

This partial glossary explains some of the terms used in the exhibition texts. It is based on current thinking, which changes constantly, as does language and the way it is used. It has been compiled with the assistance of many people inside and outside the museum. Some offensive terms are not reproduced in their entirety.

This glossary has been revised and adapted for the exhibition at the Château de Prangins in collaboration with the UPYA institute.

### ① 'Agency」

describes the capacity of an individual or a group to act. In a post-colonial context, it refers to the capacity as well as the conditions that allow a person or a group to act and assert themselves in a self-determined manner and prevail. The concept of agency is closely associated with the idea of empowerment.

### ② 'Business cartels」

refers to agreements between companies for the purpose of gaining a competitive advantage. In the colonial era, trade privileges and cartels in the commodity trade were very common, for example, the 'cocoa cartel'. European trading companies profited heavily from these arrangements under British colonial rule until 1953 because they governed pricing and quality criteria. Today, cartels are virtually banned worldwide.

### ③ 'European colonialism」

describes a system and practice of domination based on violence and exploitation which involved European powers on the one side and subjugated, non-European peoples on the other (15<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> c.). This foreign supremacy was underpinned by local cooperation and combatted by various forms of resistance. The European colonial powers were

driven primarily by economic interest and justified their rule through the claim of alleged superiority.

### ④ 'Decolonization」

refers to the attainment of constitutional independence by a former colony from a colonial power. Since the 1960s, the term also describes the struggle of overcoming the legacy of colonial domination with regard to the political and economic structures as well as the mindsets and behaviour patterns that became embedded during the colonial era.

### ⑤ 'Eurocentrism」

refers to the way non-European cultures and countries were described and assessed from a European perspective, with Europe seen as the centre of the world. Its history of development, thought, and action served as the benchmark of 'progress' and 'civilization'. Colonialism fuelled this biased view. It persists to this day in the way we distinguish between the Global North and South in terms of politics, economics, and culture. The Eurocentrism propagated by colonialism replaced a polycentric world order, that is, an order with multiple political and cultural centres.

### ⑥ 'Congo atrocities」

refers to the ruthlessly violent exploitation of the Congo Free State, the private colony of the Belgian king Leopold II between 1885 and 1908. They rank as one of the most heinous crimes of the colonial period. Economic goals such as rubber production were pursued with utmost brutality. The population was possibly reduced by as much as half due to lethal violence, famine, disease, and a falling birth rate.

### ⑦ 'Exoticization」

refers to a strategy of *Othering* (see below) by which ostensibly positive attributes such as proximity to nature, uninhibited sexuality, or bodily and emotional vigour are used to describe a specific group of people as 'fascinating' from a European vantage point, but fundamentally different from the *white* norm and thus as implicitly inferior.

### ⑧ 'Imperialism」

refers to the endeavours of a nation state to expand its power beyond its borders. Empires pursue geostrategic goals, with colonial policy being one of the options. During the age of high imperialism (1870–1914), the colonial powers divided yet uncolonized territories in Africa and Asia among themselves. In the process, new countries such as Germany, Italy, the USA, and Japan joined the old European colonial powers. Imperialism continues today in new forms.

### ⑨ 'Indigenous」

is a collective term for groups of people who, to a considerable degree, were barred from their own territory and from living their own culture through conquest and occupation by other groups. Whenever possible, indigenous groups are referred to by their native name, such as the Skarù-rę? in the USA or the Mapuche in Chile.

### ⑩ 'Climate justice」

is today frequently demanded in reference to the connection between climate change and colonialism. Not least, because the formerly colonized areas of the world are today among those most affected, while the former colonial powers are among the main polluters (e.g. greenhouse gas emissions). They also benefit the most from the profits generated by unsustainable economic methods common to the Global South.

### ⑪ 'N—」

is a racist term used to designate Black people; it gained acceptance above all in the context of transatlantic slavery. Then, in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, the now scientifically refuted race theory formed the basis for justifying the oppression and dehumanization of Black people. The term is intrinsically connected to this racist view of human evolution and can never be applied in a neutral sense.

### ⑫ 'Global North and South」

are not geographical categories; instead, they point to economic and social discrepancies, in particular those inherited from colonialism. Thus, for instance, Australia belongs to the Global North. Countries of the Global North enjoy a privileged standing in terms of prosperity and economic development. Those of the Global South, on the other hand, are at a political, social, and economical disadvantage. This recent concept is often used instead of the term 'third world', which has come to be seen as pejorative. It reflects a reality that is subject to change.

### ⑬ 'Nyai」

was a term used for Asian women who lived with European men as 'housekeepers', companions, and concubines. Girls were recruited as labourers at the age of 13 or 14 but were then called to perform domestic as well as sexual duties for their employers. In exceptional cases, this arrangement developed into a permanent relationship, more rarely even into marriage. It remains unclear to what extent the women agreed to such a relationship.

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# 'colonial」

Switzerland's global entanglements

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#### Sources

Entries marked with an asterisk (\*) are taken from the glossary of the Service for Combating Racism: <https://www.frb.admin.ch/fr/glossaire> 'Antirassismus in der Kunstgeschichte – ein (unfertiger) Leitfaden', CARAH – Collective for Anti-Racist Art History, 2022  
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#### ⑭ 「Othering」

describes the process of demarcation and marginalization of a specific group of people. In the colonial constellation of power, the perception of 'otherness' meant that, as a rule, colonized people were ascribed with negative traits to explain and justify their oppression and inferiority. Othering can easily lead to discrimination and xenophobia.

#### ⑮ 「Enslaved people」

has increasingly come to substitute the term 'slave' since this term reduces those affected to the quality of a non-human commodity. The use of the 'enslaved people' is meant to highlight the fact that slavery is always the result of violent abuse of humans by other humans for the purpose of exploitation.

#### ⑯ 「Postcolonial」

describes, on the one hand, the formal ending of a colony, and, on the other, the continuity of colonial patterns after attaining independence. Such continuities are the subject of postcolonial research as well as critique in attempt to advance the decolonization of entrenched modes of thought and action. This includes unequal global power relations, lasting colonial world views along with racist thought patterns.

#### ⑰ 「Race\*」

'Race' is a social construct which attempts to define and/or legitimize a person's membership or non-membership of a group or population. This term, borrowed from the natural sciences and applied to the social sciences, is used in its racist connotation to defend the idea that socio-economic, cultural or religious inequalities are biologically based, and that physiological, genetic, social,

cultural, symbolic and intellectual differences justify the exclusion of certain people and the refusal of fundamental rights and human dignity.

#### ⑱ 「Racialization」

refers to the process by which humans are categorized and stereotyped on the basis of actual or ascribed features and hierarchized on the strength of those characteristics. The term is meant to underscore the social construction of 'race' and focus on the aspect of marginalization. Today, the adjective 'racialised' is used to denote people impacted by racism.

#### ⑲ 「Racism\*」

Racism is an ideology and/or set of practices which classifies and ranks human beings into supposedly natural groups known as 'races' on the basis of their physical characteristics or their ethnic, national or religious affiliation, either real or assumed. In this way, human beings are no longer considered or treated as individuals but as members of a 'race', to which collective moral, cultural or intellectual characteristics regarded as inferior and immutable are ascribed.

#### ⑳ 「Structural racism\*」

refers to the process of discrimination or exclusion of racialised groups deeply rooted in our society and manifesting itself through values, actions and normative representations that have developed over the course of history. This phenomenon, which permeates society, institutions and businesses, often goes unnoticed: individuals, seeing nothing 'abnormal' about it, do not question it. In contrast stands structural privilege: the fact that majority or dominant groups enjoy advantages of which they are unaware, as these are regarded as 'natural.'

#### ㉑ 「Provenance research」

investigates the origins and changes in ownership of collection items. In particular, objects derived from contexts of injustice linked, for example, to colonialism are today subject to greater scrutiny with a view to establishing whether they were acquired illegitimately or in connection with acts of violence. As a result, museums and archives are seeking to initiate a dialogue with partner institutions and possible descendants in the former colonies in order to find a fair solution for the respective collections.

#### ㉒ 「Restitution」

refers to the return of looted or expropriated art and cultural assets to their societies of origin and their rightful previous owners. Claims for the return of looted objects have been voiced by the descendants of previous owners since the 1930s. But it is only in recent years that museums in Europe have begun assessing their collections and that first restitutions have been actually carried out.

