

# RECOVERING VOICES

Seminar Series in Endangered Languages and Indigenous Knowledge



Ferdinand De Jong, University of East Anglia



presents:

## Archiving after Empire: The Muslim Heritage of Saint-Louis, Senegal

Wednesday November 30, 2016 12:00pm, Rose Room (Room 337), NMNH

Rather than preserving colonial archives in the way in which imperial projects imagined them, postcolonial nations need to work through the colonial legacy for the imagination of new political futures. In the production of knowledge, such decolonial futures depend on the decolonisation of the archive. In this seminar, this issue will be explored in relation to the heritagisation of Saint-Louis, the capital of former French West Africa. What we witness in Saint-Louis are parallel processes of archiving that are profoundly entangled in space. Whilst UNESCO archives Saint-Louis as a colonial city, the disciples of Sheikh Amadu Bamba document the traces of his anti-colonial resistance in the same space of the city, commemorating a particular event. In 1895 the French administration summoned Sheikh Amadu Bamba to the Privy Council in Saint-Louis where he was sentenced to exile for stirring anti-colonial disobedience. At his trial, Bamba allegedly recited a prayer in defiance of the French authorities. Although there is no archival evidence that the prayer was ever recited, Bamba's disciples have since the 1970s flocked to the former seat of colonial power to commemorate his act of resistance by means of a prayer. This seminar examines how their testimony displaces the authority of the colonial archive. *Image: Sheikh Amadu Bamba incarcerated. Painting by Tapha Seck, date unknown.*

For more information or to request a visitor badge contact [RecoveringVoices@si.edu](mailto:RecoveringVoices@si.edu) or call 202-633-5039



An initiative by the National Museum of Natural History,  
in collaboration with the National Museum of the American Indian  
and the Smithsonian Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage.

Recovering Voices  
Department of Anthropology  
National Museum of Natural History  
Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC  
[www.RecoveringVoices.si.edu](http://www.RecoveringVoices.si.edu)