

English Abstract

Exoticised Objects and the Widening World: Non-European Cultures on Display in Finland Between the 1870s and the 1910s

This book focuses on the history of exhibiting African, Asian and other non-European objects in Finland between the 1870s and the 1910s. During this time, when Finland was still an autonomous Grand Duchy within the Russian Empire, the National Museum of Finland and its predecessors, missionary societies, arts and crafts groups, individual artists, geographers and other scholars acquired and exhibited non-European artefacts. Due to the different orientations and motivations of these individuals and organisations, foreign objects were utilised to convey varying and even conflicting messages about far-away cultures. This book examines the practices of displaying these objects and the ways in which their assumed exotic quality was interpreted and used. New formulations and propositions regarding the wider world were adopted at a time when the idea of Finnish nationhood became established. Consequently the two conceptions often intertwined. This book opens up fresh and previously neglected perspectives on the history of Finnish museums and exhibitions and provides historical roots for numerous artefacts that still form a part of Finnish collections. In addition, this work is firmly contextualised within the broader development in Scandinavia and elsewhere in Europe, thereby shedding new light on the connections of museum institutions and workers across the continent.