



Editorial

RESEARCH INTO THE COLONIAL PROVENANCE OF RIJKSMUSEUM OBJECTS

European national museums are increasingly aware of the extent to which colonialism and colonial violence are entwined with the formation of their collections, and that they should recognize the injustice done to former colonized territories. The unconditional return of objects that were looted or stolen is an integral part of this recognition, which is a matter for the State. The Rijksmuseum looks forward to contributing, primarily through shared research with experts from the countries of origin. It is our firm belief that sound research provides the foundations for restitution policy.

It is evident that in general, museum research is in the process of being reviewed and expanded to include new questions regarding ownership of objects and the multi-layered meanings of objects, broadening the field and the questions we ask as museums together with external experts, especially with those from the countries of origin of the objects concerned. New research breathes fresh air into the debate and delivers new ingredients for a fruitful exchange of ideas. As this issue of *The Rijksmuseum Bulletin* demonstrates, museums need outside input to enable them to create new types of content and find new connections.

The research that forms the core of the articles in this *Bulletin* was undertaken as part of the Pilot Project Provenance Research on Objects of the Colonial Era (PROCE). This project was a joint initiative of the NIOD Institute for War, Holocaust and Genocide Studies, the Stichting Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen and the Rijksmuseum Amsterdam, carried out under the leadership of the NIOD and its Expert Centre Restitution. The purpose of the project was to develop a research methodology and make recommendations for the organization and policy relating to provenance research into colonial collections. The Open University, the Royal Netherlands Institute of Southeast Asian and Caribbean Studies (KITLV), Leiden University and the Reinwardt Academy were partners in the project. It was carried out with the financial support of the Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture and Science and ran from November 2019 to March 2022. Reports on several objects from the Rijksmuseum collection have already been published and this *Bulletin* draws further attention to these finds that shed new light on the colonial provenance of these objects.

Furthermore, in order to coordinate and provide focus to provenance research and restitution policy in the Netherlands, the Rijksmuseum will take an active role in a new consortium of several Dutch museums and institutions, who will join forces to further the accessibility of provenance data to our partners in the countries of origin and elsewhere. In addition, this cooperation will form a support network for other Dutch heritage institutions and unite national and international academic initiatives in the field of provenance research.

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