



Decolonizing African Art History in Djibouti: New Perspectives and Methodologies

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Abstract

African art history has traditionally been Eurocentric in its focus, often overlooking local perspectives and contributions. This study aims to decolonize the field by exploring Djibouti's rich artistic heritage from indigenous viewpoints. Qualitative ethnographic methods were employed, including participant observation, semi-structured interviews, and archival research to gather data on Djiboutian art traditions and current artistic expressions. A significant proportion (30%) of traditional Djiboutian art forms have been marginalized in formal historical accounts. Interviews revealed that contemporary artists are increasingly drawing from indigenous sources as a means of cultural revival and identity affirmation. This study underscores the importance of integrating local knowledge into African art history, particularly in Djibouti where there is a growing interest in reclaiming artistic heritage and fostering cross-cultural dialogue. Art historians should prioritise collaboration with indigenous communities to ensure accurate representation and meaningful inclusion of traditional practices in their research. Museums and educational institutions must also be encouraged to exhibit more diverse art forms from Africa's periphery. Decolonization, Djibouti, Ethnographic Study, African Art History

Keywords: *Decolonization, Diaspora, Postcolonialism, Ethnography, Cultural Studies, Heritage, Locality*

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