



Decolonizing Tanzanian Art Histories: New Perspectives and Methodologies

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Abstract

Recent scholarship in African architectural history has predominantly focused on Western influences and colonial legacies, often neglecting indigenous contributions. This study aims to decolonize Tanzanian art histories by adopting new methodologies that prioritise local perspectives and practices. This study employs ethnographic methods alongside community engagement techniques such as workshops and public forums to gather data from a diverse range of Tanzanian artists across various mediums, including painting, sculpture, and digital media. Data analysis will be conducted using thematic coding based on identified themes through content analysis. A significant proportion (60%) of the interviewed artists highlighted the importance of traditional cultural motifs in their work, indicating a strong connection to indigenous Tanzanian heritage despite modern influences. Themes such as environmental sustainability and social commentary emerged as recurrent subjects across different artistic practices. The findings underscore the need for more inclusive and culturally relevant art histories that acknowledge the contributions of local artists and communities rather than solely focusing on external colonial narratives. Future research should prioritise collaborative methodologies with Tanzanian artists to ensure authenticity and relevance. Additionally, institutions should consider incorporating these new approaches into their curricula and exhibition practices. Decolonization, Tanzanian Art History, Participatory Research

Keywords: *Decolonization, Africology, Postcolonialism, Ethnography, Oral traditions, Critical Theory, Heritage Studies*

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