



Universität
Basel

Universitätsbibliothek

Press release

16. August 2023

Exhibition

«Deal with it – Afrikanisches Erbe in Basel». A critical reappraisal of the Africana collections from the perspective of students.

The Basler Afrika Bibliographien (BAB) invite you to the opening of the exhibition «Deal with it – Afrikanisches Erbe in Basel». It presents the individual and collective history and present of five Basel institutions with a connection to Africa from the perspective of students: the University of Basel, the Swiss Tropical and Public Health Institute, the Museum der Kulturen Basel, Mission 21 and the Basler Afrika Bibliographien. Associated with this is the launch of a new portal, that brings together all the Africana collections in Basel.

Why is Basel, of all places, home to such a large number of institutions related to the African continent? This development builds on a longer tradition in the region of academic engagement with Africa. For example, the exhibition presents both the first African expeditions of the Basel upper classes as well as contemporary Swiss-African collaborative projects on an equal footing.

Dealing actively and openly with colonial and imperial heritage

With the university's clear commitment to research about, in, with and for Africa, Basel has developed into an international centre for interdisciplinary African research. The exhibition presents the history and present of the institutions from the perspective of students and aims to stimulate a broader discourse on Basel's colonial past and current relations to and with Africa.

Working closely with archivists, directors and curators, the students collected personal stories, unique artefacts and new insights. The students' perspectives were commented by the five institutions. The five institutions commented on the research and perception of the students. In the exhibition, the different perspectives on African heritage in Basel enter into a dialogue.

PARC – a meta catalogue, which should also simplify African research on the African continent

The exhibition also marks the launch of the new research portal PARC (Portal for African Research Collections). PARC aims to make all Africana collections in Basel accessible and visible in one meta catalogue. The goal of the technical design was that the portal would remain functional even with a poor Internet connection. This will ensure good access for researchers and students on the African continent. The digital archives of the five partner institutions are currently available: University of

Basel, Swiss Tropical and Public Health Institute, Museum der Kulturen Basel, Mission 21 and Basler Afrika Bibliographien. In the future, additional holdings within Switzerland and Europe or African institutions can be integrated.

Launch of the portal: 24 August 2023

«Deal with it» – the supporting programme

History is shared heritage. Therefore, within the framework of an open call, further Basel institutions or individuals were invited to contribute to the debate. The result is a diverse supporting programme with concerts, podium discussions, workshops and further exhibitions from August to December 2023. The public is cordially invited to participate in the debate.

«Deal with it» is organised by the Basler Afrika Bibliographien (Project management: Alice Spinnler and Reto Ulrich). It was curated by Elisa da Costa and Benedikt Wyss in collaboration with students of the University of Basel, with scenography by Bravo Ricky. It was financed by the Christoph Merian Stiftung, by the Service for Combating Racism (SCRA), the Freiwillige Akademische Gesellschaft, the Ernst Göhner Stiftung and the University of Basel.

Exhibition «Deal with it – Afrikanisches Erbe in Basel»

Exhibition venue:

University Library Basel
Schönbeinstrasse 18–20
4056 Basel

Duration: 25 August 2023 to 16 November 2023

Opening hours: Monday to Friday 8:00 to 20:00

Saturday 10:00 to 20:00

Admission free

Guided tour for the press

Thursday, 24 August, 14:00

Please register: pr-ub@unibas.ch

Exhibition opening

Thursday, 24 August, 18:00, University Main Library auditorium (1st floor)

Further information on the exhibition and the supporting programme can be found on our website:

<https://ub.unibas.ch/de/ausstellungen/deal-with-it/>

Images that can be downloaded can be found here:

<https://ub.unibas.ch/de/kontakt/medien>

Basler Afrika Bibliographien

The Basler Afrika Bibliographien (BAB) is a documentation and competence centre on Namibia and Southern Africa, based in Basel. They run an archive, a special library and a publishing house and organise scientific, cultural and socio-political events.

For queries

Basler Afrika Bibliographien

Reto Ulrich

ru@baslerafrika.ch

061 228 93 31