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SLIDE DECK

ROTTERDAM, THE NETHERLANDS



Building a Sustainable Future in Museums: Decolonized Perspectives of the University of Lagos Museum Collection

By

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This article explores the role of the University of Lagos Museum Collection in decolonizing the Nigerian mind and promoting a return to African roots and ideology.

The study explores the historical significance of museum archives in shaping individual and collective memory, and how museum collections and displays can be used to challenge dominant narratives and ideologies. The findings suggest that museums can be powerful tools for decolonization, and the University of Lagos Museum Collection in particular holds great potential for this purpose. Overall, this article contributes to the ongoing discourse on decolonization and the role of museums in shaping national identity and memory.



FESTAC AND THE ASSERTION OF AFRICAN IDENTITY

The Second World Black and African Festival of Arts and Culture otherwise known as FESTAC 77, where Africans from the motherland and the diaspora all came together to assert African pride and their contributions to the development of the world. FESTAC '77 held significant patriotic implications to the leaders who were part of its organisation. The individuals responsible for arranging the event had optimistic expectations of the contributions of the festival to the promotion of national harmony and the integration of various cultural elements, thereby creating a distinct Nigerian national culture that could be showcased in museums.



The Development of the Museum Section, University of Lagos Library Collection

Many of the initial works that form the University of Lagos Museum collection of Artworks were derived from this festival (Barber, 2022, & Ikpakronyi,.2002). Based on the connection of these works to the FESTAC celebration, one can immediately understand their position as cultural materials that were produced and exhibited for decolonisation and reorientation purposes.


Art and Reorientation

The connection between museums worldwide and colonisation is inherent. Consequently, the process of decolonisation goes beyond physically separating from the coloniser or the dominant power. It involves actively engaging in a critical process of contemplation and action that does not uncritically endorse Eurocentric ideas. Decolonisation calls for deep reflection on the accumulation of ideas and knowledge systems that form the basis of “Western civilization,” both those that existed before and persisted during and after colonisation. It involves questioning and revealing the underlying foundations of these ideas, which contribute to rendering the societies and people of Africa, Asia, and Latin America “invisible” to the colonisers.

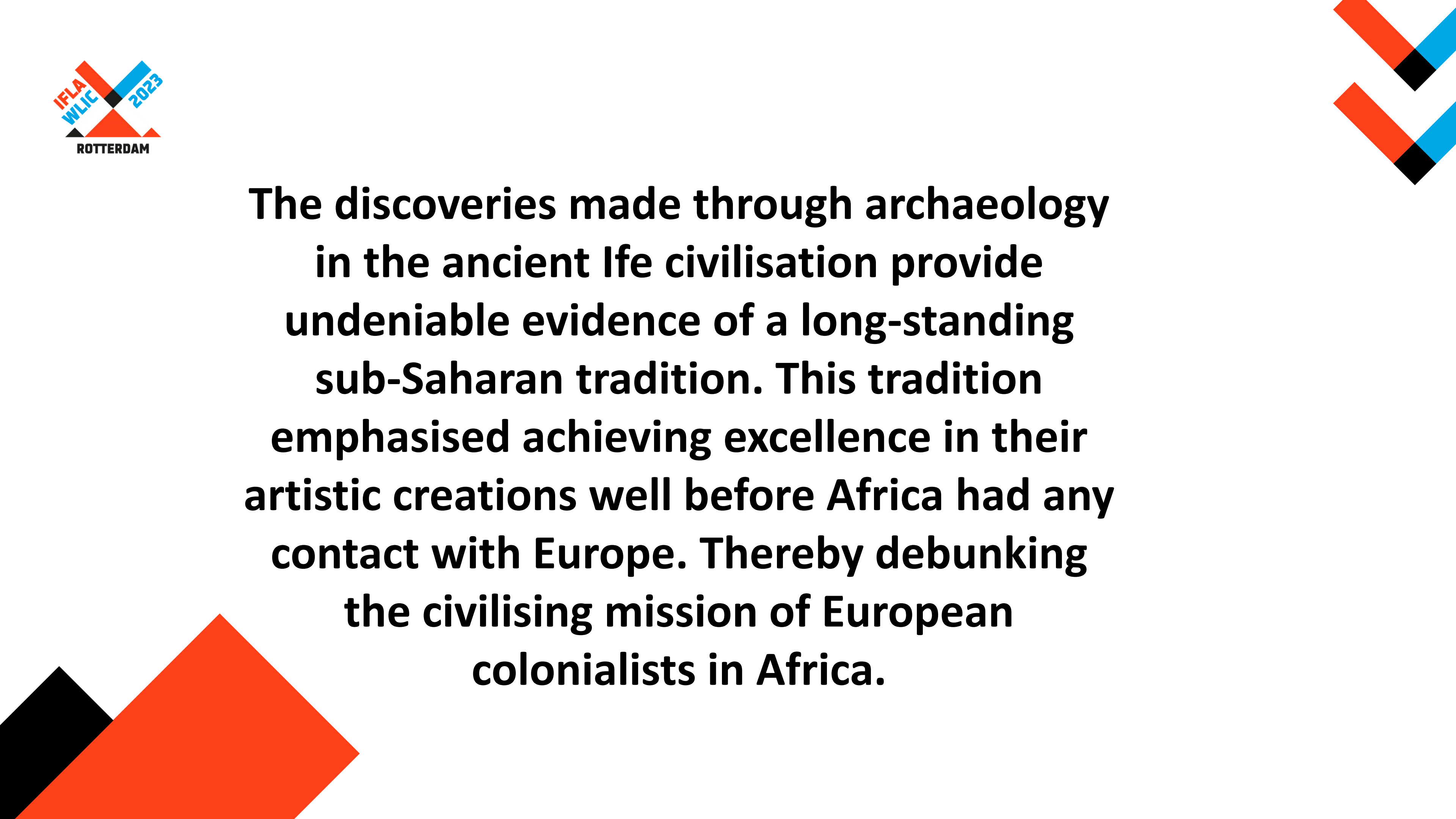


**Hundreds of years of subjugation:
the wounds in need of healing
extend beyond the impact of
colonialism on the African psyche**



The slide features decorative geometric shapes: a large red triangle in the bottom-left corner, a black triangle in the bottom-left corner overlapping the red one, and a large red and blue 'X' shape in the top-right corner.

The narratives accompanying exhibitions of cultural materials from Nigeria and other African nations should reflect the specific local content and context in which these objects exist. It is essential that those who live and actively participate in the culture being examined play a central role in expressing these narratives.

The slide features decorative geometric shapes: a large red triangle in the bottom-left corner, a black triangle in the bottom-left corner overlapping the red one, and a stylized 'X' shape in the top-right corner composed of red, blue, and black lines.

The discoveries made through archaeology in the ancient Ife civilisation provide undeniable evidence of a long-standing sub-Saharan tradition. This tradition emphasised achieving excellence in their artistic creations well before Africa had any contact with Europe. Thereby debunking the civilising mission of European colonialists in Africa.

Plate 1

Artist: Abayomi Barber

Title: Ori Olokun

Year: 1973

Medium: P.O.P

Height: 46cm



Plate 2
Artist: Afi Ekong
Title: Uphill
Year: N/A
Medium: Oil on board
Size: 60cm x 60cm





Plate 3

Artist: Ben Enwouu

Title: Going/Beauty and the Beast

Year: 1961

Medium: Oil on board

Size: 258cm x 92cm

Plate 4

Artist: Erabor Emokpae

Title: The Journey

Year: 1965

Medium: Oil on board

Size: 152cm x 91cm



Appropriation of ideas from the West by Nigerian artists

Through his artistic license, Fakeye appropriates the context of a religion introduced to Africa by Europeans and transforms it into a metaphorical expression for Nigerians. By intentionally incorporating various tribes, he aims to foster a sense of unity and common purpose within the nation.

Plate 5

Artist: Lamidi O. Fakeye

Title: N/A

Year: 1965

Medium: Sculpture Wood relief

Size: 61cm x 37cm



Conclusion

This research has revealed how the University of Lagos Museum Collection has been deployed for decolonising the Nigerian mind and promoting a return to African roots and ideology by its deployment as a means of reorientation of the postcolonial Nigerian mind. The artistic expressions in this collection have been used as a window to gain insight into the mind of the artist of late colonial and early postcolonial Nigeria. The artists involved have successfully married the ideologies of traditional Africa and that of the West that was introduced to them through colonialism, even though their works are expressed in different styles and mediums. The study has also revealed the process of decolonisation of collections by localising the context and narratives of the collection.



Thank you for listening.



