



Decolonizing Central African Art Histories: New Perspectives and Methodologies

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Abstract

Central African art history has been shaped by colonial influences, often marginalizing indigenous perspectives and methodologies. We employed participatory action research (PAR) in collaboration with local artists and cultural institutions to document traditional arts, ensuring their voices are central to the narrative. Through PAR, we identified a significant proportion of traditional art forms practicing specific ritualistic roles that were previously unrecognized by mainstream scholarship. The study underscores the importance of integrating indigenous methodologies in Central African art history, fostering more inclusive and accurate narratives. Art schools should incorporate training on decolonizing research methods to prepare future scholars for such collaborative approaches.

Keywords: *Decolonization, Africana Studies, Critical Theory, Participatory Action Research, Indigenous Knowledge Systems, Ethnography, Postcolonialism*

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