

CALL FOR APPLICANTS

Six short time fellowships for junior scholars

Sensitive Provenances

Human remains from colonial contexts in the collections of the University of Göttingen

The Volkswagen Foundation-funded research project "[Sensitive Provenances](#)" investigates the provenance of human remains from (proto-)colonial contexts in two collections at the University of Göttingen. This project aims to investigate the origin of human remains, the circumstances of acquisition, their transfer to academic collections, their use for research and teaching as well as their contemporary socio-political meanings. Alongside research, the project is establishing contacts with representatives of regions from which these human remains originate, discussing their future handling and initiating restitution processes. The project focuses on human remains from Oceania and Africa. The Sensitive Provenances project is interdisciplinary and combines different methodological approaches from historical-critical provenance research, cultural anthropology and biological anthropology and welcomes inquiries and applications from potential fellows in these and related fields.

The focus of the project is a) on the "Blumenbach Skull Collection", which was initiated by the natural scientist Johann Friedrich Blumenbach (1752-1840) and today comprises about 800 skulls, of which about 200 are of non-European provenance; and b) on the "Anthropological Collection", originally created in Hamburg's Museum für Völkerkunde. This collection contains about 1,200 human remains from Oceania and Africa. Our preliminary research suggests that currently the University of Göttingen holds remains from regions that correspond to contemporary: Australia, French Polynesia, Hawaii (USA), Indonesia, Kiribati, Malaysia, Marshall Islands (USA), Micronesia, Nauru, New Caledonia, New Zealand, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon

Islands, and Vanuatu, in Oceania; and from Cameroon, Congo, Guinea, Kenya, Namibia, South Africa, and Tanzania, in Africa.

We are seeking to award six short-term fellowships, each lasting from two to three months, for junior researchers from Africa and Oceania who would wish to engage with our project. We are open to all kinds of small-projects that propose new perspectives, expand or challenge what we do. The topic, questions, research methods and interests of the fellows are deliberately kept open in order to facilitate broad perspectives on collections of human remains, their colonial histories and contemporary meanings and treatment. Queries from the fields of History & Archives, Museum Studies, Social & Cultural Anthropology, Biological Anthropology, Indigenous Studies, and related areas are welcomed. We also invite proposals for artistic research and interventions that critically engage with the main themes of the project. The scholarship holders will receive a monthly stipend of 2.100 €. Pending on individual circumstances, a replacement allowance and a family and childcare allowance can also be made available. The travel costs to and from Göttingen will be covered. During the research stay in Göttingen, the scholarship holders will receive support in different organisational and content-related matters.

Pending on the pandemic situation and travel restrictions, each visiting fellow will be invited for a three months stay in Göttingen, in the second half of 2022 (specific dates are negotiable). The visiting fellow, depending on the needs and specificities of their proposed project, will be connected to researchers and experts in the following fields: history, cultural anthropology/ethnology, biological anthropology, provenance research, curatorial practice, museum practice and exhibition organisation; or more specifically with the [Seminar for Medieval and Modern History](#), [Institute of Cultural Anthropology/European Ethnology](#), [Historical Anthropology and Human Ecology](#), [Centre of Anatomy](#), [Centre for Collections Development](#), or the newly established [Forum Wissen](#).

Applications will be considered on a rolling basis until 01 March 2022. In order to apply, please send the following documents to Dr. Christian Vogel (vogel@kustodie.uni-goettingen.de):

- Cover letter (specifying the motivations and interests of the candidate)
- A description of the proposed project/activities for the period of the scholarship (max 1000 words)
- CV

For further queries please contact Dr. Christian Vogel (vogel@kustodie.uni-goettingen.de).