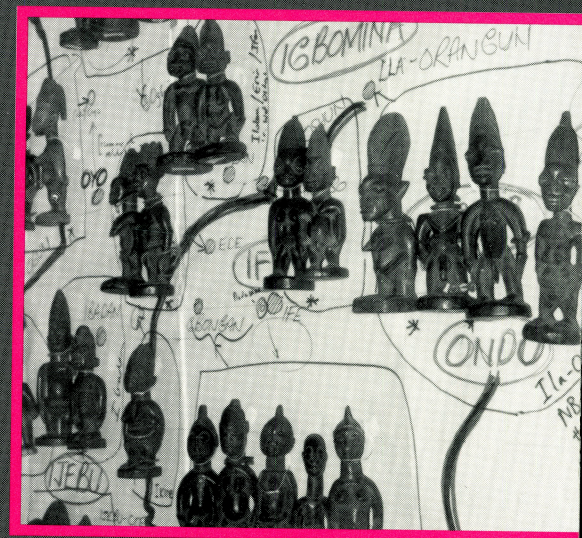


COLLECTORS

Expressions of Self and Other



Edited by

Anthony Shelton

Preface

This volume grew out of the first Horniman Research Conference, *Collections and Innovations*, held in 1997. The conference focused on the means, motivations, and purposes behind collecting and the ability of collections to communicate alternative messages beyond those they were originally intended to illustrate. *Collections and Innovations* was organised at a time when the Museum was preparing to re-display its extensive ethnographic collections and looking forward to a possible large scale re-building project which would provide additional galleries and facilities. One of the core ideas behind the design for the proposed new building, was that it should help re-orientate the Museum away from the busy London Road, towards the extensive gardens which surround it, thereby re-integrating the outside botanical collections with the zoological, ethnographic, and musicology collections displayed in its interior. Faced with such wide ranging potential changes which not only promised additional and larger galleries and the refurbishment of others, but raised questions about what constituted a collection, and the ways collections could be used to communicate meaning, we invited a broad range of museum professionals drawn from natural history, anthropology, musicology, contemporary arts, and public service departments, to debate the nature and uses to which collections had and could be put. When it came to publish the papers, it was decided, for reasons of coherency, to focus solely on those areas most strongly represented at the conference; those of anthropology and musicology.

These core papers were complemented by additional work that over the last few years had been generated by a concerted curatorial research project on the history of the Horniman's own collections, as well as work undertaken in the Art History subject group, and between 1996-1998, in the postgraduate research programme in Critical Museology, taught by Museum staff at the University of Sussex. To those who supported research in collection history at Sussex, I would like to convey my deep appreciation.

The collected papers which constitute this volume have their origin in the kindness, patience, enthusiasm and commitment of many persons. I would like to thank Michael Houlihan, now director of the National Museums of Ulster who supported and provided funding for the first Horniman Research Conference, and Janet Vitmayer, our present director, for making them into an annual event; Professor Roger Silverstone, who as director of the Research Centre in Culture and Communication at the University of Sussex was an erstwhile advocate of the Critical Museology programme and co-operation with the Horniman Museum; Kirsten Walker who organised the first conference, and Claire West who designed and produced publicity material. David Allen and Anne James of the Horniman Library provided extensive bibliographical assistance; Ken Teague and Nicky Levell helped with mailing, registration and the general running of the conference; Margot Granger undertook a thousand kindnesses, and Ms. Daria Neklesa who, as usual, has done an outstanding job in designing and producing the accompanying publication. I would like to thank all the staff of the Horniman Museum for their enthusiasm and help in making this first conference such a success and, nearly four years onwards, for their continued support of the publication which disseminates its proceedings.

Anthony Shelton