HUMAN ZOOS
THE INVENTION OF THE SAVAGE

11/29/11 – 06/03/12
West Mezzanine

General Curator: Lilian Thuram
Scientific curators: Pascal Blanchard & Nanette Jacomijn Snoep

HUMAN ZOOS, The invention of the savage unveils the history of women, men and children brought from Africa, Asia, Oceania and America to be exhibited in the Western world in circus numbers, theatre or cabaret performances, fairs, zoos, parades, reconstructed villages or international and colonial fairs. The practice started in the 16th Century royal courts and continued to increase until the mid-20th Century in Europe, America and Japan.
“From sordid to commercial, reaching the heights of indecency, human zoos opened the door to realms of imagination that this exhibition masterfully reconstructs.”

Today it seems hard to understand how people could perceive, demean and display human beings like objects, and how that phenomenon could trigger such fascination over the centuries.

From sordid to commercial, reaching the heights of indecency, human zoos, circuses, fairs, ethnic exhibits, freak shows and other spectacles staged the exploitation and dispossession of certain humans by other humans. They opened the door to realms of imagination that this exhibition masterfully reconstructs.

Ever since the Renaissance, non-Western civilizations have sparked curiosity and disgust, attraction and repulsion, with equal intensity. The many works on show in Human Zoos, The Invention of the Savage offer a journey through these “appearances” and provide a more subtle grasp of the arbitrary nature of ways of looking. Dotted with fascinating multimedia installations, the exhibition presents no fewer than five hundred items and documents – marshalling a wide spectrum of media to provide an accurate idea of how the “Other” was represented in all its complexity and diversity.

As Pascal Blanchard, one of the curators of the show, has aptly put it, “The entire period of human zoos corresponds to an absence of referents in the West with respect to alterities.”

Indeed, it was an implicit question of “underscoring difference, of drawing an invisible line between normal and abnormal”, of thinking about the borderline between “us” and other individuals considered to be exotic, wild, or savage. Such wildness furthermore legitimized an eroticizing of the body, viewed either as a transposed fantasy or a distorting, distressing mirror. The “monsters” are not necessarily the ones we think, as clearly demonstrated by the imagery associated with them.

This exhibition is the fruit of a meeting between Blanchard – a specialist in colonial history with its “fractures” – and French football star Lilian Thuram, who has lent his name, image and convictions to an operation designed to shed some light on this often overlooked aspect of a relatively recent past. My thanks go to both of them, as well as to Nanette Snoep, Curator Historical Collections at the Musée du Quai Branly, who put so much skill and courage into making this show a success.

Stéphane Martin
Ever since I was a child, I have felt moved to question certain prejudices, and this questioning has led me to an interest in slavery, colonization, and the sociology, economics and history of racism. Ten years ago, thanks to Pascal Blanchard and the researchers working with him, I learned about human zoos. This was a revelation. I was surprised by the magnitude of this phenomenon which, over the years, developed into a mass culture. The images of these men, women and children – exposed and exhibited, shown and humiliated – appeared on postcards, posters, paintings, crockery and souvenirs. Looking at the films or photographs of the exhibitions, we see families strolling around, children smiling: happy spectators.

“Knowledge of the human zoos helped me understand just that little bit better why certain racialist ideas continue to exist in societies like ours.”

The public was at a show, denying the humanity of these people: the humanity of Saartjie Baartman in the early nineteenth century, of Ota Benga in the early twentieth, and of the great-grandparents of my friend and fellow-footballer Christian Karembeu, exhibited in the Jardin d'Acclimatation in Paris and in a German zoo, in 1931. All these stories are part of our common heritage. But they are still too little known. Much more remains to be written, shown, told, and passed on.

Knowledge of the human zoos helped me understand just that little bit better why certain racialist ideas continue to exist in societies like ours. For when I go into schools to talk about racism, children still do not know that there are not several different races, but just one species: Homo sapiens. How many people still think, consciously or unconsciously, that the colour of a person’s skin determines their qualities or faults? Do Blacks run faster? Do Whites swim faster?

Today, after two years of work and research, I think it is an extraordinary thing that the leading international specialists on human zoos, colonial exhibitions and world’s fairs, on the history of circuses, science and theatre, have contributed to this catalogue which helps us to better understand our present.

They explain the racist prejudices, with their hierarchies and contempt, that live on in our society. These images that, yesterday, “invented the savage”, must today be used to deconstruct those patterns of thought which propagate the belief in the existence of types of human being that are superior to others.

Even today, for many communities, the best way of defining themselves is to oppose themselves to others: “They are like that and we are not.”

Are we not capable of enjoying self-esteem without denigrating the Other? The encounter with alterity may be sexual, cultural or religious, but it can also concern our partner, sister, brother, friend, son or daughter and should be a process of permanent negotiation.

After all, are we not constantly negotiating with ourselves?

Lilian Thuram
“To exhibit men and women, to place a distance between them and visitors, to present them as different and inferior, was to construct a kind of divide between the normal and the abnormal, to invent a break between two distinct forms of humanity.”

The West invented the “savage”. It did so through spectacles, with performers, stage sets, impresarios, drama and incredible narratives. This story has been forgotten, and yet it stands at the intersection of colonial history, the history of science and the history of the world of entertainment and of the grandiose world’s fairs that shaped international relations for over a century (1851–1958).

This was the age of human exhibitions, the time of “scientific racism”, a time when men came to see “monsters” or “exotics”, not for what they did, but rather for what they were supposed to be. Beings that were different. Inferior beings. Others.

From a few individuals and “specimens” in the sixteenth century to the “ethnic shows” of the early nineteenth century, like that of the famous “Hottentot Venus”, the West “recruited” new troupes, families or artistes from all over the world, some of them by force, others by “contract”. The public was curious, it was on the look-out for powerful sensations, and the spectacle of the “savage” fitted the bill perfectly.

The phenomenon gained in scale throughout the nineteenth century, running parallel to colonial conquest. In less than a generation, it went from a few isolated individuals held in captivity and exhibited like animals to veritable organized troupes. Crowds flocked to see these displays and the public called for more. Scientists set out “living specimens”. The West organized a huge theatre in sets as extraordinary as they were ephemeral. In all, nearly one billion four hundred million visitors were affected by this phenomenon, whether at world’s fairs or colonial exhibitions, in zoos, on circus tours, in theatres or in fairground museums.

To exhibit men and women, to place a distance between them and visitors, to present them as different and inferior, was to construct a kind of divide between the normal and the abnormal, to invent a break between two distinct forms of humanity. This was a major process in contemporary history that has been analyzed over the last two decades in several seminal works on human zoos.

This history has left us thousands of photographs, commercial postcards, official and amateur films, promotional posters, paintings, prints, newspaper drawings and articles, each one more sensational than the last. And, as we survey and decode them, we can measure the ways and the relatively short period in which the idea of domination became general and permeated the world. Finally, thanks to these images we can picture how public opinion was persuaded, deceived and manipulated by these stagings of the savage put on from Tokyo to Hamburg, from Chicago to London, from Paris to Barcelona, from St. Louis to Brussels and from Basel to Johannesburg.

Reading the analyses by the seventy specialists whose perspectives are brought to bear in the catalogue, or walking round the exhibition, we come to understand how this huge freak show at the heart of the capitalist system made “difference” into an invisible frontier between “Them” and “Us”. We can now measure the extent to which racism, segregation and eugenist ideas were able to penetrate public opinion, with no apparent violence, and while entertaining visitors. And we also realize that in order to deconstruct our vision of the Other, we need to decolonize our own imaginations.

Pascal Blanchard
The exhibition Human Zoos. The Invention of the Savage and this accompanying catalogue reveal an incredible quantity of artworks and artefacts shedding light on the long historical process behind the fabrication of alterity and the “invention of the savage” over the centuries.

The musée du quai Branly, the Prado, the Louvre, the Muséum National d’Histoire Naturelle, the Victoria & Albert Museum, the National Portrait Gallery and many other museums, libraries, universities and archives in Europe, Australia, Japan and the Americas, too numerous to be cited here, not to mention important private collections (like those of Gérard Lévy, of the ACHAC research group, and Michael Graham-Stewart), all hold traces of this incredible story.

“By giving them a name, a life and a history, we free these people from the shackles in which they were once held, restoring dignity to individuals who suddenly found themselves thrust on stage in front of a curious crowd simply because they were considered different.”

Paintings, sculptures, posters, anamorphoses, casts made on live subjects, waxworks, automata, magic lanterns, costumes and masks, daguerreotypes, photographs, postcards, plates, fans, tablecloths, jigsaw puzzles, entrance tickets, brochures, advertising documents, films, songs, puppets, dioramas and all kinds of surprising souvenirs were identified throughout the preparation of the catalogue and exhibition and have been brought together for the first time in a single place, around one unifying theme, thereby taking on a completely different meaning.

Displayed in cabinets of curiosities, on the boards at fairs or in the street, kept in scientific laboratories or exhibited in a pavilion at a colonial exhibition or world’s fair – all these accessories from the “theatre of the world” contributed to the creation of these spectacles of difference.

It might be thought that these images show only anonymous individuals. But no, many of these “exhibits” have been identified; their names are known, as are the details of their highly varied and incredible destinies. Now that the cloak of anonymity has been lifted thanks to the research carried out over the last twenty years – notably by many of the contributors to this catalogue – it is at last possible to write the history of these exhibitions mounted on every continent.

By giving them a name, a life and a history, we free these people from the shackles in which they were once held, restoring dignity to individuals who suddenly found themselves thrust on stage in front of a curious crowd simply because they were considered different.

Different because they were not the same colour or size; different because they came from faraway lands.

To discover and present this vast heritage for the first time, to bring it “into the museum”, to bestow tangible reality on this “living cabinet of curiosities of the world”, is to make them concretely a part of contemporary history. To tell that tale, to identify, analyze and decipher these testimonial objects, is to write the story of the construction of otherness and touch on a universal phenomenon. This varied, multiple heritage challenges us and invites us to position ourselves in this “theatre of the world” – either on stage, in the stalls, or in the wings.

Nanette Jacomijn Snoep
The first major exhibition with an international approach to what can be called “Human Zoos”, *HUMAN ZOOS, The invention of the savage* attempts to draw from obscurity these men, women, children, hangers-on, animals, actors and dancers, by revealing their stories, which are as diverse as they are forgotten.

A wide array of paintings, sculptures, posters, postcards, movies, photographs, mouldings, dioramas, miniatures and costumes provide insight on the scope of the phenomenon and on the success of the exotic performance industry, which captivated over a billion spectators who, between 1800 and 1958, marvelled at more than 35,000 individuals throughout the world.

The layout of this exhibition evokes a stage with its actors and accessories, through which a particular script is played out. The wings on the other hand reveal the other side of the story and present the fate of these human exhibits as well as the vast graphic production used to mould the public’s image of the world.

The strange, the savage and the monster have always been the subject of intense curiosity. The “other” puzzles, sparks interrogation and amazement and helps to conceptualize and situate oneself. Often originating from some distant land, it is a concept that crystallizes the fears and fantasies of a nation as well as its aspirations of domination. If all nations have used the concept of alterity to construct their identity, the West remains unique in the sheer scale of its living-human shows.

The genesis of these ethnic shows begins in earnest in 1492 when Christopher Columbus presents the Spanish Court with six Indians after returning from his first voyage: Europe had found her image of the “savage” in the face of the Amerindian race. Until the beginning of the 19th century only a few so-called “exotic” or “monstrous” individuals are exhibited – the famous Hottentot Venus is but one example. However these ethnic showcases rapidly expand in scale and reach their apogee between the years 1850 and 1930.

It is when the display of the Other is used to alienate a nation (or a so-called “race”) that the Exhibition partakes in the construction of social exclusion and becomes the prototype of the human zoo. This mechanism is practiced world-wide: in Europe, the United States, Japan, Australia and South Africa... touching several hundreds of millions of visitors who flock to the universal and colonial exhibitions, to the zoos, café-theatres, circuses and fairs.

Racial theories, colonialism and the belief in Western superiority acquire a great deal of legitimacy through these exhibitions. Exotic populations and freaks of nature become actors in this “theatre of the world”, displayed side by side as if belonging to the same abnormal universe and separated from the spectators by a real or imaginary barrier.

Through 600 items and the screening of many film archives, the exhibition shows how this type of performance, when used as propaganda and entertainment, has fashioned the Western perspective and deeply influenced a certain perception of the Other for nearly five centuries.
ACT I – THE DISCOVERY OF THE OTHER

This first act presents the arrival of exotic people in Europe, from the 15th to the 18th century, and the view of these "strange foreigners" according to the four archetypes presented: the savage, the artist, the freak and the exotic ambassador.

As early as Ancient Egyptian times, “dwarfs” from the Sudan area are put on public display. Under the Roman Empire, vanquished “Barbarians” and “Savages” are ceremoniously processed before the people to assert Rome’s hegemony.

From the 15th century – the opening of the Age of Exploration – Europe’s idea of the “Other” progressively takes on an exotic form, combining curiosity and animality with the unusual. Cabinets of curiosity display not only objects from around the world but also portraits of these “natural curiosities”.

To begin with, these “strange strangers” are few and generally welcomed as exceptions. Explorers bring back “savages” as “human booty” and present them to the European Courts, hence the ceremonial display in 1550 of the Tupinamba Indians before Henry II in Rouen or that of Omai, a famous Tahitian, presented to the English Court in 1774. The visits of Siamese and Persian ambassadors to the European Courts also produce an impact upon the public and as a result their portraits remain a long time in circulation throughout Europe.

As for the “monsters” exhibited – dwarfs, giants, bearded women and other human miracles – be they from Europe or some distant country, their portraits hang on the walls of such European Palaces as the Château d’Ambras, home to Archduke Ferdinand II of Habsburg.

Exactly who the “other” is makes no difference, the effect remains the same: a feeling of curiosity before such strange individuals, so different and so exotic. The exhibition is not yet a genre. We are but at the very start of this phenomenon.
ACTE II - MONSTERS & EXOTIC BEINGS

During the 19th century, the exhibition of the “Savage” is no longer reserved exclusively to the elite classes. The phenomenon is democratised and offers itself to a wider public, marking the beginning of a new type of exhibition. In an age where racial theories and the construction of hierarchies dominate the intellectual climate, the exhibition – in which monstrosity and exoticism combine – assumes a major role in shaping 19th century popular culture.

In 1800 the Society of the Observers of Man establishes one of the earliest forms of anthropological study through the examination of Victor of Aveyron – a savage feral child discovered in 1797 – and of the Chinese Tchong-A-Sam. However it is Saartje Baartman, the “Venus hottentote” who eventually becomes the personification of this exhibition phenomenon. This South-African young woman, exhibited in London and Paris between 1810 and 1815 is at the crossroads between an ever-growing passion for racial studies and public curiosity.

New racist theories are consequently developed and spread easily amongst the population. London becomes the capital of these ethnic shows, with France, Germany and the United-States following close behind. “Difference” which up till now had merely been a subject of curiosity – be it healthy or unhealthy – is transformed into a theory with a scientific basis. From now onwards the exhibited “savage” is made to reflect a preconceived image, an image constructed by society and which responds to its expectations.

Scene I: The construction of the notion of “race”

The exhibitions of “Savages” base themselves on anthropological studies, which during the 19th century, undergo a major development. The epoch seeks to understand, to classify and to order the world within a hierarchal structure using the science of Man as its tool. Racial hierarchies become the norm and living exhibits are compelled to fit into this codified model through which a particular vision of the world is constructed.

These “living specimens” present an unparalleled opportunity for theorists and intellectuals to carry out anthropological experiments, take photographs and create wax casts. Characteristics such as eye colour, skin, hair structure and cranial dimensions are observed and the results obtained used to record and classify the so-called “races”.

It is within this context of western expansionism and scientific research that sideshows find their raison d’être. The spectacles provide the tools with which to comprehend the “savage” and class it within an objective, ordered and rational hierarchy, going from the deviant, through to the mad, the insane and finally the representatives of apparently inferior races. At the same time, the Savage is associated with the subjective popular imagery of the “Other” and “Elsewhere”, thus forming a coherent system that embodies both intellectual discourse and popular stereotypes.


Natural history of mankind
Plate by Julien Joseph Virey
© musée du quai Branly
Roland Bonaparte,

**Australian Aborigine performance:** Billie, Jenny and their son Toby at the Folies-Bergère (Paris), © musée du quai Branly

**Scene 2: The distant and the deformed put on stage**

Exhibitions enjoy great popularity during the 19th century. Society delights in these spectacles of difference, in which physical, psychological and geographic abnormalities intermix.

Circuses and fairs multiply throughout Europe and the United States. Barnum and Bailey – two names now inevitably associated with spectacles – are the precursors of this fashion in the United States.

Barnum’s American Museum, in the heart of Manhattan, hosts the state of New York’s most popular show. **His novelty is the showcasing of “monsters” within a space dedicated to pleasure; “scientific conferences”, magic tours, dances and theatrical reconstructions take place in concert under the same roof.**

The Siamese twins Chang & Eng; the young micro cephalic Mexicans entitled “the last Aztecs”; the mythical Krao from Laos – “Darwin’s missing link” – suffering from an advanced form of hypertrichosis; and the mentally disabled African American actor who performed as Barnum’s “What Is It?”, are examples of individuals who represent simultaneously both the world of freaks and the concept of ethnicity.

**Figures considered to be “exotic” also begin to penetrate this universe in response to the public’s thirst for evermore spectacular, novel and bizarre distractions.** The exhibition of indigenous individuals alongside freaks becomes a genre in its own right.

**ACTE III – THE SPECTACLE OF DIFFERENCE**

The exhibition of Zulus in London or that of Aboriginals in Paris during the second third of the 19th century provide perhaps even more enthralment than the bearded woman, Lilliputians or Siamese. Here, entire races seemingly embody physical, cultural and mental abnormalities. **“Difference” is apparently not the exception but the norm within these cultures that are destined to be dominated, controlled, colonised and eventually extinguished.**

The **“savage” becomes the feature that guarantees a show’s success.** Impresarios – constantly on the look-out for spectacular exhibits – stage countless numbers of shows in response to a high public demand. Aboriginal, Pygmy and Indian families, Japanese acrobats, snake charmers and belly dancers perform side by side on the stages of the great capital cities. **Circuses, fairs and touring exotic troupes showcase men, women and children from all four corners of the world: the exotic show becomes a mass attraction.**
At a time when slavery gives place to imperialism, the world is divided between those who are exhibited and those who spectate. Regardless of how objective or not they are these exhibitions present so-called exotic populations as inferior to Europeans, Americans and Japanese and thus the fitting subjects of colonial dominion.

Visitors are introduced to “actors of savageness” who become true genre professionals: Aboriginals, ‘lip-plate women’, Amazons, snake charmers, Japanese tightrope walkers or oriental belly dancers, but also the first black clown in France called “Chocolat” and drawn by Toulouse-Lautrec and legendary Buffalo Bill, whose show revolves on the native American Indian archetype, which forever brands the Far West imagery.

**Scene 1: The professionalization of the exhibitions**

London is an obligatory stop to guarantee a troupe’s success. It showcases the Botocudo Indians in 1817, a group of Sami people in 1822, Fuegians in 1829, a group of Guaraní in 1839 as well as several Zulu groups, notably during an important exhibition in 1853. This “Zulu Kaffir” exhibition is the first of a series of major touring spectacles throughout Europe, thereby inaugurating a trend that would last until the end of the century.

Several sites, such as the Egyptian Hall in London, the Folies-Bergères in Paris and the Panoptikum de Castan in Berlin, dedicate themselves exclusively to these types of exhibitions and launch spectacular poster campaigns to advertise their shows. Plastered throughout the streets of New York, London, Paris and Berlin the poster becomes the perfect medium through which to diffuse the image of the live exhibit. To ensure maximum selling potential, it generally depicts a half-naked dancing figure with particular emphasis placed on the skin colour and the person’s animal nature.

In Paris and throughout the whole of Europe and the United States, these shows are responsible for constructing and developing a highly effective discourse surrounding the “Savage”.

The Savage, the “Other” is thus apprehended essentially through intellectual discourse and the wealth of images in circulation. Yet if the “Other” remains the explicit subject of such discourse, the “Self” is implicitly and inevitably evoked.

**Scene 2: The Amerindian conquest of the world**

It is only natural that the first “Indian” shows should be produced in the United-States before being exported throughout the rest of the world. The American George Catlin and the Indian impresario Maungwudua are responsible for introducing this people to Europe during their tour of 1845 to 1848. It is at this occasion that they are presented to King Louis-Philippe.

The myth surrounding the Indian people emerges at the end of the 19th century. As a result, Amerindians become the population the most exhibited throughout the world.
“Far West” shows like Buffalo Bill’s *Wild West* and the spectacle produced by the impresario, Hans Stosch Sarrasani, enjoy world-wide success. Specialised in historical re-enactments, these American-born showmen tour throughout the world and Europe’s greatest cities, developing a new form of mass culture.

Their objective is to enthral their naïve audience with displays of the most savage of individuals – often human-animal hybrids – set in a décor that evokes the Far West. Sitting Bull and Geronimo, both famous for their resistance to the American army, also feature in the *Wild West Show*, serving to suppress the memory of the massacres perpetrated during the Indian wars.

**Scene 3 : Exotic Artists**

If the Savage constitutes the symbol of a nation or a so-called “race”, a living specimen of a real or imagined alterity, the “exotic” artist obscures this vision through the display of his artistic talent or ability to entertain.

In many shows the boundary between ethnic exhibition and theatrical display is blurred with the performers passing easily from one genre to the other. Criticism does however surface, notably in August 1912 when Léon Werth expressed his shame in regards the public’s attitude: “All these people who, during the week, have toiled over miserable tasks and for whom civilization is merely human dressage, have the same instincts as a slave-trader”.

The Afro-American actor Ira Aldridge; the Cuban clown Chocolat; Hanako the Japanese dancer, the West Indian acrobat Miss Lala – who captivates Auguste Rodin and Edgar Degas; the black face minstrels; the Afro-American Josephine Baker; oriental belly dancers and royal Cambodian dancers – the favourites of the universal exhibitions – are testimony to the professional potential of the “exotic”.

It is essentially through dance and by fulfilling the public’s fantasies that exotic artists are able to impose themselves in Europe.

From 1890 onwards, “exotic dances”, in which the body of the “Other” becomes object of desire, proliferate across Europe and notably in Paris.

L. Damaré, "Olympia. Les trois grâces tigrées" (The three striped graces), Paris, poster, 1891.

© Acha/ Research group collection
ACTE IV – RACIAL AND COLONIAL STAGE SETS

Excess, eclecticism and ephemeral reconstructions characterise this part of the exhibition, which is illustrated by large format posters, miniature theatres, an automaton of a Zulu and a painted frieze, archive film screenings and a huge number of photographs and postcards.

Three specific spaces are dedicated to the grand-scale promotion of human and colonial exhibitions: zoological gardens, itinerant villages and universal and colonial exhibitions. Their success is measured by the number of exhibits, the geographic scale of the event and most importantly, by the number of visitors which is often in excess of tens of millions.

Troupes often unite several hundreds of human exhibits, generally paid to be displayed amidst exotic animals in an elaborate setting that serves to transport the spectator into a far away land and forget the reality of the colonial wars.

The first of these troupes are exhibited by the company Hagenbeck in Hamburg in 1874 – the same year that Barnum arrives in Europe from America. Several troupes are presented during the 1876 Philadelphia Centennial Exhibition and again in Paris in 1878.

Until the 1930s, the “exotic” is recreated through papier-mâché stage-sets in all the universal, colonial and national exhibitions throughout the world. Ethnic villages, composed of itinerant troupes directed either by westerners or, more rarely, retired “exhibitionists”, pass from one world to the other, cross over boundaries and visit the remotest villages of Europe and America. In this sense, the exhibition serves also to “construct nationalist feeling”, to build a sense of identity, of pride, of national unity. It displays the negative counterpart of the European image, an image that reassures the visitors of their modernity and “normality.

Scene I : Zoological gardens

The vogue for zoos and gardens begins at the end of the 1820s when three giraffes offered by the Egyptian pasha to the great European powers are exhibited in London, Vienna and in Paris’ botanical garden. If the giraffes pique the public’s curiosity, the people who accompany them are equally a source of fascination. This human-animal duo consequently enjoys great success.

Towards the end of the 19th century, zoos and gardens tend to focus increasingly on the sole exhibition of humans, as they seek to seduce their public with the most attractive shows possible. Set within a colonial context, this phenomenon is popularised throughout Europe.

Everywhere, the savage is regarded as a character-type, whose codified attributes are recognised by all. Zoological gardens – where displays of humans showcased alongside animals are advertised through striking posters – become a “must” in popular entertainment.
Scene 2: Exotic itinerant villages

Carl Hagenbeck, the director of Hamburg Zoo, develops the prototype of the itinerant village – a concept soon adopted by the best part of the occidental world. His concept and troupes are exported throughout Europe and America. French impresarios soon become specialised in this genre, taking their own “Senegalese”, “Dahomeyans” and “Algerian Arabs” on tour to over twenty countries.

The notion of the itinerant village, in which grand shows such as those produced by Buffalo Bill and Barnum are adapted to smaller, provincial exhibitions, is a rather late development in the phenomenon of display.

The public seem won over; the post-cards produced for the occasion are sold by the performers themselves and the money invested is made back within only two or three years.

In an era where the norm imposes a unique type of citizen, exotic villages are displayed alongside models of European villages from Brittany, Flanders, Ireland and Savoy as well as Ainu and Korean villages.

The exhibition of the other is an outward sign of grandeur and modernity and expresses the desire for homogeneity. That countries such as Russia and Japan should refuse to let their people partake in these ethnic spectacles affirms their aspiration to be identified with the occidental world. The world’s borders are constructed within the confined spaces of these cheap reconstructions that allow the spectator to leave boasting of having seen the “Savage”!

Scene 3: Universal and colonial exhibitions

To see is to know, asserts the World’s Columbian Exhibition of 1893. Indeed, the Occident believes that these “fairground monsters” have no other destiny but to be civilized by the apparently “superior races”. Ever since London’s Universal exhibition of 1851, in which India as England’s colony assumes centre stage, universal and colonial exhibitions serve as showcases of colonial expansionism, often injecting a scientific discourse into the display of the dominated “savages”. France and the United States are particularly adept in this domain, producing a great number of exhibitions at least every ten years.

From 1883, the colonial exhibitions provide the great powers with the opportunity to display their domination over the world. In certain cases these spectacles are produced within the empires themselves (such as in Hanoi in 1901-2, in Calcutta in 1883 or in Sydney in 1870). Within Europe, the most emblematic of these displays are the British Empire Exhibition of 1924-25 held in Wembley and the International Colonial Exhibition held in Paris in 1931.

The millions of images produced – the only remaining vestiges of this form of mass culture – illustrate the sheer scale of the phenomenon and reveal a capitalist plot where “difference” is exploited to construct an invisible frontier between “Them” and “Us”. One gages how racism subtly penetrates public opinion, in a non-violent and entertaining manner.
EPILOGUE – A PROGRESS MOVEMENT DURING THE COURSE OF THE 1930S

The exhibition ends with the end of these exhibitions for various reasons that are the same across the world: declining public interest, development of the film industry, new forms of imperial propaganda etc.

The phenomenon of human and colonial exhibitions eventually disappears throughout the course of the 1930s. Three reasons explain the speed with which this transformation takes place: the public loss of interest, despite a greater emphasis on the notion of alterity and the shows’ increasingly spectacular displays; the colonial powers’ desire to present the process of colonisation as being firmly underway by excluding the “savage” de facto from representations of colonial triumph; and the development of new media supports such as the cinema which captivate the public’s imagination in novel ways.

The most brutal mode of display finally becomes obsolete. The “Other” is no longer considered as the conquered “savage” but as the “pacified native” or an “exotic immigrant”, following the path of progress that has been traced for him. The last of the European tours do not meet with great public success – this is the case notably for the “Sara-Kaba lip-plate women” exhibited in Cologne in 1930-31.

The very last of these manifestations is held in Brussels in 1958 on the eve of the Congolese Independence. However, criticism is such that the organizers are compelled to close the Congolese village. The “human zoo” is finally extinct.

To close the exhibition, Lilian Thuram, the general curator of the exhibition, has chosen a work by the video artist Vincent Elka.

In a powerful and moving installation, placed within a box of 20 m², the artist gives the word to the stigmatized groups of today. On the three walls that make up the installation, these men and women bear witness. How do they live on a daily basis? How do they position themselves compared to others? Do they feel “other”?

"Through the testimonies of people suffering from active or passive discrimination, I quickly came to realize that their accounts coincided and that there would be no confusion if I chose to telescope their images and their words on the screens of the installation. As society set up its laws, they symbolically came to personify the many faces of abnormality. An abnormality that still today justifies the “accusations of heresy” and “blacklisting” of a former time. We don’t marry them. We send them back to their country. We don’t recruit them. We don’t let them come into nightclubs. We make fun of them. We reject the pariah like a fairground freak."

Vincent Elka
**General Curator: Lilian Thuram**

Lilian Thuram has had a prestigious international football career: 1998 world champion, 2000 Europe Champion, second 2006 world champion are just a few of his numerous club titles. He was involved in the 2007 musée du quai Branly exhibition titled *Diaspora*: he was featured in a movie by director and curator Claire Denis to share his vision and experience on the diaspora.


**Scientific curators:**

Pascal Blanchard - Historian, expert on colonialism, documentary film maker, associate researcher with the CNRS (Communication and Policy Laboratory), co-chair of the Achac Research Group (www.achac.com), member of the scientific committee of the Lilian Thuram Foundation, Education against racism.

He has published or codirected several dozen books since 1993, including *Zoos humains, au temps des exhibitions humaines* (La Découverte, 2004), *La France Noire* (La Découverte, 2011), *Zoos humains et exhibitions coloniales. 150 ans d’invention de l’autre* (La Découverte, 2011) and the eight books of *Un Siècle d’immigration des Suds en France* (GRA, 2009).

**The exhibition was organised with the participation of teams from the research group ACHAC and the support of its iconographic collections**

Nanette Jacomijn Snoep – Anthropologist, curator of the Historical Collections of the musée du quai Branly since 1999, She teaches the history of African art at Paris X University and at the école du Louvre.

She was co-curator for *1931, the Foreigner at the time of the Parisian Colonial Fair*, exhibition at the Cité Nationale d’Histoire de l’Immigration in 2008 and codirected the exhibition catalogue.

In 2009, she was curator and catalogue director for *Divine Recipes*, exhibition presented by the musée du quai Branly.

In 2012, she will be associate curator of the exhibition *Masters of Chaos* at the musée du quai Branly (curator: Jean de Loisy).

**Design:**

Léa Saito & Massimo Quendolo
*AROUND THE EXHIBITION*

INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM “AROUND HUMAN ZOOS”

24 AND 25 JANUARY 2012

during 9.30 AM to 07PM / Théâtre Claude Lévi-Strauss / Free access sessions, subject to availability

In the presence and with the participation of Lilian Thuram (general curator of the exhibition), Pascal Blanchard & Nanette Jacomijn Snoep (scientific curators of the exhibition), Gilles Boëtsch (research director at the CNRS and co-director of the exhibition catalogue), and thirty international specialists, all invited to provide different views of the phenomenon of exhibitions of freaks and exotic people in Europe, the United States and Japan in the context of four themed round table discussions.

The round table discussions, introduced by short presentations of each participant in order to give each one their place in the exchanges and debates, will consider the following questions:

- The construction of race and of a view of ethnographic exhibitions; the invention of the "other"
- Images and imaginings of the "savages" in exhibitions; a history of perspectives
- Exhibition, colonisation and national construction; the impact of exhibitions
- The savage, an ordinary construction; contemporary challenges.

This international conference, organised in collaboration with the Lilian Thuram Foundation for Education Against Racism, the CNRS and the Achac Research Group, builds on previous conferences on ethnographic and colonial exhibitions, organised at Marseille in 2001 (3 days), London in 2008 (1 day), and prepares the ground for the following stages which will be held at the University of Lausanne in May 2012 (2 days) and in Los Angeles in 2014 (4 days).

THE CATALOGUE DIRECTED BY PASCAL BLANCHARD, GILLES BOËTSCH (ANTHROPOBIOLOGIST AND DIRECTOR OF RESEARCH AT THE CNRS) ET NANETTE JACOMIJN SNOEP

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The Human Zoo as (Bad) Intercultural Performance

A joint publication by Actes Sud and the Musée du Quai Branly - 384 pages, 500 illustrations - 49€
SPECIAL ISSUE

On the occasion of the exhibition, Beaux Arts magazine monthly is publishing a special 44 page publication including around 80 illustrations, 9 €

THE AUDIO GUIDE

For whom are we the "savage"? How have these human zoos and performances shaped the West's view of the Other? How can we view these images more critically?

Lilian Thuram guides visitors by means of a stimulating audio guide to help them discover these images that straddle the space between exotic and freakish, science and voyeurism, exhibition and performance.

Audioguide french and english versions, 5€

The audio guide for the exhibitions is downloadable at www.quaibranly.fr, for 3€
The iPhone guide is available in french and english on the App Store. Downloading fee : 2,99€

EXHIBITION GUIDED TOUR

- Guided visits (1h)

Various tours, all accessible to handicapped visitors, are available, subject to reservation, to individual visitors, adult and school groups (secondary schools from 11 years of age).

Cultural mediation students are available to the public to explain their visit to the museum and its collections. Positioned throughout the different geographic areas of the Main Collection space and in the exhibition HUMAN ZOOS, The invention of the savage, they can be recognized by their special t-shirts.

Permanent collections, on presentation of museum entry tickets

Saturday and Sunday from 01 PM to 6 PM.

LE BEFORE EXHIBITIONS

01/06/2012 – From 7 pm to 8.30 pm

The museum invites you to explore a new world and really get the weekend started! BEFORE is the first part of the festive evening mixing performance, demonstration and workshops to discover the numerous cultures represented at the museum.

From 7 pm to 8.30 pm, the BEFORE offers visitors the chance for a VIP exploration of HUMAN ZOOS, The invention of the savage accompanied by the speakers involved, before experiencing alternative performances that plunge them into a universe reinterpreted by the artists of today.

Free event

Free access sessions, subject to availability

THE QUESTION BOX

The musée du quai Branly offers visitors to HUMAN ZOOS, The invention of the savage a "question box". In place of the traditional comment book, visitors may use a multimedia terminal to leave a message, whether written, drawn or video (of a maximum duration of 60 seconds) or to look at the comments of other visitors and the exhibition curators.

A selection of messages left by visitors and the responses provided by the curators will be accessible via www.quaibranly.fr during the period of the exhibition.

Free access in the exhibition space.
PEDAGOGICAL ACTIONS

A special edition of the educational review "Texts and Documents for the Class" : « Exhibitions. L'invention du sauvage » Number 1023, 1st November 2011 (available by means of subscription or purchase of the edition through the SCEREN network).

Every fifteen days, the review TDC offers a complete issue dedicated to a theme chosen from the arts, literature, history, geography, science or civic education.

Intended principally for teachers at primary and secondary level, but also for older pupils, students, trainers and parents of pupils, this magazine is composed of several well-illustrated articles (including a central poster), produced by specialists, and educational sequences founded on primary and secondary programmes designed and produced by teachers in the field.

Two voices : conferences intended for secondary school pupils
The musée du quai Branly invites two personalities for a conversation with secondary school pupils. From January 2012 this cycle examines the historical challenges and contemporary echoes of "Exhibitions, the invention of the savage".

Programme and registration at www.quaibranly.fr under the heading "teachers".

CINEMA

In connection with the exhibition, the museum offers twenty screenings of documentaries, fiction and archive films examining different figures or subjects linked to the exhibitions and to human zoos, such as the history of Sarah Baartman, the Hottentot Venus; the figure of Buffalo Bill, that of Josephine Baker or of the Bontoc warrior. (Programming in progress)

From Thursday 01/26 to Sunday 01/29. Saturday 02/04 and Sunday 02/05
Two special screening-debate sessions 23 March and 6 April 2012
Museum cinema room
Free access sessions, subject to availability

"Zulu mealtime"
This group of Zulu travelled from Cape Town to London in May 1853.
HISTORICAL COLLECTIONS OF THE MUSEE DU QUAI BRANLY

The musée du quai Branly has a "History" heritage unit composed of graphic arts, paintings, sculptures and artefacts relating to the history of discoveries and voyages, European expansion and exchanges and cross-fertilization from the 16th century until the 1930s. Part of this collection was inherited from the musée de l'Homme and the former musée national d'Arts d'Afrique et d'Océanie. Enhanced by significant acquisitions since 2006, this collection now includes nearly 8,000 extremely varied works.

The diversity of the techniques demonstrated is equalled by the variety of representations: dioramas dating from the colonial exhibition of 1931, watercolours by sailors from the 18th and 19th centuries representing landscapes and people from all over the world, drawings from trips by famous artists such as Paul Gauguin or Henri Matisse to Tahiti and the Marquesas Islands, orientalist paintings or sketches by explorers in Africa, colonial busts, puzzles, miniatures, portraits of Indians by George Catlin, imaginary images of the American Indians as they were imagined in the 16th century...

These works constitute as many historical stories capable of informing us about the evolution of western visions of the Other according to the place and the period. They are also a powerful reminder of the fundamental role that these images continue to play in our imagination.

In this regard, the wealth of iconography held by the museum on the representation of slavery constitutes a resource rich in lessons for today.

Nanette Jacomijn Snoep is the curator of the Historical Collections of the musée du quai Branly

PHOTOGRAPHIC COLLECTIONS

The musée du quai Branly holds some 700,000 old and contemporary photographs, which constitute an international reference collection.

A photographic legacy:
580,000 photographs came from the photographic collection of the musée de l'Homme, and 70,000 from the library of the former Musée National des Arts d'Afrique et d'Océanie, to which can be added new acquisitions, of which there have been 50,000 since 1998. Numerous photographs date from the invention of the photographic process.

The period 1840-1870 is represented in particular by a set of daguerreotypes illustrating the first uses of photography in anthropology.

The photographs contain as many points of view as their authors; military personnel, explorers, wealthy travellers and scientists. The images from 1920-1930 correspond to the emergence of French ethnology. Alongside the ethnologists, professional photographers are also present. Geographically, the strong points of the collection are the Americas, in particular Mexico, Peru and Brazil; equatorial and western Africa; Polynesia, Melanesia, Indonesia and Vietnam.

Christine Barthe is the curator of the photographic collection of the Musée du Quai Branly

A graphic arts exhibition area will open shortly within the Main Collections space and will enable visitors to discover the wealth of the History and Photographs collections.

The collection of the History heritage unit is also very often approached for loans in France and abroad or in the context of temporary exhibitions in the musée du quai Branly, such as "Regarding the Other" in 2006, "Planet Métisse" in 2007 or today in "Human Zoos. The Invention of the Savage".
One is not born racist; one becomes racist. This truth is the cornerstone of the Education Against Racism Foundation. Racism is above all an intellectual construction. We must be conscious that History has conditioned us, from generation to generation, to see ourselves above all as Black, White, Mahgrebi, Asian...

It is important to understand how our prejudices have developed to be able to deconstruct them.

Our societies must integrate the simple idea that the colour of one's skin or the sex of a person does not in any way determine their intelligence, the language they speak, the religion they practice, their physical capacities, or what they love or hate. Each of us is capable of learning anything, bad as well as good.

"The question of sexual inequality is eminently political. This model of inequality is the matrix for all other regimes of inequality."

Françoise Héritier, member of the scientific committee of the Foundation

"We possess a unique origin: we were all originally Africans, born three million years ago, and that should encourage us to fraternity."

Yves Coppens, member of the scientific committee of the Foundation

The activities of the foundation are based on the expertise of its scientific committee, composed of Françoise Héritier, anthropologist; Yves Coppens, palaeoanthropologist; Marie Rose Moro, child and adolescent psychiatrist; Doudou Diène, legal expert and United Nations special reporter on contemporary forms of racism (2002-2008); Evelyne Heyer, human population geneticist; Ninian Hubert Van Blyenburgh, anthropologist and didactician; Elisabeth Caillet, museologist; Michel Wieviorka, sociologist; Françoise Vergès, political scientist; Tzvetan Todorov, philosopher and historian; Pierre Raynaud, public policy development engineer; Carole Reynaud Paligot, historian; Pascal Brice, diplomat; Pascal Boniface, geopolitical scientist; Lluis Sala Molins, philosopher; Pascal Blanchard, historian; Patrick Estrade, psychologist and André Magnin, exhibition curator.

Among the actions developed since the creation of the Foundation in 2008:
- Activities in schools, secondary schools and French and overseas universities
- Conferences and debates
- Participation in television and radio broadcasts
- The Thuram Challenge in Seine-et-Marne
- Support for manifestations against discrimination
- Participation in the European Education against Racism movement with the Council of Europe
- Publication of the book My black stars, from Lucy to Barack Obama which won the 2010 Seligmann Prize against Racism (Ed. Philippe Rey, January 2010, Ed. Points, May 2012.)
- The design and execution of the educational tool Us Others (Nous Autres), a multimedia education programme against racism for primary school teachers and pupils, sent free of charge to schools upon registration at www.commandedvdnousautres.com/

The Foundation is supported by CASDEN, MGEN, the FC Barcelona Foundation and the Conseil Général of Seine-et-Marne.
PRATICAL INFORMATION : WWW.QUAIBRANLY.FR

Monthly press password available upon request.

* CONTACTS

Press contact : Musée du quai Branly contacts:

Pierre LAPORTE Communication
Ph: 33 (0)1 45 23 14 14
info@pierre-laporte.com

Nathalie MERCIER
Communication Director
Ph : 33 (0)1 56 61 70 20
nathalie.mercier@quaibranly.fr

Magalie VERNET
Manager of medias relations
Ph : 33 (0)1 56 61 52 87
magalie.venet@quaibranly.fr

* EXHIBITION PARTNERS

[Images of exhibition partners logos]