On the initial day, I was provided with an intern identification card, an electronic mail originating from the domain [stadt.koeln.de](mailto:stadt.koeln.de), specifically addressed to [Benazir.Torres@stadt-koeln.de](mailto:Benazir.Torres@stadt-koeln.de), and written materials containing historical details pertaining to the fourth largest ethnographical museum in Germany. I discovered that Joest belonged to the category of travelers who were predominantly white, male, and privileged. Wilhelm Joest, the son of a Cologne sugar manufacturer, had undertaken multiple excursions throughout the globe, a luxury he could afford. From this juncture, from this specific aspect, I gradually developed a heightened consciousness regarding the strong interconnections, deep-seated origins, and

financial support derived from colonialism that underpin this museum. Essentially, the various excursions and expeditions undertaken by Wilhelm Joest were mostly funded by acts of violence, extractive practices, and the oppression of individuals residing in the Caribbean. These exploitative endeavors involved the acquisition of resources in exchange for the enslavement of individuals. The individuals who were subjected to enslavement were primarily responsible for carrying out the labor, while the German men of white European descent were the beneficiaries of the resulting profits. The establishment of this museum is facilitated by the oppressive practices of corporate colonialism, which enable the acquisition of various artifacts through extensive journeys and looting.

During my internship, I had the position of an intern inside the photographic collection. However, my internship encompassed a wider range of professional responsibilities. I developed a strong interest and was captivated by the anti-colonial and anti-racist initiatives undertaken at the museum. One of the motivations behind my decision to pursue an internship for my master's thesis was the frequent exposure to various events, workshops, and activations organized by the RJM through social media. These events centered around themes such as colonial legacies, radical love, and tenderness, which resonated deeply with me. Moreover, these topics were approached in a manner that fostered inclusivity and engagement with diverse communities. I was highly intrigued by the opportunity to closely observe how an ethnological museum addresses its fundamental establishment as a colonial institution and how it actively engages with this principle by considering the museum as a social entity, wherein every aspect contributes to its vitality, as articulated by Francois Verges. The scope of inquiry encompasses the internal and external dynamics of the museum, including the individuals present within its premises, as well as the personnel responsible for its operations. I found great interest in a particular component of my personal experience, wherein I voluntarily participated in an event named as a colonial critical tour within the permanent collection of the Rautenstrauch-Joest-Museum. (Rautenstrauch-Joest-Museum Köln | Veranstaltungskalender, n.d.)

This resonated with me since I desired to observe one of these activations in close proximity. I recollect pondering the identity of the individual responsible for conducting the tour. Upon the introduction of the guides, a sense of contentment and emotional warmth enveloped me. Among them was Ricardo Marquez Garcia o, a former curator at the RJM from Colombia, and Dr. Fabiola Arellano Cruz, currently Head of Mediation and Education at the museum, originating from Peru, which is also my home country. The individuals embarked on a comprehensive exploration of the RJM museum's permanent exhibition, which encompasses artifacts acquired by acts of looting, theft, and potentially unethical transactions from several continents, including the user's own. The RJM possesses artifacts originating from my nation. I

recently had the opportunity to access the inventory records of the museum. While situated in the copy room, I noticed the presence inventory cards of Huaco Retratos from the Moche Culture, a pre-Inca civilization, which were not being exhibited. The items are stored within a secure facility, inaccessible to unauthorized individuals. Why collecting to not exhibit it? I participated in the event and was pleasantly surprised by the individuals who shared personal narratives. Marquez and Arellano initially presented a compelling argument by recounting their personal experiences with decolonization and their heightened awareness of racism within their daily lives. They emphasized their shared roots in migration and highlighted the ways in which they strategically positioned themselves and engaged in political discourse. In one chamber of the permanent collection, Christopher Columbus is identified as the one credited with the discovery of the Americas. The guides emphatically asserted that the individual in question was a murderer and genocider, devoid of any significant discoveries. The fundamental premise has transformative implications, as the manner in which a narrative is conveyed significantly influences its interpretation. The narrative undergoes substantial modifications when individuals assume agency in recounting their own stories, as opposed to being represented by others. One of the participants expressed confusion regarding the problematic nature of referring to Cristobal Colombo as a discoverer, arguing that such a designation is a factual statement. Firstly, it is important to note that the aforementioned statement is not accurate. Secondly, it is crucial to acknowledge that such a statement serves to obfuscate the presence of violence. This issue may be likened to the act of labeling Wilhelm Joest as a voyeur, as it fails to acknowledge his racial tendencies and his role as a colonizer who amassed wealth via the oppression of others. The inclusion of that subject matter should be approached with the same pedagogical methods employed in the teaching of historical facts, as it is imperative to avoid concealing any aspect thereof. The aforementioned encounter was a source of personal satisfaction, as it underscored the imperative for marginalized communities, specifically Indigenous individuals hailing from various regions in the global south such as Latin America (including Peru and Colombia) and India, to take charge of narrating their own experiences. This necessitates a departure from the prevailing practice of allowing individuals from Western societies to speak on their behalf.

I also gained a heightened awareness of the ongoing challenges associated with sharing our own narratives when we belong to underrepresented groups. Despite the current intensity of discussions surrounding race, diversity, restitution, and repair, it remains arduous for individuals from BIPOC communities to convey their own experiences within this museum. This difficulty persists despite the establishment of a Diversity Office in 2019, as the museum's staff continues to be predominantly white, thereby creating a significant barrier for BIPOC individuals seeking to share their stories. This

observation highlights the significant role of diversity within the context of this museum. The museum's self-promotion and advocacy for pro-refugee, pro-human rights, and pro-migrant stances are juxtaposed with the continued dominance of decision-making by white, Western Europeans. Consequently, the voices of marginalized communities remain unheard, prompting the question of whether any substantial changes have occurred.

Drawing from the experience I had during the internship, I state that the museum presents a multitude of objects and narratives that require decolonization. During my time there, I experienced a heightened sense of scrutiny from the security personnel, perceiving a persistent surveillance that seemed to be influenced by my physical appearance and racial background. Consequently, this experience evoked feelings of distress and vulnerability within the workplace environment. Numerous events were being conducted in the German language. The primary means of contact among staff was conducted in the German language. I was repeatedly queried regarding my preference for conversing in English, to which I consistently responded in the negative, opting instead to communicate exclusively in the German language. On certain occasions during my employment, I encountered instances when I was presented with documents that were deemed to be intricate in nature. In such instances, I was advised by one colleague to utilize the translation services provided by the deepl platform as a means to facilitate the translation process. I deem this intriguing, particularly in light of the fact that I continuously engaged in discourse pertaining to intricate subject matters in German? I did not require a transition to a different language, as I possess a high level of proficiency in the German language. It is worth noting that perception towards a racialized person like me is hindered by a prejudiced predisposition. During my internship at a German ethnological museum, I encountered instances of precarious employment, including coworkers who were overworked and underpaid. These individuals faced challenging circumstances, to the extent that some were unable to financially sustain their employment within the museum context. A period of two months is insufficient to produce a comprehensive assessment; yet I maintain that their connection with the artist remains highly extractive. As an intern, I engaged in unpaid work for this museum, highlighting the continued normalization of unpaid labor. Two months is not enough time to make a full report but I deem their relationship with the artist still very extractivist. I did free labor for this museum, which should not be normalized within a decolonial endeavour.

I am pleased to have had the opportunity to have an intimate understanding of the museum, appreciative of the relationships I cultivated, and gratified by the extensive network of individuals with whom I established meaningful ties. I had the opportunity to get firsthand insight into the functioning of this colonial organization, observing how it emerged within the framework of Coloniality and continues to

persist in contemporary society. Remarkably, this institution has skillfully integrated decolonial aspirations into its institutional narrative, albeit in a superficial manner that does not fundamentally alter its underlying essence. This thesis deems important the narration of this experience I had in a way that enables emotions to be integrated, drawing upon the theoretical framework of Autohistoria as proposed by Gloria Anzaldúa. This notion was introduced to me by Imayna Cáceres, the initial person whom I interviewed. I derive joy from the manner in which this interaction arose through the act of extending oneself and being part of a collective entity.

## **2. Repair: deep, uncomfortable, heated relations between artist and museum**

As an artist, I would like to shed some light on the power museums have held in the past and still hold nowadays in the art market and in validating artists. Before now, there had never been a time in history when so many exhibitions were being made, so many artworks were produced, and so many artists were active. The increase in quantity does not reassure an increase in quality. I also would like to share that my critical posture toward art production, art positioning, and curation lies in the fact that I love art, dearly. It comes from a vulnerable place, from a place of wanting to belong to the art world. This is not a criticism of art but of the art system. This second chapter deals with the encounter of artist and museum, two agents that are interested in arts, sadly it seems that that similarity is not enough for a smooth encounter. The art ecosystem is large and complex, it is composed of different agents: curators, mediators, art dealers, art producers, recipients, collectors, and artists. The role of the museum is to be a modern art establishment that determines what we perceive as culture today. It is important to question why this is yet like that, this shows how there is still trust in the museum as the authority that guides us to evaluate what art is. There is a danger of art losing its independence because of constant adaptation, this potential danger is forced by the current art market, rigid institutions, and the lack of critical reflection, as well as by the hierarchical structure of the art business. The debate about decolonizing the museum is key to developing an attitude toward art again and reimagining and rethinking one of its pillars; the museum. Several factors must come to our attention, for I instance: How is the success of an exhibition measured? It is done rather quantitatively than qualitatively by the number of visitors and not the quality of the exhibition. This text deems it necessary to interrogate the conformity of the art establishment." Art is a mystery, like love. It strikes, it knocks us down, we don't know why. But the way we look at art today doesn't allow for feelings."(Zepter, 2017), this thesis also seeks to power through and make space between inflexible structures to bring to the forefront how necessary feelings are to discuss sociocultural issues in an artistic field. Artists have shifted, evolved, changed social classes, set some fires, and also been burned by them. I read a book titled "Dokumente zum Verständnis der modernen Malerei"(Documents for understanding modern painting) by Walter Hess, that differentially, focused on gathering, thoughts, writings, and testimonials from artists about their own work. Many conversations about the arts, the future of the museum, and our digital futures seem to be happening without the artists, often artists are left out of discussions about art. As I am now inside the museum, as an unpaid intern this has become clearer for me: The encounter between artist

and museum takes place on uneven ground. When an artist meets the museum can the two parts engage in a conversation from a place of equality? This chapter centers on the increasing number of interventions to decolonize the museum taking place in the West. How are these initiatives taking place? Who facilitates them and instigates them? Is it the museum director or is it governmental politics? In terms of what potentiates this interaction, questions arise; Why does the artist wish for an encounter with the museum? This aim has hierarchal, classist, and ultimately unequal roots. It comes from a need: the need for legitimization, for the museum to validate them as an artist. When the artist accesses the museum they get the support of an institution, which can act as a legitimizer of their work. In 2023 a visible hierarchy is still strong in the art world, as museums, art galleries, off spaces, Kunsthalle, and artist-run spaces cohabit, the path doesn't seem to have changed as much. Art galleries, from blue-chip galleries to artist-run galleries, still act as patrons, as a gateway to the art world. Unchanging, nowadays they take almost 50 percent, and provide the artist with connections, access to collectors, visibility, and presence in art fairs, all of this in exchange for artist labor. The museum, as a European, male, hetero-normative, hegemonic, colonial, and imperial institution has a high seat in the art world. The value of an artwork increases if it becomes part of a museum collection, and also if it was shown and curated inside a museum. This power structure enables an encounter between museum and artist to be one of uneven ground. The artist seeks the museum for financial, prestige, and class reasons. The museum, on the other hand, also needs artists, since no artists equals no artwork to collect and display. Then if both parties need each other wouldn't that facilitate this conversation to happen from a place that assures equity? Through various interviews, case studies, and a focus on a determined group: Artists from the Global South entering contemporary art and ethnological European, both Austrian and German, museums this thesis argues that that heated debate-linked encounter happens from a place of inequality. For instance, for the Museumsdienst of the Stadt Köln, it is now an urgent request to Decolonize the Museum. According to the Richtlinien, guidelines, all employees should have at least heard the word anticolonial, repair, or restitution framed in a conversation. According to my internship experience and in the particular case study concerning the Rautenstrauch-Joest-Museum, many individuals part of the staff seem to agree that this demand comes from the outside, from what is happening in the streets, outside of academia.

There have been attempts to reimagine the museum, one early one was the one by Andre Malraux. In 1947 he published *Museum without walls* a text that invites people to create their own museum and overcome the limitations of space and time imposed by the traditional museum institution. The text



touches, surprisingly, on how Eurocentric museums as institution are:

So vital is the part played by the art museum in our approach to works of art today that we find it difficult to realize that no museums exist, none has ever existed, in lands where the civilization of modern Europe is, or was, unknown; and that, even amongst us, they have existed for barely two hundred years. They bulked so large in the nineteenth century and are so much part of our lives today that we forget they have imposed on the spectator a wholly new attitude towards the world of art.(Malraux, 1947, p.122).

The text sees traditional museums as unnecessary for no museum can contain all the art being produced everywhere, since challenges like fragility of the work in terms of mobility, and lack of resources arise. Now we can access art immediately, from wherever we are standing, as long as we have an internet connection. During the pandemic this became distinctive, and a broad public visited museums virtually. Google Arts & Culture has the mission to bring the world's art and culture online for everyone, it employs high-resolution images and videos of artworks and cultural artifacts from cultural organizations worldwide that are willing to partner with them. This platform overcomes traditional museum barriers regarding mobility, accessibility, wealth, geopolitics, and surely many more, nevertheless, not all museums take part in this and surely not with the entirety of their collection and archive, there is a need for the museums to set their collection and archives available for everyone digitally, this is also must in debates aiming to decolonize the museum. The text also exposes how European museums take art out of context, "for an Asiatic... artistic contemplation and the picture gallery are incompatible... above all, it demanded their isolation. A painting was not exhibited but unfurled before an art-lover in a fitting state of grace; its function was to deepen and enhance his communion with the universe. The practice of pitting works of art against each other, an intellectual activity, is at the opposite pole from the mood of relaxation which alone makes contemplation possible"(Malraux, 1947, p.155). The way museums juxtapose, categorize and display art shapes our perception wrongly, our vision has been conditioned and altered; thus, layers of varnish over oil paintings have distorted their color and texture and Greek statues were not white. With the museum conception, we can only aspire to show an incomplete version of what art is, especially in a museum portraying Cultures of the World, there will always be art missing in the museum. The writing tackles the fact that already at that time, museums managed to make our approach to art increasingly intellectualized, during my time in Cologne, I had a conversation with a high school teacher in North Rhine-Westphalia, Germany, we were discussing why for certain workshops or events in museums

there was not enough public, her take on that was that museums are directed by highly educated people with no real connection to the broader public and their interests. Our knowledge goes beyond the museum. The museum has imposed a vision of art that has shaped our understanding of what is art, it has separated art as high art, low art, fine art, and craft, it has imposed a particular canon as universal, and fails to see that art exists on its own, even or sometimes especially outside the museum.

Other more recent encounters and reimaginings of artists and museums are the ones done by Alfredo Jaar and Sandra Gamarra, in Skoghall, Sweden Santiago born artist Jaar developed The Skoghall Konsthall, and in Lima, Perú Gamara founded LiMAC. Until that foundation neither Lima nor Skoghall had a contemporary art museum, Jaar and Gamarra intended to propose special kinds of museums that departed from the negation of the traditional one.

I have gathered inputs from artists, museum staff, and cultural workers inside and outside the museum. “What you could say about how I approached the institution, is that it was in an irreverent way, of no respect, of no hierarchy.” (Basauri Torres, 2023, Appendix A). Visual artist Imayna Caceres did not approach the museum looking for its acceptance, but rather having a radical critical approach rooted in her activist actions. Caceres participated in *Who's Afraid of the Museum? Una Excavación de las Heridas Coloniales* (An Excavation of Colonial Wounds) an exhibition intervention featuring exhibitions and performances at the Weltmuseum in the city of Viena, the intervention took place from September 25, 2015 to September 27, 2015. This means these complex topics were being addressed inside a museum already eight years ago, the project was presented before the re-opening of the Weltmuseum Wien (World Museum Vienna), which was formerly named Museum of Ethnology, through this activation Latin American artists stirred the colonial foundation of the museum up and revealed the wounds of colonialism, power structures, Eurocentrism, exotism and other colonial fantasies through artistic interventions. The description of the exhibitions sounds amazing, nevertheless the artist, who held a curator role, unveils how the project took place structurally; “It was an experience about how if one wants to do something critical, but not fundamental, of change, people are fine if it is symbolic. But if it is to make a real change, a real demand, people get a little more difficult” (Basauri Torres, 2023, Appendix A, p. X), this confirms a poignant critic to this decolonial interventions, often they stay on the surface, and fail to constitute a real change to the frames of the museum, this generates a danger of decolonization to be eaten by the museum and being used for washing the image of its institution, as mentioned on the first chapter. Paloma Ayala, Mexican artist based in Zurich, verifies this and states that “it is difficult to think of ways to explore frames so

institutionalized, so solid, so little fluid, so old, but that have also been part of colonial traumas that we all have” (Basauri Torres, 2023, Appendix D) .

Before I continue, I would like to touch on a sensitive subject, and I am issuing, again, a trigger warning first, as it contains violence and may greatly affect populations that position themselves as PoC. Almost in all the interviews I have conducted for this master thesis while questioning my conversation partners about the relevance and spotlight on decolonial approaches, methods, and practices the majority mentioned the murder of George Floyd and the protests it sparked as a groundbreaking moment, it seems like from that moment Antiracism, Anti-Discrimination and other Diversity enhancing policies needed to be included in all industries, especially the cultural institutions, as a popular demand. This ignited further discussions which translated for example into the need to address Decoloniality, Restitution, and Repair in ethnological museums across Europe. Mr. Floyd, a Black man, was killed in May 2020 after being handcuffed and pinned to the ground by racist, brutal Minneapolis police officer Chauvin. This act was racist and dehumanizing, moreover, it was recorded on video and released to the public domain. Outrageously this was not the first time a racist crime by police brutality was recorded on video but for various reasons, it was a determining time in history, not only was the recording actively and extensively spread through social media but it sparked a series of protests in the US and from there it broadened to various other countries worldwide. Georges's voice, that image is engrained in my mind, and in many others. Three years, some months, and some days have passed since this act occurred, what has happened? Has something changed? and What were the results of the #BlackLivesMatter movement? For my interviewees, and various persons I have engaged in conversations with regarding this topic, it pushed the conversation from the street to the museum, and it opened many doors. Another pertinent aspect is how the artist positions herself for this encounter, “knowing how to be a mediator, it was also difficult to talk to the white public, that is, to be something critical. I am not telling you that you are a colonizer, I am not talking to you so directly, I am creating a space where these ideas can be developed, and where you can connect with these points that the exhibition is talking about” (Basauri Torres, 2023, Appendix D, p. X) , the pedagogical and mediation intention of Paloma Ayala during HERE AND NOW Anti-colonial Interventions at the Museum Ludwig, exhibition that took place from October 8, 2022 to February 5, 2023 required her to be there in person, for the workshops, for talking, in order to create a space collectively, this demanded for the artist access to mobility in the European Union, which is not universal, this matter will be tackled further on in this chapter. Additionally, to this, the

curator is a key element in this confluence, in the experience of Paloma Ayala, according to her, the curator Joanne Rodriguez was a key figure. The positioning and lived experience of Rodriguez was significant, she comes from a family that has roots in South America and Africa, speaks fluent Spanish, and did tangible work in the selection of the participating artists, she didn't only choose people who were living in Europe or that performed in Europe artistically. Moreover, unlike Caceres' experience, Ayala shares that it was a process where true freedom was granted to the artists, "Joanne, who is white, and from Europe, assumed a position of listening, I liked that a lot, a lot of dialogue, of sharing, of input, of what she was going through and questions because she didn't know how to answer them either, so we were constantly talking about it." (Basauri Torres, 2023, Appendix D) . Paloma Ayala added that the role of Rodriguez as a mediator between five artists from the Global South and an art museum of the Global North was needed, since the way the artists worked and the possibilities they had were not the possibilities the museum had, another challenging aspect was the planning processes museums in Europe and especially in bureaucracy ingrained Germany possess, everything needs to be plan years in advance and the artwork needed to be ready way before the exhibitions begin, this, for an artist that unfolds her artistic practice through community-based actions is rather testing. In Palomas' work, the process is very important, the museum as an institution is colonial, is white, is heterosexual, and has a fixation with objects. It is entertaining to imagine a museum, for example, the Ludwig Museum without objects, what is left? Paloma chooses, just like Caceres, to not adapt to the museum, but to enter the museum as herself, without bending or accommodating. The way I encountered Rajkamal Kahlon and her art was by listening to the podcast of Kunsthalle Wien, a place I visit every time I am around Vienna, which is very often since my twin sister lives there. The conversation centered in her exhibition titled *Which Side Are You On?*, which was on show from December 2022 to April of this year. Rajkamal Kahlon engages in research-based practice that puts together visibility, violence, and colonial histories. Kahlon believes that art can throw one's values into question and tackle colonialism with images. Her practice centers in looking into narratives that are seen as scientific and objective, and at the same time are deeply influential in forming the collective imagination and the way we see and interpret things around us, "there is always this experience of, um, being part of a world that I did not understand and did not agree with who has power and who doesn't have power. Somehow the way the world is set up didn't match my understanding of it." (Simku, 2023), in that way she seeks to rewrite and overwrite the stories that she has been told, in her positioning as a US person with parents coming from India. Regarding encountering the museum by working with archives and images that have colonial weight she

reclaims her agency by the way she creates her work, Kahlon sees it as an “empowering act. Actually, to first start with destruction, but then there's a cycle. It doesn't end there. It, it's, always beginning with destroying the cultural or historical object. But then I also don't believe in erasure. Because this is like a form for me of fascism, this is what fascism does, erase history and control history” (Simku, 2023). Kahlon, similarly to Ayala, engages in having a dialogue that does not erases history but retells it and scrutinizes the way it was told, by whom, and why it was structured the way it was structured. Despite this openness she deems it important to expose colonial legacies that are present until this day; “You can't dissolve the histories of violence that are in your boots. You can't get rid of the blood that's there.” (Simku, 2023). Next, a thematic analysis of the interviews is included, several themes were recognizable, the ones deemed more relevant were prioritized:

#### Theme A: Museum as a Sacred Place

In Ayala's words, the concept of the museum as a sacred place emerges through the description of her artistic vision and the challenges she faced in realizing it within the museum's constraints. This theme encapsulates several key elements:

##### A.1 Artistic Vision and Materiality:

"I wanted many kilos of clay in the middle of the space." (Basauri Torres, 2023, Appendix D)

Ayala's desire to place that amount of clay in the museum space signifies her vision for the museum as a canvas for creative expression. The use of materials, like clay, suggests a deep connection to the tangible and the transformative power of art.

##### A.2 Caring for the Museum, care or demand?:

"It was not possible because we had to take care of the museum..." (Basauri Torres, 2023, Appendix D) Ayala's acknowledgment of the need to care for the museum space underscores the idea that the museum is regarded as a place of importance, one that requires preservation and respect. This aligns with the notion of the museum as a sacred space, immutable space.

##### A.3 Artistic Constraints and Negotiation:

"From there I found a way to solve them..."

Ayala's creative problem-solving in the face of constraints implies a delicate balance between the artist's creative vision and the preservation of the museum's integrity. This reflects the negotiation that artists often engage in when working within the confines of a museum.

#### A.4 Struggle for Artistic Freedom:

"But I felt that it would have been a stronger work, if they had let me do that." (Basauri Torres, 2023, Appendix D), Ayala had many aims at the beginning of the collective exhibition she was invited to be part at the Ludwig Museum: "I had to fight to get them to paint the walls..." (Basauri Torres, 2023, Appendix D). Ayala's struggle to gain artistic freedom within the museum environment highlights the tensions between artists' desire for creative expression and the museum's preservation concerns. This struggle underscores the importance and sanctity attached to the museum as a space. In Ayala's narrative, the museum emerges as a sacred place where artistic visions are constrained, requiring artists to navigate a limitation between creative expression and preservation. This theme highlights the complex relationship between artists and the museum as they negotiate the boundaries of creative freedom within the confines of the institution.

#### Theme B: The public, who is the museum for?

In examining the theme of the public and the museum's educational mission, Arellano Cruz's quotes provide valuable insights into the evolving role of museums as educational and inclusive spaces. These quotes collectively emphasize several key aspects:

#### B.1 Reimagining Education within Museums:

"An important public for museums, all museums, at least in Germany, have a kind of educational mission, meaning that we are extracurricular spaces where you can also learn, where you can also educate, but what has been a very classical and traditional way of understanding what it means to learn, to educate and to know, that is what I am interested in changing a little bit." (Basauri Torres, 2023, Appendix C). Arellano Cruz highlights the traditional understanding of education within museums and the need for reimagining this concept. Museums are seen as spaces of extracurricular learning, suggesting a broader, more inclusive approach to education.

## B.2 Interrogating the Knowledge Narrative:

"what is the knowledge that we have been giving and who has been distributing it and in what way?" (Basauri Torres, 2023, Appendix C) , Arellano Cruz addresses knowledge production and the way it is shared critically, shedding light on the detrimental aspect of it being hegemonic and impositive, in a way that abolishes all other knowledges production or deems them inferior: "I don't think it's wrong that white ethnologists do guided tours but I think it's wrong that they do it believing that they are distributing absolute knowledge." (Basauri Torres, 2023, Appendix C) . The Director of Mediation and Education at the RJM raises critical questions about the nature of knowledge presented within museums and the identities of those who traditionally disseminate it. This underscores the importance of questioning the authority and perspectives that shape the museum's educational content.

## B.3 Diverse Audiences and Inclusivity:

"There are people who just don't want to come to the museum, who are not interested" (Arellano Cruz, 2023), it is relevant to acknowledge that assuming that visiting the museum is beneficial for all people is dangerous as it stripes person from agency and self determination. It is factual to say that there is an avid public that engages with ethnological museums in Germany; "the usual public is educated, white people, who love to go to the museum and I think we can help them to rethink things." (Basauri Torres, 2023, Appendix C), in this way Arellano Cruz acknowledges that museums may not appeal to everyone, and there are individuals who are disinterested or excluded. This highlights the challenge of broadening the museum's audience beyond the traditional, educated demographic, and the importance of making museums more inclusive and thought-provoking for diverse communities.

## B.4 Creating Inclusive Spaces:

The question who are museums for leads to the questioning of who feels welcome and invited in the ethnological museum, in this case at the RJM. Arellano Cruz has engaged in efforts to attract a diverse public, nevertheless it is complex, even in a city as Cologne, in regard of younger public she shares: "especially in a city as international as Cologne, it is important to find that those objects that seem so far away are suddenly not so far away, that it has to do with their own identity and that they see it as a space of their own. But they are not going to see it as their space if the security guy says 'Shhhh,' so they have to create the conditions for younger people to come." (Basauri Torres, 2023,

Appendix C), Arellano Cruz emphasizes the need to create inclusive conditions within museums, particularly in diverse and international cities. This includes making museum spaces feel relevant to the identities and experiences of visitors, especially younger generations. In summary, regarding the public of the ethnological museum, Arellano Cruz's quotes collectively underscore the evolving role of museums in education and the imperative of rethinking traditional paradigms. They highlight the need to critically examine the content and distribution of knowledge, broaden the museum's appeal to diverse audiences, and actively create inclusive spaces where all individuals can engage with and find relevance in museum offerings. Artist Kahlon affirms this by stating, in context of the solo show she held in Kunsthalle Wien, how she thought about the public: “the cleaning women of the museum were coming to talk to me about this de project, about these images. For me, it was like that's the moment that I started to think my audience is the cleaning person of the museum as well as the director. And I don't privilege or think about the director as being a better viewer for my work. And obviously if you have knowledge of histories of colonialism or image making or you'll read other things in it but I want the work to be accessible to everyone. And I'm trying to work then with a kind of figurative language that can be more accessible.” (Sumki, 2023), in regard to this Appadurai delves on whether a museum space is the best for the public: “But is the museum really meant to be a classroom? Can it entertain and educate at the same time? Is the taste of the elite collectors, patrons, and curators who support the museum really what the middle and working classes need? Is this an illusion of cultural elites confused by the modern idea that their taste has to be the arbiter of all taste, and that their learning needs to be the canonical source of a broad democratic ideology? Does the museum really have the capacities to foster critical thinking and new knowledge in the manner of the best modern universities?” (2020)

Theme C: The ethnological museum as a perpetuator of colonial legacies

C1: The creation of The Other:

An impact of coloniality is the lack of empathy or the ability to relate to the other, because of race. The Global South is often portrait as distant and unconnected to the Global North, therefore it becomes irrelevant: “I had a professor who said to me because I was working on colonial photography from India and they were like, but what does colonialism? Have to do with America, like in America, like, and this is before the term settler colonialism was like coming with you.” (Sumki, 2023)



## C2: Even ground

Caceres refers that the encounter-artist museum should happen from a place of equality and in a situation that the museum not only acknowledges its use of coloniality what reframes itself to better accommodate all communities; “my perspective is that, I feel that Achille Mbembe says it very well: Give everything back and then we can talk. And in a practical way, not only as a demand without solution, if you want to talk about the historical archive of humanity, make copies of the works, make good quality photos, 3D presentations but give things back to the people, because it is their history, precisely, spiritual, political, cosmopolitical, about how they relate to reality, about what their ancestors did, then they have imprisoned part of their soul, part of their feet, like they can't stand up because of that” (Basauri Torres, 2023, Appendix A)

## Theme D: Are we ready for a decolonial encounter? Questioning ourselves and finding joy

Caceres delves on how she addresses the artist-museum encounter for it to be beneficial for her and her artistic practice: “I work with people that I feel are resonant, political-spiritual, that see the whole picture. It is also important that they have that work of care, which manifests itself in various small details” (Basauri Torres, 2023, Appendix A), Kahlon agrees in the power that lays in being able to address colonialism through her work: “for me to be able to stay with this kind of traumatic historical material. Personally, I have to have that that has to be this element of joy and creation of something beautiful, as a form of resistance towards these histories.” (Sumki, 2023). Caceres shares how powerful art as a whole is: “ I think art has an enormous potential, especially if it is understood as something that is a language of life, and not the creation, the invention of human beings, but it is the language of life to survive, and that all forms of life perceive shapes, colors, and have to make decisions and produce along the way things that are linked both to survival, to the community, but that are also aesthetic, that is to say that everything is interconnected, that is to say that there is no separate sphere of art and sphere of life, that when we can make this reconnection we will be better able to deal with all the systems of oppression that have us in the state of crisis in which we are, because we are so fragmented that capitalism can reign left and right, shamanic art linked to the earth, to the soil, has a lot of strength to make the world a better place to live” (Basauri Torres, 2023, Appendix A)

Chapter 2 establishes a connection with the preceding chapter by emphasizing the importance of

acknowledging and validating the existence of the injury in order to progress towards its resolution. According to Anzaldúa, “We are all wounded, but we can connect through the wound that alienated us from others. When the wound forms a cicatriz, the scar can become a bridge linking people who have been split apart” (Anzaldúa 2009, 313). The formation of a scar in a wound can serve as a means of connection, acting as a bridge between those who have experienced separation. The cicatriz (scar), commonly referred to as a scar, undergoes a transformative process, assuming the metaphorical role of a bridge, as a result of the powerful emotions of love and fury.

## 2.1 Whose job is it to decolonize the museum?

Who should decolonize the museum? Whose job is it, who will do that labor?

Around ten years ago in Germany, there was no conversation about colonialism in Germany, Germany did not perceived itself as a colonial country, in a counter way now you cannot be anywhere in the art world, without this question being raised. Within the realm of museum discourse, the concept of decolonizing the museum has emerged as a significant topic of debate and contemplation. A noteworthy development in this regard is the growing practice of museums engaging with artists to undertake collaborative projects, but, is it our task? Do we have to give our labor to educate the museum? Or are we falling in a trap, “This is an old and primary tool of all oppressors to keep the oppressed occupied with the master's concerns.” (Lorde, 1984, p.35), since, if the museum sets the frame it can institutionalize decolonial aims which are presented as artistic interventions to decolonize the museum. For instance, at the particular museum, I did the internship in, there is an initiative titled "Artist meets Archive", the program was presented this year, 2023, in the month of May for the third time. It was organized by the Internationale Photoszene Köln together with four institutions from Cologne, Germany. The program aims to converge upon the photographic holdings of Cologne archives and collections and invites internationally active artists to exchange ideas and discuss the complexity and versatility of photography in its various institutional contexts. At the moment, an exhibition featuring the work of Lebohang Kganye, a South African artist, who engaged with the archive of Cameroon, is being showcased at the Rautenstrauch-Joest-Museum, Cologne. Similarly, the Weltmuseum in Vienna showcased the project “Who is afraid of the museum?”, and the Leaky Archive actively involves artists residing in the Global South, who were also born there. This exemplifies the efforts made to incorporate perspectives and voices from certain regions and communities into museum spaces. Consequently, these endeavors prompt a

crucial query: who bears the responsibility of decolonizing the museum?

The museum, being an institution rooted in colonial foundations, continues to grapple with a range of persistent challenges, including one of particular significance, the issue of underrepresentation of marginalized communities and lack of diversity within professional roles inside museums located in the Global North. In a white male-dominated art institution such as it is a European museum is it not uncommon to see people of color, but the roles they hold are, mostly, low paying jobs, linked to precarious conditions such as halftime jobs, contracts that don't benefit them, and positions lacking decision-making power. In a European museum, it is normal to see a person of color as a security person but not as a curator. This underrepresentation is a direct offense and presents a problem to the large number of migrants that live, form families, and make part of the community. Thus, in Cologne, the fourth-most populous city in Germany in 2020 “40% of Cologne's inhabitants had a migration background, i.e. almost 440,000 people have their family roots (also) abroad, more precisely in 180 different nations.” (Kölner Statistische Nachrichten on Nationalitäten in Köln – Entwicklung und Status Quo der Immigration, 2021) Why don't museums align their diversity concept with the population structure of the city they operate in? There is a power in telling our own story, to be represented. A museum without a diverse staff is condoned to perpetuate the colonial legacy of discussing topics about us, without us. This story has been presented as the story of the “minorities”, when in reality humans that do not identify ourselves as white but as Black, Asian, Brown, dual-heritage, indigenous to the Global South are the Global Majority, we represent more than eighty percent of the population. The conception of ethnic minorities was conceived by colonial powers to secure their power, but, if we get rid of that narrative and see each other as the majority rather than the minority our whole perception of who we are changes, that's where the power of the story we tell ourselves lays. It is also important for artist to approach this encounter with self-determination, agency, and artistic freedom, we can not be reduced to addressing colonial and decolonial topics, “I think I don't also only work on colonialism, but rather, I think a lot about how power is organized within an image and who has the power to tell a story and who does not. And then how do these images exert influence over our lives today?” (Simku, 2023).

To open up this enthralling conversation this quote by Brenda J. Caro Cocotle seems to fit; "The third trend really makes me angry, this one proposes that artistic intervention is the way to decolonizing archives. Suddenly art could dismantle the accumulative, vertical, classificatory, violent archival rationality simply because it is art."(Cocotle, 2018). Caceres states that real restructuring was lacking in the artist-museum encounter: “there really was no process of critically rethinking what they had” (Basauri

Torres, 2023, Appendix A) , she states there is a long path to be walked: “so my perception is that there is a very big distance, I don't feel that the museum can be decolonized, because it is a problematic institution, it is born in a problematic way, It is born in a problematic way, its existence creates the idea that there are high arts and low arts, that there are fine arts and crafts, all of which are inventions of the hegemonic elitist European modernity, because it is not all of Europe, it is the elites who wrote the upper class white men who invented all that history” (Basauri Torres, 2023, Appendix A), nevertheless she see decolonial labour in the museum as important: “ how to deal with that paradox until we get to the moment when everything goes back to its place, as it should be, which seems to me a necessary and important work, but if you ask me my answer is no, it's not possible. Loot the museum, take down the monuments, we don't need any of that, it's part of the problem, there's nothing to undo, clean, repair, the very essence that is wrong. And my criticism also comes from, knowing that they get so much money from the EU and they use it to make a kind of filter of artists that don't really compromise them too much, I mean not because the artists are bad, but they also know that there are limits to how far they can go. I'm very critical, but it's not that I'm super pessimistic either, I know it's going to happen at some point, I think it's already happening, especially with the human remains, and already, and I'm waiting for the revolution, for people to come in and take their stuff.” (Basauri Torres, 2023, Appendix A) . De Miranda has a similar opinion: “I think the job is to the forces that colonized in the first place. I don't feel it's the job of the colonized to decolonize but it's almost that, I say we, that we have to do that because I don't think we can count on the colonizers. It's a bit like asking your jailers for freedom.” (Basauri Torres, 2023, Appendix B) , she mirrors the situation to try to get a colonizers perspective: “decolonizing as a colonizer means you need to give up power and privilege. And that's never a pleasant thing to do.” (Basauri Torres, 2023, Appendix B). For Arellano Cruz the origin of the museum is very relevant: “To begin with, the museum has a colonial origin, it is in a city that has a colonial past that is still in force, it is inside a country that still needs its colonial past, it is inside a continent where 50,000 people die every year in the Mediterranean. We live in a colonial system, it is difficult to believe that just because we do a couple of actions in a museum it is going to change everything, it is not going to happen.” (Basauri Torres, 2023, Appendix C), Arellano Cruz reaffirms that a shared vision toward decolonizing is key in the museums staff: “try to get everyone on the same side, because otherwise there will be conflicts of interest. There are people who want to continue forging collections, who want to continue maintaining their position that university knowledge, white knowledge, is universal knowledge and there is no other” (Basauri Torres, 2023, Appendix C), she elaborates on a possible path: “the way to decolonize the museum through mediation will only work if we stop thinking of the public as passive and try to create participatory

mechanisms, invite them, take their criticism seriously, not only treat them as consumers of what we want to give them, because we know how to decolonize, but invite them to also be part of the process.” (Basauri Torres, 2023, Appendix C). Ayala shares about her experiences with the Ludwig Museum: “The first is that of being tokenized, the part of using this biography and contextuality that you bring with you, when showing the work, with the purpose of being sustained or of openmindedness, that's one part. And another is, that not only has to do with decoloniality or trends, but in general the figure of artists have fulfilled this function for a long time, I think for example feminists, and when the feminist "trend" began in the 60s, 70s in the US and Europe, as suddenly it was important to talk about these things, and women were not included, invited, it was a public criticism of patriarchal systems. I think about the work of people who are not making objects, or who are not always making objects, and how when it comes to having that encounter with cultural spaces, with museums, galleries, knowing that if I am going to cook, I am going to cook out here, it doesn't necessarily work, it still doesn't match, I think there is still not an understanding, where you say, oh yes of course, this is art, because it is so, because it is an artist who is doing it,” (Basauri Torres, 2023, Appendix D), she does not completely see these interventions as unnecessary, though: “I would not detract from these interventions, spaces in the museum. In the same way that activism is valid, that a mass of people take to the streets to shout for their rights, in the same way it is important to make this placement of objects, or non-objects within spaces that traditionally contain objects, I believe that this opening or this incidence does something, that is to say that they have an impact,” (Basauri Torres, 2023, Appendix D). There is however an unwillingness to change, at the core of losing power, since 2019, Nanette Snoep, she is from the Netherlands, and her approach is decolonial, from her positioning, but decolonial as such, and she is a woman and so she also receives hate mail almost daily. And it is "funny" because supposedly this comes from Stadt Köln, all the guidelines, which in the end we know that structurally there is a lack of coordination, I think. How to decolonize the museum without destroying it? For artist Kahnon, there are a lot of limitations: “It can't change policies, and it can't do the work that activism does, but it can somehow throw one's values into question.” (Simku, 2023). It is important that the artist-museum encounter does not fall into decoloniality as a trap, as something the museum can easily absorb to benefit its image: “I think artists become a kind of neoliberal cheerleader. For like marketing, for like of to add to the brand value of a. Museum or in the case of like ethnographic museums, often artists of color are invited to kind of like, lessen the institutional guilt.” (Simku, 2023)

## 2.2 Do we need a museum?

The debates around restitution take place in European-only contexts as well, this time with Italy and France on the spot, Italy on the demanding side, and France being questioned. The Louvre is a Museum that I entered for the first time at the age of twenty-seven, after learning about the cultures of the world through images featured in history books. The day I went to the Louvre it was raining and I got sick, I remembered at some point my only intention was to exit the museum, a mission that, despite knowing the word in French *Sortie*, was extremely complicated. In my attempt to step out of the museum, I kept encountering rooms full of statues, paintings, and objects, rooms full of the 35,000 objects that are shown to visitors. An endless display of the collection of the most visited museum in 2022 worldwide, a display that accounts for a minor part of the 380,000 objects the Parisian institution hoards in its deposit. According to *Le Monde*, Italy is calling out on the provenance of objects from the collection of the Louvre Museum and asking for the return of seven of its archaeological objects. One of them is an amphora on a black background from the 5th century BC, which depicts, on one side, a musician playing the zither and, on the other, a laurel-crowned figure extending his arm in an inviting gesture. The museum purchased those objects at a time when the focus was not on their origin and history of ownership of such artifacts. (*Monde*, 2023)

We have to consider the idea of what happens with a museum that is losing objects, and for example the typical tasks of the museum were to collect, preserve, investigate, mediate. And now, as these tasks are losing shape, is it important to continue collecting? We have a lot of objects, I think only 3 percent of the things we have in the collection are shown, imagine that. Also another thing we have to rethink is the restoration issue, if those objects can be touched or not, that idea will have to change at some point, I am not saying that now everything can be touched, but the idea that nothing can be touched when they were objects that were made and predestined to be touched, it is strange. (Basauri Torres, 2023, Appendix C)

I think not, because in the end, for what they serve, they always end up taking life away from art, I think art has an enormous potential, especially if it is understood as something that is a language of life, and not the creation, the invention of human beings, but it is the language of life to survive, and that all forms of life perceive shapes, colors, and have to make decisions and produce along the way things that are linked both to survival, to the community, but that are also aesthetic, that is to say that everything is

interconnected, that is to say that there is no separate sphere of art and sphere of life, that when we can make this reconnection we will be better able to deal with all the systems of oppression that have us in the state of crisis in which we are, because we are so fragmented that capitalism can reign left and right, shamanic art linked to the earth, to the soil, has a lot of strength to make the world a better place to live, I remember that in 2015 I was asked, apropos of that exhibition at the Weltmuseum, that if there should be any. .and my answer was that in Latin America there are no ethnographic museums of Europe as if you put in that perspective, I mean we do not have "Come and learn about what they did", it is absurd, it is that. It is a very specific construction in time, which is not only not necessary, but also goes against the idea of being able to live in community. That is it. (Basauri Torres, 2023, Appendix A)

For Lemba de Miranda it has to do with reframing the narrative: “And I think it has a place for both. Or if the coloniser can see what has been done through that narrative, and how we can make that a bit more inclusive” (Basauri Torres, 2023, Appendix B), and there must be an emphasis in the story you tell through the museum, “I think in general I think it's important that we undo ourselves from the narrative we've been taught by the colonizer and it's for people from the global south about what the global north tells about you and you believe” (Basauri Torres, 2023, Appendix B), for Arellano Cruz it has to do with our understanding:

It depends on what we understand as a museum, if we understand the museum as a sacred place where you can not talk and where only pieces from other places are contemplated and those pieces are contemplated as if they had absolutely nothing to do with me, then we don't need museums”. (Basauri Torres, 2023, Appendix C)

It should not rely solely on objects: “If you see the museum as a space in which precisely through some objects or perhaps not only objects, but living stories, stories about objects that suddenly will no longer be there, because some will simply be returned, but to create a space of exchange, of dialogue, of horizontality, where multi perspective is something allowed, then it seems to me that spaces of that kind are needed” (Basauri Torres, 2023, Appendix C). Moreover, the museum should not be seen as a sterile space,

We have to consider the idea of what happens with a museum that is losing objects, and for example the typical tasks of the museum were to collect, preserve, investigate, mediate. And now, as these tasks are losing shape, is it important to continue collecting? We have a lot of objects, I think only 3 percent of the things we have in the collection are

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Ayala adds: “the things that I consider important in the artistic world do not necessarily happen inside the museum, they happen in other places and in other formats that are not necessarily those of a museum like the Ludwig” (Basauri Torres, 2023, Appendix D), she deems structural change is long overdue:

All these exhibits are still being conceptualized in the same way as they were 20 years ago, 40 years ago, so it's the same story, it's the same value. I feel much more connected with the area of contemporary art, but also with explorations that happen outside of traditional spaces and on the one hand, there is the critical side, in which I say this does not represent the planetary emergencies that we are going through right now, but it is also because, many times I do not understand it, I feel that there is not a good pedagogical work, or it is not contextualized, it is not brought to relevance that is happening right now. (Basauri Torres, 2023, Appendix D)

Personally, I think this kind of encounter is very important. Especially for example the work of Ayala work, which is not about producing an object, Ayala focuses on the work with people, with materiality, it is about processes. This is a position that the artist takes from a place of autonomy, disregarding the frames the museum sets, where the object has a central role.

I believe that up to now the Ludwig Museum is one of the largest museums in the EU that has invested so much space in an exhibition like this. Next year, here in Zurich, in the National Museum, there is an exhibition that is being prepared right now about Switzerland as a colonizing country, so they are talking about colonization. And right now there is a rather small exhibition in the Stadthaus, about colonial Zurich, called Blinde Flecke. What I see is that it is happening, they are giving work for example to people to develop these ideas, in the national exhibition I think there are about 15 advisors, curators and staff. I think it is very interesting, I hope it turns out well, obviously it is not going to be perfect, of course not. But there are already groups, there is a group here called Decolonize Zurich, where I have met many people, I have given workshops, almost all of



them are academics, but not academics from the humanities, there is also, I work very closely with someone who does Agroecology. There is also another group called BlackBox, they do staging all over Zurich, and they show them where the families lived and they talked about where they got their money from, their connection with cocoa plantations, with sugar plantations, with cotton, who had slaves in their plantations somewhere in the Caribbean or Africa, and they are all named families, street names, statues. "Switzerland never had colonies", hahaha. And that leads you by the hand to think the question about this colonization process is very, very complex. (Basauri Torres, 2023, Appendix D)

### **3. Care: ternura radical and radical care**

Emma Holten, feminist activist and gender policy consultant, specializes in women's unpaid and underpaid care work. In the context of care and its political implications, Holten elucidates the discernible framework by asserting that individuals who seek care or are in need of care are often perceived as lacking, they are perceived as weak. This phenomenon can be attributed to the hegemonic group's lack of recognition about the importance of care, as it is readily available to them.

Consequently, care remains imperceptible to this group due to their consistent access to it. (Holten, 2023) In the realm of cultural encounters, the importance of care politics becomes particularly pronounced when examining the dynamic interplay between artists from the Global South and European ethnological museums. This nuanced intersectionality brings to the forefront the inherent power imbalances and disparities that underlie such collaborations, as explored in the previous chapter, echoing the observations made by Emma Holten. Holten's insights into the realm of care, where the perception of individuals seeking or in need of care as "weak" or "lacking" stems from the dominant group's privileged access to care, serve as a potent lens through which to understand the intricacies of the encounter between these artists and museums. In this interaction, the historically dominant Western cultural narratives and institutions can perpetuate a sense of superiority and control, relegating the artists to a position of perceived dependency. Just as the privileged group tends to overlook the significance of care due to its constant availability, so too does the dominant cultural narrative sometimes overshadow the artistic voices and narratives of the Global South. This parallel brings to light the pressing need for care politics within the artist-museum encounter, care politics entail a conscious and empathetic approach that respects the agency and voices of artists from the Global South, addressing their historical, cultural, and socio-political contexts. Just as care should not be relegated to a position of invisibility, the artistic expressions and contributions of these artists should not be overshadowed or marginalized. Instead, a mindful approach that acknowledges and empowers these voices is essential for a more equitable and meaningful exchange.

Moreover, care politics advocate for a reciprocal and mutually beneficial engagement. By recognizing the agency of artists from the Global South and valuing their perspectives, European ethnological museums can foster a genuine dialogue that transcends the traditional power dynamics. Care in this context means not only attending to the preservation and interpretation of cultural heritage but also nurturing the relationships and interactions between artists, museums, and audiences.

In summary, just as Emma Holten's analysis highlights the significance of care in social contexts, her observations have a profound resonance in the realm of cultural encounters. Care politics become a vital framework for negotiating the encounter between artists from the Global South and European ethnological museums, one that promotes a shift away from the perception of artists as lacking or dependent and towards a dynamic of mutual respect, recognition, and meaningful collaboration. Through embracing care politics, these encounters can evolve into spaces where diverse cultural narratives coalesce, fostering a more inclusive and equitable cultural landscape.

Adding to this, the exploration of care politics and the encounter between artists from the Global South and European ethnological museums is profoundly intertwined with the principle of intersectionality, concept which was first introduced by Kimberlé Crenshaw and defined as a prism that allows for the observation of the interconnectedness and amplification of different manifestations of inequality (Crenshaw, 1989). The concept of intersectionality provides a theoretical framework for analyzing the complex interplay of various forms of social inequality that impact an individual's experiences and opportunities. By considering these compounding impacts, it is possible to get insights and comprehension regarding the variations in experiences among individuals, even within a shared collective. The impact of acknowledging differences in our identities, histories, and perspectives resonates deeply with the challenges and opportunities presented by this artist-museum encounter.

In the face of the intricate landscape of cultural relationships, the notion of intersectionality serves as a guiding principle in this thesis for navigating the many dynamics at play, similar to how artists are not exclusively characterized by their artistic pursuits, they also encompass a complex network of intersecting identities and experiences. The acknowledgment of these identities, whether privileged or marginalized, forms the cornerstone of a mindful and equitable praxis. Intersectionality prompts us to consider how factors such as race, class, ethnicity, gender, and body shape our interactions, and shape our responses to the world around us. In the context of the encounter between Global South-artists and European ethnological museums, intersectionality functions as a lens through which to critically assess power structures. Through intersectionality, the praxis that emerges from this encounter is not only a reflection of artistic output but also a statement of resistance against dominant narratives. The embrace of intersectionality also extends its influence into the realm of decolonization. The act of acknowledging our own positions and perspectives prompts a radical shift in praxis, it opens pathways for self-recognition, knowledge reclamation, and empowerment. In the context of artists engaging with ethnological museums, decolonization becomes an act of care — care for one's own narrative, care for the narratives of others, and care for the broader societal fabric that has been woven through histories

of colonization. Through this reframing, a ripple effect is created, extending beyond artistic outputs to influence the very structures that shape the encounter between artists and museums. Thus, the essence of intersectionality in praxis resonates deeply within the discourse surrounding care politics and the cultural encounter between artists from the Global South and European ethnological museums. It reminds us that every interaction reflects our complex identities and experiences. By embracing intersectionality, these encounters can evolve from spaces of imposition to spaces of mutual understanding and empowerment, fostering a culture of care and decolonization that shapes artistic narratives and societal landscapes alike.

In “Decolonization as Care” Uzma Z. Rizvi, associate professor of anthropology and urban studies at the Pratt Institute of Art and Design in New York, expands on the impact of acknowledging differences in persons, histories, bodies, and aesthetics, as well as on the praxis. Recognizing ourselves and our positions can lead to radical change, where decolonization can be recognized as care. Rizvi elaborates on intersectionality as decolonizing research that integrates care. The author argues that intersectionality compels the process of alienation to shift, thereby relinquishing authority over one's own self, body, and labor. The process of reclaiming oneself necessitates careful consideration, and prioritization of personal well-being. A transformative shift in praxis does not need extreme modifications. Rather, it can be sustained through collaborative efforts, the cultivation of alliances, and the fostering of solidarity with others, so preserving one's livelihood and personal identity. Through the establishment of social connections, individuals can safeguard and preserve their own well-being. Moreover, engaging in acts of care towards others not only benefits others, but also contributes to one's own self-care. The act of acknowledging our own identities and social standings has the potential to instigate profound transformations, wherein the process of decolonization can be understood as an expression of compassion and concern. (Rizvi, 2016)

Ternura radical, title of this section, translates to radical tenderness and can be understood as a subversive reaction to a societal structure that penalizes vulnerability. This concept entails acknowledging and embracing one's internal emotions, and subsequently sharing them collectively through active listening. The term 'radical tenderness' has been employed for over a decade within the context of La Pocha Nostra's radical pedagogy-performance. The purpose of this manifesto is to pay homage to the term "collective". The concept arises from a collaborative exploration that contemplates the significance of radical tenderness in various facets, encompassing both collective endeavors and

individual pursuits. (d'Emilia & Chávez, 2015), drawing from this, this thesis explores community building as an ultimately act of care in the next section.

### 3.1 Community Building: from us, by us

“Beloved community is formed not by the eradication of difference but by its affirmation, by each of us claiming the identities and cultural legacies that shape who we are and how we live in the world.” (hooks, 2013, p.265). As stated in Chapter One, this thesis focuses on the central importance of anti-racism in decolonial objectives. It is imperative to acknowledge colonial legacies as interconnected systems of oppression that sustain one another. Consequently, the endeavor to decolonize museums must adopt an antiracist approach. In the pursuit of community building, these objectives are mutually dependent, as bell hooks argues, "Longing for community is a perspective we must all embrace if racism is to end." (p.269). Another key concept to draw from hooks' work is accountability, in the same way that seeing racism as immutable enables for no responsibility to be taken regarding that oppressive system, not recognizing colonial legacies redeems the museum and all stakeholders from exercising accountability, since the nature of immutability of the museum as an institution is seen as a given. In that regard, it is important to move forward from perceiving colonialism as something from the past, as a process that is already over and acknowledging coloniality, as a system that prevails to this day and is present in the artist-museum encounter. If that accountability is acknowledged, anyone who can identify colonial legacies operating in our current times is required to assert anti-colonial habits of being. In the museum context, and in the current debate that centers and makes visible the colonial past in which ethnological museums in Europe were build and still operate from, the history of colonialism is well documented, and it is also important to recognize the fact that changes has already been done in the topic of how the museum engages with its colonial past, asserting it as not immutable. Drawing from the case study I conducted centered on the Rautenstrauch-Joest-Museum, historical changes have been documented, ina pivotal move, the museum made the decision to reject the use of a geographical arrangement due to the inherent limitations and potential misrepresentation it entails. This approach has been increasingly criticized for perpetuating the notion that museums perpetuate a static, remote, and localized understanding of anthropological topics, according to Engelhard (as cited in Lidchi, 2014). An additional illustration of the attainability of change, which has been previously accomplished and recorded, pertains to the endeavor of repatriating Benin artifacts to their legitimate custodians. This campaign, spearheaded by Nanette Snoep, the director of RJM, is discussed in Chapter 2. Snoep assumes a pivotal position in

effectuating decolonial praxis inside the RJM. It is imperative to acknowledge that our efforts in community building within the context of the museum institution have not reached a sufficient level. To truly embrace the concept of the museum as an institution, it is necessary to reevaluate and redefine its framework. This reevaluation should prioritize the active involvement of communities, allowing them to actively participate in the creation and development of the museum. Consequently, the museum should transform into a space that fosters the growth and sustainability of these communities, so that they can not only flourish but, most significantly, be sustained and thrive. An example of the museum as a place for community building are the exhibitions held at the RJM, LOVE and RESIST. Dr. Fabiola Arellano Cruz expanded on the LOVE exhibition during the interview conducted for this master thesis. According to Arellano Cruz, who expressed a significant level of engagement in this workshop, the title "LOVE," was intentionally created with the aim of exploring the fundamental question of "What is love?" in a manner that is collective, rather than solely motivated by curatorial reasons. In order to respond to this question, a series of workshops was organized. One objective involved the coordination of the artistic residency program of iJuLa (Intersektionale JugendLabore), a collective comprised of young individuals committed to the exploration of the concept of intersectionality. The LOVE program was a strategic effort by the organisation to actively engage a younger and more diverse demographic. The creation of guided tours for the LOVE show posed a notable difficulty given its characteristic as a process-oriented encounter as opposed to a conventional exposition. A curated tour was devised in the permanent display area rather than the allocated place for temporary exhibitions, where the artwork LOVE was showcased. Following the LOVE workshop, the theme of love was incorporated into the guided tours of the museum's permanent collection. This inclusion paid particular attention to the overarching theme of love and facilitated the establishment of links among the numerous artifacts housed within the collection. Consequently, the permanent exhibition was enhanced with new and modern topics. However, Arellano Cruz acknowledged that the museum attracted a specific audience, namely individuals from the BIPOC and queer communities, who found a sense of identification and perceived the museum as a safe environment. To cultivate this connection, the LOVE team proactively organized exclusive activities tailored to this particular community involving agents of that community. The objective of maintaining the public's engagement with LOVE and ensuring their continued visits to the museum may not have been achieved. However, the importance of LOVE lies in its communal nature, as it was created and executed by the community itself. This initiative successfully contributed to the growth and prosperity of the community during its exhibition. The inclusion of the permanent

exhibition in the traceability process is indicative of progress being made. The event demonstrated the efficacy and influence of collaborative endeavor and unwavering commitment. (Arellano, 2023). For efforts in community building to be sustained, in a consistent and lasting way, a shared vision among the museum staff is fundamental, especially if we aim for real change, and not temporary solutions. The case presented by Paloma Ayala in Chapter 2 serves as an exemplification of the intricate dynamics at play within this context. During her interview, Ayala highlights the significant contribution of curator Joanne Rodriguez, who acted as a mediator between the artist and the museum. (Ayala). Rodriguez's success can be attributed not only to her position of power, which granted her the ability to make crucial decisions and exercise decision-making authority, but also to her extensive knowledge and deep understanding of the subject matter. Furthermore, Rodriguez's unwavering belief in the value of diversity further bolstered her effectiveness in this role. According to Joanne Rodriguez, co-curator, "When a society becomes more diverse, the museum must also become more diverse," ("Anti-colonial Interventions" in Cologne – DW – 10/13/2022, n.d.). According to Joanne Rodriguez, "Anti-colonial is always brought into connection with anti-colonial resistance," says Joanne Rodriguez. "Decolonial" as a term was too weak, she explains during the inaugural press conference, adding that they needed to emphasize the pro-activeness of the initiative. ("Anti-colonial Interventions" in Cologne – DW – 10/13/2022, n.d.). However, if the staff does not collectively embrace and actively implement a shared vision, such as the one aimed at *Decolonizing the museum*, interventions, exhibitions, workshops, and other initiatives addressing the decolonization of the museum may encounter constraints. The aforementioned scenario was recounted by Imayna Caceres, who acted as a curator for an anticolonial artistic intervention at the Weltmuseum. Through dialogues, it became evident that certain staff members exhibited a noticeable lack of support. (Caceres). In this context, it is plausible that the artistic intervention may be perceived as detached from the museum's overarching vision, thereby lacking the necessary endorsement, coherence, and objectives to integrate it into the museum's guidelines in a manner that transcends superficiality and truly engenders transformative change through decoloniality.

Museums are evolving, and teaching strategies must adapt to prepare students for the future. In "Community museums as spaces of decolonised university learning" Luran Bonilla-Merchav refers to how community museums can expand students' approach to museum work, focusing on heritage conservation and sustainable community development. This decolonizes the curriculum and promotes inclusive approaches in heritage work. Community museums are spaces created by and for marginalized groups, such as the LGBTIQ Museum in Costa Rica and the Sor María Romero

Community Museum. These museums represent marginalized communities and work together to assert their cultural identity, history, and concerns for the present and future, these museums work with local actors, identifying stakeholders who form part of the community and provide relevant voices, by incorporating all stakeholders, the museum tells its story, their beliefs, and motivations, generating greater respect for and self-respect within the community. In that doing, the museum can generate a greater sense of belonging to a place, potentially influencing collective life and common well-being. By incorporating students into this environment, acquainting them with community museology, and facilitating processes toward sustainable museum practice, the created decolonised university provides them with learning spaces that present real-life challenges and creative problem-solving opportunities, ultimately yielding knowledge and experience that can be integrated into future museum work. (Brown, González Rueda, & Brulon Soares Eds., 2022)

In “Outline of ten theses on coloniality and decoloniality”, the tenth thesis Nelson Maldonado-Torres refers to centers decoloniality as a collective project, he states that:

Decoloniality, however, is not a project of individual salvation but one that aspires to “build the world of [the] you” (Fanon 2008, 206). Thinking, creating, and acting are all done, not by looking for recognition by the masters, but while reaching out to other *damnés*. And it is the *damnés* and others who also resign from modernity/coloniality who, thinking, creating, and acting together in various forms of community can seek to disrupt the coloniality of knowledge, power, and being and change the world. Decolonization is therefore not a past event, but a project in the making. (Maldonado-Torres, 2016, p.29)

*Damné* translates to condemned in French, Maldonado-Torres uses this term to refer to the colonial subject as stripped of their essential humanness, a subject that was stripped of power.

In the context of art museums in the Asian region, the text “A Better Tomorrow for Art Museums in Hong Kong: Looking Back at the 1990s” emphasizes the need for collectivity in museum practices, focusing on the establishment of an independent contemporary art museum, diversification of arts development, enhanced professionalism and transparency, systematic documentation and archive, and exhibition diversity and exchange. It calls for the government to involve private entities and companies in fostering the arts, establishing art funds, and promoting a collaborative approach to cultural growth. Additionally, the text recommends revising previous policies that excessively favor one type of art, fostering artist exchanges, and enhancing exposure through various exhibition formats. Overall, a



collective approach to museum practices is crucial for promoting diversity, inclusivity, professionalism, transparency, and the recognition of contemporary and historical artistic expressions. (ArtAsiaPacific: A Better Tomorrow for Art Museums in Hong Kong: Looking Back at the 1990s, 2023). The relevance of the text to this thesis lies in its emphasis on the importance of soliciting perspectives from artists, while it is also crucial to acknowledge that the responsibility of modifying museum frameworks to be more inclusive and effectively engage diverse audiences should not rest solely on the shoulders of artists, as it was discussed in Chapter 2 in the section “Whose job it is to decolonize the museum?”.

People are organizing themselves all over the world to delink from the myths of modernity and the logic of coloniality. They are delinking from modernity/coloniality to relink with their own memories and legacies in order to secure satisfying modes of existence. These modalities of existence should not be conceptualized as singular, homogeneous, or uni-global, since all of these claims are contemporary imperial claims that seek to homogenize the entire planet through uniformity, which ultimately perpetuates the colonial legacy of erasure. Decolonization is not a "new" or "better" global architecture that will replace earlier ones. (Mignolo, 2017), decoloniality rather represents a reframing a possibility to stablish our society in a way that serves every community in order to achieve real freedom from the oppression of coloniality, since “Without community, there is no liberation, only the most vulnerable and temporary armistice between an individual and her oppression. But community must not mean a shedding of our differences, nor the pathetic pretense that these differences do not exist.” (Lorde, 1984, p.99)

### 3.2 Carefuturism

For the purposes of this thesis, I coined and use the term carefuturism to refer to a broad social, political, and artistic movement that envisions a world in which every community and their cultures play a central role in its creation, where every community exists within a framework that serves them and enables and supports them to further expand, take safe spaces, and excel in self-determination and agency. This is an expanding definition, since its evolving nature is not only recognized but celebrated. This conception draws heavily from the notion of Afrofuturism, which can be further explored through the scholarly work of Ytasha L. Womack. Womack, an accomplished author, filmmaker, independent scholar, and dancer, who has authored the book titled "Afrofuturism: The World of Black Sci Fi & Fantasy Culture." For a comprehensive understanding of Afrofuturism, it is recommended to refer to

Womack's aforementioned publication. (Ytasha Womack - *Afrofuturism Imagination and Humanity*, 2017).

The discourse surrounding the decolonization of museums is undergoing significant transformations, with factual examples of institutions actively embracing decolonial approaches and implementing them in practice, or at least seeking to, and fulfilling tasks that lead them closer to decolonizing the museum or cultural institution. Prominent instances of institutions that have wholeheartedly adopted decoloniality as a guiding principle and integral component of their identity include the following: Haus der Kulturen der Welt (HKW), the next edition of the Venice Biennale, Documenta 15, among others. The clarification of why this thesis deems them as decolonial inclusive institutions is as follows; Haus der Kulturen der Welt (HKW) is actively embracing a decolonial praxis through various intentional actions and approaches. By acknowledging the multifaceted complexities of cultures, histories, and identities, HKW is committed to deconstructing colonial legacies and fostering an inclusive, equitable space. Relevant aspects include centering plurality and diversity, HKW recognizes and celebrates a wide range of cultures, epistemologies, and ways of existence. By foregrounding the concept of 'Welt' (world) as a dynamic and ongoing process rather than a fixed entity (About Us, n.d.), HKW challenges colonial ideas that often imposed a Eurocentric worldview. This centering of diversity challenges the colonial hierarchy of knowledge and perspectives. Another point that provides additional support is that the guidelines of HDK actively incorporate migrant-situated knowledges. HKW challenges the colonial inclination to highlight dominant narratives and voices by giving prominence to the lived experiences and narratives of migrants and diverse communities. This approach validates the richness of knowledge from historically marginalized groups, a third point is the exercising by HDK to embrace emancipatory maxims, HKW adopts the Haitian Revolution's maxim, "Tout Moun Se Moun" (Every Human Being is a Human Being), which resonates with the spirit of equality, respect, and justice (About Us, n.d.). This principle challenges colonial hierarchies that categorized and dehumanized individuals based on race, ethnicity, and other factors. A third point is acknowledging non-human beings, as part of their decolonial praxis HKW shows commitment to respect living and non-living beings, which signifies a departure from anthropocentric colonial ideologies that often exploited nature and marginalized non-human entities. This recognition of the interconnectedness of all life aligns with indigenous and decolonial perspectives. The fourth point is the active rejection of HKW to hate and discrimination, HKW explicitly states its rejection of various forms of discrimination such as racism, sexism, homophobia, and more. By actively creating a hate-free

environment, HKW works against the divisive and oppressive structures that have colonial roots. The last point is HKW's community engagement, HKW collaborates with citizens from 170 nations and recognizes their agency in shaping the institution. By engaging with a diverse range of voices and perspectives, HKW challenges the colonial legacy of power and control that often suppressed local agency. Furthermore, regarding representation and diversity, on 1 January 2023 Prof Dr Bonaventure Soh Bejeng Ndikung stepped in as the new director at the HKW. Ndikung is a curator, author, and biotechnologist born in Cameroon with extensive experience in art institutions, he is the founder and was artistic director of SAVVY Contemporary Berlin (2009–22), is artistic director of sonsbeek (20–24), Arnhem (2020–22), was artistic director of 14th Rencontres de Bamako, Mali (2022), curator of the Finnish Pavilion, 58th Venice Biennale (2019) and curator at large of documenta 14 (2017), and is the first Black person to be director of the HDK, since its foundation in 1956.

When I wake up in the morning and look at myself in the mirror while brushing my teeth, I'm not concerned with matters of diversity, because the world I live in is diverse. Whereas these predominantly white institutions want to just have a drop of colour and fetishise diversity, we actually practice not only the diversity of peoples, but of epistemologies. ("The Act of Opening a House Is so Beautiful": Berlin's Historic House of World Cultures Relaunches With an Ambitious Multisensory Weekend," 2023)

Ndikung's 17-person curatorial team includes the Senegalese curator Marie Helene Pereira, the Colombian artist Carlos Maria Romero, the Filipina activist Rosa Cordillera A. Castillo, and the Cameroonian curator Dzekashu MacViban, as well as Can Sungu, Istanbul-born artistic director. "What I know is that if this house wants to be the Haus der Kulturen der Welt, it must do better. It must be reflected in the team, in the programme and the visitors" (Local, 2023). In essence, HKW's adaptation of a decolonial praxis involves dismantling colonial hierarchies, amplifying marginalized voices, and fostering an environment of inclusivity, respect, and empowerment. Through its intentional actions and programming, HKW strives to challenge historical injustices and work towards a more just and equitable future.

Regarding the case of the Venice Biennale, it is a promising example of another art institution including decoloniality as part of its framing, the 60th International Art Exhibition will take place from Saturday 20 April to Sunday 24 November, 2024 and will be curated by Adriano Pedrosa, who

is currently the artistic director of Museu de Arte de São Paulo Assis Chateaubriand – MASP. “I am honored and humbled by this prestigious appointment, especially as the first Latin American to curate the International Art Exhibition, and in fact the first one based in the Southern Hemisphere” (Biennale Arte 2024 | Biennale Arte 2024: Stranieri Ovunque – Foreigners Everywhere, 2023). In an anti-racist aim the name of the Turin collective, Stranieri Ovunque, which fought against racism and xenophobia in Italy in the early 2000s, inspired the title "Stranieri Ovunque - Foreigners Everywhere". The third example is documenta 15, held in 2021. The curation of this iteration was undertaken by the group ruangrupa, who actively immersed themselves in Kassel's environment. Their engagement extended not only during the 100-day show but also prior to and following it. Therefore, alongside the advancement of novel sustainability models, the fundamental focus of this documenta was the building of enduring partnerships. According to ruangrupa, the notion of lumbung is not merely a theoretical concept, but rather a tangible and active practice. The aforementioned practice exhibits dynamic changes as a result of interpersonal interactions. Hence, it may be inferred that documenta fifteen does not adhere to a specific thematic framework. This affects the artistic process, which is shaped collectively. The term "lumbung" refers to a communal rice-barn in the Indonesian context, serving as a storage facility for the surplus harvest, which is intended to benefit the entire community. (Lumbung - Documenta Fifteen, n.d.), this collective effort is an active exercise of decoloniality. It is significant to note that community building as a decolonial practices benefits from spaces being created by the community for the community. Gabriela Wiener describes this goal as no longer wanting to be invited to the party (of coloniality), but instead making your own party (of decoloniality) (Tapia, 2023). Wiener, a Peruvian writer based in Spain recently founded Sudakasa, which is a community writing and art space, resembling a house without a master, focusing on life, inhabitants, and ancestral knowledge, reappropriating the insult against the south carried in the word “sudaca”, which is a detrimental way to refer to someone from South America, by applying self-determination to the term, Wiener regains power about how she and members of that community construct their identity and position themselves in society. “We reappropriated the insult against the people of the south and made it our home.” (Home | Sudakasa, n.d.)

## Conclusions

We are experiencing a critical moment of intense reconfiguration. Global dynamics sweep across the planet, challenging organizational forms previously deemed stable, while revealing the interpenetration of areas often represented in isolation. We are witnesses to a return of positions that privilege the individual, translated into conservative and nationalist measures.

By embracing a comprehensive understanding of ecosystems, encompassing the intricate connections between mankind and nature, as well as the interdependencies among ecological, economic, and social institutions, the ramifications of the present circumstances become apparent. By recognizing the existence of both human and non-human life, the dichotomy between nature and humanity can ultimately disintegrate, enabling us to approach environmental issues as global, interconnected, and mutually shared concerns. The global impact on the earth is comprehensive, resulting from the intricate interconnections that come from the multifaceted degrees and velocities of globalization, as well as the inherent structure of the environment. These links underscore the absence of an external entity. There exists a necessity to critically examine the economic structure that is accountable for these advancements. However, it may be of greater importance to critically reassess the societal framework that underpins this system, alongside the collective modes of comprehension and structuring of the world, which reciprocally shape and are shaped by this society. Periods of crisis are characterized by significant periods of restructuring, facilitating and fostering the birth of novel forms, for example the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic precipitated an accelerated trajectory of digitalization within Germany, a region characterized by a certain hesitance toward embracing digital technologies due to its intricate historical tapestry. The domains of payment for services, bureaucratic processes, and the mail post service, for example, experienced a rapid overhaul, with digital solutions swiftly supplanting conventional methods. This unforeseen global crisis functioned as a catalyst, propelling Germany towards the expedited adoption and integration of digital innovations that were previously met with measured caution.

In-depth criticism and the offering of alternative solutions are necessary for effective questioning of the current social model of the museum, which will result in achieving the decolonization of the museum, so that it can evolve to a place of necessity for all communities, where joy and cares are foundational.

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## **Appendix A. Transcript of interview 1**

**Interviewer:** Benazir Basauri Torres (B.B.T)

**Interviewee:** Imayna Cáceres (I.C)

**Date and time:** June 6th, 2023

**Location:** Online, via video conferencing platform Zoom

**B.B.T:** How did you encounter decolonization?

**I.C:** When I entered the Bildende [refers to the Akademie der bildenden Künste], that's how I entered fully with all this decolonial stuff. And also at the same time with Gloria E. Anzaldúa's proposal, which is based on autohistoria. In reality I have grown up with many anti-colonial practices, I believe that this is a very common experience in Abya Yala, Latin America, in Peru without a doubt, that we have grown up surrounded by multiple knowledge, both hegemonic and from the margins of the Global South, surrounded by much knowledge about plants, about the agency of plants, with connection also with worlds, as they say here, of the irrational, about dreams, about souls, the world of the spirits, it is like precisely part of my work is to make that revision, how I have grown up, how many people have grown up, that we have always been crossed by anticolonial, decolonial practices, that above all have always been crossed by the maternal lines of the mothers, the grandmothers and so on, also that has been very influenced by the migrant worlds that inhabit both Lima, the capitals in general, in my case of migrants from the Andes and the Amazon and I had neighbors from everywhere, the neighbor of my house next door was from Huancayo, then the next one was from Tarapoto, all were from the provinces. My mother was from Uchumarca, they were all people who somehow met and exchanged all that knowledge as something very positive and of course not everything was ideal, we have also grown up with oppressive systems, like understanding gender relations, patriarchy, logics of the capitalist system, heterosexist, but well, that, that, in inhabiting these multiple practices both hegemonic and decolonial has been the constant for many people.

**B.B.T:** Is there a definition that you align yourself more with on decolonization or perhaps some of your own that you have?

**I.C:** I must have written something, but not now, because I also see some limits to the decolonial project, as is the case with all things, nothing can account for the multiple worlds that make reality. I found a temporal limit, in the sense that it kind of explains all reality only from the great colonial enterprises, for example Columbus' voyage to the Americas and all that is unleashed with it. Because I found certain

limits and I began to be interested in working from the other history and working from the non-human, I stopped thinking about the need to want to define it, but I have been invited to talk about it and it is a useful framework. I don't think I have a definition, well in this text that I have sent I have put a lot of definitions, I have written about decolonizing knowledge, I think I agree with most of them. A limit that I see is that there is a kind of idea that the world is impacted by the consequences of colonialism and decolonization would be like undoing, by this prefix and sometimes that focuses everything towards the dis, what not to do, what to criticize, what anti-practices, what is negative, and not paying attention to what is propoitive, to what regenerates, to the forces that exist in the world. It is not the case of all the projects, Nelson Maldonado Torres is very clear, to talk about the fact that colonization never destroyed everything, but that there have always been these spaces where things survived, and were rebuilt. If I had a serious concept it would be on how to further complex temporalities, proposals of the anti and the pro, not reaction, but action, of regeneration and thirdly, the importance of the non-human. That it does not remain in a discourse only of human oppression, which I understand because it is urgent, but at the same time it is fundamentally connected to human oppression, the oppression or non-recognition of the action of other forms of life.

**B.B.T:** That is also very much connected to your work.

Just for the record the book you are talking about is a product of the Dekolonisierung des Wissens conference? Is it a post-conference book or what is the format?

**I.C:** If it is a book, I think it is planned as a book to contain the lectures that were given. There are going to be two, one with a focus on art and one with a focus on theory.

**B.B.T:** How has your encounter with cultural institutions in Europe, as an artist been?

For example, if you could describe an experience, what was the beginning like? How was that approach, how were you approached? And how was the process and maybe some reflection on the project, I would like you to tell me what happened in the encounter? In that meeting?

**I.C:** Now with the paraphrasing, it makes me think that through that, one learns how the story of an artist can be, from beginning to end. To begin with, in fact, I did more activism when I was in the art university, making works of political intervention with successful demands for concrete changes. What you could say about how I approached the institution, is that it was in an irreverent way, of no respect, of no hierarchy, of no "I am here and how can they accept me", but rather from a criticism, maybe too radical. When I arrived in Vienna I met with anarchist, anti-fascist, anti-racist groups, but who were also artists, so it was very much like this, there are migrant students, a lot of migrant students but the website is not in English, it is only in German, so they don't have access to the benefits, so through an action of an artistic

demand, we managed to change it, after a couple of months, the website and that it is also in English and not only in German. We managed to have an office for migrant students, which there wasn't before, so it was like, in fact at a moment, after years of doing this, in fact at a moment after arriving to this wave of refugees to Europe, Germany, Austria, Spain, there was a lot of activism around that, of support. At a moment in 2018, I think, okay, I want to keep doing that, but I also want to finally pay attention to my personal work. So as personal artistic work it has been a short time, but from that, depending on how you work is how you're going to meet people. So at some point I had a job at the museum, I was the curator, along with four other people, we had positions of artists who were quite critical of the museum, so first there was a lot of support and then very little support, like "You can do whatever you want", like all those walls are going to be thrown away, then they found out what the projects were going to be and it was like "No, you cannot change this", so it was like a lot of non-support. It was an experience about how if one wants to do something critical, but not fundamental, of change, people are fine, if it is symbolic. But if it is to make a real change, a real demand, people get a little more...and of course that was in 2015, it has been before many things, the decolonial roll was present in academia, but not in the institutions, they saw it as something very like what is this, nope, I felt a lot of rejection. And it's very crazy because after what happened with Black Lives Matters, many doors opened. And coming into my own, to think about what I want, so I had a conversation, where I was asking how to balance my interest in working for the collective but also listening to my inner song and that the plant taught me this beautiful textile and that it can only be beautiful because there is this detail, ah okay I understood, for what I am looking for, that is the transformation of society, I have to be honest, pay attention to what my inner self is telling me, what it wants to express, it is not in competition, it is part of, it feeds back, so I have the right to express my voice, to look for what interests me, to pay attention to it. And since then, looking to put my work online, I have received invitations via instagram, it happens to me a lot that people write me that they like what I post and invite me to exhibit, for a while too, and precisely because I wanted to apply for this scholarship from the Academy of Sciences, I was also writing to friends, to people I knew in other cities so that they would invite me to exhibit, to have a portfolio, to balance all the years I had dedicated to activism, and not to do, this, residencies, and maybe I got a couple of small residencies, and that's it. In general, it is very positive. I work with people that I feel are resonant, political-spiritual, that see the whole picture. It is also important that they have that work of care, which manifests itself in various small details, and that's it, yes.

**B.B.T:** Who should decolonize the museum? Well, for example today there is a whole debate in the museum, about decolonizing the museum and we see a lot that museums invite artists to do projects with



them, for example in the museum where I am there is a project called “Artist meets Archive”, for example now we have an exhibition of an artist from South Africa and she worked with the archive of Cameroon. Also in Vienna, in the Weltmuseum, Rajkamal Kahlon was also presented, there is also Leaky Archive that invites artists from the Global South who reside in the Global South. And all of that brings me to the question I wanted to ask about who should decolonize the museum.

**I.C:** Ethnographic museums in the European Union are organized around how to do critical issues, and they receive funding from the EU to be able to carry them out. One of them has to do with how to problematize restitution, how to problematize issues of decolonization and I, my perspective is that, I feel that Achille Mbembe says it very well: Give everything back and then we can talk. And in a practical way, not only as a demand without solution, if you want to talk about the historical archive of humanity, make copies of the works, make good quality photos, 3D presentations but give things back to the people, because it is their history, precisely, spiritual, political, cosmopolitical, about how they relate to reality, about what their ancestors did, then they have imprisoned part of their soul, part of their feet, like they can't stand up because of that, also because of the structural colonization that exists regarding mobilization on the planet, people from the Global South cannot travel to see their own things, they don't have the permits, they don't have the money, they don't have the necessary powerful passports, there are so many limitations, everything is wrong around that, the solution is very simple, I feel that they know it and they are just making it long to be able to continue benefiting from what they can, in the end it is all about making money, who are the holders, the big names and the big capitalists behind it.

I understand that they invest money in these conversations and it is my experience, and even, very lightly because Rajkamal Kahlon, the experience I had was with the Weltmuseum, what came out for me is that there really was no process of critically rethinking what they had, there were several problems afterwards. They had a head, a skull in the exhibition of a group from Brazil, I think Claudia Gustav was in charge of that section, and all the people who were there before, directors, deputy directors, from continents, all were the same people who were there afterwards. When we made that intervention, one of those assistants was very critical, talking about racism to white people, so my perception is that there is a very big distance, I don't feel that the museum can be decolonized, because it is a problematic institution, it is born in a problematic way, It is born in a problematic way, its existence creates the idea that there are high arts and low arts, that there are fine arts and crafts, all of which are inventions of the hegemonic elitist European modernity, because it is not all of Europe, it is the elites who wrote the upper class white men who invented all that history. I don't think it's possible, but I understand that there are a lot of people who are working on that, how to deal with that paradox until we get to the moment when everything goes back

to its place, as it should be, which seems to me a necessary and important work, but if you ask me my answer is no, it's not possible. Loot the museum, take down the monuments, we don't need any of that, it's part of the problem, there's nothing to undo, clean, repair, the very essence that is wrong. And my criticism also comes from, knowing that they get so much money from the EU and they use it to make a kind of filter of artists that don't really compromise them too much, I mean not because the artists are bad, but they also know that there are limits to how far they can go. I'm very critical, but it's not that I'm super pessimistic either, I know it's going to happen at some point, I think it's already happening, especially with the human remains, and already, and I'm waiting for the revolution, for people to come in and take their stuff.

**B.B.T:** Do we need museums?

**I.C:** I think not, because in the end, for what they serve, they always end up taking life away from art, I think art has an enormous potential, especially if it is understood as something that is a language of life, and not the creation, the invention of human beings, but it is the language of life to survive, and that all forms of life perceive shapes, colors, and have to make decisions and produce along the way things that are linked both to survival, to the community, but that are also aesthetic, that is to say that everything is interconnected, that is to say that there is no separate sphere of art and sphere of life, that when we can make this reconnection we will be better able to deal with all the systems of oppression that have us in the state of crisis in which we are, because we are so fragmented that capitalism can reign left and right, shamanic art linked to the earth, to the soil, has a lot of strength to make the world a better place to live, I remember that in 2015 I was asked, apropos of that exhibition at the Weltmuseum, that if there should be any. .and my answer was that in Latin America there are no ethnographic museums of Europe as if you put in that perspective, I mean we do not have "Come and learn about what they did", it is absurd, it is that. It is a very specific construction in time, which is not only not necessary, but also goes against the idea of being able to live in community. That is it.

## **Appendix B. Transcript of interview 2**

**Interviewer:** Benazir Basauri Torres (B.B.T)

**Interviewee:** Lemba de Miranda (L.d.M)

**Date and time:** June 12th, 2023

**Location:** Rautenstrauch-Joest-Museum, Cologne, Germany

**B.B.T:** Okay, so Lemba. Thank you for being here. Really appreciate that. What, like I told you I'm doing this master thesis on decolonizing the museum. And I have a focus on the encounter of the artists and the museum. And then what happens in that encounter? And also, I wanted to ask you, how do you because of the conference, where you were a speaker, you mentioned, you took out decolonizing as this kind of guiding frame. So I wanted to ask you how your encounter with decolonizing was.

**L.d.M:** Oh, that's a big question. Well, I think it started with realizing I was colonized and especially as a woman of color in a white world because I think my colonized state, I realized was a sort of survival mechanism, kind of like how to survive in a white world. And it's not that I was conscious of that. But it's more if you want to get ahead in the world then you, when in Rome do as the Romans, a bit like that. So it first started realizing like I am colonized, I am diminishing my blackness, or kind of like, Oh, does it matter, or I'm just as you or I'm not scary, or I'm not angry, or... And then I realized, well, this is not helping me. And it's not my story. And I'm, I'm disconnecting myself from my source and my true power. Like, where my ancestors come from? My mom's from the Caribbean. And my dad is from Southern Africa. And I think also their generations when they came to Europe like mine was in general, they're very, like ambitious for themselves or for their children. And I think my parents are very much yeah, when in Rome do as the Romans, you know, and I feel, and obviously, they did their best to, you know, give me the best start in life, but I feel they also disconnected me from, and it's probably my own doing because my sister doesn't have that at all. And we grew up in the same household. And so that's how I started and how I work with it is being very conscious of the kind of stories I want to tell, I think, I'm very focused on sovereignty and human sovereignty, because, for me, that's more or less the same, because I feel almost all of us live in a colonized state, to a certain extent. That's not only something for women or people of color or queer people.

**B.B.T:** Because you mentioned you included that in your work between the academia.

**L.d.M:** So it's a great interest for me in when it comes to academic research, but also in my, in my

fictional storytelling. So I'm a writer, screenwriter. And it's a big theme in the stories I want to tell kind of like owning up to your true self, or owning up to what you want to be or want to become. Or being the full human, you actually are. Not getting eaten up by the/a system. So that's very important to me because I think very much it has to do with my own development kind of like, take all of what you are, rather than, Oh, this is this mold and try to fit yourself in it because it's never going to be comfortable.

**B.B.T:** Now we are here at the Rautenstrauch-Joest-Museum and this museum is doing some projects that deal with the topic of decolonizing the museum, for example, the exhibition, we were just in the museum inviting artists from the Global South to work with the archive and present an exhibition. So I wanted to ask you the question, whose job is it to decolonize the museum?

**L.d.M:** Oh, wow. That's a very good question. Well, I think the job is to the forces that colonized in the first place. I don't feel it's the job of the colonized to decolonize but it's almost that, I say we, that we have to do that because I don't think we can count on the colonizers. It's a bit like asking your jailers for freedom. Or a bit like, I don't know, every repressed people. They never got free to because they politely asked for it. They, it was, they demanded it using force or whatever. And that the oppressor was forced to relent rather than Okay, you go. I don't think it's the job of the colonized. Yeah, it's a bit again after George Floyd that people started to ask questions kind of like, oh, but how is, and I understand where it comes from. But is that then for people of color people from the Global South, and it shouldn't be our job to explain it. And again, I understand why they ask, but that shouldn't be our job. So then yeah, it's up to the colonizers to decolonize but can you expect them to because decolonizing as a colonizer means you need to give up power and privilege. And that's never a pleasant thing to do. Never I mean, I don't know. I'm just thinking, what in what position? Am I a privilege? I'm sure I am. But like, oh, no, you need to share with other people. Yeah, that's fine. But how this is affecting me, you know? So I think that's always a painful process. Um, so yeah, it's, it's a very tough question.

**B.B.T:** Yeah, it's, for me, it's a question that should be asked. So of course, just like us the first step. And then what now that we are also in this museum, and we have also this conversation on how is it in your country, the Netherlands, especially with these ethnological museums. So then the next question would be, do we need a museum?

**L.d.M:** In general, museums like these? Museums like this, like ethnological museums? I mean, what is need? Yes, I think we do. But one needs to discuss the form. And what's/who is a museum supposed to serve? Because I think especially with museums like these for a long time, it's been the colonizer, as in look what we've achieved, and I'm talking about my own country's especially, look what we have achieved look what we've gathered, stoled from the world. But with a sense of pride. Look at this, look at

this loot. That's what it was. But as I mentioned this, this museum Tropen Museum that it started to, like reframe the narrative. And I'm not sure if it's center stage, but moving much more to center the people who've been colonized and that was very like, I've never seen that before. That was the there was like, wow, what's going on here? And I think it has a place for both. Or if the coloniser can see what has been done through that narrative, and how we can make that a bit more inclusive. I think that will be the ideal to do we need a museum. Again, what is need but I think yes, yes. But then how do you what story do you tell that museum is really important? Yeah.

**B.B.T:** Maybe last question. You mentioned sovereignty is very important in your work. That also makes me think our discussion we had in the conference. So how, or maybe some strategies you think we could have to do, especially these conversations from the global south to lower salt, like to you, maybe in your work, maybe which strategies to use to shift to that sovereignty.

**L.d.M:** The thing is, I'm not from the Global South, my parents are. So that's already like a because, you know, my research, the presentation I did are focused on Afro-futurism and how it could help in women's liberation. And then Xena, the organizer asked, What woman are you talking about?. And well, I mean, universal woman. But I start from my selfish point of view, like women from the African diaspora. And then through that, African women and women all over the world. But I started with me. And so in that sense, I am I can't say anything about how the global south should relate to the Global North. But I think in general I think it's important that we undo ourselves from the narrative we've been taught by the colonizer and it's for people from the global south about what the global north tells about you and you believe, or people of colour, what the white mainstream what you see reflected in the white mainstream in the media, about yourself and you believe, women, queer people. So I think that we also have to realize, wait a minute, is this really the story? So I think it starts there and, and objecting to that story. Like, this is not my story. This is a story you make about me, you don't know me. And I think it has to do with asserting oneself. And that can be scary. And it can be shocking for the other side because they're not used to it. But I think, yeah, that's how it starts. And I think when it comes to the Global South, they will be there sooner than we think. Because they're emerging economies. Like Europe, people are getting older. You know, Europe is fine. If we're not producing a lot. It's Asian producers. Everything is Asia, and Africa who buys. It's Latin America who invents, you know what I mean. I mean, I mean, it's not America and Europe anymore.

**B.B.T:** That's really interesting because that's not usually what we generally hear or see.

**L.d.M:** Totally. And of course, that's the big secret. But it's, it's a big secret. But if you look at Europe, it's you know, what's the word in English that people are getting older, older population, and yet less

young people. By the time I can take my pension, there's no money because they're not enough young people to make that money. As I said, we don't produce anything. Because an older population, we buy less, there's less money for healthcare, stuff like that. So it's, I mean, people are telling this story, but then they're, they're kind of pushed to the fringes because they tend to be kind of like right-wing people. So they can, we can dismiss them. But I mean, I've started for quite a while I think the future is in the Global South, for sure. For sure. And I think it's Yeah, once the global south as a collective is like, okay, the power is ours. Yeah. Yeah, that's, that's gonna be scary. For sure. Yeah, for sure.

**B.B.T:** That is yeah, that is something to think about. Okay, maybe. Now, the last question. Because you are in the film industry, and I know you are in screenwriting, but then you also went through academia. So do you think how do you see those two worlds because also there's this question about who what is the scholarship for? So especially when you talk about decolonizing or you have a decolonial approach? Do you feel it not that it fits. But how do you feel maybe having this decolonial approach inside Academy?

**L.d.M:** Yeah, that's a very interesting question. I really like a very like the right brain, left brain approach. And my professor at film school, he's both is an academic. He's got a Ph.D. And he's also a screenwriter. He's actually like written a lot of stuff. I can tell he, I think it's a different way to position yourself, because I think like, screenwriters will think you too academic, and academia think you do artistic. So I think, but I think for an academic/artist, oneself, I think it could be a very interesting dynamic because you use, you know, the academic kind of dry, emotionless approach versus the right brain that is allowed to go places and doesn't have to do any of those "boring" academic stuff. And I also think you can reach different audiences through that. And it might even strengthen each other's work because I think academic research also requires creativity. And I'm not saying that creative work needs an academic approach. But especially for a writer, and especially a screenwriter, you need structure in your screenplays. You can't just like it's not like a novel or these varieties you have one says you have two types of writers like plotters and gardeners and plots are very structured and know exactly where they're going. And gardeners, it is right. And while they're writing, you know where the story goes, Okay, and I think you can do that with a novel. I don't think you can do the latter with a screenplay. You kind of need that. Much of the answer question?

**B.B.T:** Very interesting. How they complement each other.

**L.d.M:** Totally. Yeah. I mean, so you asked who's academia for? Well, I'm gonna say something quite controversial, because it kind of depends on what kind of academia is because we're doing social science here, right? Or humanities, which is, you know, it's not exact. So it's all about the argument. So academic research is a bit like, pleasuring yourself. It's kind of like, what's the point? It doesn't need to be the point.

It's just nice to do. But I think, because the thing that I think the limitation academia, it's a very small audience, you, especially social sciences, a very small audience is very, like very, very little academic research that pops out to the mainstream. But it can be a seed, a seed you planted, and other people can build on it. And then it can like, it's a bit like Laura Malvehy, who's like, a well-known feminist film scholar. She said one thing in the mid-70s, and that's still like, a thing, both scholars and feminists and writers kind of like, you know, it referred to, and that's almost 50 years old, which I think is a big deal totally, totally. So I think I think academia is first an access for the individual I feel, to train the mind to have fun, especially that left brain, and to plant the seed that hopefully, others, academics are not can build on.

**B.B.T:** Do you have one last comment to just wanna? I could go on for hours, but you know...

**L.d.M:** Well, I think it's great. I think it's I think it's great. You're doing this research. And I think it's great. You asked me these questions because it's because it makes me think as well because I know these things are important to me. But it's also like how do I take into practice on a day-to-day basis. This I feel if this is really like a process, it can't just be our stories or our academic research is like, what do we do with it? In our daily lives? You know, and I can't answer that straight away for you to be honest. I mean, it's on my mind a lot. But how do I move? How do I move about in the world as a person in the process of decolonizing? You know, but I think it's great you are doing this research? And I think it's, I think already the Snowball is already rolling, I think. And it's going down the hill. And it's, it's, it will create an avalanche for sure. So...

**B.B.T:** There will be fire at some point

**L.d.M:** There will be fired. But fire can be cleansing. So yeah, you know, healing and healing and transforming.

**B.B.T:** Yeah, great. This has been great.

**L.d.M:** Yes, and it's kind of nice because you don't, you can't see it, but the sun is coming down and you are becoming this angel.

**B.B.T:** Thank you so much for this interview, for this time.

### **Appendix C. Transcript of interview 3**

**Interviewer:** Benazir Basauri Torres (B.B.T)

**Interviewee:** Fabiola Arellano Cruz (F.A.C)

**Date and time:** June 16th, 2023

**Location:** Rautenstrauch-Joest-Museum, Cologne, Germany

**B.B.T:** I was telling you about my thesis on decolonizing the museum and my first chapter focuses on the artist-museum encounter. So my first question is to ask you how was your encounter with decolonization?

**F.A.C:** My personal encounter or as a professional?

**B.B.T:** It's a question I get asked a lot. For example, for me it's very personal, I can't break it down. But as you prefer.

**F.A.C:** Of course, I was going to tell you the same thing, but I can't break it down either, for several reasons. The first one is because I entered a museum of world cultures with a non-precarious contract, as practically the first person in the Global South, who has a non-precarious contract and in a position of, let's say, a lot of responsibility, so those two factors have a lot to do with me and my job, that's why I don't dissociate it. In that sense, I think it is almost a little bit revolutionary, also because I am the director of the area of education in a language that is not my mother tongue, which in the global, internationalized world and how they sell it to us should be normal, but in Germany, it is not normal. The language issue is one thing, it is a super issue, that is, it is an element that is really discriminatory, from the moment you have an accent, even an accent in German, that is, if you have a dialect, you are read as a less intellectual person. Uh, now, I am in charge of the Education area, which would include that I handle the language in a perfect way and it is not like that, I mean I still make mistakes too and I think it has really been a step in a decolonizing direction to think that Okay a language that is not spoken or written in a perfect way does not limit you to have ideas and to contribute content in a museum of cultures of the world. On the contrary, I think that the way of seeing the museum from my reading as a migrant person and as a person who really has that double vision allows me to see many things that many Germans do not see and experience and try to, not only because of my nationality but also because I have professional experience.

**B.B.T:** How would you describe your position? Director of Mediation and Outreach?

**F.A.C:** Director of Mediation and Education. I work for Museumsdienst, the state of Cologne has a central institution that is in charge of the nine museums in the city of Cologne and I am in charge of one museum. I also have to tell you a little bit about the specific case of my position, my job. I came in



because the person who was in my position was retiring, so that means that the person who was in my position was in my position for years and not only that but before he became the Director of the area he was a freelancer. The Education and Mediation area, was, well, and then came Corona, the area, let's say that it was not very innovative. So I don't want to say that his work was not valid, but in the last few years, let's say that the person who was there before me was not so much in agreement with the things that Nanette wanted to introduce. My boss is not Nanette directly, but the Director of Museumsdienst. Previously there wasn't much of a partnership with the museum itself. Then I arrived and I think that everybody has great expectations, they started to involve me a lot in many things that maybe have to do with mediation but that before were maybe done by other people. And another thing, which is perhaps the most important, is that depending on the museum, mediation and education can be something very traditional or something more innovative or creative, depending on the museum. In some museums that are very traditional, the curators make the exhibition and only at the end, they involve the person who works in the area. But in my case and with Nanette, for Nanette the mediation is practically the most important thing, that's why from the beginning I was involved in projects very early on. I am also relatively new, not even a year old, but since there was a gap in our work together. Now my tasks, I was also navigating between these expectations, I am now navigating between what my tasks really are, there is no catalog of what I have to do, it depends very much on the project.

**B.B.T:** For example in the Lebohang exhibition I saw that you developed the supporting program for the Artist meets Archive exhibition.

**F.A.C:** My role was more passive, or more supportive, for example very concretely to organize my freelance workers, I have a team of twelve freelance workers who work as guides and also do workshops for children and I have to coordinate, I am the boss. We have a super horizontal relationship, I organize that my guides, and Lucia explain to all of us about the exhibition and that they are prepared for guided tours. I also helped Lucia organize and write the text for a photography workshop for children for the end of June. Where I was much more involved was LOVE, LOVE was a little bit crazy. LOVE had to be reorganized eight weeks before the opening we had to reorganize everything, I wasn't so involved before but I ended up being super involved. The concept changed, we tried to formulate the question "What is love?" not from a curatorial point of view, that the curator answers the question, but that we all answer it, or we don't answer it. That is why LOVE was not called a temporary exhibition, but rather LOVE was called a workshop, it was meant to be like a workshop, an evolutionary process that was growing, and that is why at the beginning LOVE had three artistic positions and at the end it had about twelve. And to answer this question you have to do workshops, you have to invite people, you have to work with them,

so that's where I was quite involved, in conceiving a couple of workshops, organizing them. I was in charge of the first workshop and the second one, and the rest was organizing for example the artistic residency of a group called IJULA, intersektionales Jugendlabor, which is a group of young people who work on the issue of intersectionality in an artistic way and who are 17 to 27 years old and they have a place in Cologne, it is very cool. And we invite them to participate in the LOVE project and to be as much as they can in the museum and to do their own events. We were coordinating their activities, giving them support and seeing the logistics. And the cool thing is that they brought their own audience, which is a much younger audience, much more diverse.

**B.B.T:** In connection with that, I wanted to ask you who is the museum for? Especially now that we are at the RJM, which is an ethnological museum, which has a collection, which has an archive. And also after that, do we need a museum?

**F.A.C:** I wanted to add, just to make it more concrete, about LOVE. LOVE was a workshop, a workshop exhibition, a laboratory exhibition that was growing little by little, every two weeks, three weeks, every month. In that context it was very difficult to create a guided visit to LOVE. Because as I told you with the AMA theme, Lucia when she finished her exhibition all perfect, she gave me and my colleagues and my team a guided tour and here are the pieces and this is Lebohang, she explained to us about Lebohang's biography, about the pieces, the interpretation, the video and with that my team could work perfectly and fill an hour. But LOVE wasn't like that, LOVE didn't have much to show, it was a process. So it became very difficult for me that task, which is very classic in Museum Pedagogy, to create guided tours, it was practically impossible in LOVE. Because I didn't know which pieces were there, which pieces were going to come, that's why I created a guided tour in the permanent exhibition, and I thought about what we have in the permanent exhibition to talk about the theme, to talk about LOVE and make the link, that's why that was born. That is also one of my main tasks, to try to create new, hopefully interesting or current themes for the permanent exhibition. Another task is to create guided tours for multipliers, so that teachers can come with their classes. Now yes, for whom we do this. An important public for museums, all museums, at least in Germany, have a kind of educational mission, meaning that we are extracurricular spaces where you can also learn, where you can also educate, but what has been a very classical and traditional way of understanding what it means to learn, to educate and to know, that is what I am interested in changing a little bit. It is a space of knowledge without a doubt, but what knowledge? what is the knowledge that we have been giving and who has been distributing it and in what way? And that is what I would like to work on, that is why I think it is important for the guides to reflect on who they are and in what role they are acting. I don't think it's wrong that white ethnologists do guided tours but I think

it's wrong that they do it believing that they are distributing absolute knowledge. In general, there are two versions, I do believe that the museum has to create new audiences, but there are people who just don't want to come to the museum, who are not interested, I mean we would like the whole global south to appear in the museum, but no, there are people who don't care. And there are people who will always come to the museum, educated, white people, who love to go to the museum and I think we can help them to rethink things. I mean, if that's already the audience, I don't think that will change, we can gain new audiences, but that audience will remain. We can give them new tools to rethink some things that they have thought all their lives and that they have believed to be knowledge, culture, and give them new tools to question what they have always thought they knew. There are other tendencies that say, we don't want these people to come anymore, but no, I think that if they are going to continue coming, we must try to integrate them to the new discourses we want to impart. On the other hand, now I am quite involved in this project for children, if you go to the museum you will see that there are many older people. With formats like LOVE, like RESIST. Well, with LOVE there were many more young people, students, because LOVE, in spite of being a question that involves all of us, the language we used sometimes was not inclusive at all, queer language, which some people don't understand at all. I think it is quite elitist to think that everybody is going to know certain terms, words that circulate in quite small spaces. It's not that those spaces are not necessary for victims of discrimination, I don't want to underestimate that, but I mean that it is a reduced part of society that knows and handles those terms, so on the one hand we wanted to be super inclusive in LOVE and on the other hand we spoke with a vocabulary that only we and a couple of other people understood, so it's complicated. In the case of LOVE we try to bring BIPOC people, queer People of Color, that is a public that feels identified, that feels that it is a safe space for them and also, I mean that we create activities exclusively for that community. I don't know if we have reached the goal that these people will stay, that is, that they will continue coming to Artist meets Archive, for example. I don't think so, I think that the people who came to Photoszene are different from the people who came to LOVE. And for the permanent exhibition, what I would like to achieve is to create a palette of themes that can be interesting for everyone. And last but not least, with the theme of the exhibition for children, it is important to me that children, especially in a city as international as Cologne, find that those objects that seem so far away are suddenly not so far away, that it has to do with their own identity and that they see it as a space of their own. But they are not going to see it as their space if the security guy says "Shhhh", so they have to create the conditions for younger people to come. Apparently, there used to be a lot of children, many years ago, and now I don't see so many children.

**B.B.T:** Speaking of children I was surprised with the figures that you included in the text of the

exhibition, about how many people are migrants in Cologne and how many people are children, I was surprised.

**F.A.C:** Yes, they are Germans, yes this city is super international and you don't necessarily see that internationality reflected in the public, not always.

**B.B.T:** And going from the public to whether we need a museum, how would you answer that question?

**F.A.C:** It depends on what we understand as a museum, if we understand the museum as a sacred place where you can not talk and where only pieces from other places are contemplated and those pieces are contemplated as if they had absolutely nothing to do with me, then we don't need museums. If you see the museum as a space in which precisely through some objects or perhaps not only objects, but living stories, stories about objects that suddenly will no longer be there, because some will simply be returned, but to create a space of exchange, of dialogue, of horizontality, where multiperspectivity is something allowed, then it seems to me that spaces of that kind are needed, but always taking into account what we want to understand by what we call a museum. I think we have to get out of the impression that museums are sterile spaces, it seems to me as if we were talking about the same as twenty years ago, it seems to me a Dejavu. But now it is a current reality that there are objects that are going to be returned, so many objects, 60,000 objects, in the museum, 60,000 objects are not going to be returned now, but some objects are going to be returned, so we have to consider the idea of what happens with a museum that is losing objects, and for example the typical tasks of the museum were to collect, preserve, investigate, mediate. And now, as these tasks are losing shape, is it important to continue collecting? We have a lot of objects, I think only 3 percent of the things we have in the collection are shown, imagine that. Also another thing we have to rethink is the restoration issue, if those objects can be touched or not, that idea will have to change at some point, I am not saying that now everything can be touched, but the idea that nothing can be touched, when they were objects that were made and predestined to be touched, it is strange.

**B.B.T:** About that, especially in this museum that as you said has a huge collection, has a huge archive, I wanted to talk about whose task it is to Decolonize the Museum? First, I wanted your reaction to this quote from Brenda Caro Cocotle I found recently: "The third trend really makes me angry, this one proposes that artistic intervention is the way to decolonizing archives. Suddenly art could dismantle the accumulative, vertical, classificatory, violent archival rationality simply because it is art."

**F.A.C:** I think what she is trying to say is that it is a rather simplistic approach, because in the end the structures in which these archives are displayed and in which one has access to the archive are structures that are within a much larger system and art just because it is art is not going to dismantle that hierarchical structure. I also believe, I also believe that it is easy to say intervention, intervention,

intervention as long as it does not change anything else. I mean I don't think that by intervening artistically, AMA is a good example, I think that Lebohang has managed to put on the table in a super nice and super personal way issues that if they had remained only in the archive would have been exposed only to people who are interested in the subject, which are usually white people who have access to education and with resources and now it is exposed in a museum that is also for white people with money but at least with a slightly less elitist scope. And I don't think that her version of how she has treated the subject is so difficult to "understand", I think it is possible to understand what it is to work with a colonial archive. But I do agree with the artist, that simply instrumentalizing art to try to do "colonial washing" is a bit simplistic, but I do not think it is either one or the other, they could be processes that go hand in hand, trying to dismantle hierarchical and colonial structures and try through art channels that touch the public.

**B.B.T:** How would you answer: Who should decolonize the museum?

**F.A.C:** I think it is a joint task. There may be the best intentions of a director, for example, but the museum is not in a vacuum. To begin with, the museum has a colonial origin, it is in a city that has a colonial past that is still in force, it is inside a country that still needs its colonial past, it is inside a continent where 50,000 people die every year in the Mediterranean. We live in a colonial system, it is difficult to believe that just because we do a couple of actions in a museum it is going to change everything, it is not going to happen. The task of decolonizing the museum has a lot to do with the museum staff, I feel that we have to try to get everyone on the same side, because otherwise there will be conflicts of interest. There are people who want to continue forging collections, who want to continue maintaining their position that university knowledge, white knowledge, is universal knowledge and there is no other, because that is not going to work. All the workers of an institution have to try to pull on the same side. And on the other hand, the way to decolonize the museum through mediation will only work if we stop thinking of the public as passive and try to create participatory mechanisms, invite them, take their criticism seriously, not only treat them as consumers of what we want to give them, because we know how to decolonize, but invite them to also be part of the process. Of course, for all that I am telling you it takes money, there are museums in Scandinavia that have a content manager position, all of us are with our little free time trying to create content, and it's a pod. That's why I think it is a task that not only corresponds to cultural institutions but to everyone.

**B.B.T:** Do you have any final comment you would like to make?

**F.A.C:** A final comment would be that I am interested in these issues, and I have always moved in circles that are interested in these issues, that have a tendency a little more left or more progressive, I mean if we

want to put it that way, I move in my own bubble and to believe that this bubble is also the tendency is bullshit (b\*llshit). I say this because we all talk about decolonizing but there are also people who have other priorities, much more physical, much more, I am talking about people who right now are not questioning if they were or were not colonized but they are questioning what they are going to eat. And sometimes it seems to me that by being in these so trendy, so progressive, so cool speeches we forget that our issues do not belong to everyone. I know that our intention is good, that we want to create a horizontal world and free ourselves from colonialism and everything but we also have to take into account that having these processes is part of our privilege, to be able to make certain readings, to be able to verbalize some processes that maybe other people live them but cannot talk about them because they do not have the vocabulary, sometimes I think it is also time to leave that intellectual and activist bubble and really see what happens in the real world, with people who do not have the privilege to be discussing so much shit and go to the demonstrations because they have to work. Sorry, I don't think that had anything to do with your question.

**B.B.T:** I think it has to do with that because part of these interviews has been just what you mentioned, realizing that a lot of these conversations happen at academic levels which, who can access? People who know German, people who are here (Germany), like in the Erzählcafe of Aurora and Carla, it was nice, it was very empowering and touching, but one question that reminded me a lot of what you were saying was a woman from Iran, who in the final round of questions said everything very well but how does a woman who has just come as a refugee find out about these, for example this Storytelling Cafe, or a feminist group, how does she find out? How does she find out if she doesn't have, as you mentioned, that access to the university, academic things, even social media that everybody doesn't question anymore if she has, how to do that accessible, it seems to me that it has everything to do with decolonization. Also the personal stuff, and how to get it out of that bubble, which is true. Also, how we met is because we are both here in the Global North and so with access to these kinds of conversations.

**F.A.C:** Yes of course, and for example you were able to study Media Art and I was able to study Art Pedagogy because we were lucky enough, for example, not to have to support our families, our parents for example. Our parents gave us the option of being able to study our interest, imagine that privilege of studying what you are interested in, I mean f\*ck! Even people who send their children to study in Europe tell them "Look honey, you are going to study economics, because forget it, I am not going to send you to study art." So there are several things, that freedom to choose is an immense privilege.

#### **Appendix D. Transcript of interview 4**

**Interviewer:** Benazir Basauri Torres (B.B.T)

**Interviewee:** Paloma Ayala (P.A)

**Date and time:** June 21st, 2023

**Location:** Online, via video conferencing platform Zoom

**B.B.T:** Well, I start recording, as I was telling you thanks for accepting the interview in the context of my thesis of Decolonizing the Museum, the first question I wanted to ask you is how was your approach to decolonization?

**P.A:** Hey, does it have to do with discourse? No! B\*llshit! It has to do with my family, with the women who have cooked for me all their lives and have taken care of me, the land has taken care of me too. Decolonization as a concept came to me or came to me through Caribbean feminisms, through lesbians, and blacks, who are situated in different Caribbean contexts, especially I think that the voice of Ochy Curiel, has been very, well, someone who has guided me a lot. And from there, maybe not from there, because decolonizing existed in other people's works or words that I had heard before in anti-colonial discourses, which is what I contextualize myself better, what I contextualize myself better at this moment as well. And, at the end of the day, I still didn't quite understand, there is a question that has to do with historical processes and a question that has to do with imagining, imagining decolonized worlds, that I still didn't connect with practice. I still didn't understand how through these imaginations to advance on a path that leads us to decolonization, whatever that means, depending on what areas, what you do it in, what book you read, and the strongest voices, as I said, have been Ochy Curiel, Yuderkis Espinoza too, and I think they belong to the same group, if I remember correctly, they are the two that I think about the most right now. I really like to listen to their talks, especially Ochy's are very clear, at an educational level, and it is also noticeable that she puts her speech and her person as a mediator for the white public. I mean they have come several times to Europe, and I have seen them speak here at least a couple of times, for example, in Zurich, but they have also been in Germany, in Paris, in Madrid, and when it comes to explaining their research, and well, not only research because they make it very clear, decolonial feminisms do not only work at a written level and at a research level, they work at an activist level, at a body level, they work at a level where a certain practice becomes part of one, It becomes something that you really use in everyday life, and when it comes to explaining to this white public, to these students, students in universities here, I think they manage to mediate or manage to do this mediating activity which for me is very pedagogical and explain what it is about, what all this is about, and there is also

mention of where it comes from, there is an interest in situating themselves to begin with, within their Caribbean contexts, but also as global people. It is something that has to do with these pedagogical intentions, and it is something that I share, and I think it also has to do with decolonization, it is something that I do a lot here. I work for example with issues that happen in the northern border of Mexico, with the ecology of the northern border of Mexico, which is where I am from, with my family, with stories that have to do with my family, my family is, they are farmers, so they are stories of the countryside, narratives of the river delta, and in many occasions when I tell those stories, I know that I am telling them here, and that it is not telling those stories here, but telling those stories in that place, in that place, or in Latin America. So I'm always here or my body, it functions as a mediator, my person at the time of doing these Storytelling Sessions has to share this message, but not leave it ambiguous and I think this is something that many people share, or cultural workers, people who do visual arts, or other art, is that many times when you work with social issues, in community practices, political practices, you can't leave things poetically and ambiguously open, sometimes you have to be very clear. And that's what I'm trying to do here, I'm being very clear in what I'm saying. And I think there's some strength in that clarity, and there's also, I think it's easier for the public here to understand what we call decolonization, what we call anti-colonialism.

**B.B.T:** Thanks for the answer!

**P.A:** I think I'm going too far out on a limb.

**B.B.T:** No, no! It's ok, I just wanted to link it to...is it ok if I check first that I record well?...Done! I wanted to link what you were saying with other questions I had, for example about the artist-museum encounter. And the issue of playing this kind of anti-colonial themes that touch on personal things and therefore is something very sensitive and very vulnerable to a white audience. And I saw an interview you did on the roof of the Ludwig, in the AKDW, and you were just talking about that, about your personal experience, how it is to grow up with this Eurocentrism, which I really identify with, if they teach you about art, they teach you European art, then. How was this encounter for you already from your practice?

**P.A:** It is something difficult because I think it is difficult to think of ways to explore frames so institutionalized, so solid, so little fluid, so old, but that have also been part of colonial traumas that we all have, since always obviously you have to put yourself from your position, so in principle I, I think that we, the group that participated in that exhibition found it complex to engage in that conversation with the museum model, and especially with the model of the Ludwig museum, which is full of modern art, it is a collection obviously made by collectors, I mean it has all these collectible works and that intentionally work to increase the value of a collection, I mean already having a Warhol, I think it is the best seller, a



Warhol, a Picasso is already like a collection of world renown, it is a collection invited to all parts of the world, the name Ludwig or the Ludwig museum is not only in Cologne, there is another Ludwig museum around the world. We are talking about an institution that starts from private museums or private collections, the moment of Thank you, private collector for opening this collection to the public! We are going to make a big building, the German state made them a big building, a very nice building indeed and to put I don't know how many thousands of objects in there. At the end of the day they continue to reproduce the same colonial patterns that we have known since the creation of the museums and the European creations and concentrated objects and exoticizations of the colonies, and it also continues to function much like that. So when I went to talk to people who worked in the museum, to try to understand mechanisms and connections that I could talk about in the work, I also understood that these frames continue to function in the same way they functioned a hundred years ago, for example, the same contract team continues, there are still more or less the same type of characters that function within a museum metabolism to reproduce this, that is to say to observe this work again, to sell it and then we go again and then we go again and then we go back to the museum, sell it and then we go again and we are going to re-review and re-review the whole building, created to contain and protect this type of objects, which at the end of the day for many of us is like meeting again with the constant disgust, it is the same here you find yourself with the canons, and this reflection on the basis of the relation canon-representation, representation of ideas, of bodies that are European, are white, are ways of living here, that do not correspond to the ways of living, to our ideas. And it was also in this pedagogical intention that I have, and also in knowing how to be a mediator, it was also difficult to talk to the white public, that is, to be something critical, that at the end of the day I felt it was vanilla, that is, I am not telling you that you are a colonizer, I am not talking to you so directly, I am creating a space where these ideas can be developed, and where you can connect with these points that the exhibition is talking about, which is very different. For example, it is very different from the work of Daniela Ortiz, which is very clear, and Daniela is like that. So also this mediating intention is, well it requires my presence there, I was the one who was there the most, it requires workshops, it requires tools, it requires discussions, it requires encounters with the space, with the people who work there, with the people who visit it.

**B.B.T:** And about that artist-museum encounter in the exhibition at the Ludwig Museum in which you participated, Here and Now Anticolonial Interventions, how would you describe that process?

**P.A:** Yes, I was contacted by the curator Joanne Rodriguez, she is also from a family, I think her father is Mexican-African, she speaks Spanish very well, she studied a long time in Latin America, I think as a person who mediates, as a curator I think she did very well. Because in the first instance, when she chose

people, she didn't only choose people who were living in Europe or in Germany, she didn't choose people whose work was located in Europe, she didn't choose people who were too famous either. And that was also the encounter with the museum, because none of us who were there had ever worked with a museum or this kind of institution. They were always smaller galleries, smaller exhibition spaces, in my case, as I tend to do community work sometimes they are social spaces, community spaces, here or elsewhere in the world, but work for the gallery, produce to sell, zero. And anyway, Joanne invited me to the exhibition, and that was very valuable for me.

**B.B.T:** And let's say it was an already determined project, or did you feel there was freedom?

**P.A:** There was a lot of freedom, I think that from Joanne's position, which is a position of power after all, she is white, and from Europe, she assumed a position of listening, I liked that a lot, a lot of dialogue, of sharing, of input, of what she was going through and questions, because she didn't know how to answer either, so we were constantly talking about it. I feel that it gave us a lot of freedom, as much as possible. I had to have the piece finished months before the exhibition, it is months in advance, we started working on the exhibition a year and a half before, and with a year before you have to be proposing, thinking about the budget. The first thing I proposed was a bed, literally a complete block of clay, I didn't want a table or anything, I wanted many kilos of clay in the middle of the space, but it was not possible because we had to take care of the museum and we had to take care of the work that was in the surrounding spaces. And well, from there I found a way to solve them, but I felt that it would have been a stronger work, if they had let me do that. They didn't want them to paint the walls, Joanne I had to fight to get them to paint the walls, because they need experts to get the walls clean.

**B.B.T:** Joanne was kind of like a mediator?

**P.A:** Yes, very much so, and we needed it. The way we work and the possibilities we have, are not the possibilities the museum has and also you have to be planning a long time in advance and that's something I'm not used to do, that is to have the work ready so long in advance.

**B.B.T:** Just talking about this, I think that in your community work, the process is also very important, I also wanted to ask you about this, because the museum as an institution, as you have already said, is colonial, is white, is heterosexual, and has this fixation with objects. So imagine a museum, this museum for example, the Ludwig museum, if you take away the objects, what is left? I also thought it was very important the way you showed your work, not focusing on that one object that perhaps...

**P.A:** However, something that I said, from the beginning, and included in the texts that were there in the exhibition is: the museum has, I don't know how many thousands of objects stored and safeguarded, and what we are doing here is creating objects, that is, creating a new collection that cannot be collected, you

the public, we are going to create this collection together, but I will never burn it, never, all this clay that was used, donated, reused, I have part of it and I am already using it for other works, that is something that I wanted to do. And it is also a risk because the work cannot be bought, they didn't buy my work, they bought Pavel's work, they bought Paula's work. Yes, it is also a political stance, I don't want to enter the art market, that makes me very nervous, no, I don't want to be part of this collection. Thank you for inviting me, I love that you have opened these critical spaces, and I think it is extremely important that you continue to do so, but not me.

**B.B.T:** Sure, I think it is very important for your narrative. I also wanted to ask you also, for example, this exhibition on anti-colonialism, in a German museum, a contemporary museum. For example, right now it's all seen as a trend, isn't it? To decolonize the museum, inviting artists, from the diapora, from the Global South, or maybe with a positioning, about this. About that, I wanted to ask you, whose job do you think it is to decolonize the museum? And for that I wanted to read a quote from Brenda J. Caro Cocotle, "The third trend really makes me angry, this one proposes that artistic intervention is the way to decolonizing archives. Suddenly art could dismantle the accumulative, vertical, classificatory, violent archival rationality simply because it is art."

**P.A:** Well, there are two parts that I thought of when you were reading the quote. The first is that of being tokenized, the part of using this biography and contextuality that you bring with you, when showing the work, with the purpose of being sustained or of openmindedness, that's one part. And another is, that not only has to do with decoloniality or trends, but in general the figure of artists have fulfilled this function for a long time, I think for example feminists, and when the feminist "trend" began in the 60s, 70s in the US and Europe, as suddenly it was important to talk about these things, and women were not included, invited, it was a public criticism of patriarchal systems. I think about the work of people who are not making objects, or who are not always making objects, and how when it comes to having that encounter with cultural spaces, with museums, galleries, knowing that if I am going to cook, I am going to cook out here, it doesn't necessarily work, it still doesn't match, I think there is still not an understanding, where you say, oh yes of course, this is art, because it is so, because it is an artist who is doing it, because it is not a dinner.

**B.B.T:** Whose job do you think it is to decolonize the museum?

I would not detract from these interventions, spaces in the museum. In the same way that activism is valid, that a mass of people take to the streets to shout for their rights, in the same way it is important to make this placement of objects, or non-objects within spaces that traditionally contain objects, I believe that this opening or this incidence does something, that is to say that they have an impact, that ideas cross

from the way I work, to the way Teresa Burga works at some point. I used works that Teresa Burga has in the museum, drawings and paintings, to make the clay pieces that I made for the museum and I liked it very much. On the other hand, I don't believe that I am a person with power, I am not going to change things, nor the public that sees my work in relation to Teresa Burga, or in relation to any of these painters that they have in the rooms next to the Anti-colonial Interventions exhibition, we are not going to change anything. There was a lot of resistance to that exhibition, also backlashes, I think the curator can tell you more about that, I think that's where I should stop. But yes, backlashes from white power groups there.

**B.B.T:** Yes, I understand you, because here there is also a whole issue with the new director who has been here since 2019, Nanette Snoep, she is from the Netherlands, and her approach is decolonial, from her positioning, but decolonial as such, and she is a woman and so she also receives hate mail almost daily. And it is "funny" because supposedly this comes from Stadt Köln, all the guidelines, which in the end we know that structurally there is a lack of coordination, I think. I had another question, and that was do you think we need a museum?

**P.A:** Hahahaha. Honestly no. Personally, I feel so, on the one hand so disconnected, on the other hand I have anger, I have, I have to look for a word to define it but it has to do with feeling that the things that I consider important in the artistic world do not necessarily happen inside the museum, they happen in other places and in other formats that are not necessarily those of a museum like the Ludwig, with a collection of modern art, and I do not say it as to cancel culture or anything like that, I think it is valuable to see what your ancestors were thinking and feeling, I think you can learn a lot there. But also, all these exhibits are still being conceptualized in the same way as they were 20 years ago, 40 years ago, so it's the same story, it's the same value. I feel much more connected with the area of contemporary art, but also with explorations that happen outside of traditional spaces and on the one hand, there is the critical side, in which I say this does not represent the planetary emergencies that we are going through right now, but it is also because, many times I do not understand it, I feel that there is not a good pedagogical work, or it is not contextualized, it is not brought to relevance that is happening right now. How do we connect this with political movements? For example, in the case of Teresa Burga, how do we put this Pop Art that Teresa Burga did with what the United States was doing, how those relations that at that time were called Pan-American worked. I would invest my money in a different way, sorry, hahahahahah.

**B.B.T:** Also with these issues of Decoloniality, which happen a lot in academic, university environments. In a Storytelling Cafe, it was the farewell of the Diversity Directors, a question that reminded me a lot of what you were saying was a woman from Iran, who in the final round of questions said everything very

well but how does a woman who has just come as a refugee find out about these, for example this Storytelling Cafe, or a feminist group, how does she find out? How does she find out about these beautiful meetings?

**P.A:** Yes, it's a very relevant question.

**B.B.T:** The phrase that I read, I think it's a good input, a little bit like against all this of maybe idealizing Decoloniality in a German, European context, but to me personally I think this kind of encounter is very important, I agree with you. Especially for example your work, which is like I am not going to make an object, I am going to work with people, I am going to work with clay, I am going to make a dinner, that is to say, the theme of sharing food, cooking. So what you said at the beginning that the decolonization came to you maybe because of the women who took care of you and then I think that is a position that you take from a place of autonomy, it is not something that ties you. I think it's quite authentic, in that sense.

**P.A:** And it has to do with things that seem important to me.

**B.B.T:** One wonders how real changes are going to happen if the structure is the same. I don't know if you want to add any comments?

**P.A:** Yes, I was thinking about, for example, what you are going to write about, in this positioning of decolonizing ideas or desires in museums here, I was thinking about what you were talking about the trends, and I believe that up to now the Ludwig Museum is one of the largest museums in the EU that has invested so much space in an exhibition like this. Next year, here in Zurich, in the National Museum, there is an exhibition that is being prepared right now about Switzerland as a colonizing country, so they are talking about colonization. And right now there is a rather small exhibition in the Stadthaus, about colonial Zurich, called Blinde Flecke. What I see is that it is happening, they are giving work for example to people to develop these ideas, in the national exhibition I think there are about 15 advisors, curators and staff. I think it is very interesting, I hope it turns out well, obviously it is not going to be perfect, of course not. But there are already groups, there is a group here called Decolonize Zurich, where I have met many people, I have given workshops, almost all of them are academics, but not academics from the humanities, there is also, I work very closely with someone who does Agroecology. There is also another group called BlackBox, they do staging all over Zurich, and they show them where the families lived and they talked about where they got their money from, their connection with cocoa plantations, with sugar plantations, with cotton, who had slaves in their plantations somewhere in the Caribbean or Africa, and they are all named families, street names, statues. "Switzerland never had colonies", hahaha. And that leads you by the hand to think the question about this colonization process is very, very complex. The

groups I worked with at the Ludwig museum, I was amazed, I had not thought about these things, super complex.

**B.B.T:** Thank you very much indeed for your time...

**P.A:** To you Bena! And it's true if you want to come.

**B.B.T:** Are you serious?

**P.A:** Yes of course, of course, we have to decolonize ourselves in that too!

**B.B.T:** Hahahahahahahahaha

**P.A:** Hahahahahahahahaha