

Invitation to two events with the artist **Astrid S. Klein** who is guest of the project "Colonial Commodities" (<https://medienwissenschaft.uni-bayreuth.de/wissenschaft/colonial-commodities/>) at the Cluster of Excellence EXC 2052 – „Africa Multiple: Reconfiguring African Studies“ at Bayreuth University

Wednesday, May 7th, 2025, 6 pm

AV studio/Medialab@Forschungszentrum Afrika (FZA U.04.1), Bayreuth University



TO THE RED SOIL

An audio piece by Astrid S. Klein with contributions by Jupiter Bokondji, Albert Gouaffo, Koko Komégné, and Soro Solo, and with music by Mariá Portugal and HugueFe Tolinga

When: Wednesday, May 7th, 2025, 6 to 8 pm

Where: AV studio/Medialab @ Forschungszentrum Afrika (FZA U.04.1) at Bayreuth University

Listening event in cooperation with Media Lab Sound (Medienlabor Sound) / Dr. Alan Fabian, Media Studies, Bayreuth University, Moderation: Prof. Dr. Christine Hanke

The audio piece TO THE RED SOIL accompanies the art project THE POWER OF THE KOLA - NEGOTIATING THE LIVING (2023 - 2025).

Young kola plants, living in the diaspora in Germany, are embarking on a journey to the African tropics. The plants have decided to leave the University of Hohenheim's tropical collection greenhouse to accept an invitation to travel to Dschang in Cameroon. This departure from the Western archive may seem a bit absurd, and it raises questions. Why are the plants in a botanical collection in Europe in the first place? Why are they traveling "to the red soil"? What are their plans? Do they wish to unfold their dormant potential, activate alliances, and negotiate more just relationships? Will they make use of their profound skills to become active again? Will they link various systems of knowledge in an equitable way? Are they capable of countering the violence of industrial plantations and the extraction of natural resources with alternative perspectives and actions?

The kola tree and its seeds, the kola nuts, hold significant meaning for the African continent. In the botanical collections of the West, which are inextricably linked to European colonialism and

extractivism, the Cola acuminata as a tropical crop plant and raw material is omnipresent. Yet the agency of these plants as protagonists is widely ignored.

TO THE RED SOIL, 60min., English version

Voice actresses: Astrid S. Klein, Paula Maestrali, Yara Richter

Announcer: Annett Lorisz

Translation: Paula Maestrali, Dawn Michelle d'Atri, Carmina Röger

Text: Astrid S. Klein

Text consulting: Karin Rebbert

Sound and technical production: Nils Edte

Production: quartier flottant, 2023

Contact: quartier-flottant@t-online.de

Thursday 8.5.2025, 12 to 2 pm

**Room S 147 (Forschungszentrum Afrika, FZA 0.21),
and Zoom (see link below), Bayreuth University**



Astrid S. Klein

THE POWER OF THE KOLA – Restituting knowledge?

When: Thursday, May 8th, 2025, 12 to 2 pm

**Where: Room S 147 (Forschungszentrum Afrika, FZA 0.21) and Zoom (see link below),
Bayreuth University, Moderation: Prof. Dr. Christine Hanke**

Based on the long-term research project THE POWER OF THE KOLA and the associated plant journey of diasporic kola plants from Germany to Dschang in Cameroon (THE POWER OF THE KOLA – NEGOTIATING THE LIVING, 2023 –2025), the artist Astrid S. Klein presents her translocal research and artistic practice.

THE POWER OF THE KOLA is a transgenerational, translocal art project by Astrid S. Klein that has involved international research, art projects and events since 2011. It is supported by the voices of many. With the kola plant (Cola acuminata), tropical diasporic plants are placed at the center as powerful actors with diverse modes of action and meanings. In contrast to the violence of the Plantationocene, colonialism and extractivism, the kola embodies constructive forms of action and communication and activates respectful relationships. Marginalized, local knowledge about economies, social connections, cosmologies, ecology and plant medicine as well as the reconnection of diasporic plants are given space. Alternative translocal modes of action are negotiated on an equal footing in the encounter and convergence of different knowledge complexes.

You can also join via Zoom:

<https://uni-bayreuth.zoom.us/j/67598682591?pwd=CnTgdrwFkHzhoiivKPP8t8bVZk13GU.1>
(Meeting ID: 675 9868 2591, Code: 679884)

About Astrid S. Klein

The artist Astrid S. Klein has been working translocally with protagonists from the African continent, the African diasporas, the Caribbean, and Europe since 2005, jointly creating many-voiced, sustainable projects. Her research is focused on the decentering of one's own thinking, on the fostering of new relationships through different knowledge, and on opportunities for collective action. Her investigations trace connections and paths which intend to depart from the colonial library (V.Y. Mudimbe) and to permit vibrant, non-essentialist neighborhoods of multiple worlds.

Klein studied sculpture at the Akademie der Bildenden Künste in Stuttgart and stage design and dramaturgy at ENSAD in Paris. She then earned a postgraduate degree in video / installation art and performance as Meisterschülerin under the video- and performance art pioneer Joan Jonas (New York, 1936). Her transdisciplinary practice encompasses poetic-critical analyses in different media and public event formats. She is the editor of crossing-boundaries-of-doubt.net and the artistic director of quartier flottant. She is a founding members of the Gesellschaft für künstlerische Forschung Deutschland / Baden-Württemberg. Since 2020 she has been teaching Cultural Studies and Artistic Research at the Peter Behrens School of Arts, Düsseldorf.

For her research Astrid S. Klein has received numerous grants and fellowships. Her works have been shown at various venues, including Hamburger Bahnhof – Museum für Gegenwart (Berlin), Arsenal Institut für Film und Videokunst (Berlin), Heidelberger Kunstverein (Heidelberg), Künstlerhaus Stuttgart, Württembergischer Kunstverein (Stuttgart), Wien Modern (Vienna), Le Plateau (Paris), Musée national de l'histoire de l'immigration (Paris), Apexart (New York), Anthology Film Archives (New York), Doual'art, The Forest, Douala, Le Musée des Civilisations, Goethe-Institut Yaoundé (Cameroon), Accra (Ghana), Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire), Maputo (Mosambique) and CCA Lagos (Nigeria).

For more informations on the KOLA project see interview with Astrid S. Klein and Prof. Albert Gouaffo: <https://www.ifa.de/en/blog/article/the-power-of-the-kola-negotiating-the-living/>

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