

Claudia Ankrah

“Sometimes the Dead Go Unburied”: Deconstructing the Colonial Legacies of Museological Collections and Display of Ghana c.1890s.

“Sometimes the Dead Go Unburied” is a museological history of Ghana beginning in the mid-19th century. In it, I examine how, through the theater of the museum, formerly living materials—African technocultural productions with active culturally-based traditions of engineering that required specific knowledge of the land and utilized cosmologically informed processes of manufacturing—became recognized by Africans and Europeans alike as non-living “artifacts” and “objects.” I engage in trans-hemispheric conversations between cosmologies (that is, ways of being, seeing, ordering, and making worlds) and epistemologies (that is, ways of knowing, producing, and ordering knowledge), to create space to imagine alternatives to the Western-dominated ideologies that have framed indigenous productions in its museums as “objects” and “artifacts.” This public history project builds on the intellectual foundations of Black and Indigenous anti-colonial and environmental scholarship for a multidisciplinary inquiry on the legitimacy of indigenous societies and their plurality of being.