

## *Heritage and the Memory of Slavery* *How to exhibit collections related to this history?*

25 November 2024 / 6pm – 8.30pm

Jacqueline Lichtenstein Auditorium at the Institut National du Patrimoine and  
on digital platform

### About the evening

Finally, it is only relatively recently in the history of museums that the issue of slavery as a subject and as a representation has been taken into account. Today, alongside contemporary society's strong desire to tackle the issue head on, our institutions have gradually committed to embracing this subject their own and to promoting the heritage associated with it. Museums of history and society are no longer the only ones to offer their visitors dedicated tours, permanent galleries, temporary exhibitions, mediation and cultural programming. Fine art museums and contemporary art venues, whose collections or the sites that house them are linked to the history of slavery, are also taking up the subject.

How do different types of museums, with different scientific and cultural projects, approaches and resources, respond to the issues raised by the exhibition of collections linked to the history of slavery?

There are many issues at stake: re-reading the collections, calling on outside expertise to give an accurate and nuanced account of the history of slavery, expanding the debate to all forms of slavery, from antiquity to the contemporary period and on all continents, creating space for dialogue with militant associations and for co-constructing discourse, considering the role of artists in this complex dialogue. How are museums tackling these issues today, and what proposals are they putting forward? How can they contribute, with the means at their disposal, to creating new narratives that avoid clichés?

As the French Ministry of Culture is working on the promotion of 'contested heritage'; as the issue of the 'decolonisation' of museums, collections and the way our institutions operate is at the heart of the discussions being held by the professional community in France and abroad, particularly within ICOM; as the issue of human rights is increasingly present in our professional exchanges, this evening is an opportunity for professionals to share their experiences and thoughts on this fundamental issue, which today concerns a wide range of museum types.

Émilie Girard, Chair, October 2024