

DOK Industry Podcast on the Role of Documentaries in Decolonising Museums

Press Release
20 June 2023



Host Aisha Jamal and guests Marley McDonald and Sameer Farooq (from left to right)

The first episode of the new season of the DOK Industry Podcast has just gone online. Filmmakers Sameer Farooq and Marley McDonald join host Aisha Jamal to reflect on the specific role that documentary films can play in the decolonisation of museums.

Sameer Farooq introduces his experimental documentary “The Museum Visits a Therapist” (co-directed by Mirjam Linschooten). This film focuses on the collection in the Tropenmuseum, Amsterdam’s prominent museum of ethnography, and asks: What if the museum were to go to a therapist? What might such a trauma-centred therapy session reveal?

Marley McDonald is currently developing a documentary project entitled “The Elephant in the Room” which focuses on American natural history museums. This film, which consists entirely of archival footage, attempts to discern what collections show and hide about their past, present, and future.

In this episode of the podcast, our guests explore such questions as: What does documentary film add to the conversation around art restitution and museum collections? What are the ethical concerns when dealing with archives? How can images, objects or entire collections be further decolonised?

Sameer Farooq is a Canadian artist of Pakistani and Ugandan Indian descent. Using a versatile approach involving sculpture, photography, documentary film and anthropological methods, he explores strategies of representation to add to the ways in which museums have investigated the past through collection, interpretation and display.

Marley McDonald is a filmmaker, animator and painter. She was an associate editor on “Spaceship Earth” and “All the Beauty and the Bloodshed” and an additional editor on “Listening to Kenny G”. She completed her first feature film, “Time Bomb Y2K”, for HBO in 2023.

Documentary filmmaker and curator Aisha Jamal is a member of the

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Publicist
Nina Kühne
Tel. +49 (0)341 30864 1070
presse@dok-leipzig.de

Leipziger Dok- Filmwochen GmbH
Katharinenstraße 17
04109 Leipzig

Chairwoman of
the Supervisory Board
Dr. Skadi Jennicke

Managing and Artistic Director
Christoph Terhechte

Place of Performance
Leipzig

Handelsregister
Commercial Register, HRB 35 89

VAT Tax ID
DE141498242

Programmers of Colour Collective and a curator at the Hot Docs film festival in Canada. She is currently working on her second documentary film about art repatriation and museum culture.

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The podcast is available from the DOK Leipzig website as well as from Spotify, Google Podcasts and Deezer.

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