

Soutenance de mémoire de MA en sciences sociales - *pilier anthropologie* - de

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**The Museum in the Context of Humanitarian Communication**  
*The Potential of Artistic Museum Objects and Representations  
as Means for Humanitarian Communication and Research*

**Jeudi 17 novembre 2022 à 10h00**

Institut d'ethnologie / Salle de séminaire (1<sup>er</sup> étage)  
Saint-Nicolas 4 – 2000 Neuchâtel

Directrice de mémoire : Katarzyna Grabska  
Expert-e : Octave Debary

In my master thesis, I explore a potential intersection between the fields of humanitarian action and museums. More precisely, I ask “What is a museum’s artistic collection’s and representation’s potential in acting as a space for humanitarian communication and research?”. Drawing on my case study, the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Museum at Geneva (MICR), I follow this question on the grounds of three categories: collections, exhibitions and discourses. Each one of the three categories looks at a specific research sub-question and connected methodological approach. I consequently build the master thesis on three distinct but still overlapping methodological approaches: observations and notes from my six-month internship at the MICR (1), exhibition analysis of its temporary exhibition *Who Cares? Gender and Humanitarian Action* (May to October 2022) (2) and discourse analysis of its symposium series *Art and Humanity. What is possible?* (3). My analytical focus lies on art objects, artistic representations and the role of arts in social action. From a thematic perspective, I specifically regard questions concerning the representation of gender and religion (esp. religious iconography). I thereby show that museum exhibitions can not only show developments in humanitarian communication but also act as an actor implied in the latter itself. This is fostered by its social engagement and its encouragement towards a visitor to challenge their knowledge. Moreover, I show the museum’s collections’ potential in highlighting otherwise marginalised perspectives on historical developments (see also Martín-Moruno et al, 2020; Thomas, 2010).