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Institut für
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Goethe University Frankfurt / Lagos

Post-colonialism or Post-nationalism: Third Cinema, Archives, and Decolonizing History

The discovery and beginning presentation of a national archive's holdings of long-forgotten footage affords the possibility of engaging with the existing, established mode of historiography. The discovery, therefore, some few years ago, of a large batch of decaying film cans in the abandoned rooms of Nigeria's old Colonial Film Unit - which the country inherited from the British - affords a revolutionary possibility: a critical engagement with academic-based history, which privileges the colonial experience, post-colonialism, at the expense, the erasure of all other national-historic experiences, viz., post-nationalism, the betrayal of the anti-colonial struggle.

This discovery arrives at a critical juncture: the demands for restitution of artefacts and calls for decolonization of museums and archives. The demand for the restitution of audiovisual archives throws up a crucial question: are museums and artefacts-based frameworks for restitutive justice applicable to archives? Given that a significant proportion of these rediscovered materials were produced within the colonial gaze, does not the technical reproducibility offered by digitization risk perpetuating the racist violence inherent in these works through shared rights. Furthermore, this presentation will consider what it means to think Third Cinema in relation to archives and conclude by considering how possible it is to decolonize history-keeping practices without decolonizing the world.

Didi Cheeka is a filmmaker working with found image and sound. He is the founder and artistic director of Decasia - Berlin-Lagos Archive Film Festival. Didi has presented his archive image-based work at the Berlinale's Forum Expanded, and archive-sound installation at Arsenal - Institut for Film and Video Art and Goethe-University Frankfurt's Archival Assembly, Berlin. He is co-curator of Black Atlantic Cinema Lecture series and currently researching and helping to digitize Nigeria's National Film, Video, and Sound Archive. Didi is currently on research residency for his coming book publication, *Encounters in the Archive: The Struggle to Reclaim Nigeria's Audiovisual Heritage*, at Goethe-University Frankfurt's Theatre, Film, and Media studies..



Institutskolloquium Sommersemester 2025
Leitung: Matthias Krings

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