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The Capitalist Eye

From Commercial Museums to Colonial Museums

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A new history of art that combines economics and post-colonial studies.

At the end of the 19th century, a new type of museum appeared and became hugely successful in Europe and elsewhere: commercial museums. The immense collections in these museums were not intended for contemplation, but rather for economic intelligence and the commodification of the world. After falling into oblivion, their collections were buried or even destroyed and their buildings were converted for other uses. Their rediscovery is an opportunity to understand the museum as an instrument of trade policy and to reinterpret the history of capitalism and colonization as a history of the gaze.
