

Museums, Monuments and Statues: A Critical Review

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Abstract

World over, the characters of museums and monuments have historically been influenced by the purposes, assumptions, and identities of those who planned them. From an African perspective, processes of building museums and monuments are a sincere quest for the restoration of an authentic African identity previously destroyed by imperialism and necessarily construed as a decolonization project. However, reality in many countries including Zimbabwe shows that many of these are a significant expression of the ruling class and powerful elites' desire both to engage in a politics of recognition and to position themselves relative to pasts and futures. Designating an architectural product as a historicist piece is rarely a straightforward engagement; it is multi-authored and often obscure. The representation and materialization of museums and monuments are paradoxical: serving as iconographies for historic preservation and collective heritagization, and at the same time instruments of power.

Keywords: Coat of arms, Colonial violence, Collective memorialization, Community, Community museum, Currency, Deities, Dzimbabwes, Elites, Flag, Genocide, Guerrillas, Heritagization, Heroes Acre, History, Historiography, Iconographies, Imperialism, Independence, Kings, Kingdom, Landmark architecture, Liberation, Memory dispositifs, Memorialisation, Museums, Monuments, Mythicisation, Mythic statuses, Mythology, Party, Patriotic iconography, Patriotism, President, Politics, Pungwe, Sculpture, Sell-outs, Spirit medium, Sovereignty, Statues, Symbolic violence, Totalitarian propaganda, United Nations Educational Scientific Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), Violence, Zimbabwe Bird