

Presseinformation

Museum am Rothenbaum

Rothenbaumchaussee 64 | 20148 Hamburg
Germany | markk-hamburg.de

Hey Hamburg, do you know Duala Manga Bell? The exhibition for young people



14.04.2021 - end 2022

With the special exhibition *Hey Hamburg, do you know Duala Manga Bell?* the MARKK engages with the topics of colonialism, racism and commemorative culture. Designed as an exhibition for young people and families, it tells the tragic, widely forgotten story of a resistant young king from the Bell merchant dynasty who moved between Cameroon and Germany. As a contribution to the debate about Hamburg's colonial heritage, a multi-voiced exhibition was created in cooperation with international partners from academia, art and civil society.

The Protagonist

Cameroon, about one hundred years ago: Rudolf Duala Manga Bell (1873-1914), heir to the throne and heir to a trading house, who speaks perfect German, rebels against the racism and arbitrariness of the German colonial government. He and his allies paid for their opposition with their lives. This biography runs through the exhibition which focuses on an entire generation of resistance. It all begins in the port city of Douala, where the Wuri River flows into the sea. Rudolf Duala Manga Bell was born here, and it was here that his family became rich through trade with European merchants. The business in raw materials and products takes place between equal partners - at first. But soon colonial exploitation takes over in Cameroon and the greed of the Hamburger trading houses plays a central role.

Hey Hamburg accompanies Rudolf Duala Manga Bell: How does he grow up between the big city of Douala and a small village in Germany? How does he navigate a world that is becoming increasingly polarized? The conflicts between the Cameroonian population and the Germans, caused by colonial expansion and racism, escalate shortly before the First World War - the traces of colonial violence continue having an effect today.

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Culture of remembrance

Every year on August 8, the residents of Douala organize a commemoration in honour of Rudolf Duala Manga Bell. It is the date on which German colonial officials executed him in 1914. The charge was high treason. But although no evidence of the charge ever surfaced, this chapter of colonial history in Germany has not been addressed to this day. On the contrary, many prejudices and racisms constructed at the time continue to thrive. Especially now it is becoming apparent - not only through the worldwide Black Lives Matter movement - what such an omission means for younger generations. So far, they have searched in vain for answers in their textbooks. The exhibition offers easy access to the background and current debates in politics and culture of this tragic history and its legacy. (Rudolf even gets his own Instagram account for the duration of the exhibition: @duala.manga.bell!)

Hamburg

Rudolf Duala Manga Bell's life is the starting point for a panorama view of the German colonial period in Cameroon and its interconnections with Hamburg. Through the life histories of his allies, such as Maria Mandessi Bell, who was a central figure in the Black Diaspora until the 1990s, the arch of the story extends to the present. The traces in the city of Hamburg, in buildings, shipping companies or the museum itself, in trade or medicine, are made visible in the exhibition. Visitors experience vividly how much the exchange between Hamburg and Douala was determined by trade, which made a few people rich and influenced many in their everyday lives what role education played in the global race for power and influence, and how much violence was unleashed when the Germans took away the rights of the Cameroonians. In short: how intertwined German-Cameroonian relations were even 150 years ago.

Inside the exhibition

Around the drawings *The Past is a Way* in the style of a graphic novel by the Hamburg-based Nigerian artist Karo Akpokiere, archival holdings and photographs meet contemporary works of art as well as outstanding historical works from Douala in the MARKK collections and borrowed from other museums. Activity points invite visitors to interact and reflect. Among other things, two works by the Cameroonian artist Hervé Youmbi address the culture of memory. The works by young Hamburg artists between the ages of 18 and 27, created in cooperation with the youth association LUKULULE deal with the origins of the MARKK's collections, the for different narratives, and the relevance of the themes in the exhibition to their own biographies.

For the MARKK, *Hey Hamburg* is an experiment that reworks the themes of colonialism and racism for a young target group of 10 years and older and points to the future of the museum as a place for everyone, or, as the Federal Cultural Foundation's greeting in the catalogue puts it: "Ethnological museums are places where a great deal is changing at the moment. This starts with their name. (...) The MARKK of today does not even try to avoid history. It prefers to ask itself difficult questions right away."

The exhibition is a project of MARKK in Motion, funded by the Initiative for Ethnological Collections of the German Federal Cultural Foundation and the program 360° - Fund for Cultures of the New Urban Society of the German Federal Cultural Foundation with the support of the Rudolf Augstein Foundation, the Mara & Holger Cassens Foundation, the ZEIT Stiftung Ebelin und Gerd Bucerius, the Commerzbank Foundation and the Friends of the Museum am Rothenbaum.

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Cooperation partners: Princess Marilyn Douala Bell (Doual'Art), Lukulule Musik und Tanz für Jugend e.V., Hamburg

Advisory Board: Princess Marilyn Douala Bell, LaToya Manly-Spain, Dr. Elisabeth Menasse, Dr. Stefanie Michels, Mable Preach

Curators: Suy Lan Hopmann, Dr. Malika Kraamer, Gabriel Schimmeroth, Dr. Fiona Siegenthaler, Dr. Richard Tsogang Fossi, Dr. Johanna Wild

Immer.Wieder.WiderStand: Since June 2020, young Hamburg artists have been developing in regular workshops paintings, illustrations, works of sculpture, performance and media art under the direction of Tamika Odhiambo, Naomi Odhiambo and Joan Funnah. The project Immer.wieder.WiderStand is a cooperation with Lukulule e.V. (overall direction: Mable Preach).

Lenders:

Dr. Roger Mbassa Ndine/Ville de Douala
Editions Présence Africaine
Family archive Rolf-Dieter Röger and Georg Röger / Paltino
Fridelle Aimée Njo Moukouri Dina Manga Bell
Herbarium Hamburgense
Hervé Youmbi and Axis Gallery
Sound Archives of the Humboldt University Berlin
Leica Microsystems GmbH/Hessian Business Archives
Linden Museum Stuttgart
Loki Schmidt House Hamburg
Medical History Museum Hamburg
Museum of Labor Hamburg
Museum of Cultures Basel
Museum of Arts and Crafts Hamburg
Princess Marilyn Douala Manga Bell/doual'art
Private collection Prof. Dr. Dmitri van den Bersselaar
Reine-Mere Delphine Eboumbou Douala-Bell
Hanseatic Economic Archive Foundation
World Cultures Museum Frankfurt am Main

Family catalogue for the exhibition in the form of a richly illustrated educational book with graphic novel elements

"Hey, do you know Rudolf Duala Manga Bell?" ed. Suy Lan Hopmann, Fiona Siegenthaler

256 Pages

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MARKK
MUSEUM AM ROTHENBAUM
Kulturen und Künste der Welt

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Quotations about the exhibition

Dr. Carsten Brosda, Senator for Culture and Media: "The MARKK has realized an extraordinary exhibition project under the difficult Corona conditions, for which the cooperation with the international partners provided an important basis. The resulting exhibition not only honors the story of Rudolf Duala Manga Bell and his family, but also traces the close interconnection between the trading metropolises of Douala and Hamburg. It directs our gaze to colonial crimes and makes hitherto little illuminated aspects of history visible. In doing so, it chooses new ways of conveying the themes of racism, colonialism and the culture of remembrance that particularly appeal to a young audience. Hamburg, as a central site of colonial history, needs exhibitions like this that enable engagement with these issues in a variety of ways."

Prof. Barbara Plankensteiner, Director MARKK: "With this exhibition we want to set a new accent in our museum work especially for families and young people. In the past, our museum's children's programs in particular have promoted exotic ideas about people from other cultures. It was a particular concern of mine to prepare the topic of colonialism for this target group, which is also given too little space in schools. The story of the Bell family, which is linked to the historical connection between the two port cities of Hamburg and Douala, lent itself very well to this. In close cooperation with the great-granddaughter of Rudolf Duala Manga Bell, Princess Marilyn Bell, we wanted to use the experiences of her ancestors to make it comprehensible how colonial exploitation, racist unequal treatment and violence were experienced and how this continues to have an effect in our society today. We very much hope that our wish to show the exhibition subsequently in Douala can be realized."

Princess Marilyn Douala Bell, great-granddaughter of Rudolf Duala Manga Bell: "To my knowledge, *Hey Hamburg Do you know Rudolf Douala Manga Bell?* is the first large-scale public tribute to the Cameroonian king Rudolf Douala Manga Bell in Germany. We can only congratulate the MARKK and its director Dr. Plankensteiner for lifting the veil on this part of the common history between the two countries. Unjustly executed by the German colonial administration in 1914, his brutal death has left Cameroonians orphaned. The exhibition combines the past and the present, featuring objects from the Cameroonian Littoral that entered the museum in the late 19th and early 20th centuries with contemporary artworks by Cameroonian artists. This exhibition, which will be shown in Cameroon afterwards, becomes a bridge of dialogue between the peoples of the two countries who must not forget!"

Suy Lan Hopmann, Curator: "We had the vision to tell a different story of colonialism with our exhibition, one in which pain, violence and grief play as much a role as pride, care and solidarity. A new shared narrative is not an endeavour that can be implemented overnight or in two years of exhibition planning. It will be the ongoing work - coming together, talking, listening, engaging, arguing and challenging, questioning and showing nerves - that moves us forward. Museums can and should be central places in this process. And I'm convinced that visitors will see and feel, in every detail, the process we've begun here with so many people."

Mable Preach: "Are collaborations with colonially influenced institutions possible at all? Whose truth is being told and who determines the historical representation? We

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dared the experiment because it was important to us to actively shape the narrative from the perspective of our art project. The biography of Rudolf Duala Manga Bell was completely new to us, which is testament to how little attention colonialism receives in the German school system. Despite the fact that his story is so relevant to us. For us, too, resistance runs through our entire lives. It begins at school and continues into adult life. Again and again, we are concerned with making our point. The themes of the exhibition have great contemporary relevance.”

Artists:

KARO AKPOKIERE

is an artist/designer living between Hamburg (Germany) and Lagos (Nigeria). His work combines his interest in popular culture with everyday experiences and observations. His work moves between fine art, graphic design and drawing; it can and will be political, social, humorous, or anything he wants it to be. Akpokiere has participated in exhibitions in Montevideo, São Paulo and Italy, and has done commissioned projects for Nike and Google.

TAMIKA LEAH AMARACHI ODHIAMBO

is a budding social economist and curator for the FORMATION**NOW collective, which organizes platforms by and for BIPOC artists in Hamburg through various event formats. She has also been on stage several times as a performer for theater productions of Lukulule e. V.

NAOMI KELECHI ODHIAMBO

is a queer Black actress (most recently Kampnagel and HAU Berlin), curator and writer from Hamburg. Since 2018 she is part of FORMATION**NOW, a project of Lukulule e. V. for the promotion and cross-disciplinary networking of BIPOC artists* in Hamburg.

HERVÉ YOUMBI

lives and works in Douala (Cameroon) and travels all over the world for exhibitions, guest and research grants. He studied art in Cameroon and France and now teaches young artists at the Institut des Beaux-Arts of the University of Douala in Nkongsamba (Cameroon). He is also a founding member of the artist group Cercle Kapsiki in Douala with Hervé Yamguen, Blaise Bang, Jules Wokam and Salifou Lindou.

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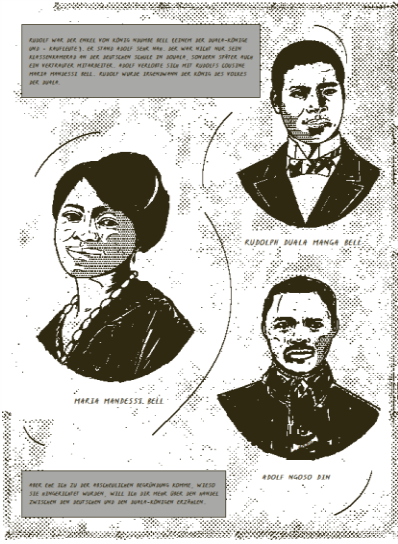
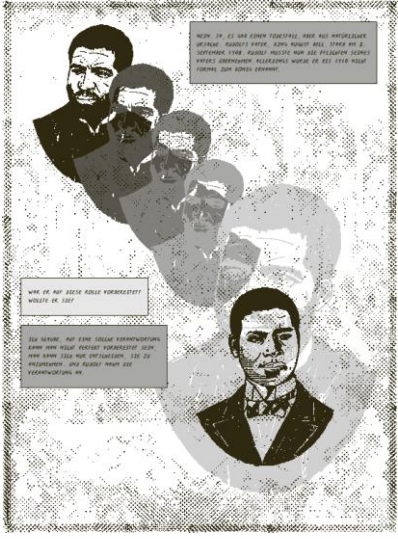

Press Pictures:

	<p>Hey Hamburg, do you know Duala Manga Bell?</p> <p>Rudolf Duala Manga Bell and Tube Meetom with the teacher family Oesterle in Aalen, Württemberg Photographer not documented Probably 1892 Albumen print 18 x 24 cm © Family archive Rolf-Dieter Röger and Georg Röger / Platino</p>
	<p>Hey Hamburg, do you know Duala Manga Bell?</p> <p>Artistic work "THE PAST IS A WAY" by Karo Akpokiere © Karo Akpokiere</p>
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	<p>Hey Hamburg, do you know Duala Manga Bell?</p> <p>Portrait of Rudolf Duala Manga Bell, Around 1902 Photo on cardboard 6,5 x 10,5 cm Court photographer J. van Daalen K.U.K., Aalen © City Archive Aalen Q1197</p>
	<p>Hey Hamburg, do you know Duala Manga Bell?</p> <p>Boat ornament (Tange) Artist not documented Douala or surroundings Before 1905 Wood, painted 69,6 cm x 54 cm x 106,30 cm Purchase from A. Dannenberg (before 1905) MARKK C 3219 © MARKK Photo: Paul Schimweg</p>
	<p>Hey Hamburg, do you know Duala Manga Bell?</p> <p>Chair of a dignitary Artist not documented Douala or surroundings Before 1912 Wood 36 cm x 56 cm x 27 cm Donation Ph. Winter (1911) MARKK 12.48:2 © MARKK Photo: Paul Schimweg</p>
	<p>Hey Hamburg, do you know Duala Manga Bell?</p> <p>Dress (Kaba) of the Ngondo celebrations from the possession of the queen mother Delphine Douala-Bell Manufacturer:in not documented Douala, 1990s Industrial printed cotton fabric loaned by Reine-Mère Delphine Douala-Bell 132x56 cm © Private collection Reine-Mère Delphine Douala-Bell, Photo: Paul Schimweg/MARKK</p>

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	<p>Hey Hamburg, do you know Duala Manga Bell?</p> <p>Dress (Kaba) of the Ngondo celebrations of royal mother Delphine Douala-Bell Maker:in not documented Douala, 2000s Industrial printed cotton fabric, ca 139 x 58 cm © Private collection Reine-Mère Delphine Douala-Bell, Photo: Paul Schimweg/MARKK</p>
	<p>Hey Hamburg, do you know Duala Manga Bell?</p> <p>Boat Artist not documented, Batanga (south of Douala) Before 1905 Wood, painted 49 x 42 x 618 cm, collected by J. Wölber between 1885 and 1905, donation C. Woermann (1905) MARKK C 2016 © MARKK Photo: Paul Schimweg/MARKK</p>
	<p>Hey Hamburg, do you know Duala Manga Bell?</p> <p>Isango Mask Artist not documented Douala or surroundings before 1895 wood, painted, metal 80x25x12 cm purchase from H. Schilling (1889) MARKK C 1310 © MARKK Photo: Paul Schimweg</p>
	<p>Hey Hamburg, do you know Duala Manga Bell?</p> <p>Figure of a dignitary Artist not documented Cameroon (probably Douala), end of the 19th century Wood, painted 33 x 16 x 19 cm MARKK XX AF 171 © MARKK Photo: Paul Schimweg/MARKK</p>

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	<p>Hey Hamburg, do you know Duala Manga Bell?</p> <p>Boat model with 18 paddlers Artist not documented Probably Douala, Cameroon, 1900-1908 22x 43x142cm Collected by General Karl Zimmermann (1915) © Weltkulturen Museum Frankfurt am Main, inventory number 50472 Photo: Wolfgang Günzel, 2020</p>
	<p>Hey Hamburg, do you know Duala Manga Bell?</p> <p>Tét'ékombo ô muléma Hervé Youmbi Douala, Cameroon, 2020 wood, beads 20x30x97cm © Hervé Youmbi and Axis Gallery, New York and New Jersey Photo: Hervé Youmbi</p>
	<p>Hey Hamburg, do you know Duala Manga Bell?</p> <p>Essay mask Artist not documented subscription, woodland, Cameroon before 1897 wood, painted, plant fiber, metal 72,6x50x35cm Collected by Lieutenant Späthe, consigned to the Museum der Kulturen in Basel via Leo Frobenius (1897) © Museum der Kulturen Basel III 781, Photo: Derek Li Wan Po 2011</p>

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