



Decolonizing African Art History: New Perspectives and Methodologies in Kenya

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Abstract

African art history has traditionally been influenced by Eurocentric perspectives, which have shaped its narratives and methodologies. This oversight has led to a limited understanding of African artistic practices and their historical contexts. The study employs a multi-disciplinary approach, integrating ethno-archaeological fieldwork with archival research. Participant observation, oral history interviews, and community-based documentation are used to gather data from diverse Kenyan communities. Participant observations indicate that traditional art-making practices in Kenya often incorporate local mythologies and spiritual beliefs, significantly influencing the aesthetic choices and materials used. By integrating these indigenous methodologies into African art history discourse, this research underscores the importance of recognising and valuing diverse artistic expressions across Africa. Future studies should prioritise collaborative approaches with local communities. Art historians and archaeologists are encouraged to engage more deeply with community leaders and artists in their research processes. This collaboration can lead to a more nuanced understanding of African art history, free from colonial biases. Decolonization, Kenyan Art History, Indigenous Methodologies

Keywords: *African, Decolonization, Postcolonialism, Ethnography, Oral Tradition, Subjectivity, Agency*

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