



© MEG, Roberta Colombo Dougoud

Ancestors in Collections? Intersecting Perspectives on Scientific Challenges and Contemporary Responsibilities

Organising Committee

Roberta Colombo Dougoud – MEG (Musée d'ethnographie de Genève), MC-SAA (Museum Commission of the Swiss Anthropological Association), ARCAN (Archaeology of Africa and Anthropology) Laboratory, University of Geneva

Jocelyne Desideri – ARCAN (Archaeology of Africa and Anthropology) Laboratory, University of Geneva

Antoinette Maget Dominicé – Art-Law Centre, University of Geneva

Anne Mayor – ARCAN (Archaeology of Africa and Anthropology) Laboratory and GSI (Global Studies Institute), University of Geneva

Milène Rossi – MEG (Musée d'ethnographie de Genève)

With the support of

SAGW/ASSH – Swiss Academy of Humanities and Social Sciences

SNSF – Swiss National Science Foundation



08:30 – 09:15 **Registration and Welcome**

09:15 – 09:30 Opening by **Carine Ayélé Durand**, Director of the MEG, and **Roberta Colombo Dougoud**, on behalf of the conference organisers

Intersecting Perspectives – Introduction

Chair: Anne Mayor

09:30 – 09:50 ***Human Remains from a Bioanthropological Perspective***
Jocelyne Desideri (ARCAN, University of Geneva, Switzerland)

09:50 – 10:10 ***Human Remains from an Ethnographic Museum Perspective***
Roberta Colombo Dougoud (MEG and ARCAN, University of Geneva, Switzerland)

10:10 – 10:30 ***Human Remains from a Legal Perspective***
Antoinette Maget Dominicé (Art-Law Centre, University of Geneva, Switzerland)

10:30 – 11:00 **Discussion**

11:00 – 11:30 **Coffee break**

Intersecting Perspectives – Repatriation and Responsibilities I

Chair: Jocelyne Desideri

11:30 – 12:00 ***Repatriation of Ancestral Persons in Namibia and Southern Africa: Reflections on Policy, Practice and Ethics***
Alma Nankela (RCHS – Archaeosciences & Consultants, Windhoek, Namibia)

12:00 – 12:30 ***From Congo to Switzerland and Back: A Decade of Scientific Diplomacy around the Restitution of Seven Mbuti Ancestral Remains***
Germain Ngoie Tshibambe (Department of International Relations, University of Lubumbashi, Democratic Republic of the Congo)
Anne Mayor (ARCAN and GSI, University of Geneva, Switzerland)

12:30 – 13:00 **Discussion**

13:00 – 14:30 **Lunch**

TUESDAY 3 NOVEMBER | 14:30 – 18:30

Intersecting Perspectives – Repatriation and Responsibilities II

Chair: Roberta Colombo Dougoud

- 14:30 – 15:00 ***Offering Respect and Dignity to Māori and Moriori Ancestral Remains through Repatriation, Restitution and Reconciliation***
Te Herekiele Herewini (Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, Wellington, Aotearoa New Zealand)
- 15:00 – 15:30 ***How the Missiemuseum Deals with Its Collection of Sepik Skulls: Research, Exhibition and Exchange***
Paul Voogt (Missiemuseum Steyl and Cultural Anthropology and Development Sociology, Leiden University, the Netherlands)
- 15:30 – 16:00 ***Le cas des Kali'na (Caraïbes): une restitution réussie***
Corinne Toka-Devilliers (Association Moliko Alet +Po, Séné, France)
- 16:00 – 16:30 Discussion
- 16:30 – 17:00 Coffee break

Intersecting Perspectives – Guided Tour of the MEG

- 17:00 – 18:30 ***Guided Tour of the “Dialogue” Section of the MEG’s Permanent Exhibition, The Archives of Human Diversity***

WEDNESDAY 4 NOVEMBER | 09:00 – 12:30

Intersecting Perspectives – Exhibiting Human Remains

Chair: Roberta Colombo Dougoud

- 09:00 – 09:30 ***Regarding the Dead. Human Remains in an Archaeological Museum***
Christian Greco (Museo Egizio, Turin, Italy)
- 09:30 – 10:00 ***Christian Saints’ Bodies and Their Display in Churches and Museums***
Urte Krass (Institut für Kunstgeschichte, University of Bern, Switzerland)
- 10:00 – 10:30 ***Travelling Legacies: Collecting Histories of Human Remains between South America and Europe***
Trish Biers (Department of Archaeology, University of Cambridge, United Kingdom)
- 10:30 – 11:00 Discussion
- 11:00 – 11:30 Coffee break

3 – 4 November 2026 | MEG Auditorium | Boulevard Carl-Vogt 65, Geneva, Switzerland
Free admission | Registration is required at ancestors.in.collections.meg@geneve.ch

Intersecting Perspectives – Visit to the University Anthropological Collections

11:30 – 12:30	<i>Visit to the University of Geneva's Anthropological Collections</i>
12:30 – 14:00	Lunch

WEDNESDAY 4 NOVEMBER | 14:00 – 18:30

Intersecting Perspectives – Artistic Interventions

Chair: Antoinette Maget Dominicé

14:00 – 14:30	<i>Artistic Provenance Research with Ancestors in Boxes</i> Tal Adler (Conceptual Artist, Berlin, Germany)
14:30 – 15:00	<i>Sutures: Photography, Colonial Archives and Human Remains</i> Karim Kal (Photographer, Viuz-en-Sallaz, Haute-Savoie, France)
15:00 – 15:30	<i>Elephants & Squirrels: An Artist's Perspective on the Repatriation of Human Remains</i> Deneth Piumakshi Veda Arachchige (Multidisciplinary Artist, Sri Lanka and France)
15:30 – 16:00	Discussion
16:00 – 16:30	Coffee break

Intersecting Perspectives – Roundtable: Dialogue Across Perspectives

Moderator: Carine Ayélé Durand

16:30 – 18:00	Fabienne Baraga (Federal Office of Culture, Bern, Switzerland) Te Herekiele Herewini (Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, Wellington, Aotearoa New Zealand) Alma Nankela (RCHS – Archaeosciences & Consultants, Windhoek, Namibia) Germain Ngoie Tshibambe (Department of International Relations, University of Lubumbashi, Democratic Republic of the Congo) Bernhard Schär (Chair of Modern and Contemporary History, UniDistance Suisse, Switzerland) Jayne-Leigh Thomas (Office of the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act, Indiana University, United States of America) Corinne Toka-Devilliers (Association Moliko Alet +Po, Séné, France) Henri-Michel Yéré (Swiss Society of African Studies and Commission for Historically Problematic Cultural Heritage, Bern, Switzerland)
18:00 – 18:30	Closing Discussion

Getting to the MEG

The conference will take place at the MEG.

Boulevard Carl-Vogt 65
CH - 1205 Geneva
Tél. +41 (0)22 418 45 50



As part of its eco-friendly approach, MEG promotes and encourages sustainable modes of transportation. Located in the heart of the Plainpalais district, the Museum is well connected to the tram, bus, and bike path networks and is easily accessible on foot.

Transportation to the Museum / TPG

Museum Bus Stops

2 19	Musée d'ethnographie
1	École-Médecine
1	Plainpalais
35	École-Médecine

Museum Tramway Stops

12 17 18	Plainpalais
15	Uni Mail
15	Plainpalais

Registration

Admission is free, but prior registration is required at
ancestors.in.collections.meg@geneve.ch