

# 23.04.

18:15–19:45 Uhr  
P 5  
(Philosophicum)

# ifeas

Institut für  
Ethnologie und  
Afrikastudien

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## Loss: colonial context and contemporary practice



Desk and insects  
in Kaya Kinondo  
(A. Storch, 2022).

If we consider African Studies as a narrative, then we can recognize that the guiding motif of this narrative is loss – the loss of memories, of nominal classifications, of zones of distribution on maps, of languages, and finally of people themselves. Behind this construction of loss is on the one hand – in a rather contradictory way – the idea that this loss actually exists (and not just as a narrative) and must be alleviated by reconstructing lost language and archiving the evidence of its history. On the other hand, however, this narrative also leads – in a far more predictable fashion – to a habituation to the supposed banality of loss and the violence that preceded it, and thus to the normalization of narratives (and probably practices) of genocide, mass murder, burning and looting. This presentation first offers a search for the traces of historical meanings and practices of loss, for example in the abstracting reconstructions in which the effects of violence are mirrored without, however, considering their triggers. Subsequently, information is provided on how history and its narrative tip over into the disciplinary present again and again. The loss that has become present appears to be infected with its own burdened past, without enabling any form of becoming. Abstract objectifications become placeholders that block the space for conversations about actual experiences. The rigid adherence to the old narrative now becomes a loss of one's own language, for example as an expression of protest and grief, of one's own integrity and humanity. How other narratives help to develop alternatives could be discussed at the end of the talk, perhaps as the beginning of something that is beyond our control.

**Anne Storch** teaches Afrikanistik at the University of Cologne. Her research combines language description, sociolinguistics, critical Africanistics, critical approaches to colonial linguistics, critical heritage studies and Indigenous theory. She has contributed widely to the analysis of complex repertoires, spiritually meaningful registers and creativity in language. She is also interested in language in tourism and in semiotic landscapes in contexts of (neo)colonialism. Her current research is about language and contingency, with a particular focus on magical practices and inscriptions on roof tiles.

Weitere Informationen: [www.ifeas.uni-mainz.de](http://www.ifeas.uni-mainz.de)

Institutskolloquium Sommersemester 2024 Leitung: Nico Nassenstein

JG|U