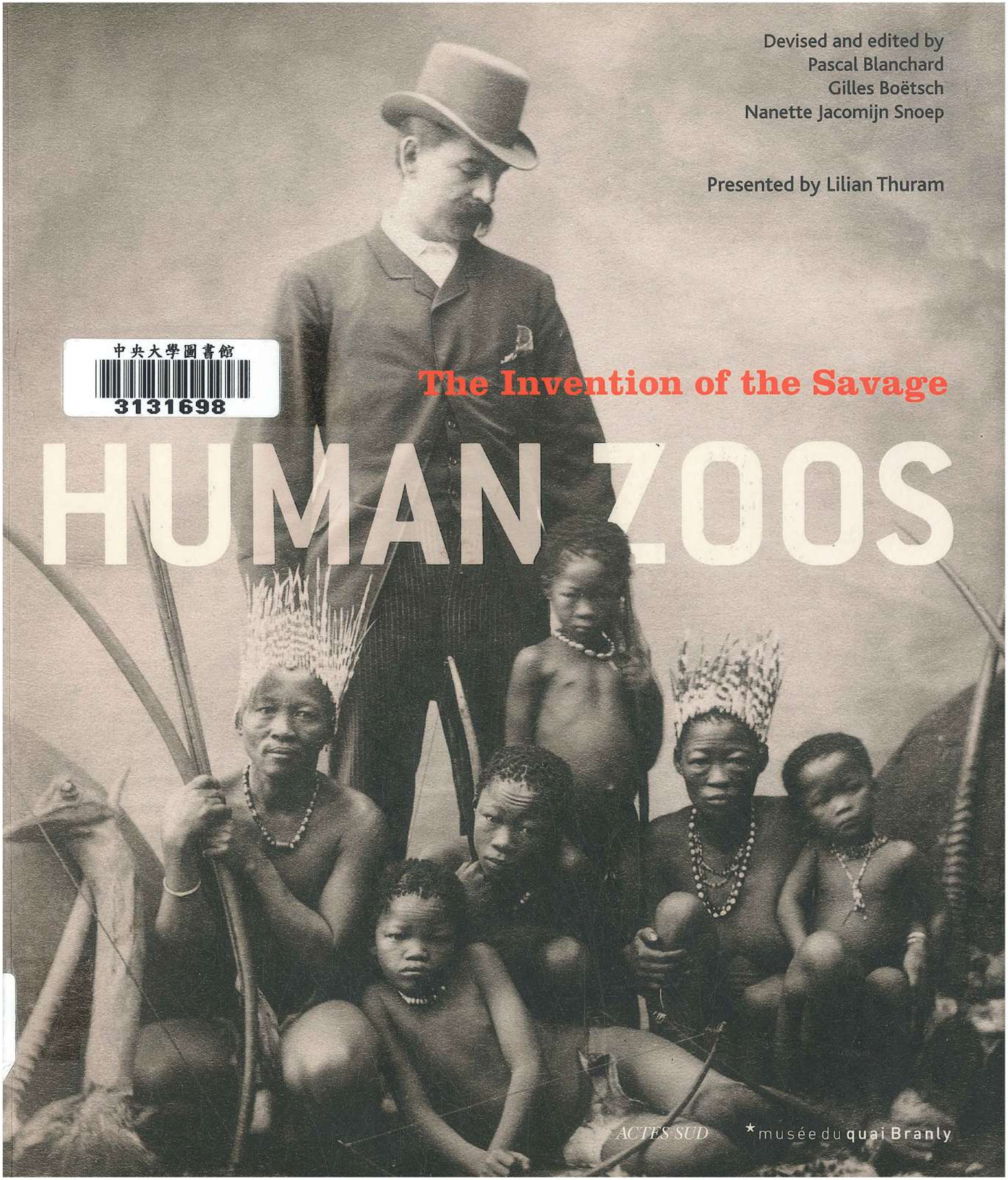

Devised and edited by
Pascal Blanchard
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Nanette Jacomijn Snoep

Presented by Lilian Thuram

The Invention of the Savage

HUMAN ZOOS

ACTES SUD
musée du quai Branly

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The Invention of the Savage

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FOREWORD

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 Jacomijn 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

PREFACES

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.

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

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.[1] 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

1- Bancel, Blanchard, Boëtsch, Deroo and Lemaire, 2002; Lindfors, 1999; Bogdan, 1988; Corbey, 1993; Hollein and Kort, 2006; Allegaert and Sliggers, 2009.

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. 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

Introduction

"Sister of Joseph, Hova woman from Madagascar, Senegal and Madagascar Ethnographic Exhibition, Champ-de-Mars", Paris, photograph, positive created from the silver-bromide glass plate negative, 1896.

Human Zoos. The Invention of the Savage

Pascal Blanchard, Gilles Boëtsch and Nanette Jacomijn Snoep

"As the last four centuries of history come to a close, Western mankind now realizes more than ever that by assuming the right to make a radical distinction between humans and animals, granting the former everything it denied to the latter, it was triggering a vicious circle in which this same stark line, constantly pushed further, would come to separate men from other men."

Claude Lévi-Strauss

The history of human inter-relationships has often hinged on the implementation of strategies of domination, which may take complex and varied forms. But two of the most standard forms involve knowledge and exhibition of the other person. The "Other" has always sparked interrogation, puzzlement, and amazement. Exhibiting the Other helps to conceptualize and situate oneself and the alacrity with which it was shown and later orchestrated bears this out. Putting strange or new things on show can trigger emotion, admiration, anxiety and disgust all at once. Being exhibited can entail various levels of personal relationship: performers who stage themselves in order to valorize their feats; bodies exhibited in an erotic vein (as is the case with dance); and conquered or excluded people who are exhibited to symbolize domination, defeat or pending punishment. When exhibiting others becomes a way of adopting a distance from an entire people (or exotic "race"), when it becomes a reflection of identity or deformity – or, indeed, a combination of the two – then the process of constructing a radical alterity has begun, often as a prelude to exclusion.

The Hottentot Venus in early nineteenth-century Europe and Ota Benga in early twentieth-century America were consummate examples of this principle of exclusion. A double process of distancing became merged in their bodies, effectively placing them in the sphere of "abnormality". What we have elsewhere described via the concept of the "human zoo"[1] became an international mechanism which functioned equally well in Hamburg (1874), Amsterdam (1883),[2] Paris (1889),[3] Chicago (1893), Barcelona (1896), Brussels (1897), Osaka (1903) and Wembley (1925). It was a "global" system (probably one of the first in history, prior to sports, music and movies) based on a model that became generic. It entailed stagecraft which accompanied the construction of the major

← José Conrado Roza, "The Nuptial Masquerade", Portugal, oil on canvas, 1788.

colonial empires, the development of the social sciences, and the emergence of racial, eugenic and segregationist theories, along with the mechanisms of nascent capitalism. And it helped to make exotic bodies familiar to hundreds of millions of exhibition-goers who could never have travelled to "strange and distant lands".[4]

The ancient roots of human exhibition

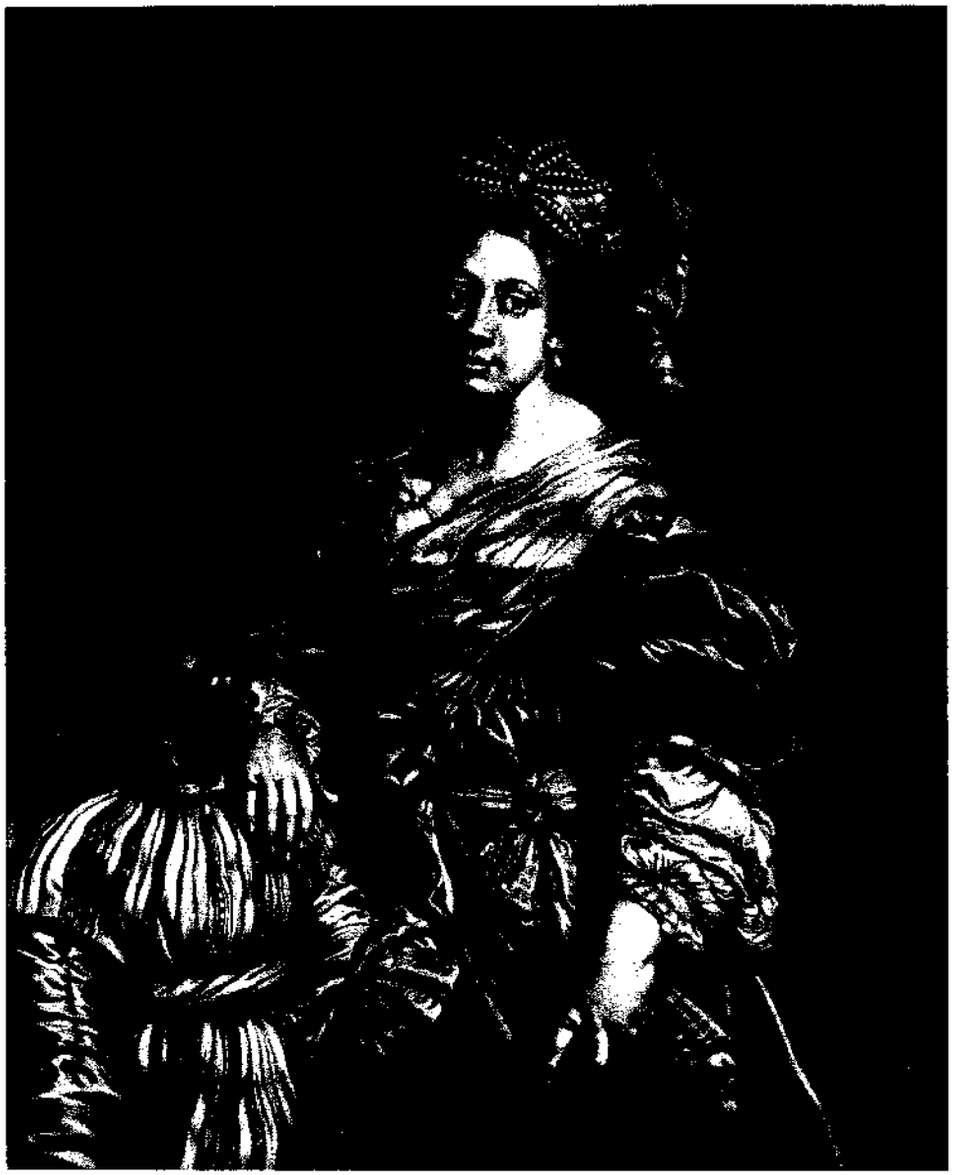
Ancient Egyptians exhibited "black dwarves" from Sudanese lands. And the Roman Empire paraded "barbarians" beneath its triumphal arches, thereby asserting its superiority and staging its worldwide hegemony. In the Middle Ages, fairground "monsters" and "freaks" fascinated both commoners and aristocrats. Painters, sculptors and engravers have always depicted monsters ranging from gargoyles on cathedrals to Renaissance grotesques, and from Hieronymus Bosch's paintings to Archduke Ferdinand's cabinet of curiosities in Ambras Castle.

With the discovery of the New World and the expansion of exploration and conquest, explorers brought back living "specimens" to Europe's royal courts, starting in Portugal (from 1440 onward) and Spain, followed by Italy and the rest of Europe. Yet this practice was not exclusively European – Chinese sailors took Africans back to China as early as the fifteenth century.

Christopher Columbus returned from one of his voyages with Amerindians to be presented to the court of Spain; the first Indian to be seen in France was a native of Brazil named Essomericq, who arrived there in 1505. Cortés brought back a troupe of native musicians, dancers and acrobats from Mexico, who performed at the court of Holy

✐ Charles Le Brun, "Tête de monstre" (Monster's Head), France, pastel and red chalk, late seventeenth century.

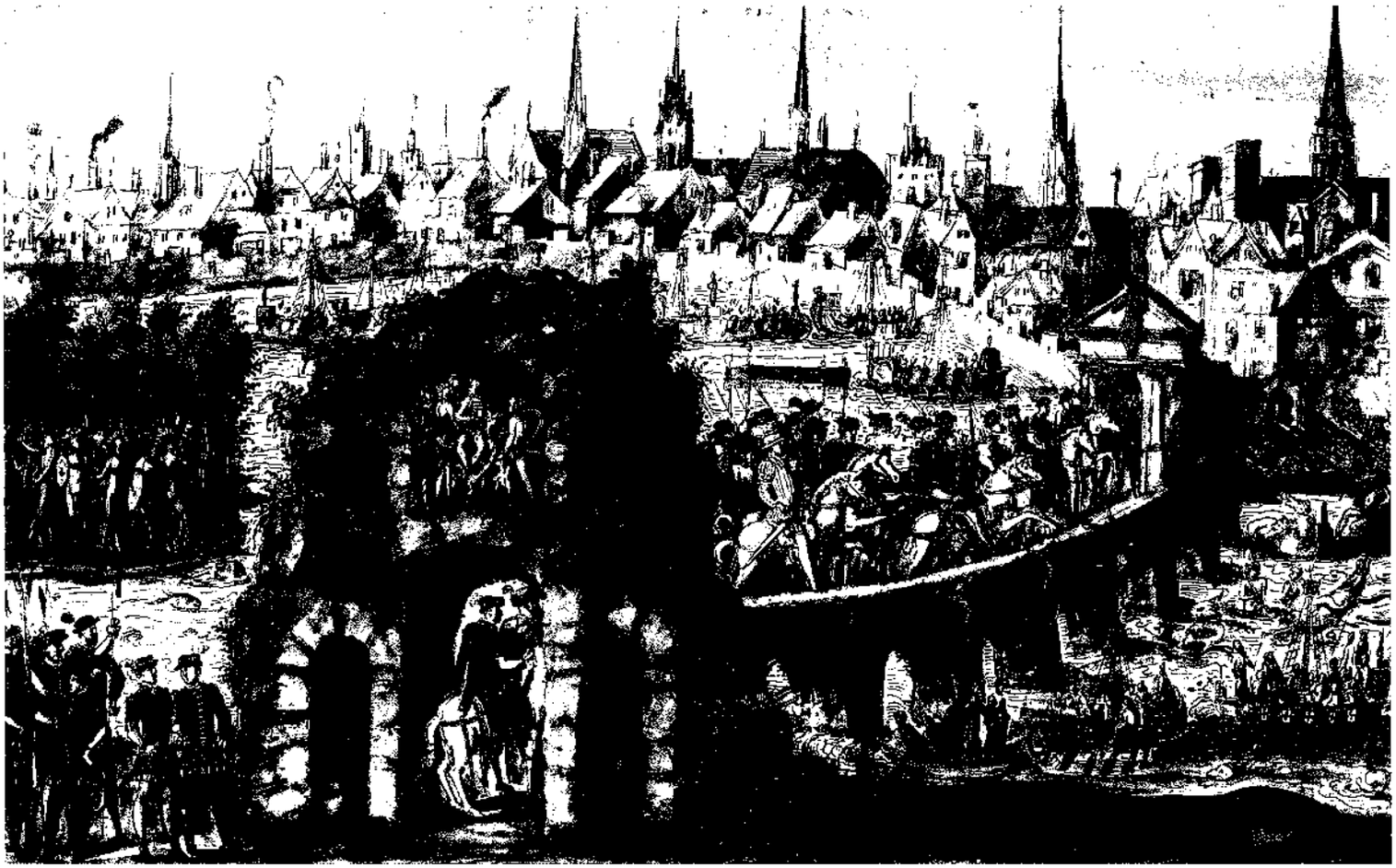
✐✐ Richard Tompson (after Titian), "Laura dei Dianti", Great Britain, mezzotint, 1678–1679.



Roman Emperor Charles V in 1528. In 1550, a royal procession in Rouen before the French King Henry II featured a "tableau vivant" of fifty Tupinamba Indians accompanied by one hundred and fifty French sailors disguised as Tupinambas.

Just as the first "human specimens" from the New World were arriving in Europe, a passion for everything remote, unusual and "wild" or "savage" also grew thanks to the exotica displayed in cabinets of curiosities.[5] Around 1580, for example, Duke Wilhelm of Bavaria assembled a collection of "monsters" that included an amazing variety of dwarfs and people with disabilities. A progressive consolidation of the category of the Other occurred with the enlightenment and the discovery of the South Seas, highlighted by the arrival of a Tahitian brought back by Bougainville in 1769[6] and the presentation of a certain Omai to King George III of England. In France, the Société des Observateurs de l'Homme was founded in 1800 in the wake of the French Revolution, giving form to an initial version of "academic" anthropology that prompted scholarly examinations of a "wild boy from Aveyron" (France) and a native of China named Tchong A-Sam.

At the same time, royal delegations, exotic foreigners and travelling merchants from the four corners of the earth converged on the West, flaunting an "exoticism" that was duly



recorded in imagery. Delegations from Siam, ambassadors from the Sublime Porte (i.e., the Turkish sultan), "Negro princes" and representatives of Annam and the Indies rubbed shoulders with Amerindian "chiefs", black ambassadors from African coastal lands and other "Oriental curiosities", who all became an integral part not only of the familiar landscape of royal and imperial European courts, but also of subsequent tales and depictions of journeys. Over a period of five centuries one can observe the spread of an iconographic grammar, a corpus of imagery of the Other which manufactured and permanently defined that Other.

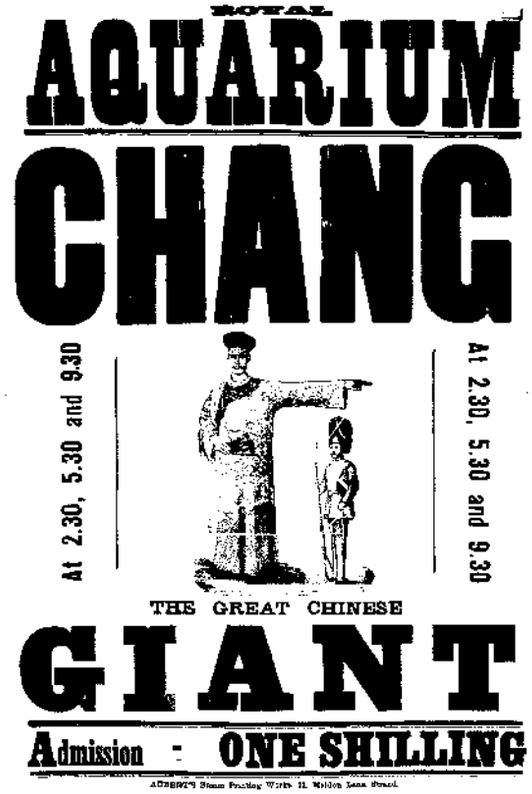
The strange, the "savage" and the "freak" have thus always been objects of lively curiosity. The phenomenon of *exhibition* progressively arose from the conjunction of several political, social and economic factors, and naturally found its place in the large universal exhibitions held from 1851 to 1958,[7] as well as in national and colonial exhibitions hosted for over a century by more than forty countries, mainly Japan, the United States, France, Belgium, Great Britain, Australia, Italy and Germany. The nineteenth century was profoundly marked by the appeal of far-off lands and the discovery of everything unknown, strange or supernatural, which was also stimulated by improved printing technology (mass-produced engravings) and the rise of affordable newspapers and periodicals.

In the United States, right from the second quarter of the nineteenth century the vision of an "elsewhere" was incarnated by circuses which imitated the European tradition of exhibiting animals at fairs, although without that tradition's scientific or educational goals.[8] These grandiose American spectacles[9] were the place where "ethnic shows" merged with "freak shows". The key figure – and model – in this process was P. T. Barnum,

"Fête brésilienne" (Brazilian Fête), Rouen, watercolour, from twenty-seven decorated sheets on vellum, 1550.

Courier Lithographic (pr.), "Buffalo Bill's Rough Riders Review, Wild West and Wild East Show", Cincinnati, poster, 1901.

Aubert's Steam Printing works (pr.), "Chang the Great, Chinese giant", London (Royal Aquarium), poster, 1880.



until Buffalo Bill came along with his *Wild West Show*.[10] Those American-born showmen organized worldwide tours of acts designed to fascinate the public by exhibiting human beings labelled as "savage" (notably Indians) or "strange" (by concocting archetypal figures), that is to say hybrids of humanity and animality. In New York, Barnum's American Museum[11] became the most popular attraction in the country.[12] What Barnum invented was a way to stage the strange in a venue devoted to leisure activities[13] by simultaneously programming "scientific" lectures and theatrical reconstitutions or dances.[14] Later, Barnum launched the "Grand Congress of Nations," a kind of ideological culmination of the early, purely commercial attractions. That was the context in which Barnum exhibited R. A. Cunningham's Australian Aboriginals, some "ferocious Zulus" (then on a worldwide tour), "Sioux Indians" recruited from reservations, a "savage Muslim" from Nubia and several other exotic specimens.[15]

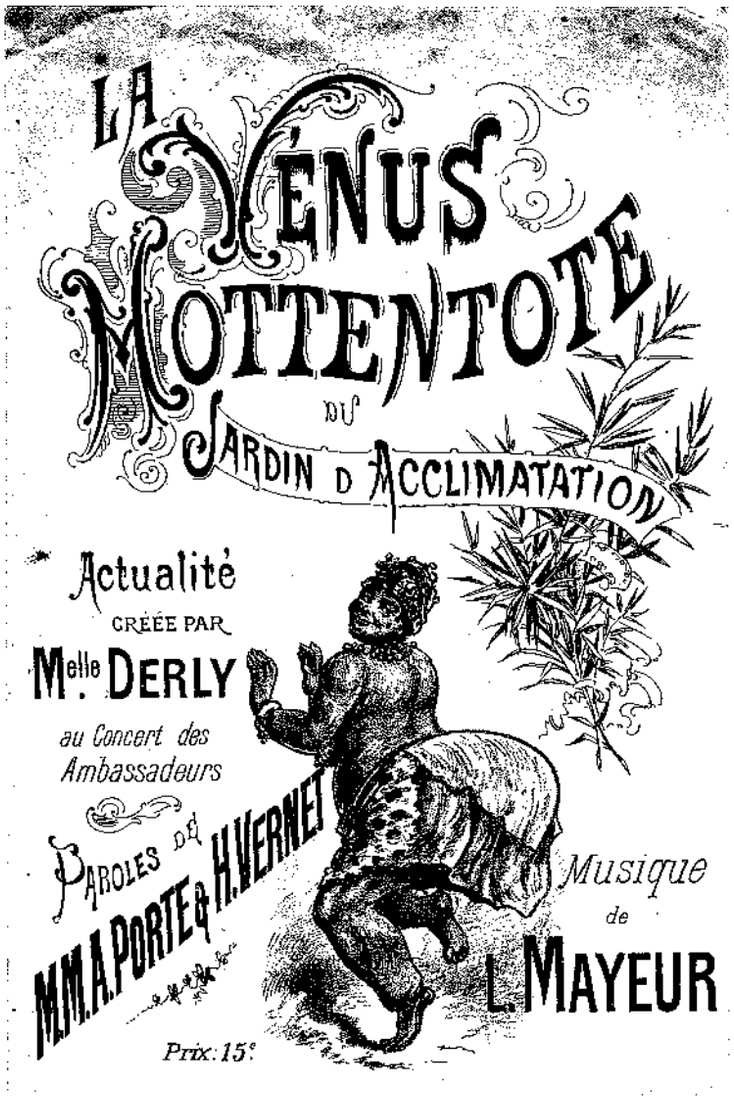
The mid nineteenth-century arrival of *categorization*

Scholars began to feel that studying ethnographic objects and human remains from archaeological digs was insufficient – the examination of real individuals was indispensable to any anthropologist worthy of the name. The possibilities were limited, however, for it meant either "going into the field" by joining a major, long-term expedition, or importing "items of study" (which might even mean "ordering" bodies, as French scientists did in the mid nineteenth century, and as German scholars did in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century from southern Africa and Australia). Imported human specimens were the most common resource used by scientists right up to the First World War, when "armchair anthropology" went out of fashion and observation in the field became essential for all ethnologists. That was the context in which the most reputable French anthropologists conducted studies in the Paris zoological gardens (Jardin Zoologique d'Acclimatation) from 1877 onwards,[16] as did German scholars on

"Guerrier et paysage marquisiens à la mémoire de l'annexion des Marquises à la France en 1842" (Marquesan Warrior and Landscape in Memory of the French Annexation of the Marquesas in 1842), Exposition Universelle de Paris, diorama and sculpture, 1878.

M. M Hanly & Co. (pub.), "S. Watson's American Museum of Living Curiosities", London, poster, 1885.

Roland Bonaparte, "La collection anthropologique du prince Bonaparte" (Prince Bonaparte's Anthropological Collection), Exposition Universelle de Paris (anthropological gallery), photograph, albumen print, 1889.



Henri Sicard (pr.), "La Vénus Hottentote" (The Hottentot Venus), Jardin Zoologique d'Acclimatation de Paris, cover of musical score, 1888.

Sébastien Cœurc, "La Vénus hottentote dans les salons de la duchesse de Berry" (The Hottentot Venus in the Salons of the Duchesse de Berry), Paris, watercolour on paper, 1830.

Hagenbeck's exhibits in 1874; similarly, international exhibitions in Philadelphia in 1876, Paris in 1878 and 1889 and Amsterdam in 1883 provided anthropologists with unhoped-for opportunities.[17] Such exhibitions were also an occasion to produce special sets of photographs, notably the ones taken by Prince Roland Bonaparte, who was a member of the Société d'Anthropologie de Paris.[18] The world thus found itself "organized" into albums or "galleries" of ethnic groups, usually represented by two photographs of each individual, frontal and profile.

This desire to juxtapose the "races" not through photographs but in real life in fact dates back to the early nineteenth century, as Éric Baratay has pointed out. There was an early plan for an ethnographic park "where each man would be dressed in the manner of his own country, placed in a setting suited to his lifestyle [...] as proposed in Paris in the [Revolutionary] Year XI [1802–1803]",[19] which already indicated a growing, precocious interest for anthropo-zoological studies of the peoples of the world. Europe-wide, a similar stage was reached in the early nineteenth century with the exhibition in London and Paris of the "Hottentot Venus", whose body became an object of science and show business (1810–1815).[20] Subsequently, London[21] would become the European capital of "exotic exhibitions",[22] hosting exhibits of Indians in 1817,[23] Laplanders in 1822, Eskimos in 1824, Fuegians from 1829 onward, Guyanese in 1839 and Bushmen in 1847. The major London show of Zulus in 1853 was merely the first stop on a "grand tour" throughout Europe,[24] marking the advent of a new dimension to the exhibition process.

It was at this very moment – at least in the Old and New Worlds if not yet in Japan – when national identities were being forged, that there emerged the paradigms for a standardization of the world whose visual dimension functioned simultaneously as popular entertainment, scientific lesson (through the work of scholars), and explicit demonstration of the validity of racial distinctions and hierarchies.

During the Great Exhibition in London in 1851 – the first in a long series of universal exhibitions, ten years after Barnum's museum opened and two years before the Zulus went on tour – pavilions devoted to the Middle and Far East, notably India, impressed visitors through the quality of local artistic output. Similarly, the Egyptian pavilion scored a big hit with its full-scale reconstitution of a street in Cairo. The papier-mâché exoticism of this Cairo street went on to draw millions of visitors in Paris, Chicago, San Francisco, Berlin and Milan.[25] Alongside these temporary reconstructions there was the contrivance of exotic troupes who, under the aegis of a new breed of impresario, took the world by storm. The first troupe to be conceived and recruited in this way was exhibited by Carl Hagenbeck's German enterprise in Hamburg in 1874, the very year that Barnum arrived in Europe, thereby constituting a key date in the evolution of human exhibits in western and central Europe. The troupe was composed of a family of six Laplanders (Europe's own "savages") accompanied by some thirty reindeer. Given its initial success, Hagenbeck exported his show throughout western Europe, notably featuring it at the Jardin Zoologique d'Acclimatation de Paris in 1877.[26] Hagenbeck made his shows appear more professional by dubbing them "anthropo-zoological exhibitions".[27]

The world discovers "savages"

Scientific interest, colonial topicality, political motives and show-business acumen did not always suffice, however, to draw the public, as demonstrated by the flops (in terms of attendance and income) of the Bella Coolas (Nuxalk people) in Germany, the Kalmuks in France, the Eskimos in Great Britain and the Egyptian Caravan in the United States. Audiences did not find them sufficiently exotic, sensational or original. Sustaining the spectacle called for constant innovation, which meant inventing a "savageness" or "wildness" ever more galvanizing in terms of alterity, promoted through advertising imagery that gave visitors an increasingly exciting feeling of seeing something "for the first time ever". This process largely explains why purely "racial" exhibits mutated in three directions in order to reinvigorate the formula: shows henceforth contained several scenes, reconstructions became ever more majestic, and a more or less faked otherness was contrived.

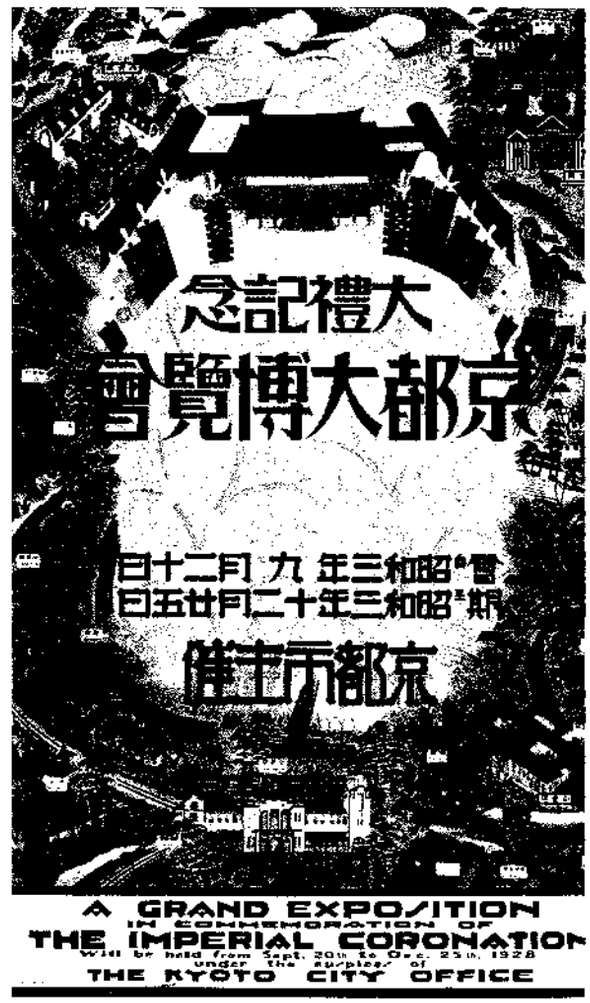
Furthermore, following early shows of "specimens" who were "constrained" to appear, showmen quickly realized that pay and professionalism were keys to the success of a tour that might last several years. Whatever the borderline between true and false,

"Sechseläuten Procession in Zürich" (Sechseläuten Parade in Zurich), *Leipziger Illustrierte Zeitung*, woodcut, 1870.

Roland Bonaparte, "Boschiman" (Bushman [show with Pygmies at the Folies-Bergère]), Paris, photograph, albumen print, 1886.

"A Grand Exposition in Commemoration of the Imperial Coronation," Kyoto, poster, 1928.

between authentic and fake,[28] the very act of exhibiting "savages" proved that, given this very status, they were inferior to Europeans, hence could be colonized.[29] This process was also intrinsically linked to the quest for identity then underway in Old-World societies as part of the construction of Europe's nation-states, just as it was linked to a New-World assertion of "Americanness" following the Civil War and to Meiji Japan's image of "modernity" after 1878. Indeed, Japan took a twin line of attack: the assertion of a "Japanese" racial model (by definition "superior") as distinct from the "backward peoples" all around them; and the staged presentation of peoples who were "potentially" colonizable by Japan's new ruling elite because they inhabited nearby geographical regions (Ainus, Koreans, Formosans, Okinawans, Chinese, etc.). Thus the 1895 exhibition held in Okazaki (Kyoto)[30] featured a pavilion of "foreign colonial specimens" as well as, for the first time, a Taiwan pavilion, just one year after the World's Fair in Chicago where Japan's mere presence made an impression on fair-goers and international opinion. This trend was reinforced in Osaka in 1903,[31] where locals saw for the first time in Japan an exhibit of colonial natives and "exotic" peoples in an Anthropological Pavilion placed under the aegis of the directors of Tokyo's Anthropological Society.

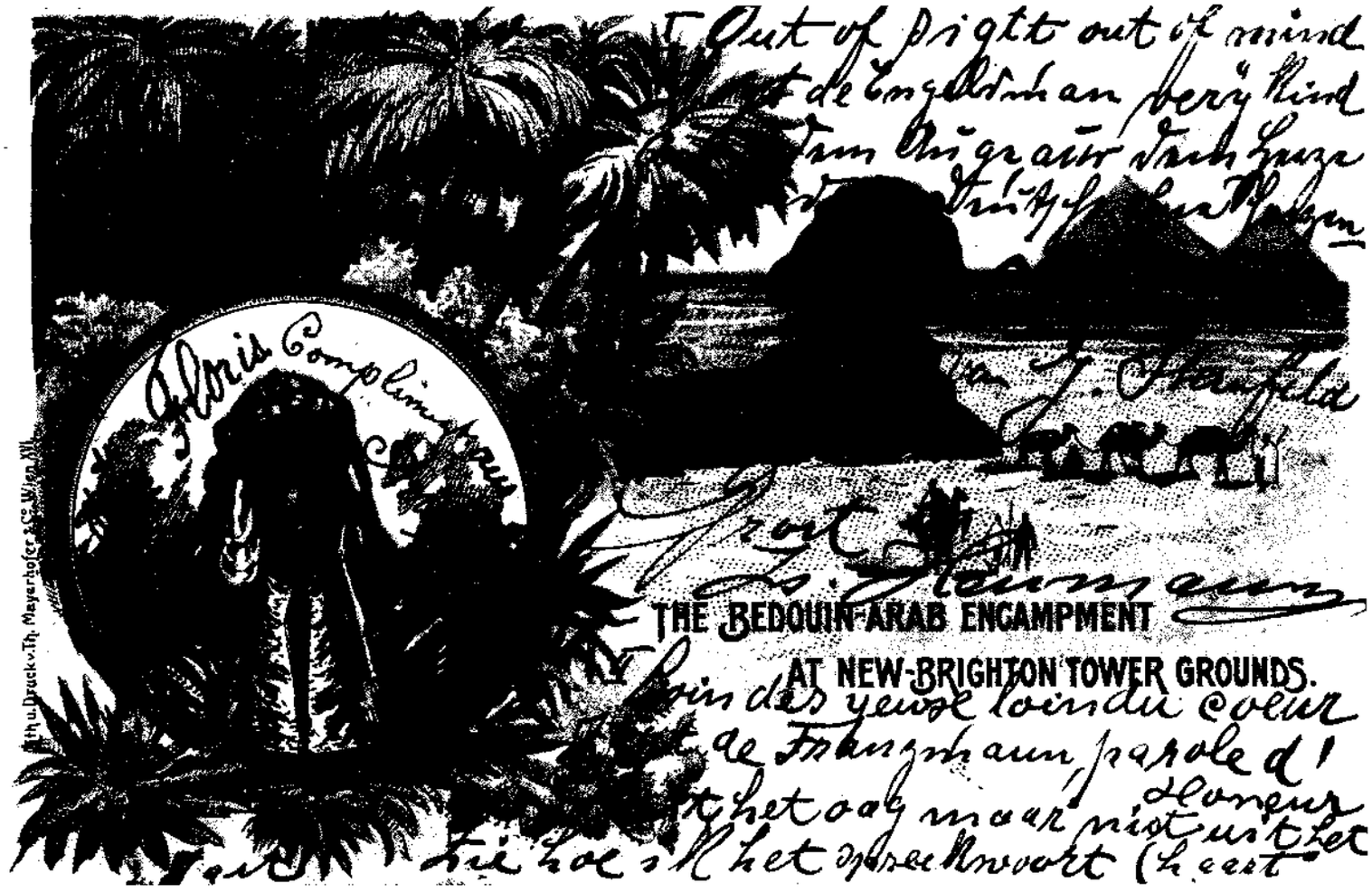


✒ Frederick Burr Opper, "Darkies' Day at the Fair", Chicago, excerpt from the book *World's Fair Puck*, drawing 1893.

✒ Th. Mayerhofer (pr.), "The Bedouin-Arab Encampment at *New-Brighton Tower Grounds*", Vienna, postcard, 1902.

✒ ✒ W. and D. Downey, "Krao", Great Britain, photograph, circa 1892.

✒ ✒ "For Three Nigts Only. The New Zealand Chief", Great Britain, poster, 1846.



In Europe, the major powers also justified their choice of colonies through exhibitions constituting what could be described as "colonial theatre"[32]: Great Britain had India;[33] France had Algeria, Indochina and West Africa; the Netherlands had the Dutch East Indies; and, later, Belgium had its Congo, Germany had Togo and Cameroon, Italy had Ethiopia, and Portugal had Angola. It was also a period when all exhibitions of "difference" were rationalized and "commercialized" to include not only exotic humans but also people with mental or physical disabilities and anyone with any kind of anomaly. This popular infatuation with "freakishness" was inseparably linked to the relegation of various forms of alterity – Guillermo Farini was certainly one of the masters of this game and a peerless jack-of-all-trades.[34] The distancing of "abnormality" in Western culture was accompanied by greater visibility as a "freak" – one in fact flaunted what was usually hidden.[35]

Crossovers between the realms of "ethnic show" and "freak show" included Siamese twins Chang and Eng,[36] the "last Aztecs",[37] the legendary Krao, the two "wild men of Borneo",[38] the "cannibal warrior" from Dahomey,[39] and troupes of African albinos. Such attractions were presented by Barnum[40] and other showmen in settings generally inspired by "wild" lands, with suitable costumes and stage sets,[41] thereby re-ordering the world into new spheres. The exhibition of an Oceanian "cannibal" in London and a "monkey-woman" in Luna Park in Paris sparked as many, if not more, shudders than the "human torso", the "Lilliputian",[42] and "pig-woman", because they implied that an entire population was similar to these physical, cultural and mental "deviants": it was no longer a question of exceptions or mistakes, but rather the extraordinary norm of other, surrounding spheres.

An unmatched power of attraction

Today it is hard to imagine the powerful appeal that the theatricalization of fairground attractions exercised upon visual culture in the second half of the nineteenth century, but three phenomena testify to their popularity: first of all, the extensive dissemination of printed pictures by itinerant hawkers (who were especially active when Osage Indians toured in France in the 1820s) and the significant sales of postcards and other image media[43] on the site of the exhibits themselves; next, the ever larger number of articles in local and national press devoted to such events; and finally, the reliably heavy attendance figures at the various venues. These quantitative indicators underscore the infatuation with such shows,[44] including small-town versions. Being "savage" was good for business.

The series of essays in this catalogue allow us to distinguish – in terms of form as well as content – between anthropo-zoological exhibits,[45] colonial pavilions at international exhibitions, circus and fairground attractions, anatomical museums, "freak shows", travelling "exotic" villages and "exotic" or "freakish" performers on tour. Three motives governed, with more or less intensity, these productions: to entertain, to inform and to educate. These motives overlapped and merged in various forms of show – the same

→ → William T. Maud, "A Peek at the Natives', Savage South Africa at Earl's Court", London, pen and washes on paper, 1899.

→ Ets. Maurice (pub.) (attributed to), "Souvenir du Village noir" (Souvenir of the Black Village), Exposition Internationale de Reims, postcard, 1903.

troupe might go from public park to music hall,[46] from scientist's lab to native village on tour, from colonial reconstitution to circus ring, and from a poster for the Folies-Bergère to an article in *Nature*. Lines were blurred,[47] genres overlapped, interests varied.
Retracing the history of nearly five centuries of human exhibits, the contributors to this catalogue demonstrate that the various approaches all share one explicit or implicit goal: to establish a borderline.[48] This observation allows us to encompass the wide variety of exhibitions and systems of meanings which they generated in that context, so that admiration for certain civilizations and for the physical attractiveness of certain exotic peoples could indeed exist, not forgetting the role of reverie and fascination. The "savage" was not only a threatening, limited, childish or bestial figure, it was also the irreducible core of a desire to transcend the bodily constraints and rigidity that accompanied the rise of modernity. "Wildness" was a metaphor for lost innocence or for an "elsewhere", the reverse face of late nineteenth-century rationality, as vividly perpetuated in the following century. Thus the diversity of these forms constructs a whole with its convergences, coherence and, above all, shared gaze.[49] What we refer to through the all-encompassing term "human zoo" corresponds, in an historical and etymological sense, to a specific period ranging from the first third of the nineteenth century to the 1930s, broadly speaking, with a "before" (1497 to 1815) and an "after" (post Second World War).[50]
Very few visitors or promoters voiced objections to this huge image-concocting machinery. There were, however, a few exceptions in France (intellectuals such as the Surrealists in 1931), the United States (a few religious organizations and impresarios), Great Britain (the abolitionist movement) and Germany (impresarios and intellectuals). In August 1912, Léon Wurth published an article in which he criticized the masquerade of men "dressed as clown-negroes" and expressed his shame at an audience's reaction to an unwell woman who trembled with fever: "I'm ashamed to be white.... All the

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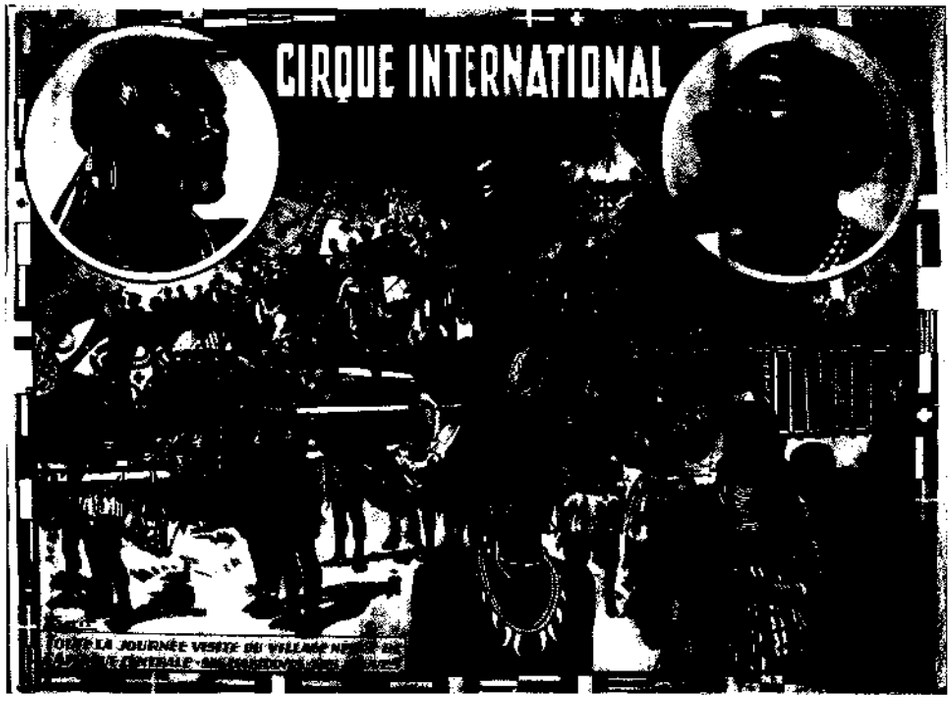
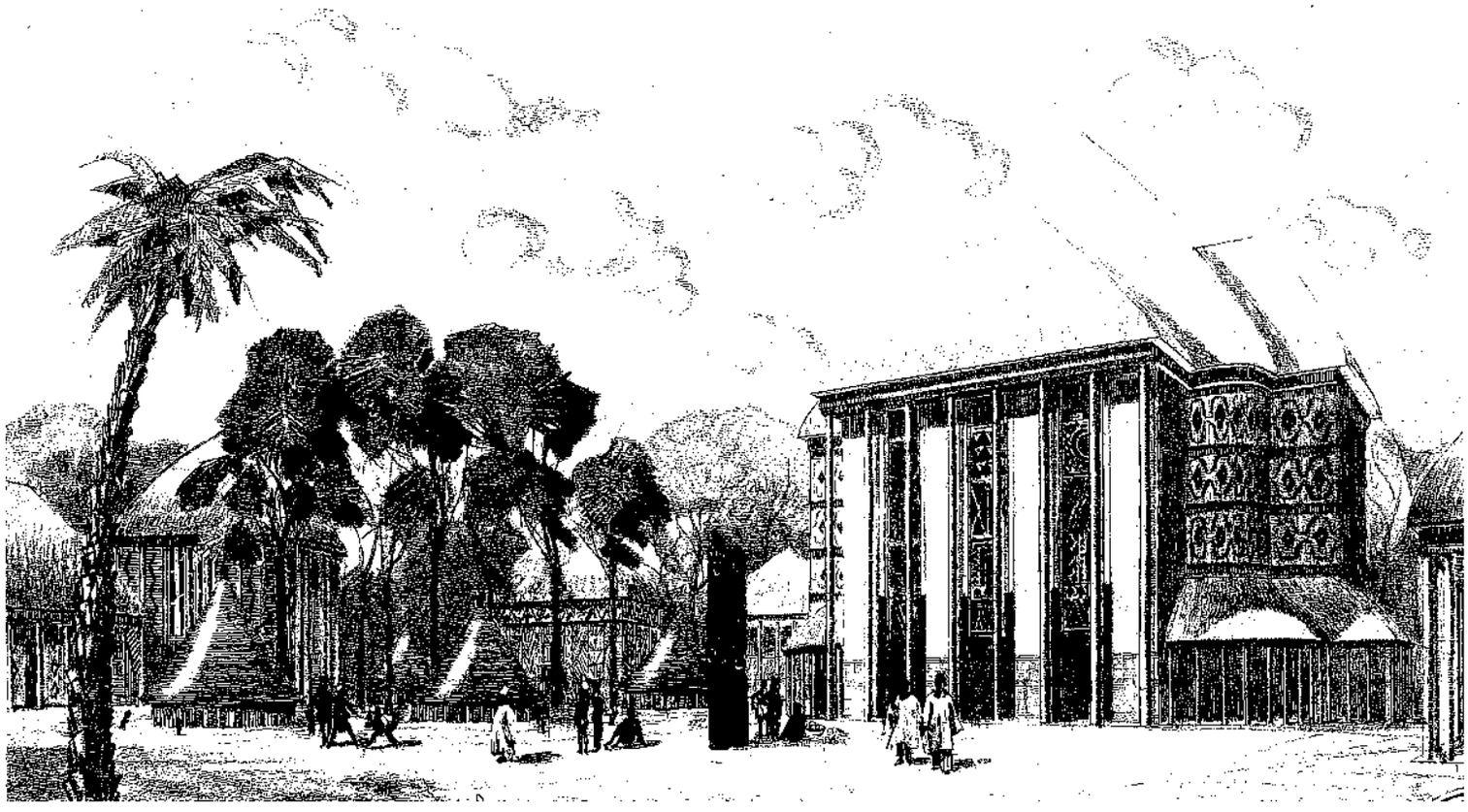
♦ "Monstre et beautés de l'humanité" (Monstrosities and Beauties of Humanity), excerpt from *Les Races humaines*, France, photomontage, 1921.



➨ E. Florit, "Cirque international. Toute la journée visite du Village nègre" (International Circus. All Day, Visits to the Negro Village), France, poster, circa 1925.

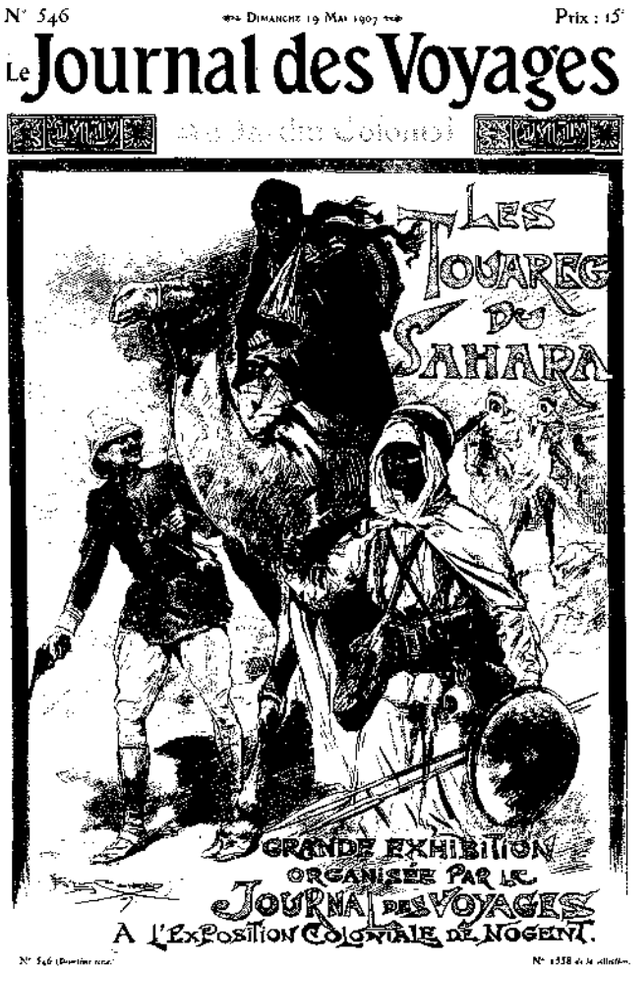
✔ "Projet pour le pavillon du Togo et du Cameroun" (Design for the Togo and Cameroon Pavilion), Exposition Coloniale Internationale de Paris, drawing, ink and red chalk on paper heightened with gouache, 1931.

➨ ➨ Jules Renard, aka Draner, (Henri Sicard pr.), "Maison de la Belle Jardinière", Exposition Universelle, Paris, advertising chromolithograph, 1889.



onlookers had a lofty feeling of white superiority. All those people, who during the week, labour at wretched tasks and on whom civilization has touched only lightly, have the instincts of slave merchants."[51] Objections also arose from within, ranging from strikes by the exhibits themselves to veritable protest movements such as the one organized by the Malagasy people on show at the Exposition Internationale Coloniale in Paris in 1931. For the great majority of visitors, the norm was acceptance, condescension and a gaze that ranged from open contempt to admiration for physique.[52] And while such exhibits may now appear "shocking" in terms of principle and presentation, they directly reflect the attitudes of the day – we should try to avoid any anachronism. On the material level, however, many clues point to the occasionally inhuman treatment of the people put on show: the use of cages (which was extremely rare, however) or enclosures (more common, with the double goal of separating and "protecting" both visitors and exhibits);[53] the dreadful living conditions of certain troupes, the deaths of "participants" and suicides while on tour or upon return to their respective homelands subsequent to serious trauma;[54] housing on the exhibition site itself or in "stockyards";[55] the forcible seizure of people[56] and/or their transport against their will (fairly rare incidents that had ceased by the turn of the twentieth century); methods of "recruitment" via a sole agent and highly abstract "group contracts"; the presence of children and highly publicized births within ethnographic exhibits, plus women deliberately presented naked in touring villages; finally, the "scientific" studies carried out on the bodies of individuals who died while touring in various ethnic shows.[57] While the deaths that occurred at Tervuren in 1897, Paris in 1892 (among the Kali'nas at the Jardin Zoologique d'Acclimatation de Paris) and Barcelona in 1896, not to mention the outbreak of smallpox in Chicago in 1893, were all real – as were the tragic fates of the Hottentot Venus in London and Paris around 1810, of the Fuegians in Switzerland, of Ota Benga in St. Louis in 1904, and of the Pygmies presented at the court of the King of Italy in 1883 – these incidents should not mislead us into assessing the phenomenon by the sole yardstick of abusive violence.

*Exposition Universelle_1889_*



A "savage" under contract

Indeed, two factors soon effected a change in contractual conditions offered to human exhibits. First of all, showmen realised that illness – and, in particular, death – threatened the "good financial health" of the enterprise by creating publicity that was harmful to the show. It provoked the mistrust, sometimes even the rebellion, of the exhibits, not to the mention the sudden compassion and above all anxiety of a public who feared contamination. A system of self-regulation thus emerged to protect the main "capital" of such spectacles, namely the exhibits themselves.

Thus, following the deaths of an entire troupe of Eskimos and numerous Fuegians, the Hagenbeck organization subsequently made sure that all of its shows' "participants" were vaccinated. In the case of shows of African villages that toured France, a publicity campaign – including the use of postcards – announced the "vaccination" of the natives every time they arrived in a new city. Furthermore, given the discontent expressed by certain troupes and their refusal to participate in exhibitions, showmen took increasing care to recruit entire families, including children – the presence of the family allegedly prevented any rebellion or desertion. Impresarios also drew up contracts (usually via a go-between) and benefited from the backing of colonial authorities. Following several scandals, colonial authorities increasingly prohibited "savage" recruitment tactics and

à Adolph Friedländer, "The Four Flying Chinese's of the Royal Troupe Lijen-Chaisan," Hamburg, poster, 1907.

◁ E. E. Conrad, "Les Touareg du Sahara" (The Tuareg of the Sahara), Exposition Coloniale, Paris/Nogent-sur-Marne, cover of *Le Journal des voyages au Jardin colonial*, May 1907.

◁◁ Jules Grand, "Village noir. Exhibition ethnologique" (Black Village. Ethnological Exhibition), Exposition Coloniale de Perpignan, postcard, 1906.

◁◁◁ De Graeve (pub.), "Abyssinisches Dorf" (Abyssinian Village), Germany, postcard, heliotype, 1910.

✒ Neurdein (pub.), "Les Fétichеurs" (Fetish Worshippers), Jardin Zoologique d'Acclimatation de Paris, postcard, 1912.

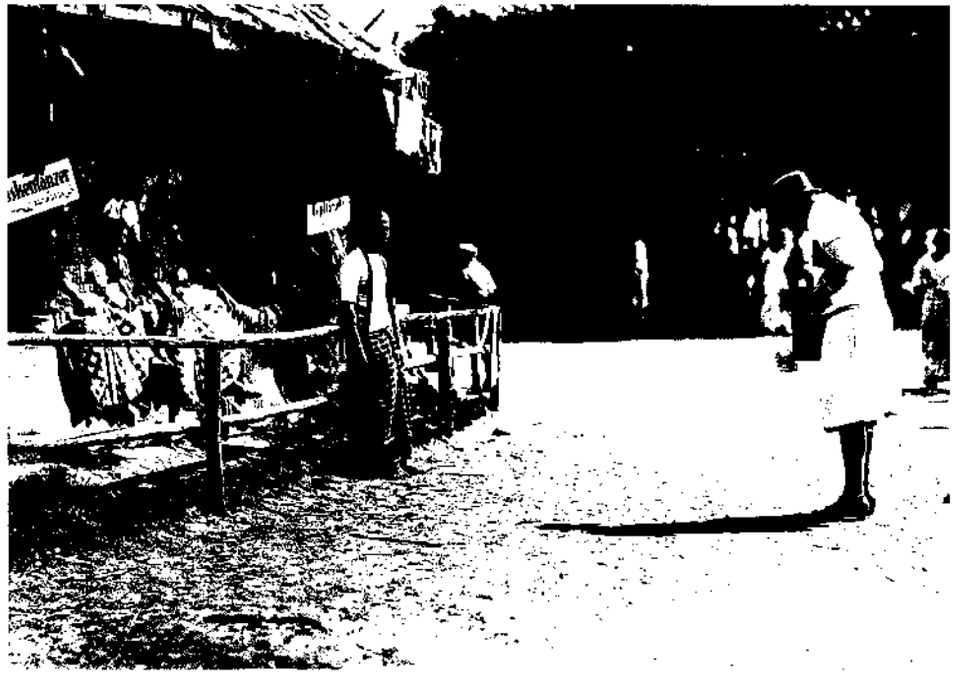
ABYSSINISCHES DORF —
Brautpaar Kadica-Elmi.

75 — JARDIN D'ACCLIMATATION. — Les Féticheurs. ND Phot.

set up specific organizations charged with part of the coordination of these shows (as begun in the United States in 1893 and France in 1906) in order to professionalize the trade in "savages".[58] The contractual system that emerged involved the implementation of a new economics based not only on the concept of mutual interest but also on more complex relationships between exhibitor and exhibit, as reflected in Abdellatif Kechiche's film *Vénus Noire* (*Black Venus*, 2010) about the Hottentot Venus during her testimony before a court in London, and as suggested by explicit acts of "resistance" to the process of exhibition.[59]

In the end, between thirty-five and forty thousand "exhibits" from all latitudes were thus displayed in all parts of the world in a period that lasted just over a century. They played a major role in the construction of the image of the "savage", since starting in the mid nineteenth century the vast majority of Europeans and Japanese first set eyes on "exotic" peoples – most of whom would soon be colonized – via the stage sets and cages that set them apart from these "savages". Furthermore, the imagery generated by such shows imposed a standardized view of bodies and of difference in general. The colonial period thus steadily constructed a different – less strange and more quotidian – alterity, inevitably inscribed in a colonial, racial hierarchy.

This major shift in view was triggered by the emergence, then consolidation, of photography, soon backed by the cinema, as demonstrated by the book illustrations featured in this catalogue, just a tiny fraction of the vast collections scattered in archives, museums and private collections around the world.[60] As for artists, certain exhibitions stimulated their fascination with such bodies, as can be seen in works by Gauguin, Nolde, Rodin and Picasso, who often combined objectification of "race" with a "recognition" of difference, an artistic recognition devoid of disparagement even as it played on the sexual appeal of often naked bodies.



The impact and stakes behind exhibiting "savages"

In Europe, colonial exhibitions were designed to glorify the accomplishments and schemes of the imperial powers, led by France,[61] Italy,[62] Great Britain[63] and Belgium.[64] The process was the same when it came to Japan (with respect to Korea and Formosa) and the United States (the Philippines). Therefore, during the twentieth century, "savages" progressively evolved into "natives", "exotic craftsmen" and "exotic performers" before the spectators' very eyes.

Whereas France made a speciality of universal and international exhibitions[65] as well as large colonial exhibitions or smaller colonial salons[66] (such as travelling "African villages"), and whereas Germany and Switzerland specialized in "ethnic" displays,[67] Great Britain developed a hybrid phenomenon that was a cross between those two major trends. As John MacKenzie has suggested, Britain's "great exhibitions" came to be "dominated by the imperial theme. [...] The secret of their success was that they combined entertainment, education and trade fair on a spectacular scale."[68] Such exhibitions were held throughout the Empire,[69] in addition to the ones organized in Britain itself, notably in 1908 (Franco-British Exhibition), 1909 (Imperial International Exhibition), 1911 (Coronation Exhibition), 1914 (Anglo-American Exhibition) and 1924–1925 (the British Empire Exhibition at Wembley, which drew twenty-five million visitors).[70] But the watershed had occurred between the Indian Exhibition of 1886 and the Greater Britain Exhibition of 1899,[71] the high point of this latter event being a "Kaffir Kraal" that

➡ ➡ L. Damaré, "Olympia. Les Trois Graces Tigrées" (The Three Streaked Graces), Paris, poster, 1891.

➡ "Photo-souvenir d'Indiens" (Souvenir Photo of Indians), Hamburg, photograph, 1922.

➘ "Visite en famille" (Family Visit), Exposition Coloniale Internationale de Paris, photograph, 1931.

⬇ Beigat (pr.), "Völkerschau der aussterbenden Lippen-Negerinnen" (Exhibition of Black Women with Labrets, an Endangered Species), Cologne, poster, 1930.

depicted a "savage" South Africa being brought to heel by white men. The attraction was so popular that it was programmed at the following year's universal exhibition in Paris under the title *Afrique Sauvage*.

After the First World War, it was the exhibition held in Wembley in 1924–1925[72] that marked an initial shift in the system of colonial exhibitions.[73] The presence of "ethnic villages" was increasingly relegated to the background, taking a back seat to demonstrations of the British Empire's economic development and power, a trend that lasted till 1938.[74] In France, meanwhile, a similar development could be observed at the national colonial exhibition hosted by Marseille in 1922, where racial stigmatization was largely underplayed to the benefit of an ode to France's "civilizing mission"[75] and to increasingly mercantile exhibits.

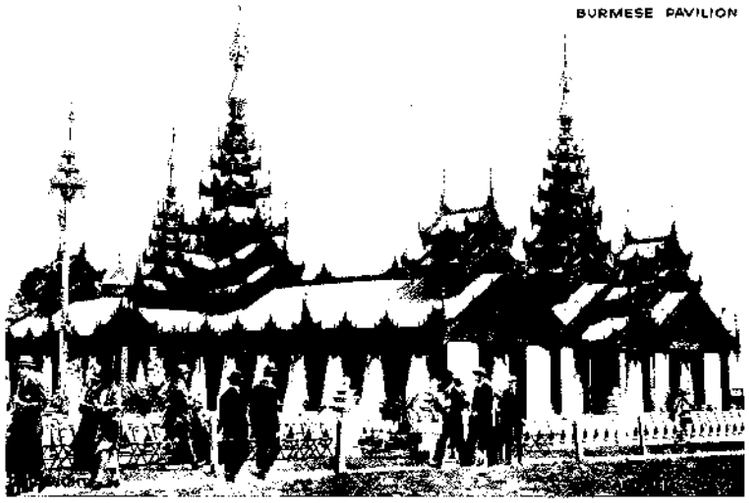
This phenomenon was more complex in the United States, even if a shift in exhibiting "exoticism" might be pinpointed – with many reservations – to the San Francisco fair of 1915,[76] ending a cycle begun in 1853–1854 in New York. After the First World War, the exhibition of "minorities" and "exotic" peoples took on a new dimension yet soon sank beneath the emphasis placed on "modernity" by America's world fairs, whose key examples included Philadelphia in 1876, New Orleans in 1884–1885, Chicago in 1893,[77] San Francisco in 1894, Atlanta in 1895, Buffalo and Charleston in 1901, St. Louis in 1904, Portland in 1905, Jamestown in 1907 and Seattle in 1909. The invisible wall separating "them" from "us" survived primarily in the realms of circuses and show business, as well as in the world of movies. Of course, world's fairs continued to feature "Egyptian pavilions" and "Indian shows", but the public was henceforth being presented with a Hollywood escapism that brilliantly exploited the registers of imagination and entertainment. It was the vision of modernity and futurism that won out over "archaic worlds" after the First World War as America's large world's fairs elaborated a different dialectic on the world, notably at Chicago in 1933–1934 and New York and San Francisco in 1939–1940.

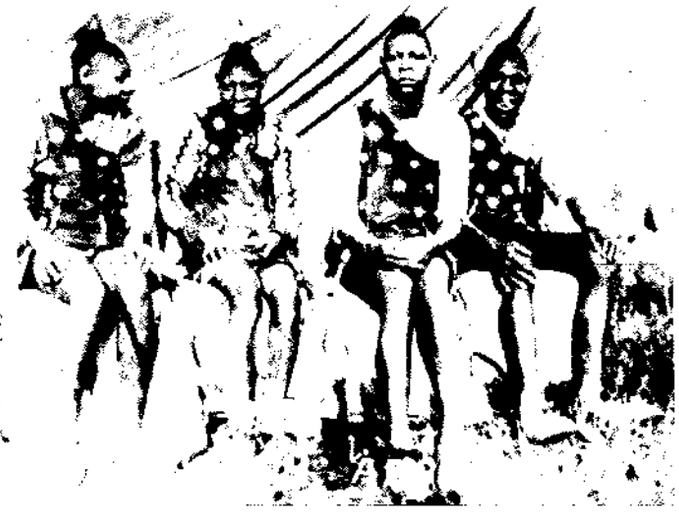
◂ Nicolaas Henneman, "Zulu Performer", original photograph, albumen print, 1853.

◂◂ Campbell Gray (pub.), "Burmese Pavilion". British Empire Exhibition, Wembley, postcard, 1924.

◂◂◂ "Pigmy's from Abbyssinnia", location unknown, postcard, 1920.

◂ Carl Hagenbeck (pub.), "Völkerschau Nubien. Schilluks vor Ihren Hütten" (Nubian Exhibition. Shiluk [tribe in modern-day Sudan] Outside Their Hut), Hagenbeck Zoo, Hamburg, postcard, circa 1920.





When it came to Japan, colonial and ethnographic pavilions became commonplace at big exhibitions between 1914 and the Second World War.[78] The Tokyo-Taisho exhibition of 1914 included pavilions devoted to Taiwan, Karafuto (Sakhalin), Manchuria and Korea, that is to say exhibits on all the regions of Japan's future colonial empire, plus another pavilion devoted to "Development". At the 1922 exhibition, new pavilions devoted to Nanyo (the South Seas) and Siberia also featured an ethnographic dimension. During the inter-war period, these increasingly military and imperial shows became paeans to Japanese power in Asia and regularly included exhibits of "colonial" peoples. In Europe, travelling villages soon became emblematic of the whole process. The main ingredients of the programme included a dash of exoticism, a dollop of crafts for "tourists" and some shiny finery that underscored the "civilizing mission" then underway – along with, of course, a good measure of regular entertainment and attractions. Village attractions followed a fairly repetitive formula: dances or processions accompanied by music; picturesque costumes and troupes with interchangeable "names"; crafts aimed at fair-goers or reconstitutions of "schools" in which children "had a go" at the alphabet; "entertaining" attractions ranged from children diving in a pool to retrieve coins, to women preparing meals and even to "births within the village".

Carl Hagenbecks Tierpark, Stellingen
Völkerschau Nubien
Schilluks vor ihren Hütten.

These "villages" and the outbreak of the First World War jointly constituted a pivotal period in ethnic shows in Japan and the United States as well as in Europe. Visitors seemed to adopt greater distance (even as they got closer to the participants), and the showmen's ideas no longer seemed to match the public's expectations. The crudest, most caricatured forms of exhibit thus headed for the circus tents, emphasizing the burlesque image of the savage,[79] whereas the colonial and scientific spheres (notably led by eugenics) steadily came to terms with private forms of exhibition.

Yet all countries continued to use these big exhibitions – whether international, colonial, or national – not only to flaunt their social programmes (indeed, "racial" and eugenic programmes) but also to impose their own view of the world, legitimizing overseas policies and segregationist practices. In Japan as in France, Great Britain, Belgium and Italy, the link between colonial potential and peoples to be "subjected" (or already colonized) was clear. In the cases of France and England, the people exhibited reflected current events, based on the specific phase of conquest and colonial developments between 1880 and 1910.[80] In the United States, the connection between exotic or freak shows and eugenics was a constant theme of a campaign by the Eugenics Record Office (ERO). Although, for a number of reasons, the influence of American eugenicists waned from

TWO OF JAS. H. BALMER'S KAFFIR BOYS

Are these anything like your (ideal Shottish). I hear it is washing-day dont forget to use your (dolly-legs).

M. A.

1935 onward, as did human exhibits, their impact was unmistakable and American culture perfectly assimilated eugenic, anti-miscegenation philosophy, as did Switzerland and Scandinavian and Germanic countries.

Nevertheless, during the 1930s there was a steady, progressive decline in the exhibition of "savages" and "freaks". The process was not uniform from one country to another. For example, as late as 1934[81] and 1940[82] Portugal organized the import of several "native" troupes in order to underpin its colonial efforts and to shape public opinion. Similarly, having begun a wave of conquest in Ethiopia, Italy occasionally included tribal villages in its major exhibitions, ending with an East African village presented in Naples in 1940 (although such presence was becoming increasingly diffuse). In Switzerland and Germany – with its *Deutsche Afrikaschauen* – ethnic shows were still popular among a public seeking classic ethnographic exhibitions, but they became much less frequent. Notable exceptions did nothing to halt the irreversible decline of the genre. The last incarnation of this phenomenon was the Universal Exhibition held in Belgium in 1958, where native participants were included in the theatricalization of colonial power just as the "sun was setting" on empires. Indeed, given the behaviour of visitors, the natives quit their villages – times had changed.

"Human zoos" were henceforth out of step with social expectations. This was obvious by the failure of Hagenbeck's two final shows[83] – a troupe of Kanaks who travelled to Germany from France in 1931, and the tour of a "Cherkess [Circassian] troupe" in 1932 – marking the decline in Germany of a process that had entailed more than seventy ethnic shows.

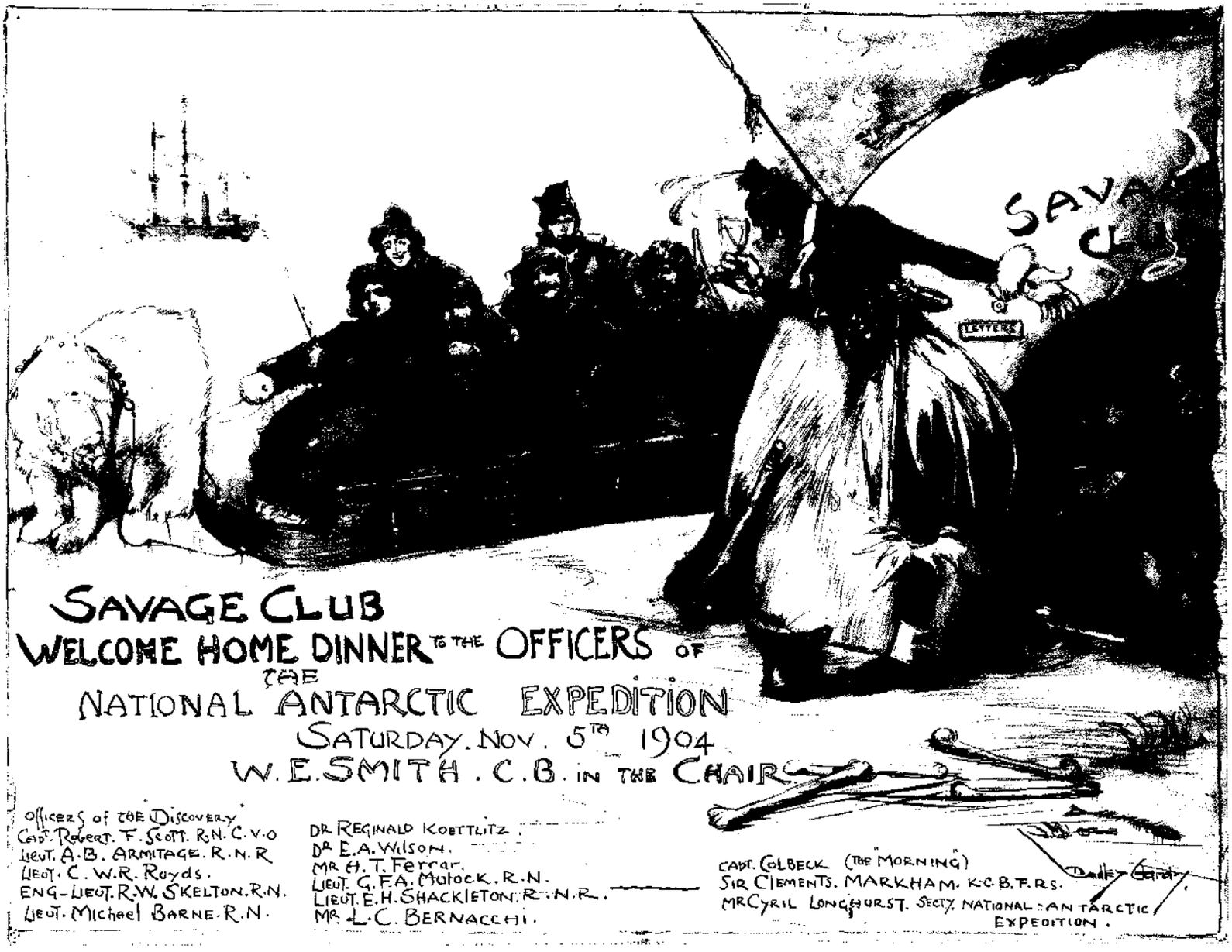
The last ethnographic shows held in Europe apparently no longer drew the vast crowds of the previous generation, whether hosted in Basel,[84] Stockholm, Milan or Cologne (featuring a troupe of "Sara Kaba tribeswomen with lip plates"). After the war, international exhibitions moved away from this ethnographic model, and even regional fairs began downplaying the display of "savages" as "objects" in favour of a dialectic on the civilizing mission, on modernity, or even on the construction of scientific discourse. The most recent incarnations (including Ivoirians at a wildlife park in France, Masai in Belgium, Pygmies in Austria, a tourist village of "Chinese dwarves"

H. Chipault (pub.), "Un groupe de la population du royaume de Lilliput" (A Group from the Population of the Kingdom of Lilliput), Exposition Internationale de Paris, postcard, 1937.

"Two of Jas. H. Balmer's Kaffir Boys", Great Britain, postcard, 1904.

Isaac Kitrosser, "Quand les 'coloniaux' visitent la 'Coloniale'" (When "Colonials" Visit the "Coloniale"), Exposition Coloniale Internationale de Paris, *VU*, magazine article, August 1931.

Dudley Gardy, "Savage Club. Welcome Home Dinner to the Officers of the National Antarctic Expedition", Great Britain, drawing, 1904.



↓ Adolph Friedländer, "Amazonen Corps aus Dahomey" (The Amazon Corps of Dahomey), Hamburg, poster, 1893.

← "Skeleton and cast of the body of Saartjie Baartman exhibited at the Musée de l'Homme until 1976", Paris, photograph, 1952.

in China, and an African village in Germany), even if they involved the same kind of staging, merely represented the final throes of a show-business culture that had run out of imagination.

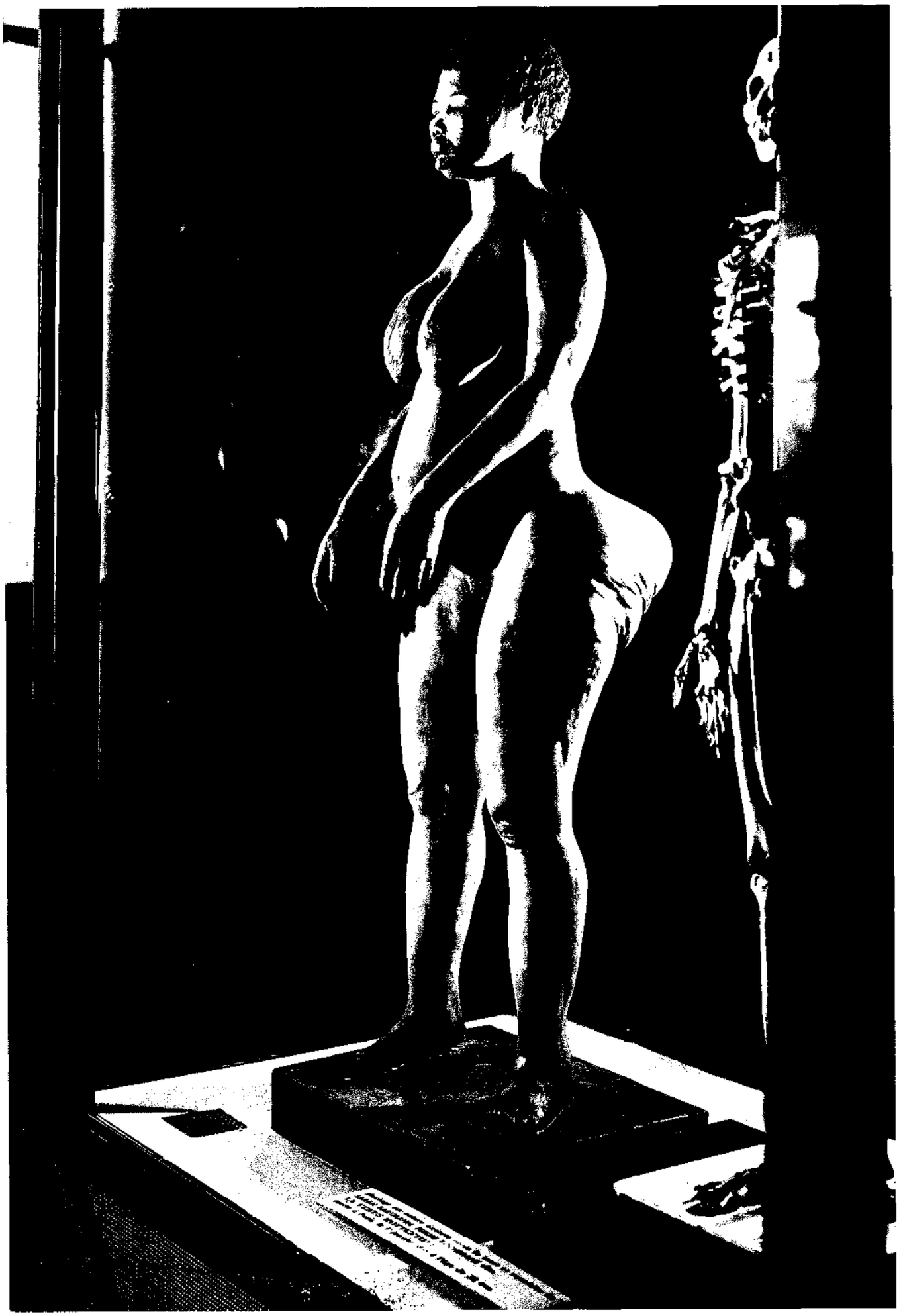
Exhibiting "savages": the legacies

There then began a long period of oblivion, when such exhibitions vanished from collective awareness and historical accounts. Tens of thousands of photographs,[85] postcards, posters and brochures were stripped of their original context. At best the phenomenon was little known, at worst it was an object of contempt because intrinsically associated with lower-class culture, an attitude also displayed by the main specialists in the history of colonialism, immigration and racism, who never assessed the impact of these exhibitions because the latter fit into no standard field of research and thus required an unprecedented degree of transversality.

It was not until twenty years ago that it became possible to begin identifying the phenomenon as a whole thanks to a spate of international research papers,[86] novels (including Didier Daeninckx's *Cannibale*, Barbara Chase-Riboud's *Hottentot Venus*, Gérard Badou's *Enigme de la Vénus hottentote* and Frank Westerman's *El Negro en ik*), documentary films (notably *Boma Tervuren, On l'appelait la Vénus hottentote, Calafate, zoológicos humanos, Des zoos et des hommes, The Return of Sara Baartman, From Bella Coola to Berlin, Zoos humains, Mysteries in the Archives: 1910 Buffalo Bill* and *Bontoc Eulogy*) and feature films (such as *Man to Man, Vénus Noire* and *The Elephant Man*).[87] Whether labelled "human zoo", "exotic exhibit", or *Völkerschau*, debate focused on the boundaries and limits of that phenomenon, including its usefulness as a code for deciphering present-day phenomena as varied as ethnic tourism,[88] reality shows,[89] and exhibitions on the body (such as *Our Body: À Corps Ouvert*) which have collectively drawn more than twenty-five million visitors in recent years.[90]

Paradoxically, what this past reveals and demonstrates to us remains taboo – something dangerously difficult to curb – as demonstrated by a polemic triggered in France in April–May 2011 by the choice of the historically tarred Jardin d'Acclimatation de Paris as the venue for an "Overseas Garden" during the celebratory "Year of France's Overseas Territories".[91]

Although academics and the museum world took their time in becoming aware of the risks, for fifteen years now artists have prompted a re-reading of this past. Such artists include Coco Fusco, who exhibited herself in a cage to the public, in order to analyze that public's behaviour and response and thus explicitly invert the principle of exotic exhibit.[92] Srik Narayanan, meanwhile, organized an event in 1996 during which an image of Ota Benga, who had been exhibited in St. Louis in 1904, was projected onto a public building. Kara Walker has explored stereotypes of the black female body, which includes the body of the Hottentot Venus, who also features in works by Hassan Musa, Tracey Rose and Renee Cox. Mariana Matthews focused on the display of Fuegians by setting exhibition photographs in the gardens of the château of Versailles, whereas in 2004 Bharti Kher invented a unique character, called Arione, challenging the conflation of the freakish and the ethnic. In another register, Jean-François Bocle uses exotic and colonialist imagery in his installations, while Fiona Tan, Andrew Brooks and Carrie Mae Weems re-employ anthropological photography in their video installations.



"Aux Armes de France. Bons, bons petits Français" (Aux Armes de France [Parisian shop], Sweets from the Sweet Children of France), Paris, advertising chromolithograph, 1895.

L. Leichner (pub.), "Fasching Schminken Karneval" (Carnival Make-Up and Disguises), Berlin, advertisement, 1978.

"Ludwig Heck, director of Berlin Zoo, and women of the Sara Kaba tribe on their arrival at the Anhalter Bahnhof", Berlin, photograph, 1931.

The world of freak exhibits has also inspired the photographic work of Lourdes Grobet, Susan Meiselas and Paz Errázuriz. In addition to this artistic approach, and to the various happenings organized in zoos in Europe, the United States and Australia,[93] a second phenomenon has arisen at the crossroads of this past with our present: the restitution to their original lands of the bodies and remains of human exhibits. It has become a controversial subject, associated with the stories of the Hottentot Venus (whose remains were returned to South Africa in 2002),[94] the "Banyoles Negro" (whose mummified body was returned to Botswana in 2000 after having been displayed in a Spanish museum throughout the twentieth century), the Tambo Aboriginal whose body was repatriated to Australia in 1994, and the five Fuegians who died in Switzerland while on tour in Europe (whose remains were returned to Chile in January 2010 and buried at Puerto Eden). These restitutions of the bodies of exotic exhibits are part of a broader policy of Western museums to return human remains to their countries of origin.[95]

6 PARIS — Jardin d'Acclimatation
Groupe de jeunes Achantis

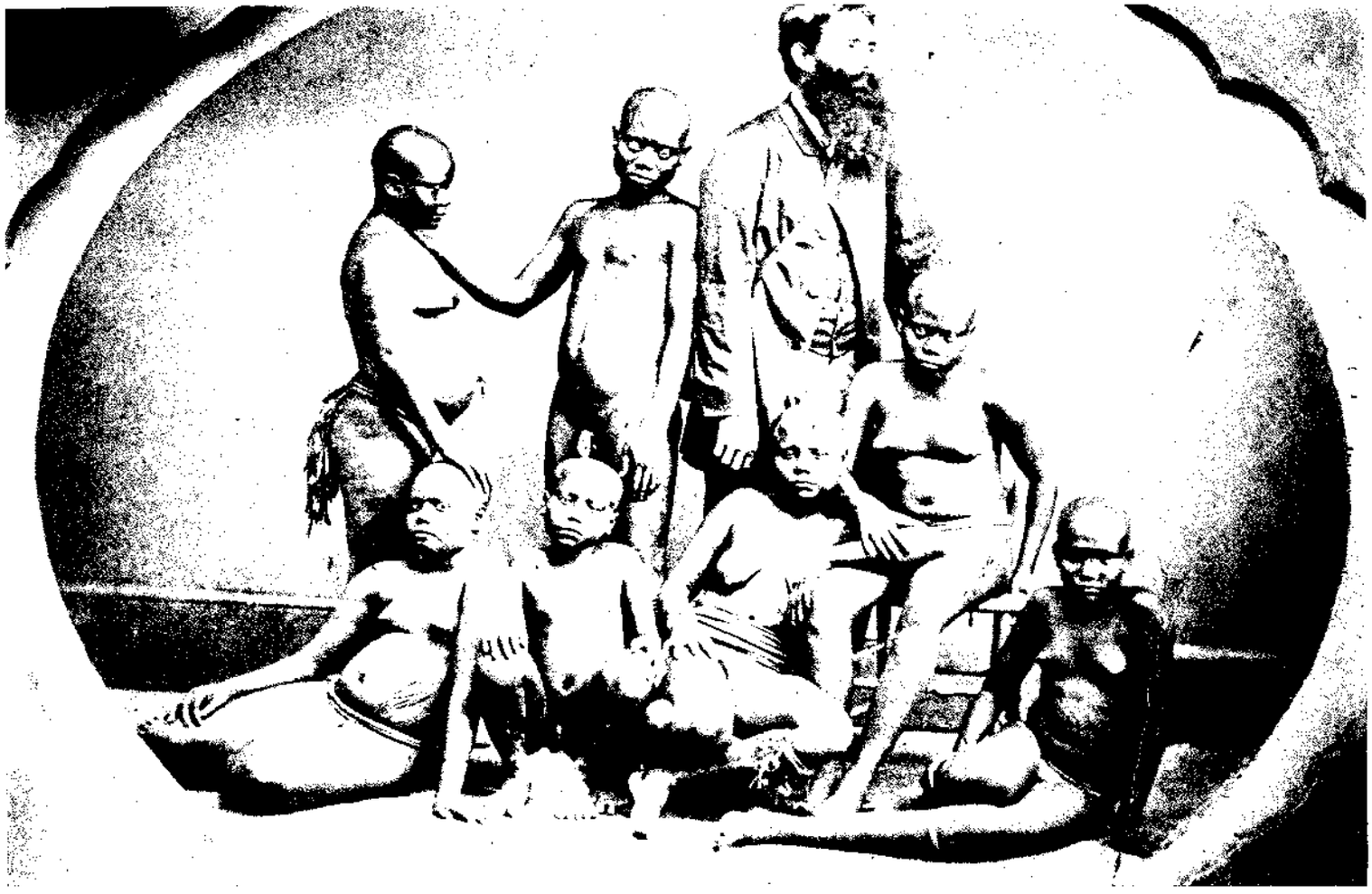
Héliotypie E. Le Deley, Paris

Série N° 6
Vues Stéréoscopiques Julien Damoy

The fate of those human exhibits who died far from home has today assumed a triple dimension: transnational tale, national histories, and the history of racism and science. They carry unusual symbolic and historical significance, because their tales are meaningful in the present and embody the unequal relationship established by the colonial confrontation. To this day, the fate of hundreds of human remains in Europe, Japan and the United States are unresolved. The "search" for these bodies in zoological gardens, exhibition sites and museums represent a kind of archaeology of memory that allows us to reconstruct the thread of a story in which there is no "hero". In their own way, they have become "modern heroes" because they occupy a key position in of our shared history. On this level, "human zoos" represent much more than the history of a few thousand human exhibits "lost" in the West; they are the visible part of a complex, unequal relationship which, right from the start, drew an invisible line between the "savage" and the "civilized", a line that we can finally see by taking a new look at the countless images produced by this "theatre of the world".

What remains today of these human exhibits? Their legacy takes three major forms. First, knowledge of the scope of the phenomenon allows us to understand the transition from "scientific racism" to "popular racism" in the nineteenth century, keeping in mind that the "savage" was a non-passive, salaried participant in most cases of global showcasing. Second, the elaboration of colonial empires and segregation policies cultivated – everywhere – a gaze that viewed part of the world as sub-human. Third, somewhat paradoxically, these exhibitions also provided knowledge about dozens of cultures and populations – through the deforming prism of show business, true enough – at a time when few people travelled.

Finally, the rediscovery of these images, restored to their original context, reveals a previously overlooked heritage, weaving a narrative that we are just beginning to understand. This mass of imagery not only reflects history, countless ethnic shows, over one billion visitors, racist texts, and colonial practices, but above all it speaks to us of the people who were exhibited and the people who went to look at them. In a way, these pictures tell us about *ourselves*.



1- Bancel, Blanchard, Boëtsch, Deroo, Lemaire and Forsdick, 2008; Bancel, Blanchard, Boëtsch, Deroo and Lemaire, 2004. The term *zoo humain* (human zoo) was first used to describe this process in Bancel, N. and Blanchard, P., *De l'indigène à l'immigré*, Paris, Gallimard, 1998. It was discussed and contextualized in a symposium organized in Marseille in June 2001 by the ACHAC research team and a CNRS research unit dubbed "Anthropologie des représentations du corps".
2- Dujardin, 2007.
3- Bertho-Lavenir, 1989; Leprun, S., "Paysages de la France extérieure: la mise en scène des colonies à l'Exposition du centenaire", *Le Mouvement social* , no. 149, October 1989.
4- An accurate and exhaustive quantitative measurement is impossible to make, but it can be estimated that, by taking all exhibitions, touring shows, villages and spectacles organized between 1850 and 1950 into account, more than one billion three hundred million people "visited" or "frequented" this type of exhibit in Europe, Asia, America and South Africa.
5- Impey and MacGregor, 1985; Falguières, P., *Les Chambres des merveilles: Le rayon des curiosités*, Paris, Bayard-Centurion, 2003.
6- Bambridge, T., "Les Premiers Polynésiens en Europe et l'imaginaire occidental", in Bancel, Blanchard, Boëtsch, Deroo and Lemaire, 2004.
7- Benedict, B., "World's Fairs and Anthropology", *World's Fair* 1 (4), 1981; Almone and Olmo, 1990.
8- Japan joined this process of exhibition only at a late date, following the opening of the country and the accession of the Meiji dynasty.
9- Adams, J. A., *The American Amusement Park Industry: A History of Technology and Thrills*, Boston, Twayne Publishers, 1991.
10- Brown, R. D., *Modernization, The Transformation of American Life, 1600–1865*, New York, Hill and Wang, 1976.
11- Harris, 1973; Lindfors, 1983.
12- Thomson, 1996.
13- Boëtsch and Gagnepain, 2008.
14- Bogdan, R., "When the Exotic Becomes a Show", in Bancel, Blanchard, Boëtsch, Deroo, Lemaire and Forsdick, 2008.
15- Poignant, R., "The Making of Professional 'Savages' from P. T. Barnum (1883) to the *Sunday Times* (1998)", in Pinney, P. C. and Peterson, N. (eds.), *Photography's Other Histories*, Durham, Duke University Press, 2003.
16- Anthropological studies carried out in the Jardin Zoologique d'Acclimatation de Paris took place from 1877 to 1908 and resulted in some thirty scholarly publications.
17- Benedict, B., "Rituals of Representation: Ethnic Stereotypes and Colonized People at World's Fairs", in Rydell, R. W. and Gwinn, N. (eds.), *Fair Representations: World's Fairs and the Modern World*, Amsterdam, VU University Press, 1994.
18- Roland Bonaparte was not the only photographer or graphic artist to take an interest in the ethnic groups exhibited at the Jardin d'Acclimatation (1884). There were also Pierre Petit and Pierre Flamant for the Nubians (1877), Edouard Foa for the phoncy Dahomeyans (1891), Maurice Bucquet for the Pai-Pi-Bri (1893) and Maurice Thiriat for the Somalis (1890).
19- Baratay, É., "Le Frisson sauvage: les zoos comme mise en scène de la curiosité", in Bancel, Blanchard, Boëtsch, Deroo and Lemaire, 2004.
20- Fauvelle-Aymar, F.-X., "Les Khoisans: entre science et spectacle", ibid.

Julien Damoy, "Groupe de jeunes Achantis" (Group of Young Ashanti), Jardin Zoologique d'Acclimatation de Paris, stereoscopic views, 1903.

Herdtle, "Völkerschau. Kolonial Ausstellung" (Ethnic show. Colonial Exhibition), Stuttgart, poster, 1928.

Group of Andaman Islanders, probably photographed in Paris, albumen print, 1869.

21- London already had a tradition of exhibiting freaks, for the Bartholomew Fair made a speciality of it. Garland-Thomson, R., "From Wonder to Error: Monsters from Antiquity to Modernity", in Bancel, Blanchard, Boëtsch, Deroo, Lemaire and Forsdick, 2008.
22- Durbach, N., "London, Capital of Exotic Exhibitions from 1830 to 1860", in Bancel, Blanchard, Boëtsch, Deroo, Lemaire and Forsdick, 2008; Altick, 1978.
23- It has been claimed that Cherokee Indians were exhibited in London as early as 1762. See Fox, C.P., *Old-Time Circus Cuts: A Pictorial Archive of 202 Illustrations*, Mineola, Dover Publications, 1979.
24- This tour so fascinated Charles Dickens that he subsequently published an article debunking the myth of the "noble savage" (Lindfors, 1999). In 2005 French director Régis Wargnier made a film, *Man to Man*, that combined this true story with a fictional one (about Pygmies).
25- Aimone and Olmo, 1990.
26- Schneider, W. H., "The Ethnographic Exhibitions of the Jardin Zoologique d'Acclimatation" in Bancel, Blanchard, Boëtsch, Deroo, Lemaire and Forsdick, 2008; Coutancier, B. and Barthes, C., "Exhibition et médiatisation de l'Autre: le Jardin zoologique d'acclimatation (1877–1890)", in Bancel, Blanchard, Boëtsch, Deroo and Lemaire, 2004. Revealingly, 70% of the troupes exhibited at the zoological gardens in Paris were supplied by the Hagenbeck firm.
27- Thode-Arora, H., "Hagenbeck's European Tours: The Development of the Human Zoo", in Bancel, Blanchard, Boëtsch, Deroo, Lemaire and Forsdick, 2008.
28- "Falsity" existed on two levels: Europeans might be made up to look like "savages", or an exotic exhibit's background story might be falsified. With the Egyptian Caravan in particular, part of the troupe was composed of Europeans in disguise, while in the early 1890s English impresario John Hood recruited ten Egba women from Nigeria and fourteen women from Togo, then "trained" them in Hamburg and marketed them throughout Europe as authentic "Dahomeyan Amazons".
29- In 1995, an initial approach to the phenomenon of exhibiting the Other and elaborating imaginary racial and colonial constructs was explored at an international symposium titled *Scènes et types*, organized at Marseille by the ACHAC research team. The proceedings were published as *L'Autre et nous*, Paris, ACHAC/Syros, 1996.
30- Nanta, A., "Colonial Expositions and Ethnic Hierarchies in Modern Japan", in Bancel, Blanchard, Boëtsch, Deroo, Lemaire and Forsdick, 2008.
31- More than four million people attended the Osaka exhibition.
32- Leprun, 1986.
33- August, 1985.
34- Peacock, S., "Africa Meets the Great Farini", in Lindfors, 1999.
35- Truzzi, M., "Circus and Side Shows", in Matlow, M., *American Popular Entertainment*, Westport, Connecticut, Greenwood Press, 1979; McNamara Brooks, A., "Congress of Wonders, The Rise and Fall of the Dime Museum", *Esquire*, no. 20, 1974.
36- The fate of brothers Chang and Eng, originally from Thailand, epitomizes the intersection of the worlds of science and show business. In 1829 they arrived in Boston, where Professor John Warren of Boston University sanctioned their exhibition and the tour of Europe that followed in 1830. In 1835 the brothers joined Barnum, later becoming their own impresarios. They continued to exhibit themselves in the United States up to 1869.
37- These "Aztecs" were not cannibals, but suffered from mental disabilities. On this subject, see Nicolas Menut's entry *infra*, p. 118.
38- In fact, the "wild men" were two brothers from Ohio, who became a popular attraction from 1852 onward.
39- The "warrior" was a certain Henry Moss, who exhibited his spotted skin in Philadelphia.
40- Barnum's show included William Henry Johnson, an albino Afro-American suffering from vitiligo (spotted skin) and microcephaly, who was presented as the "missing link" between apes and humans.
41- Barnum, P. T., *My Diary or Route Book of P. T. Barnum's Greatest Show on Earth*, New York, Barnum's Advance Courier, 1883; Saxon, 1980.
42- A vast "Lilliputian Village", inhabited by dozens of performers, was featured at the International Exhibitions in Brussels (1935) and Paris (1937) as well as the New York World's Fair of 1939, demonstrating that such attractions had not totally vanished before the Second World War.
43- Banta, M. and Hinsley, C., *From Site to Sight: Anthropology, Photography and the Power of Imagery*, Cambridge, Peabody Museum Press, 1986.
44- In his biography, Hagenbeck himself expressed surprise at high attendance figures, referring to "gigantic crowds" and recalling that, on a single day in Berlin, nearly ninety-three thousand visitors headed to one of his shows, requiring the presence of "policemen on foot and horseback" (Hagenbeck, C., *Cages sans barreaux: Roi des zoos*, Paris, Nouvelles Éditions de Paris, 1951; Déroo, E., "The Cinema as Zoo-keeper", in Bancel, Blanchard, Boëtsch, Deroo, Lemaire and Forsdick, 2008.) Similarly, just under one million paying and non-paying customers were admitted to the Jardin Zoologique d'Acclimatation de Paris in 1883, according to annual accounts. The Universal Exhibition hosted by Paris in 1900, meanwhile, was attended by nearly fifty million people, while the 1931 exhibition in Paris sold over thirty million tickets; the one held in Wembley in 1925 welcomed nearly twenty-five million visitors.
45- L'Estoile, B. de, *Le Goût des autres: De l'exposition coloniale aux arts premiers*, Paris, Flammarion, 2007.
46- Chalaye, 1998; Chalaye, 2001.
47- The case of Franz Boas, the father of American cultural anthropology, is particularly interesting. During the World's Fair held in Chicago in 1893, Boas tried to wrest exclusive rights to an anthropological exhibition of Kwakiutl Indians from the Barnum & Bailey Circus.
48- The proof is that when Cossacks appeared at the Jardin Zoologique d'Acclimatation de Paris and Japanese in London in 1908, they insisted on being "presented" differently, *not* like the "savages" who were a separate category of humanity.
49- Hartog, F., *Le Miroir d'Hérodote: Essai sur la représentation de l'autre*, Paris, Gallimard, 1980; Le Pichon, A., *Le Regard inégal*, Paris, Lattès, 1991.
50- Bancel, Blanchard, Boëtsch, Deroo, Lemaire and Forsdick, 2008.
51- *La Grande Revue* 15, 10 August 1912.
52- The accounts of the exhibition of Kali'na people recorded by Gérard Collomb are remarkable insofar as they demonstrate how a story was transmitted from one generation to the next. According to a certain Maliana, "They had been locked up so that white people could see them. No one was allowed to go out. Every day the whites gathered to stare at them." Collomb, G., "Les Kali'na de Guyane: le droit de regard de l'Occident", in Bancel, Blanchard, Boëtsch, Deroo and Lemaire, 2004.
53- An article on the Jardin Zoologique d'Acclimatation in *L'Illustration* dated 4 August 1877 notably commented that the exhibits "above all came casually near to the barriers that the public could not cross".
54- Conversely, some anthropologists – reflecting their own times – noted that "exhibits" became more "civilized" while being exhibited. In 1881 Paul Nicole wrote in *Le Bulletin de la Société d'anthropologie* that Zulus who arrived as "savages" returned to their own country "crafty and sly".
55- Robert Rydell has pointed out that natives awaiting to be housed in "villages" for the 1901 World's Fair in Buffalo were installed in a "stockyard". See Rydell, R. W., "Africans in America," in Bancel, Blanchard, Boëtsch, Deroo, Lemaire and Forsdick, 2008.
56- This was generally the case with Australian Aboriginals, Pygmies, and Hottentots.
57- Anthropologists in Paris and London complained of the difficulties they encountered when they wanted to dissect the corpses of exhibits who died "on stage", while in St. Louis in 1904 the American anthropologist Ales Hrdlička removed the brains of several Filipinos.

58- Belgian authorities did as much in the Congo in 1897 following the deaths of exhibits, as did the Germans in 1910, and the French throughout their Empire following incidents with Kanaks in 1931.
59- Notable incidents included a refusal to go on show during bad weather in Paris, a strike for better wages in Geneva, a refusal in Hamburg to care for animals on days off, a demand for bonuses for extra performances and legal disputes that led to a full-fledged suit against an impresario in Germany.
60- Sherman, D., and Rogoff, I. (eds.), *Museum Culture: Histories, Discourses, Spectacles*, London, Routledge, 1994.
61- Bancel, N., Blanchard P. and Vergès, F., *La République coloniale*, Paris, Albin Michel, 2003.
62- Labanca, 1992; Palma, S., *L'Italia coloniale*, Rome, Editori Riuniti, 1999; Abbattista, G. and Labanca, N., "Living Ethnological and Colonial Exhibitions in Liberal and Fascist Italy", in Bancel, Blanchard, Boëtsch, Deroo, Lemaire and Forsdick, 2008.
63- MacKenzie, 1984; Hoffenberg, 2001.
64- Demoor and Jacquemin, 2000; Jacquemin, 1991; Jacquemin, J.-P. *et al.*, *Zaire 1885-1985, cent ans de regards belges*, Brussels, CEC, 1985.
65- Hosted in 1855, 1867, 1878, 1900, 1925 and 1937 (Demeulenaere-Douyère, 2010).
66- Organized in 1894, 1895, 1901–1902, 1906, 1907, 1909, 1911, 1914, 1922, 1923, 1924, 1927, 1930, 1931, 1935 and 1940 (Blanchard, Lemaire and Bancel, 2008).
67- Benninghoff-Lühl, 1984.
68- MacKenzie, J., "The Imperial Exhibitions of Great Britain", in Bancel, Blanchard, Boëtsch, Deroo, Lemaire and Forsdick, 2008.
69- Notably in New Zealand (three times), Jamaica (1891), Tasmania and Australia (1879, 1888, 1891, 1894, 1897) South Africa (1877, 1936) and India (1888, 1910).
70- There were also International Exhibitions hosted in London or Glasgow in 1851, 1874, 1884, 1887, 1888, 1899, 1901, 1907 and 1938. Hoffenberg, P. H., *To Create a Commonwealth: Empire and Nation at English, Australian and Indian Exhibitions, 1851–1914*, Ph. D. dissertation, Berkeley, University of California, 1993.
71- Breckenridge, 1989.
72- Saunders, 1978.
73- Woodham, 1989.
74- The "Britain Can Make It" Exhibition of 1946, like the Festival of Britain held in London in 1951, demonstrated that the pre-Wembley era of grand imperial exhibitions was well and truly over.
75- Çelik and Kinney, 1990.
76- Benedict, 1983.
77- Chicago 1893 has probably produced the greatest number of studies and publications. See Geppert, A., Coffey, J., and Lau, T., *International Exhibitions, Expositions Universelles and World's Fairs, 1851–1951*, http://www.lib.csufresno.edu/SubjectRessources/SpecialCollections /WorldFairs/Secondarybiblio.pdf, as well as Rydell, R. W., "The Literature of International Expositions", in *The Books of the Fairs: Materials about World's Fairs, 1834–1916*, Chicago, American Library Association, 1992.
78- Nanta, A., *op. cit.*
79- By way of example one might mention the fate of Clicko, a young "Khoisan" who performed his Wild Dancing Bushman act in Europe and Cuba from 1913 onward and later joined the Barnum & Bailey Circus; he died a half-mad alcoholic in New York in 1940. Joseph Lee, meanwhile, was an Afro-American who portrayed an "African savage" from Dahomey and went on to become a veritable star in the United States.
80- For example, "Dahomeyans" were exhibited in various shows and exhibitions from 1891 to 1894, following the defeat of King Béhanzin (one troupe even went to Chicago after performing at the Casino de Paris); similarly, Madagascans were exhibited once that island was conquered, as were Tuaregs who toured Paris and elsewhere after the fall of Timbuktu in 1894.
81- The exhibition was known as the Exposição Colonial Portuguesa.
82- It was called the Exposição do Mundo Português. See Léonard, 1999.
83- As Hilke Thode-Arora has pointed out, Hagenbeck's shows were timidly revived in the 1920s, without ever attaining their earlier splendour and popularity. See Thode-Arora, H., *op. cit.* and Thode-Arora, 1989.
84- Stachelin, 1993; Ryhiner, 1995.
85- MacCauley, E. A., *Likeness: Portrait Photography, 1850–1870*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1985.
86- See the exhaustive bibliography on this subject at the end of this catalogue.
87- It is also worth recalling the French made-for-television movie *L'Homme qui venait d'ailleurs* by François Luciani (2004), in which a doctor from Martinique comes across a "Negro village" in the south of France.
88- On giraffe-necked women in Thailand, see "Quand les femmes-girafes profitent au tourisme thaïlandais", 2007 (www.metrofrance.com/fr/article/2007/06/25/12/0352-54/index.xml) and on Chinese dwarves see aliciabxnews.wordpress.com/ 2010/04/02/video-un-village-chinois-peuple-de-nains-un-zoo-humain. Survival International, meanwhile, launched a campaign in India in 2007 to protect the Jarawa tribe from tourists who risk "exposing the Jarawa to diseases to which they have no immunity".
89- Razac, O., *L'Écran et le zoo: Spectacle et domestication des expositions coloniales à Loft Story*, Paris, Denoël, 2002. See also a July 2010 article by Franck Schrafstetter in which he referred to televised "ethnic shows" as "an echo of human zoos" in which the "zoos" have been replaced by "human safaris". "On the heels of the programme *Rendez-vous en terre inconnue*, channel TF1 launched the programme called *Bienvenue dans ma tribu*, produced by Alexia Laroche-Joubert, who was behind the reality-TV shows *Loft Story* and *Dilemme* on channel W9." (www.lepost.fr/article/2010/07/23/2161457_bienvenu-dans-ma-tribu-un-rendez-vous-en-terre-trop-bien-connue.html). In such programmes, families spend several weeks among "exotic peoples" and are filmed discovering "savages" such as the Zaparas in Equator, the Surmas in Ethiopia and the Hulis in Papua-New Guinea.
90- www.20minutes.fr/.../Lyon-Des-universitaires-denoncent-un-zoo-humain-cadaverique.php et www.francesoir.fr/.../our-bodya-corps-ouvert-l'exposition-fait-face-nouvelles-controverses35754.html.
91- See "Un choix douteux pour l'année des Outre-Mer", *Le Monde*, 3 March 2011. This opinion piece spurred the government minister in charge of overseas territories to commission a study on the history of "human zoos". The study was entrusted to the Comité pour la Mémoire et l'Histoire de l'Esclavage on 7 April 2011.
92- www.thing.net/~cocofusco.
93- The exhibition of young Britons at the London Zoo in 2005 comes to mind (see *infra*, p. 351), as do the *Homo sapiens* caged in Zagreb in 2005 and the Australians in Adelaide who lived behind a display window, visible to passersby, in 2007. This kind of exhibit was also presented by the Edinburgh Zoo in 2008 and in Warsaw in 2009 with "Neanderthals".
94- In 2002 the French legislature passed a law that allowed the return of Sara Baartman's remains to South Africa. The same procedure was used to restitute fifteen Maori heads to New Zealand in 2010.
95- On current debate and legislation on this issue, see http://www.wellcome.ac.uk/About-us/Policy/Policy-and-position-statements/WTX033469.htm, and Leggett, J. A., *Restitution and Repatriation: Guidelines for Good Practice*, Museums and Galleries Commission, 2000. When it comes to the restitution of cultural property, the Code of Ethics of the International Council of Museums (ICOM) stipulates: "When a country or people of origin seeks the restitution of an object or specimen that can be demonstrated to have been exported or otherwise transferred in violation of the principles of international and national conventions, and shown to be part of that country's or people's cultural or natural heritage, the museum concerned should, if legally free to do so, take prompt and responsible steps to co-operate in its return."

♦ Hassan Musa, "Who Needs Bananas in Vietnam?", mixed media, 2007.