

EVENT DESCRIPTION SHEET

PROJECT	
Project name and acronym:	Multidirectional Memory: Remembering for Social Justice – (MultiMemo)
Participant:	Fundacja Urban Memory (UMF)
PIC number:	890263570

EVENT DESCRIPTION	
Event number:	WP 8
Event name:	Academic conference on misplaced heritage and decolonization of museum collections
Type:	Series of events
In situ/online:	in-situ
Location:	Poland, Wrocław
Date(s):	11.01.2024, 25.04.2024, 13-14.11.2024, 28.11.2024, 03.12.2024
Website(s) (if any):	https://multimemo.difficultheritage.eu/blog/event/rozmowa-panelowa/ https://multimemo.difficultheritage.eu/blog/event/1834/ https://multimemo.difficultheritage.eu/en/blog/event/panel-discussion/ https://multimemo.difficultheritage.eu/en/blog/event/sensitive-legacy/
Participants	
Female:	62
Male:	27
Non-binary:	0
From country 1 [Poland]:	87
From country 2 [Germany]:	1
From country 3 [Czechia]:	1
Total number of participants:	89
From total number of countries:	3
Description	
<i>Provide a short description of the event and its activities.</i>	
The conference “ <i>Sensitive Legacy in University Collections: Between Adaptation and Restitution</i> ” and a series of pre- and post events was organized to address the complex legacy of human remains, ethnographic objects,	

and photographs collected in Australia by Hermann Klaatsch in the early 20th century under colonial rule. The event served as a platform to explore Australian, German, and Polish perspectives on the status, cultural biography, and ethical use of such collections, which are part of the University of Wrocław's holdings.

The conference resulted from networking and a series of events extending over nearly a year, during which research was conducted, and collaboration was established among scholars from various countries and representatives of indigenous communities whose artifacts and human remains were appropriated by Klaatsch. The event program, focusing on various aspects of difficult heritage, aligned closely with the Urban Memory Foundation's (UMF) mission to foster knowledge exchange, raise awareness of sensitive heritage, and enhance cooperation between academic and NGO sectors.

Pre-Conference Activities

1. **January 11, 2024:** A lecture by Dr. Agata Strzdała (Wrocław Medical University) at the Institute of Cultural Studies (University of Wrocław) addressed the ethical issues of acquiring, storing, exhibiting, and studying human remains, using Hermann Klaatsch's collection as an example.
2. **April 25, 2024:** A workshop involving representatives from various academic circles in Poland (University of Warsaw, Museum of Jagiellonian University, University of Wrocław, Wrocław Medical University) and the NGO: Zapomniane Foundation presented research on sensitive collections. This workshop helped crystallize the framework for the conference and demonstrated the relevance of such discussions in Polish academic centers, museums, and NGOs.

The Conference: Sensitive Legacy in University Collections: Between Adaptation and Restitution

The main part of the event was a scientific conference held on November 13–14, 2024, marking the first event of its kind in Poland to include representatives of the Australian Aboriginal minority and Australian academics. Hermann Klaatsch's collections of human remains, ethnographic objects, and photographs served as a foundation to discuss the status, cultural biography, and ethical considerations surrounding such collections. The conference reflected on ethically appropriate procedures for their use and examined whether restitution might be advisable.

Scholars, museum professionals, and community representatives discussed the broader implications of working with these collections. The interdisciplinary participation of experts from fields such as cultural studies, medicine, ethnography, and history enriched the discussions, making the conference a platform for diverse perspectives. The presence of members from the ethnic minority whose remains were part of Klaatsch's collections added depth and authenticity to the dialogue.

Day 1: November 13, 2024. Panel Discussion: "Sensitive Heritage of Wrocław at Exhibitions"

Held at Odra Centrum, this panel focused on sensitive heritage in exhibitions, exploring the intersection of art, science, and activism. The discussion emphasized the challenges of presenting sensitive heritage in exhibitions and sparked vibrant exchanges, showcasing interdisciplinary approaches and collaborative potential between cultural and academic stakeholders. **Moderator:** Dr. Agata Strzdała (Wrocław Medical University). **Panelists:** Dr. Jacek Małczyński (University of Wrocław) – Creator of the "Colonial Atlas of Wrocław" project, Dr. Anna Kurpiel (University of Wrocław) – Co-curator of the "Rzeczy przysposobione" exhibition, Dr. Jędrzej Siuta (Wrocław Medical University) – Curator of the Museum of Forensic Medicine, Mgr. Michał Stefański (University of Wrocław) – Researcher specializing in Hermann Klaatsch's slides and photographs.

Day 2: November 14, 2024. Scientific Conference

A total of 13 presentations and a Q&A session addressed the ethical, cultural, and historical dimensions of sensitive heritage collections. The conference was a hybrid event, with on-site participants joined online by Australian researchers and minority representatives who presented their perspectives on the Hermann Klaatsch collection. Publication in a scientific journal is planned for 2025.

Key Presentations:

- *Reasons for Repatriation of First Nations Australian Ancestral Remains* – Dr. Hilary Howes
- *Hermann Klaatsch's Anthropological Research in Australia* – Prof. Paul Turnbull
- *Yawuru's Journey to Repatriate Stolen Ancestors* – Sarah Yu and Naomi Appleby
- *Hermann Klaatsch's Legacy in German Contexts* – Dr. Corinna Erckenbrecht (Reiss-Engelhorn-Museums, Mannheim, Germany)
- *Hermann Klaatsch's Legacy in Polish Contexts* – Dr. Łukasz Bukowiecki
- **Panel Discussion:** Moderated by **Dr. Magdalena Wróblewska** (Director of the State Ethnographic Museum in Warsaw), the session facilitated meaningful exchanges among attendees and experts.

- **Afternoon Presentations:** Explored museum practices, historical and ethical aspects of sensitive collections, and management challenges. Contributors included:
 - **Dr. Urszula Bończuk-Dawidziuk** (Museum of the University of Wrocław)
 - **Mgr. Agata Stasińska** (National Museum in Wrocław)
 - **Prof. Jan Kotusz** (Museum of Natural History, University of Wrocław)
 - **Dr. Kamila Uzarczyk** (Wrocław Medical University)
 - **Mgr. Marta Szaszkiewicz** (University of Gdańsk)
 - **Dr. Joanna Ślaga** (Museum of Jagiellonian University)

After-Conference Sessions

The series of events concluded with two lectures on Nov. 28 and Dec. 3, 2024 by **Prof. Renata Tańczuk**, who summarized the conference’s key insights and underscored the importance of ethical practices in museum curation. During the lecture, she introduced students of the Institute of Cultural Studies to the controversies surrounding the Hermann Klaatsch collection and emphasized the necessity of ethical approaches in handling museum collections.

websites: 13.11.2024 event: [link \(EN\)](#), [link \(PL\)](#), 14.11.2024 event: [link \(EN\)](#), [link \(PL\)](#)

information about lecture posted by Instytut Kulturoznawstwa on Facebook → [link](#), [link](#), [link](#)

UMF event on Facebook → [link](#), [link](#), UMF posts on Facebook → [link](#), [link](#), [link](#)

Video from streaming of the conference (14.11.24) available on Facebook→ [link](#) and on YouTube channel → [link](#)

HISTORY OF CHANGES		
VERSION	PUBLICATION DATE	CHANGE
1.0	01.04.2022	Initial version (new MFF).
2.0	21.05.2024	Change duration: from 1 day event to a series of events; change of the title and the topic covered in the D.8.1 instead of “Academic conference on Jewish Breslau/ Wrocław heritage 2” into “Academic conference on misplaced heritage and decolonization of museum collections”