

# A CASE FOR RESTITUTION IN 5 FILMS

A Film Series

Curated by  
**TOBI AKINDE**

Filmstill from: You Hide Me by Nii Kwate-Owoo, 1970.

Tobi Akinde is a Nigerian filmmaker and independent film curator currently based in New Orleans. In 2020, he co-founded the Monangambee Film Foundation, a nomadic panafrikan microcinema in Lagos, Nigeria, and has curated films for the Goethe-Institut Nigeria and the African Studies Book Club at the University of Cambridge. His most recent documentary work as a cinematographer, *Coconut Head Generation* (2023), won the Jury Grand Prix at Cinema du réel, Paris, and has screened at New Directors/ New Films at MoMA, New York, BlackStar Film Festival, Philadelphia, and the Geneva International Film Festival and Forum on Human Rights amongst others.



Photo: Franck H. Godefroy

## ethnographic museum

University of Zurich  
Pelikanstrasse 40  
CH-8001 Zürich  
musethno.uzh.ch

**THU**  
**13.03**  
**19:00**

## THIS IS NOT A 21<sup>st</sup> CENTURY PROBLEM

### You Hide Me

In 1970, Ghanaian filmmaker Nii Kwate-Owoo created a short film about the valuable African artefacts held at the British Museum to make a case for their restitution.

*Film by Nii Kwate-Owoo, Ghana/UK, 1970, 16 min, Language: E.*

### Statues Also Die

This film addresses the complex relationship between traditional art from sub-Saharan Africa, colonization, and how objects lose their meaning (and metaphorically die) when placed in museums.

*Film by Chris Marker and Alain Resnais, France, 1950, 30 min, Language: F with E subtitles.*

**THU**  
**03.04**  
**19:00**

### Dahomey

In 2021, 26 objects from the Kingdom of Dahomey leave Paris and are returned to present-day Republic of Benin. How should these art treasures, stolen from ancestors, be received in a country which has reinvented itself in their absence?

*Film by Mati Diop, France/Benin, 2024, 67 min, Language: F with E subtitles.*

**THU**  
**08.05**  
**19:00**

### Restitution? Africa's Fight for Its Art

Snatched up like trophies by colonizers and moved to Europe, African artworks fertilized European art before being recognised as universal masterpieces in their own right. But in Africa, their absence is still traumatic. Through the burning question of their possible restitution, the film invites us to reconsider both our cultural heritage and museums' role in reinventing our relationship with Africa.

*Film by Nora Philippe, France, 2021, 83 min, Language: F with E subtitles.*

**THU**  
**05.06**  
**19:00**

### Black Girl

In his first feature, Sembène offers a nuanced perspective on objectification and restitution through the journey of an African maid and an African mask in France. By paralleling the mask's trajectory with Diouana's, Sembène crafts a synchronous dialogue of exile of a people and their material artifacts. This dual narrative intertwines life force and objectification, displacement and restitution, emphasising the process of return as both a physical and symbolic act.

*Film by Ousmane Sembène, 1966, 65 min, Language: F with E subtitles.*