Museum? What for?

Exhibition catalogue

19.11.2021 – 11.09.2022

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MUZEUM AZJI
I PACYFIKU

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MUZEUM AZJI
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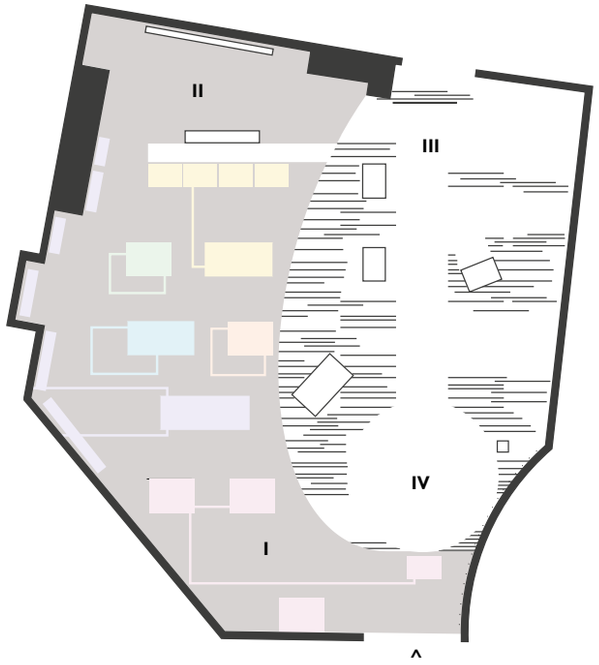

MUSEUM? WHAT FOR?

Contents

Foreword

The Asia and Pacific Museum in Warsaw is making preparations to open its permanent exhibition in 2022 and thus offer the viewers the most comprehensive overview of its possessions, including the founding collection built up by Andrzej Wawrzyniak (1931–2020) in Indonesia. The titular "Journeys to the east" spanned many years. How do we want to showcase them today? Whose journeys are they and who are they meant for? With these questions in mind we are presenting our new temporary exhibition "Museum? What for?" that heralds our grand opening.

In our work we witness different stereotypes on a daily basis. Challenging them is the main objective of what we do. People's tendency to divide others into "our own" and "aliens" has been universally observed for ages. Yet, creating a categorical hierarchy of people, cultures and epochs, and its illusory and hypocritical rationalisation, became in the colonial times the speciality of the European West, which designated itself as the universal standard.

In 1828 Krystyn Lach-Szyrma, a Pole visiting the India House in London, wrote: "The museum of Indian antiquities is less numerous than it is rich, yet one needs to possess a deeper knowledge of the matters of the East and local beliefs to understand them or at least hazard a fair guess. [...] The four-headed Brama, Budda and Krishnu* were standing all alone, no longer the objects of reverence but of vain curiosity. How the change of location affects gods too! [...] London seemed to me like the old Rome, where the gods of defeated peoples are gathered in the Pantheon [...]" (Lach-Szyrma 1981, 328–329). He noticed, just as we do now, the mechanisms underlying the compilation of museum collections, yet he accepted them as facts of life. Today, we look at them from a different perspective, analysing their seeming obviousness and making new ethical judgements.

Although in political terms the processes of decolonisation ostensibly drew to a close a few decades ago, long-term institutions and relationships are changing much more slowly. This applies to museums too. For decades now we have seen changes in museology that both question the old hierarchies and are questioned themselves by different sides of the debate.

In our part of Europe it is still widely believed that because we "did not have any colonies" and fell victim to colonialism ourselves, the problem does not apply to us. The view remains strong despite ongoing discussions about the history of Poland's predecessor states and the relationship Poles had with different minorities. It does not even crumble in the face of historical sources. The issues provoke intense emotional reactions that correspond well with the cultural wars waged in the media and the political domain.

Having said that, the situation of Polish and other Central-European museums is indeed special. In the 19th century, when the idea of the museum was shaping, national ideals clashed with superpower dominance in the region, while in the 20th century the countries behind the iron curtain became the sphere of influence of the Soviet Union and experienced "socialist post-colonialism" (Kola 2018). That is also when the Asia and Pacific Museum was established in Warsaw, which opens up new perspectives of reinterpreting its history (and name).

It is in this context that we are opening an exhibition that tries to critically examine the relationship between the museum as an institution shaped at a specific time and place, and the cultural and natural heritage that is the object of its operations. The outcome of our efforts and the opinions of the viewers and readers of the catalogue will be a follow-up to this experiment.

* i.e Brahmā, Buddha, Kṛṣṇa [note – BB]

Joanna Wasilewska

art historian. She is interested in cross-cultural and artistic relations between Europe and Asia, also as a part of museum studies, traditions of Asian theaters and costumes. She organised over 50 exhibitions and interpreted over 2000 exhibits. Director of The Asia and Pacific Museum since 2013.

How can we talk about culture? How can we talk about the world?

Barbara Banasik

What role does language play in our understanding of the world? Does it influence how we perceive it and how we imagine other countries, cultures, and strangers?

Barbara Banasik

art historian and indologist, curator of the South Asia collection at The Asia and Pacific Museum. She was granted the "Diamond Grant" MNiSW (2013) and "PRELUDIUM" (2019). She currently leads a project funded by the Polish National Science Centre on Maithili Painting from India.

What role does language play in our understanding of the world? Does it influence how we perceive it and how we imagine other countries, cultures, and strangers?

Museums and exhibitions have always been and still are our windows to the world. Thanks to them, we are able to travel back in time and see objects from many centuries or even millennia, and speculate about what life was like back then. Likewise, exhibitions featuring the art and culture of geographically distant countries allow us to imagine these unknown lands.

In 1883, Dr M. Haberlandt from Warsaw attended an exhibition of Indian art in Vienna and described his experience in "Przegląd Tygodniowy" [Weekly Review]. Reading his account, it is easy to see how moved he was by what he saw, although his impressions were different from what could be expected:

"The Indian people, separated from others in their land on the Ganges, educated themselves and grew up to be what they are today: a marvellous eccentric whose mood, ways of thinking and living we Europeans cannot always understand. The first part of the collection that catches the eye of the viewer awakens a feeling of seeing something funny: the world of vibrantly painted Indian gods. Many laugh in front of this panorama, not just the youth who are always inclined to laughter, even the serious man, unfamiliar with the Indian spirit, grins cheerfully and what is interesting – he does not bother to stop grinning" (Haberlandt 1883, 524).

I heard a similar view from a professional scholar of Indian art a few years ago, in Europe. Both of these opinions arise from the attitude of viewing and evaluating the products of other cultures through the prism of European heritage. This is why we call it **Eurocentrism**. Haberlandt's Eurocentric perspective is rather obvious. Thanks to these openly expressed opinions pointing to the foundations of European interpretations and assessments, we can clearly see the foundations of our contemporary – and often rebuffed – worldview. Today, education in Poland, Europe,

and North America is based on ancient Greek and Roman influences (for more about the consequences of this see e.g., Mirzoeff 2018). Greek and Roman art, mythology and philosophy are the model and the foundation of European civilization, the source of all thought, science, and art. The Elgin Marbles from the Parthenon in Athen's are commonly imagined to embody the ideals of art and simultaneously provide a reference point for later experiences. Today, we know that these sculptures were never white, but painted in vivid colours that resembled the Indian ones. Haberlandt wrote directly about his attachment to ancient European patterns:

> **"To consider mythology just from the point of view of art, is not the only possible option. To avoid bias, we must also explore it from other perspectives; but for us, the alumni of Ancient Greece, it seems right and most appropriate. [...] The Greeks taught us to treat both [mythology and art – BB] as one and the same" (Haberlandt 1883, 526–527).**

Such attitudes also determine how we describe the world today. In Greek or Norse mythology, we speak of "gods", but in Hinduism, Buddhism, etc. – "deities". The word "idol" appears much less frequently than in older literature, while "deity" functions almost as a term for "non-European god." So why is Zeus a god and Viṣṇu a deity? It is not because of the rules of language, but because of usus, i.e., the linguistic customs that date back centuries to the time when first translators and travellers described religions they did not know and did not understand.

And when we read reports from 150 years ago, we can see that Asian culture and art were described as curiosities, peculiarities, and exotic oddities, and with the use of a different language than European art and culture, a language that lacked decorum. This is, of course, because we treated other cultures with superiority, putting ourselves and our ancestors' legacy above and beyond that of other nations. Is this belief still prevalent today? Yes, it is.

Fig. 1

Colonial Museum
Burton Brothers studio
black and white gelatine
glass negative
c. 1880
Museum of New Zealand –
Te Papa Tongarewa
C.014974

How do we talk about the world?

The words we use to describe the world carry various meanings and associations. They carry various values – ethical, moral, aesthetic, cognitive, emotional, etc. By analysing the language and terms used in different eras, scholars reconstruct the dominant views and trends present in a given society, e.g., concerning the upbringing of children. The texts give us an insight into the authors' worldview, and by looking at words used to describe other countries and cultures; we can gain an insight into common perceptions about them. Language also reveals what is allowed and acceptable in a given society, what views and perceptions prevaFig. In other words, how we as a society imagine the world around us. The words we use to describe it show our attitude towards its inhabitants. An example of such a separation of worlds and evaluations is the above-mentioned pair: "god" – "deity".

In this way, the linguistic worldview (LWV) is constructed. Stereotypes are also part of it. LWV, however, is a broader concept, also timeless (stereotypes may become out-dated, in a way they are subject to fashions), which is why it allows us to read the values:

> **"The linguistic worldview is a supra-individual (social) interpretation of reality from the position of common sense (from the position of an ordinary individual) that exists in the form of a conceptual structure and is expressed at various levels of language" (Rak 2010, 487).**

With the help of language, we can not only describe, but also organize the world. It reflects popular opinions about the world. At the same time, language has a creative role – with its help we create images of reality, reproduce standards and attitudes towards what is external – other people, beliefs, and cultures. Therefore, the Polish language contains many phrases that reflect our idea of the cultures of Asia and Oceania. They refer to phenomena that were surprising, perhaps incomprehensible to language users. The most popular are surely the 'sacred cow' (*święta krowa* – 'about someone who enjoys privileges and special treatment; someone who for some reason cannot be criticized or judged', Fliciński 2012, 413), 'naked like a Turkish saint' (*goły jak święty turecki* – 'someone poor; a person who does not have money at their disposal ', Fliciński 2012, 112) or the most striking example that expresses both stereotypes and prejudices, i.e., the 'Black People' (*Czarny Lud* – 'imaginary, unjustified fear of something, scaring others with something or someone', Fliciński 2012, 66).

In addition to phrases related to ideas about other cultures, Polish language has many words that are taken directly from the languages of Asia and Oceania. We often do not realize that we use them to describe the most ordinary objects – the origins of some of them can be explored at the exhibition, in the Interaction Room.

Who is “the Other”?

When we talk about non-European cultures, countries and their peoples, we usually use the adjective ‘other.’ The terms “Other” or “Stranger” function as concepts describing our relationship with the outside world. They are related to particular points in space – a specific place that is “our”, and “known” to us – that we use to define what is strange and unknown (Simmel 1975, 204). Thus, in different places in the world, “Other” will mean different things, but will always refer to entire groups, not individuals. However, in order for the Other to appear in our description of the world, they must first enter it and stay there permanently – whether it is to live or become part of our perceptions about a different culture: appear in art, ornamentation or imported objects, because “otherness [...] [means – BB] that someone distant is close to us” (Simmel 1975, 205).

Therefore, the Other can easily function within “our” culture, never becoming a part of it, as e.g., lacquerware items (see postcard 19), trendy “Chinese style” and fascination with Japanese art (see postcard 15). Another example is the Chinese Cabinet of King Jan III Sobieski at the Wilanów Palace in Warsaw and the Chinese Garden of King Stanisław August in Łazienki in Warsaw. A more recent example are *boteh* patterns (also known as paisley). They can be found in every other clothing or interior design store, but we still remember their non-European origins (**Fig. 2**). The journey of such objects can be traced in the Interaction Room.

Fig. 2

Embroidered quilt nakṣi kāṅthā

author from Bangladesh
silk and cotton threads on cotton fabric
2nd half of the 20th c.

MAP 15546

The Other may also permanently enter the local cultural repertoire, and its users may not even be aware of it. This was the case with chess, for example – the most popular board game today arrived in Europe in the 9th century.* In the 15th century, its rules have been slightly modified from the Indian and Persian original, but still bear their traces. For example, the ending word “checkmate” comes from Persian and means ‘the king is defeated’ (**Fig. 3**). More such examples can be found in the Interaction Room.

The inhabitants of Asia and Oceania, representatives of all these cultural groups were – and probably still are – considered as Strangers and Others, excluding “a community formed on the basis of commonalities shared by different categories” (Simmel 1975, 211). Such Others are approached with reserve and differences and the lack of common values are often emphasized. European imperialism and the colonial attitude towards the Other were built upon this approach, and the Other were denied universal properties that are considered explicitly human (Simmel 1975, 211).

Fig. 3

Chess game

author from India
tempera on ivory
2nd half of the 20th c.

MAP 8818

* Chess originated in Persia and India. From there, it spread throughout Asia and later Europe, where it arrived via at least three independent routes, including with the Arabs who in the 8th century conquered the Iberian Peninsula, and from Central Asia to Russia. In the 11th century, chess was already extremely popular in Spain (MacDonell 1898, 131).

Orientalism, or the myth of the mystical East

Following WWII, colonies began to collapse and countries all over the world regained independence. In the 1970s, the perspective of colonialism appeared distant enough for researchers from Europe and North America to begin to critically examine the East-West relationships in relation to cultural products and language. During this period, the American researcher of Palestinian origin, Edward Said, published a book describing the phenomenon of Orientalism and pointed to its centuries-old existence in European culture and its consequences for the present day (Said 2005).

When it comes to ordinary everyday life, this means functioning within the limits of myths concerning Asia that arose from ideas, desires, and preferences prevailing in modern Europe. And so European culture created the image of the mysterious, mystical Orient. A land that is on the one hand full of deep, spiritual experiences embodied by wandering naked ascetics in India and fakirs on carpets studded with nails or dervishes whirling in a trance, and an extremely sensual world full of bodily pleasures – lavish feasts, heavy perfumes, harem dancers and the *Kāmasūtra* on the other. Both of these myths – of spiritual and sensual Asia – were created in European 18th and 19th-century literature, art, and philosophy. They responded to the needs and longings of Europeans, promising them that whatever they are looking for in life they can find in the distant Orient. Philosophical writings created the myth of mystical Asia, and art (created in the end for pleasure and entertainment) created the image of the land of bodily delights (Manicka 2008, 71-72).

This is, of course, a simplification. Nevertheless, these processes have led to the fact that people today go to India and Tibet in search of spiritual cleansing. There are also many pop culture examples that reiterate these myths, for example the book *Eat, Pray, Love: One Woman's Search for Everything Across Italy, India, and Indonesia* (2006), in which the "praying" takes place in India and the "loving" in Indonesia; a music video for the song *Hymn For The Weekend* by Coldplay with Beyoncé playing an exotic seductress, embodying – in a single performance – all ideas about the Orient, from the Middle East to Indonesia; *Sex and the City 2* (2010) film focusing on the carnal pleasures of Abu Dhabi. These myths are also reflected in museum collections. The collection of The Asia and Pacific Museum includes many examples of erotic sculptures and paintings, mainly from India. One of the highest attendances in the Museum's history coincided with the *Ars Erotica Asiatica* exhibition in 1994 (**Fig. 4**).

The influence of orientalism on Europeans was so strong that a separate genre of academic painting emerged. In 2008, the National Museum in Warsaw opened a temporary exhibition *Orientalism in Polish painting, drawing and the 19th and 1st half of the 20th century*, featuring examples of this trend from the collections of the National Museum in Warsaw, including paintings by well-known artists such as Józef Brandt, Wojciech Kossak, January Suchodolski, and Henryk Rodakowski. Orientalism in painting most often took on the form of exotic landscapes, and genre scenes of hunting, harems and deserts, as well as biblical scenes set in an Arab landscape (Kozak 2008). In the introduction to the exhibition, the curators wrote:

"Hunting was among the most popular sports in the countries of the Middle East and North Africa. Meanwhile, harem scenes formed a separate category and a new formula of showing erotic themes. Many artists' favourite subject was showing naked odalisques, as exemplified by the paintings presented at the exhibition: Girl in the Bath by Pantaleon Szyndler and Odalisque by Tadeusz Popiel." *

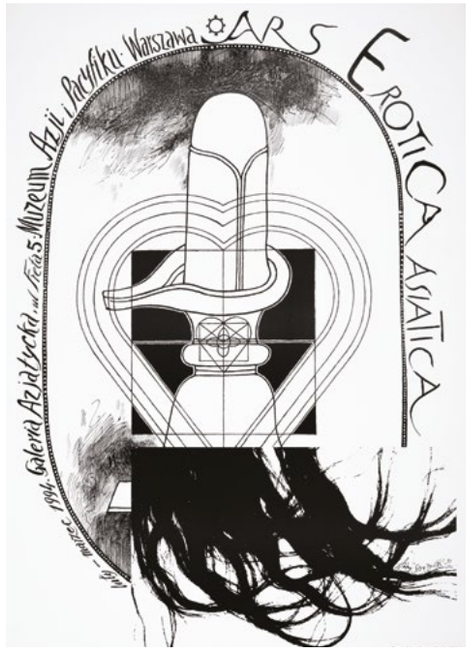

Fig. 4

Exhibition poster — *Ars Erotica Asiatica*, The Asia and Pacific Museum

Andrzej Strumiłło
1994
WIZ/MAP 22/114

This 19th-century orientalism in European painting portrayed the closest European neighbours and the world of Islam, mainly Arab world, the effects of which we can still observe today – in common understanding, Islam = Arabs. The countries of North Africa, southern Spain and Greece, as well as Turkey and the Middle East, were therefore all included under the umbrella term "orientalism" (literally meaning the orientation to the east). The word "oriental" has become synonymous with "exotic", and the exhibition in Warsaw, held two hundred years later, continued to throw "everything non-European" into one bag, enticing viewers with mystical visions of distant and mysterious worlds and a promise of a world panorama, while in fact showing us countries that were just outside Europe. Such uncritical and thoughtless use of historical terms (this trend of painting was indeed called Orientalism in the 19th century) perpetuates the existing stereotypes and myths, and instead of broadening the horizons, it visibly narrows them down.

* Accessed: 14 January 2021 http://orientalizm.mnw.art.pl/przewodnik.html

Eurocentrism – what does it mean?

Of course, there were other factors conducive to the development of orientalism in art. One key factor was imposing one's own cultural patterns and ways of thinking and understanding the world on other cultures, resulting from the European sense of superiority. We call this attitude Eurocentrism. It has led (and still causes) many misinterpretations of works of art, artefacts, and customs. According to the *PWN Encyclopedia*, orientalism is:

"[...] broadly understood attitude of Europeans to the culture and customs of the countries of the East; most often manifested in stereotypes originating from a superficial knowledge of the Eastern realities, disseminated, among others, in popular literature." *

Orientalism and Eurocentrism are therefore two aspects of one phenomenon. The outlook that takes Europe as a point of reference and norm according to which we define ourselves, results in the emergence of orientalism, which defines the attitude towards Asian cultures.

One example of the inadequacy of the use of European terms and methods of ordering the world is the division into the sacred and the profane, i.e. sanctity and everyday life. In European culture, it seems easy to separate – the church or the temple are sacred spaces, religious paintings and sculptures also belong to the sphere WWWof sanctity. On the other hand, genre painting and popular literature belong to the sphere of everyday life. However, this (typical of European culture) division is not universal. If we look at Indian art we find ourselves unable to separate religious and secular sphere. Not only will European categories fail us, but also distort our image of the world (cf. also Wrońska-Friend 2015, 55-58). Thus, Eurocentrism translates into our reception and understanding of art from Asia and the Pacific. We can confront them in the Gallery, located in the first section of the exhibition (**Photo 1**). We will not find any oil paintings on canvas or marble sculptures there. But do particular materials chosen by the author make an object a work of art? Or is the function most important and what we hang over the dining room table is a work of art? And if the picture on the wall was created on the occasion of a religious holiday, does it cease to be a work of art? Or maybe it is a matter of aesthetic expression – whether we like a given object? However, the sense of beauty is also conditioned culturally and changes over time, hence the evolving trends and fashions. We can confront our perception

* Accessed: 14 June 2021 https://encyklopedia.pwn.pl/haslo/orientalizm;3951763.html

Photo 1

Buddha Amida
author from Japan
18th c.
MAP 7229

Lama Rgyal tshab rje
[Gyaltsab Je]
author from Mongolia
mid-19th c.
MAP 6273/1

Buddha Calling the Earth to Witness
author from Myanmar
2nd half of the 19th c.
MAP 19723

Winged demon
author from Bali, Indonesia
2nd half of the 20th c.
MAP 18140

of painting and sculpture from this part of the exhibition with Haberlandt's impressions, while paying attention to the selection of epithets:

"One would like to kiss the painter for this naive and childish simplicity that he breathed into his paintings. The timid, charming grace directing his hand makes us forget that his work is very inexperienced and imperfect" (Haberlandt 1883, 531).

Photo 2

Lord Śiva Naṭarāja
author from Tamil Nadu, India
2nd half of the 20th c.
MAP 11651

Woman
author from Flores, Indonesia
3rd quarter of the 20th c.
MAP 18926

Three Figures
author from the Asmat group, Agats, Papua (former Irian Jaya), Indonesia
2nd half of the 20th c.
MAP 17512

Decolonization, or the myth of "white" Europe

Eurocentrism, orientalism, post-colonialism – are these issues that we need to deal with today? It turns out that as a result of these (and several other) processes, we distort our own history and culture. Many "non-European" elements were removed from official narratives and this is how the myth of "white" Europe was born.

In 2020, two American TV series had their premiere – *The Great*, about the first years of Catherine the Great at the Russian court, and *Bridgerton* taking place at the British court. Both series are historical fiction and do not aspire to realistically reflect the realities of life or historical facts, but are loosely inspired by them. The first is set in the mid-18th century, the second at the beginning of the 19th century; both focus on the largest royal courts of empires covering half of the world with their territories. It should come as no surprise that the courtiers who lived there came from all over the world. And yet, the viewers were shocked by the appearance of different skin colours and accused both series of being ahistorical and unrealistic (I do not mean the actors playing specific historical figures, but the ethnic diversity of the court itself). But is that really true? Abram Hannibal, an Abyssinian lived at the court of Tsar Peter I (grandfather-in-law of Catherine the Great) and even received noble titles from the Tsar. Hannibal's great-grandson also differed from the stereotypical Russian and became the most famous poet in Russia. It was Alexander Pushkin. Alexander Dumas, a 19th-century French aristocrat and author of *The Three Musketeers* and *The Count of Monte Cristo*, was also Black. In 1603, William Shakespeare published one of his most famous plays – *Othello*. The eponymous general of the Venetian army, the husband of the daughter of a Venetian senator, is a Black Moor, presumably from North Africa. Of course, this is not the only work by Shakespeare featuring characters of non-European origin and non-white skin colour (see Loomba 2002).

Polish manors and towns looked similar. People from Asia were an integral part of society: Jews, Tatars, Turks, Armenians, Karaims, and Roma who in the 16th century constituted approx. 10% of the population (Kuklo 2009, 222-224). They were often highly educated people, working at courts, dealing with international trade, military and medicine. The court physician of King Jan III Sobieski was Abraham ben Joszijahu of Karaim origin. Magdalena Abakanowicz, a Polish sculptor and friend of The Asia and Pacific Museum, came from a family of Polish Tatars, although Tatars went down in Polish history primarily as the most

important military commanders. To this day, there are numerous monuments of architecture and urban planning in Poland testifying to this multi-ethnicity (e.g. Tatar architecture in Kruszyniany, Armenian tenement houses in the Market Square in Zamość). In the first, historical part of the exhibition we restore objects from Asia and the Pacific to their rightful place in European cabinets and museums. We show where particular objects – according to the classification adopted at that time – would have been shown, had they not been hidden away in warehouses or exhibited en masse in cabinets of curiosities.

Debunking the myth of the "white" Europe is just one aspect of decolonizing knowledge. Others include language (for example, describing our customs as "normal", which would suggest that all other kinds of behaviours are an aberration – the question "do they eat normally in Mongolia?" is simply a question about the use of cutlery); geographical terms – Middle East, Far East define the distance of these areas from Europe, but have nothing to do with historical names, such as lands, or geographic names, such as plains). Therefore, "decolonization" does not necessarily relate to past colonizing activities. Poland, which did not have colonies, was very anxious to have some and – had it not been for the outbreak of war, we would probably also have Polish transcontinental colonialism. There is also the history of Poland's relationship with the so-called Kresy (literally meaning the end, the border). Poland also benefited from all the achievements of colonialism – economic, cultural, and scientific. Researchers enjoyed the knowledge, and politicians – the distribution of political power and privileges for Europeans imposed on other countries by the colonizers.

The enduring presence of individual elements "from abroad" in our everyday life does not mean, however, that the "Other" – whose culture we creates a lasting relationship – ceases to be "an other" The Indians do not cease to be "Other" just because we play chess. If that were the case, we would not face problems with xenophobia, racism, and cultural appropriation, that is "stealing" elements from other cultures and using them in a different context, often as a fashionable, visually attractive accessory or gadget. Why is appropriation so offensive? Because it constitutes a continuation of the modern cabinets of curiosities (*Wunderkammern*), where strange, exotic, and incomprehensible "other" items were collected. By stripping them of their context, meaning, and values (they were often items related to spirituality), with the help of cultural institutions (e.g. museums) Europeans employed symbolic violence, through which the ruling classes imposed their vision of the world and subordinated other groups (social, cultural). Therefore, today's actions of ordinary people may – unintentionally and unconsciously – be a continuation of these centuries-old oppressive actions. Therefore, the point is not to stop drawing from heritage, but to do it in a conscious and respectful way, paying attention to different values and customs.

This is what decolonization means in everyday life. And we can read about how museums engage with this subject in the subsequent essays.

Photo 3

Belt buckle
author from Azerbaijan
end of the 19th c.
MAP 18413

Flask
author from India
1st half of the 20th c.
MAP 6537

Necklace
author from the Pashtun group, Afghanistan
2nd half of the 20th c.
MAP 13514

Nose ring
author from the Pashtun group, Pakistan
2nd half of the 20th c.
MAP 10487

Hair jewellery
author from the Pashtun group, Afghanistan
3rd quarter of the 20th c.
MAP 3536

Belt
author from Afghanistan or Pakistan
1st half of the 20th c.
MAP 16849

Recognize the Potential

Monika Stobiecka

A history of museums and decolonization

Monika Stobiecka

art historian and archeologist, assistant professor in the Faculty of „Artes Liberales" at the University of Warsaw. She was granted the "Diamond Grant" MNiSW (2014), scholarships by the Lanckoroński Foundation (2016), the Kościuszko Foundation (2018), the Foundation for Polish Science (2019). She was awarded the „Polityka" scientific award (2020).

In recent years, cultural institutions all over the world had to adapt to rapidly and radically changing economic, political, and social circumstances. These important global changes have resulted in numerous museum exhibitions that deal with the problems of climate change and the Anthropocene (the current human-dominated geological era and its impact on the environment)*, the crisis of democracy and growing nationalism**, accelerated pace of technological development, ongoing pandemic and finally the legacy of colonialism whose effects are still felt by independent states today.

Decolonization is slowly becoming a priority in the practical undertakings of universities, schools, and museums. These institutions are described by Nicolas Mirzoeff, a researcher and theoretician of visual culture, in the essay *Empty the museum, decolonize the curriculum, open theory* (Mirzoeff 2018). He cites the numerous appeals of young activists to address the legacy of centuries of violence and oppression perpetuated by Western countries in Africa, Asia, South America, or Australia and Oceania. As the leading representatives of global humanities point to the crisis faced by the countries of the Global South*** in the face of deepening climate change (Chakrabarty 2014, Genidogan 2021), the growing political tensions resulting from economic inequalities and the technological hegemony of the countries of the Global North (Mignolo 2011, Stingl 2016), decolonization seems to be of great importance in explaining the condition of the contemporary world. It is also a strategy of identification and a recovery plan in the face of the currently perceivable colonial aftermath (Domańska 2008), once legitimized and represented, among others, in the institution of the modern museum.

The researchers and public intellectuals' calls are reflected in discussions currently conducted by museum studies and critical heritage studies scholars.**** The traditional institution of a museum therefore requires reflection and a critical approach to history. One manifestation of this kind of need was, among others,

* For example, exhibitions organized in 2019 and 2020 in Warsaw: "The penumbral age. Art in the time of planetary change" at the Museum of Modern Art (accessed: 28 March 2021, https://wiekpolcienia.artmuseum.pl/pl) or at the Centre for Contemporary Art U-Jazdowski, "Human-Free Earth" (accessed 28 March 2021, https: // u-jazdowski .pl / program / exhibitions / inhuman-land). It is also worth noting that Tom Jeffery points out that greening and decolonization are currently the priorities of museums, he also proposes the concept of "eco-decolonization" (see Jeffery 2021).

** For example, the exhibition "Archeomoderne. Polish modern art and state-building myths" at the National Museum in Szczecin. (Accessed on 30 March 2021, https://muzeum.szczecin.pl/wystawy/czasowe/1163-wystawa-czasowa-archeomoderna-polska-sztuka-nowczesna-i-mity-)panstwotworcze.html?fbclid=IwAR3P-_2vlYXqtBmvtepFDS_Fwo22j4RYt6hFCd1RP81n8LiTfriPsifTVqU # .YBxsQEZSJAs.facebook).

*** Global South and Global North: terms introduced in reflection on historical and contemporary geopolitical and economic relations in the world. For a long time, academics used the distinction between the progressive West and the undeveloped or developing East (see Said 2005), which lost its relevance following WWII. During the Cold War, there was a distinction between first world countries (capitalism), second (socialism) and third world countries (countries that did not fit into the first and second worlds). Currently, the term "Third World countries" isn't used any more – it is considered stigmatizing; more often we talk about the Global North, which consists of the United States, Canada and developed parts of Europe and Asia (formerly the first and second worlds); and the Global South, which includes Africa, Latin America and developing countries in Asia and the Middle East (third world). See, Mignolo 2014.

**** Academics and philosophers who actively popularize their research; often take the position of (activist) involvement and provide commentary on current events.

the heated debate at the 2019 ICOM International Council of Museums Congress in Kyoto. There, the new wording of the definition of a museum was debated, and the following was proposed:

> **"Museums are democratising, inclusive and polyphonic spaces for critical dialogue about the pasts and the futures. Acknowledging and addressing the conflicts and challenges of the present, they hold artefacts and specimens in trust for society, safeguard diverse memories for future generations and guarantee equal rights and equal access to heritage for all people. Museums are not for profit. They are participatory and transparent, and work in active partnership with and for diverse communities to collect, preserve, research, interpret, exhibit, and enhance understandings of the world, aiming to contribute to human dignity and social justice, global equality and planetary wellbeing"* (for Polish see: Wasilewska 2019).**

Therefore, a contemporary museum does not turn to the past, but rather looks to the future, critically facing reality.

In this essay, I examine the museum through categories resonating in this proposal for a new definition of a museum: epistemic justice, i.e., equal treatment of various types of knowledge – recognizing as equally legitimate methods of describing the world coming from anywhere in the world rather than relying on European forms of knowledge and science – and a critical – that is, responding to specific threads of history – approach to the past.** I will begin by briefly citing the history of the development of the institution of a modern museum, in order to argue that even the 1980s New Museology revolution of – a contestation movement described in a book by Georges Henri Rivière, the long-time director of the aforementioned International Council of Museums – did not quite address the need to decolonize the museum. Later, referring to the reflections of the curator and researcher of visual culture, Ariella Aïsha Azoulay presented in *Potential History. Unlearning Imperialism* (Azoulay 2019), which inspired the title of this article, I will speculate on a potential history in which non-Western cultures would be represented in the Western world in a non-oppressive and decolonial manner. The exhibits presented at the exhibition – *Museum? What for?* will serve to illustrate my points. The aim of my essay is, above all, to initiate a discussion about potential exhibition topics by creating a theoretical map of research areas and museum practices that would be open to narratives based on the equal treatment of all kinds of knowledge and culture, thus fulfilling the propositions of epistemic justice (Domańska 2016).

* https://icom.museum/en/news/icom-announces-the-alternative-museum-definition-that-will-be-subject-to-a-vote/ (accessed: 29 September 2021)

** A postulate of postcolonial studies scholars related to putting an end to "cognitive Western imperialism" (see Domańska 2016), i.e., promoting decolonizing scholarship in the face of the centuries-old hegemony of European universities and academies. It is about "cognitive decolonization of non-Western European types of knowledge" (Domańska 2016, 48), i.e., attempts to move beyond academic paradigms created and practiced in Europe.

Photo 4

Bodhisattva Guanyin
author from China
6th/7th c.
MAP 3723

Goddess Durgā slays the Buffalo demon Mahiṣa
author from Java, Indonesia
ca. 10th c.
MAP 1801

Contemplating Buddha
author from Java, Indonesia
8th c
MAP 1793

Towards a modern museum...

Photo 5

Rice Plantation

author from Bali, Indonesia
2nd half of the 20th c.

MAP 14604

Goddess Kālī standing on the body of Lord Śiva

Sana Devi
Mithila, Bihar, India
1970s

MAP 4560

"My mother Nandi"

Norman Maṇawila Garrawurra Liyagawumirr clan, Duwala language group, Yirritja moiety Millingimbi, Arnhem Land, Australia
before 1982

MAP 6489

Story of Calon Arang Witch

author from Bali, Indonesia
mid-19th c.

MAP 17367

The history of museology dates back to ancient times when the tradition of public demonstration of objects looted in wars and conflicts was born. While the Greek *museion* was an institution with an academic profile, and the pinacotheca was a gallery, the Romans used public spaces such as forums or baths to present their war trophies, such as *tituli* (tablets with inscriptions) and *simulacra* (images, sculptures and figurative paintings). In the Middle Ages, the tradition of sharing collections broke down, but collecting developed under the patronage of the clergy and sovereigns. The Renaissance brought about the revival of the idea, when the wealthy and the aristocracy organized *studioli*, i.e., closed offices in which private collections were presented. This concept continued to develop in modern times, bringing new proto-museum forms – incl. sculpture gardens (*Antiquario, Lapidarium*), treasuries (*Schatzkammern*), cabinets of art (*Kunstkammern*), antiquities (*Antiquitätenkammern*) or curiosities (*Wunderkammern*).

The latter, among the specialized cabinets of collectors-scholars, deserve special attention, because they received the first artefacts brought back from overseas colonies established from the end of the 15th century. As the cultural anthropologist Anna Wieczorkiewicz writes, originating from the New World, these unusual "curiosities mediated strangeness, offering an idea of what was difficult to express within traditional concepts" (Wieczorkiewicz 2006, 314).* The Polish researcher emphasizes that the category of peculiarity mediated the mental appropriation of unknown lands.

In the mid-18th century, these artefacts, works of art, as well as all kinds of objects of natural origin, finally found their way to newly emerging museums, such as the British Museum (created following the donation of the Hans Sloane collection) or the Louvre (created in the wake of the French Revolution). Modernity has become the Age of Museums: institutions that amassed collections to further illustrate the world order (Hooper-Greenhill 2002, Bennett 2018). The museum became a secular temple that played an important educational and pedagogical role (Duncan 2005, Bennett 2018). Museums emerging in the 19th century, whose specializations were related to the development of new academic disciplines, supported universities by teaching, explaining and lecturing on the current paradigms and visions of the world (Hooper-Greenhill 2002, Moser 2010, Bennett 2018, Stobiecka

* A term introduced in16th-century Europe, used to denote lands discovered by Europeans during the period of great geographical discoveries.

2020). Collections from outside Europe, especially in large museums, the so-called encyclopaedic, universal or *über museums* (Swain 2007) (e.g. British Museum in London, Louvre in Paris, Altes Museum in Berlin)* were displayed in order to show the contrast between the "developed" and "progressive" Europe and the "backward" and "primitive" rest of the world. These tendencies were reinforced when large world exhibitions (e.g., in London at the Crystal Palace in 1851 or in Paris in 1889 for which the Eiffel Tower was built). Timothy Mitchell, a researcher associated with the second wave of postcolonial studies, wrote about this compellingly (Mitchell 2001). He noted:

> **"The exhibition persuades people that the world is divided into two fundamental realms – the representation and the original, the exhibit and the external reality, the text and the world. Everything is organised as if this were the case. But 'reality', it turns out, means that which can be represented, that which presents itself as an exhibit before an observer" (Mitchell 2001, 28–29).**

In the 19th century – the age of exhibitions and the modern museum – the belief that the exhibit represents reality was maintained. (Mitchell 2001, 30).

These non-European collections are still often placed in darker galleries and far corridors in order to spatially and visually emphasize the "colonial aesthetics", as Nicolas Mirzoeff calls this kind of planning (Mirzoeff 2018). Thus, the model of an imperial museum, created in the 19th century and still lingering in some institutions, has survived to this day. There, the use of space and visual means, such as stage design, and narration and the language of descriptions, subordinates non-Western cultures through exhibits and narratives built around them. It should be noted, however, that we are talking about museums presenting objects from around the world (i.e., presented "in comparison" with Europe), and the levels of light in galleries may be dictated not only by curators' choices, but also by conservation considerations.

* Large, universal institutions that present collections from all over the world in one place.

Photo 6

Illustration from the tale of Thạch Sanh, part 3
author from Vietnam
2nd half of the 20th c.
MAP 19915

Chinese Pantheon
author from China
mid-19th c.
MAP 4399

"Calm Wave"
Chen Chi Chein
Taiwan
1995
MAP 14844

Critical museum studies, or the New Museology

This order of Enlightenment-era institutions that "teach and lecture" was shaken by the New Museology revolution, the movement of researchers that critically addressed the 20th-century museum institution. In the 1989 publication *New Museology*, edited by Peter Vergo, they recapitulated the numerous debates that had been taking place in Anglo-Saxon circles since the 1970s (Vergo 1989a, Popczyk 2005). Challenging the then dominant view that the museum is a transparent, neutral, and apolitical institution, they focused on the analysis of museum practices and emphasized their various ideological, economic and political aspects. Among the researchers identifying with the New Museology there are, among others: Peter Vergo, Charles Saumarez Smith, Nick Merrimann, Carol Duncan, Eilean Hooper-Greenhill, Mieke Bal, Tony Bennett, Douglas Crimp, Barbara Kirschenblatt-Gimblett, Susan M. Pearce and Victoria Newhouse.

Among their postulates was an appeal to pay attention to the social context of the museum's activity as an educational, open, participatory, democratic institution that is situated within particular cultural, political and economic realities. Museum anthropologists, set the tone of debates conducted as part of the New Museology, suggested a confrontation with the ideological and evaluative aspect of museums (Vergo 1989a). Critical interpretations of the history of museum collections were also encouraged (Hooper-Greenhill 2002, Gosden et al. 2006, cf. Dudley 2010). An intensive exchange between the museum and the academic world was encouraged, bearing in mind the centuries-old links between these environments (Hooper-Greenhill 2002, Marstine 2006, cf. Piotrowski 2011).

What is more, the researchers promoted close cooperation between the different departments of the museum institution (education, exhibitions, promotion, etc.). They recognized that the museum is a living, dynamic, fluid institution that – contrary to the criticized model of the "museum-fossil" (Vergo 1989b), based on an elite, closed structure and focused on theoretical considerations – should actively engage in socio-cultural life. In this spirit, New Museology postulated that museums should adapt to the reality of modern times, as the only path to preserve and defend the tradition of the institution. Finally, on the wave of academic upheaval caused by the spreading of critical theories (feminist and postcolonial perspective), problem exhibitions were encouraged instead of cross-sectional displays (i.e., exhibitions focussing on a specific issue, instead of exhibitions presenting a general view of a selected aspect of culture, e.g., "Costumes of the world").

Several key principles informing the focus of contemporary museum exhibiting were formulated. Starting from the idea that an exhibition is a method of posing problems and questions (Karp and Kratz 2015) rather than presenting paradigmatic knowledge – as was the case in traditional museology – a move away from classification, templates, and typology was promoted. The critique of typology as a museum strategy, the effect of which was the aestheticization of artefacts with various functions (Alberti 2005, Bal 2005, Stobiecka 2020), supported the fundamental assumption about the need to free objects from the yoke of "works of art" because ethnographic and archaeological collections were mostly doomed to such labelling (cf. the next article in the catalogue). Finally, New Museology was to engage with new media (at that time, primarily audio-guides, at the beginning of the 21st century – multimedia), which guaranteed open, equal, and free access to heritage (Cameron and Kenderdine 2014, Kidd 2014), meaning a break with hermetic and exclusive exhibition models supposing the visitors' pre-existing knowledge.

Despite their significant contribution to the transformations of contemporary museums, the postulates of the New Museology have not been fully accepted. The directors of the most important Anglo--American museums voiced their criticisms that were later collected in the American art historian and curator James Cuno's *Whose Muse?* (Cuno 2004). Taking a conservative position, the directors suggested that the museum – as a global and universal institution – was to resist various interpretative revisions (e.g., reinterpretations of their collections from a feminist or postcolonial position, etc.) and commercialization. This attitude also encouraged the French art historian and director of the Picasso Museum, Jean Clair, to suggest a return to the elite function of museums (Clair 2010). Assuming that heritage is an international good, Cuno argued in another publication that the museum should defend itself against restitutions, i.e., the return of objects looted during wars and invasions, because, according to the author, the restitutions are "nationalistic" (Cuno 2008). Let me turn then to the most important consequence of New Museology considered here – the opening of a debate on the restitution of cultural heritage.

Photo 7

Snuffbox
author from China
18th c.
MAP 10138

Snuffbox
author from China
2nd half of the 19th c.
MAP 12986

***Hip maak* betel spice container**
author from Myanmar
2nd half of the 20th c.
MAP 19212

Betel spice container
author from Sumatra, Indonesia
2nd half of the 19th c.
MAP 2050

Betel spice container
author from the Khmer group, Cambodia
3rd quarter of the 20th c.
MAP 17884

Betel spice container
author from Sumatra, Indonesia
2nd half of the 19th c.
MAP 2037

Decolonizing museums?

Restitution, i.e., the return of unlawfully removed objects is the key issue of cultural policy regarding the processes of decolonization, i.e., the liberation of former colonies from imperial power, which took place gradually after WWII. The now independent states, once exploited overseas territories, such as India, Indonesia and New Zealand, began to demand the return of cultural heritage looted as a result of centuries of violence.

The most heated disputes include, above all, the conflict between Greece and Great Britain over the Elgin Marbles – marble sculptures from the Parthenon in Athens (Stobiecka 2020, 183–189), as well as Benin legacy, recently extensively discussed by archaeologist Dan Hicks (brass sculptures from the Kingdom of Benin in West Africa, dating from the 15th to the 19th century) (Hicks 2020), scattered around European and American museums at the end of the 19th century. However, the fate of heritage plundered in colonial times is not always determined by researchers, museologists, and curators who have been striving for and encouraging restitution for several decades, but by politicians. Many museums, such as Weltmuseum in Vienna, Quai Branly in Paris, or Berlin museums, have begun to return objects from their collections. This is, of course, a laborious process and requires the involvement of state authorities, because the state treasuries own museum collections in Europe. The breakthrough, as it seems, in this context was the speech of the President of France, Emmanuel Macron, who in 2017 in Burkina Faso promised to return artefacts to Africa by 2022.

A direct result of Macron's declaration, the report *Restitution of African Heritage. Toward a New Relational Ethics* by Felwine Sarr and Bénédicte Savoy (Sarr and Savoy 2018) was published one year later. It will be used to execute the planned returns. This political development encouraged Egyptian Minister of Culture Zahi Hawass to resume talks on the restitution of Egyptian heritage. Egypt's attempts in 2007 to borrow important Egyptian artefacts from leading European museums (the British Museum, Louvre, and Neues Museum in Berlin) were ignored by the directors of these institutions, but a recent shift in the tone of cultural policy has elevated hopes for the relics' return to the country. Artists are also involved in sounding alarm on this issue. In 2015, in reaction to a lack of response from Germany to a request to borrow the bust of Nefertiti from the Neues Museum in Berlin, the Egyptian-German art duo – Nora Al-Badri and Jan Nikolai Nelles – resorted to "digital piracy." The artists illicitly scanned the sculpture in the museum and created a 3D model and a print, which they exhibited at the Egyptian Off-Biennale in the same year. In this way, Nefertiti returned "home" for the first time.

Photo 8
p. 42–43

Container
author from Vietnam
15–16th c.
MAP 14484

Bottle
author from China
14th c.
MAP 14462

Cosmetics container
author from Rajasthan, India
2nd half of the 20th c.
MAP 8041

Potential Histories, Collections, and Exhibitions

As argued by Ariella Aïsha Azoulay, a scholar exploring the history and practices of photography, the atmosphere of political debate encourages us to "unlearn imperialism" (Azoulay 2019). Writing about how photography changed the status of artefacts from the colonies, she emphasizes the importance of separating objects from their history, context, people, and the reality they generate. However, Azoulay also warns against thinking of restitution as a "magic solution" (Azoulay 2019, 20) and a kind of reparation for colonial violence. She suggests tackling the legacy of colonialisms critically by practising "potential history" that encourages us to decode, decompress, undo, rewind, and unlearn.

This is the character of the artefacts at the exhibition *Museum? What for?* – they illustrate the decoding, rewinding, and unlearning of imperialism. Arranged within "potential" proto-museums: Cabinet of Antiquities, Gallery, Art Cabinet, Armoury, Nature Cabinet, and a Treasury, i.e., forms known from modern museology. In this way, the objects that were usually exhibited in cabinets of curiosities taming the New World are placed in exhibition spaces appropriate to their status.

Sculptures from India and Indonesia do not complement the collection of curiosities, but illustrate the development of ancient art, becoming elements of the Cabinet of Antiquities – an open garden of sculpture popular in Renaissance Europe. The representations of Buddha, Kārttikeya, and Durgā take part in designing a potential past in which they could be displayed alongside the statues of Apollo, Hercules, or Aphrodite (**Photo 4**).

The paintings in the Gallery also propose potential scenarios for the revision of the canon that even today resists decolonization and contains an overwhelming majority of European works of art. For example, the Australian painting on bark transforms traditional thinking about art, its uneven structure resembling contemporary art pieces (**Photo 5**). Thus, not only representations, but also techniques, materials, paints, and substrates extend the scope of our thinking about art, especially when it comes to the imperial and exclusive nature of art institutions regulated by a number of policies and guidelines (**Photo 6**).

The wealth of materials and artistic media changes our perception of Asian and Pacific art. A comparison with European arts and crafts reveals mastery, craftsmanship and creativity that have not always been fairly judged. Sophisticated incensories, intricate dishes or richly decorated snuffboxes on display in the Art Cabinet (**Photo 7, 8**) break with the traditional ways of thinking about collections presented in 16th-century Europe, limited to objects of craft, painting, and sculpture

based on the then and local canons of beauty, e.g., golden salt shakers or inlaid chests.

Finally, the exhibition asks important questions about the ethics of exhibiting objects from Asia and the Pacific. Here, the interventionist attitude towards religious heritage, that used to be presented in perhaps the most violent way, is particularly important. Enlightenment museums, and cabinets of curiosities before them, stripped objects of their contexts, imposing them with artistic connotations and therefore aesthetic evaluation, and made us see them as first and foremost works of art. Today, these problematic collections are becoming the subject of restitution and pioneering research using new technologies. Thus, for example, what was considered to be a rattle and displayed in the Quai Branly Museum in Paris was revealed as a mummy of a child (*fardo*). The rattling elements inside the little Peruvian *fardo* were not beads, but the mummified corpse of a child (cf. Vey 2015). Korwars (**Photo 9**), i.e., anthropomorphic sculptures containing a skull personifying the deceased, can also be easily taken out of context. These religious objects, associated with a three-stage religious ceremony (sculpting the image of the deceased, personification, i.e., the transition of the soul to sculpture, the ceremony of luring the shadow of the dead into the sculpture), most often arrived in Europe without human skulls, thus becoming mere "exotic sculptures." A member of the Ronsumbre family crafted the object now held in the collection of the Asia and Pacific Museum on Biak Island in the 1990s and although it no longer served ritual purposes, it was part of an important religious tradition.

By engaging with the issue of religious heritage, the Museum not only attempts to engage in important ethical discussions, but also makes a much-needed gesture – it attempts to unlearn imperialism that dictates that everything that is based on European perception is considered a "work of art".

Photo 9

Korwar *kaku*
author from Ronsumbre family
Biak Island, Papua, Indonesia
1990s
MAP 21633

Why is decolonization important for contemporary museums?

This critical and practical approach is aimed at writing the history of collections, organizing exhibitions and conducting educational activities in the spirit of epistemic justice. We should think not only about future exhibitions, but also those that have shaped our approach to cultural heritage. Decolonization opens up new, ethical ways of thinking about heritage, adapted to the challenges of the present day. Instead of offering conclusions, I would like to map potential areas of future intervention and further research.

Starting with the essence of museums, that is, collections: decolonization allows us to rethink the status of various artefacts that over centuries and despite their often questionable artistic values have been labelled as "works of art". By removing the imperial lens, which in modern museums dictated ocularcentrism and seeing objects as works of art (Classen and Howes, 2006), we partially restore the objects' original contexts: archaeological, ethnographic, ritualistic, sacral, and functional. Decolonization rereads the status of objects, allowing for the construction of an unbiased platform where all "museum items" are given their historical, cultural and social value. Simultaneously, this approach allows us to redefine key concepts of museum discourse, such as "art" or "material culture".

Second, decolonization encourages us to critically assess the histories of collections, methods of acquiring collections or collectors'

Decolonization enables asking questions about the role played by the artefacts before they were placed in a museum. What significance was given to them in non-Western cultural contexts? What functions did they perform? What stories can they tell us today?

biographies. Valued archaeologists or ethnographers may be knocked off their pedestals when research reveals their attitude towards the inhabitants of the studied territories or models of local cooperation. In this sense, critical research on the provenance and history of museum collections may shed new (and often much needed!) light on the recognized "custodians of heritage." As a result, the decolonization of the history of museology and collecting raises important questions:

How were the collections obtained?

How did the museum position itself in relation to enslaved peoples? What narratives did the owners of collections create? In what circumstances were the collections transferred to museums, and what were the ideas and motivations behind it?

Third, decolonization has the potential to revise the state of museum research relating, for example, to the history of exhibitions, ways of constructing narratives or methods of analysing and interpreting artefacts. This approach leads to important questions:

How have non-Western collections been written about and interpreted?

Photo 10

Shield
author from the Asmat, West Papua, Indonesia
2nd half of the 20th c.
MAP 18955

Shield
author from the Dayak group, Kalimantan, Borneo, Indonesia
1st half of the 20th c.
MAP 312

Headgear
author from the Naga group, Chin State, Myanmar
2nd half of the 20th c.
MAP 19261

Photo 11

Boomerang
author from Australia
2nd half of the 20th c.
MAP 12936

Javelin
author from Kalimantan, Borneo, Indonesia
1st half of the 20th c.
MAP 141

Club
author from Oceania-Melanesia
2nd half of the 19th c.
MAP 11972

Spear-thrower
author from the Iatmul group (?), East Sepik, Papua-New Guinea
2nd half of the 20th c.
MAP 10000

***Woomera* spear-thrower**
author from Australia
1970s
MAP 20700

What meanings were attached to them? How were they presented to a wider audience?

Fourth, current debates on the restitution of heritage as part of decolonization policies should also inspire countries such as Poland which – although they lack a history of overseas conquests – could express solidarity with countries affected by centuries of violence by engaging in the recovery of their collections. Dorota Michalska pointed this out in the review of the permanent exhibition opened in 2020 at the National Museum in Warsaw (Michalska 2021). Referring to the sensitive subject of war losses and restitution battles fought by the Polish state, Michalska encouraged thinking about museum exhibitions in Poland in terms of decolonization. This leads to other important academic and ethical questions:

How to present foreign collections? Which museums and exhibitions in Poland require decolonization?

What narratives accompany the non-Western artefacts exhibited in Polish museums?

And finally – decolonization is aimed at improving the future of social relations, allowing for an equal, fair and non-discriminatory way of participating in culture, represented by artefacts constituting global heritage, i.e., the heritage of all inhabitants of Earth (Spivak 2005).

What is History of Art?

Zuzanna Sarnecka

History of Art – What is it? Why do we need it? Is it a useful tool for describing the world around us?

Zuzanna Sarnecka

art historian, assistant professor in the Institute of Art History at the University of Warsaw. She holds a PhD from the Cambridge University (2017). She currently leads a project funded by the Polish National Science Centre on devotional terracotta sculpture in the Papal States 1450-1550. Her research focuses on materiality and craftsmanship of fifteenth- and sixteenth-century art. Member of ICOM and Renaissance Society of America.

History of art focuses on the study of visual cultures, or the imagery of a culture and people's ability to make sense of it. Importantly, this ability is culturally and historically specific. In the past, art history tended to investigate what has come to be understood as the fine arts, namely paintings, sculptures and architecture, often disregarding other elements of the visual landscape of specific communities, that made up a complex and intricate fabric of visual culture. The multitude of things to be seen is the key to understanding why we can never talk about a single visual culture, but rather multiple visual cultures, each shaped by individual experiences and access to two-dimensional and three-dimensional artefacts. In the past, as today, people were surrounded by things to be seen, heard, smelled, tasted or touched by them and by the others. Their praised possessions could be limited to a celadon-glazed terracotta bowl (**Photo 12**) or a silver hairpin incrusted with turquoise and pearls (**Photo 13**), but their visual culture extended way beyond these objects to the things they saw around them.

What questions do we need to ask, as historians of art, to understand this Chinese multicoloured ink painting on silk and paper (**Photo 6**)? The scale of the three figures at the top indicates their importance. Their robes are notably different, with colours ranging from bright blue and yellow, through intense red to deep black, and this attention to characterizing them as three, distinctive persons seems to be meaningful. These initial observations leave many unanswered questions: who are the important figures at the top? Who are the other prominent figures included in the painting? What was the function of the image? Are we looking at the illustration of a story or a devotional image? Without an understanding of the culture and an ability to identify the figures, we are lost. With further research we realise that the image is a sacred painting, depicting the pantheon of Chinese gods, deities and saints from the three main traditions. The three seated figures at the top are, from the left, Laozi (Lao Tzu), the founder of Taoism, Buddha Śākyamuni, the founder of Buddhism, and Confucius, the founder of Confucianism. Among other figures that we are able to identify is the Jade Emperor surrounded by his four ministers, but the personality of many other figures is difficult to determine with absolute certainty. We can admire the lightly painted landscape and the symbolic

creatures such as the Qilin, the mythical mono-horned beast, or the tortoise with a snake on its shell, an important mythological figure in Taoism.

By analysing with all the senses the objects produced for specific communities, we can identify important, potentially meaningful elements, such as the hardness of the material, use of line, colour or scale. However, without the knowledge of the specific visual culture, to which the object belonged, we can only focus on its form rather than try to reconstruct its intricate meaning.

Photo 12

Plate
author from China or Vietnam
18–19th c.
MAP 21183

Bowl
author from Vietnam
15th c. (?)
MAP 21228

Dish
author from China
12–13th c.
MAP 21186

Vase
author from Vietnam
15/16th c.
MAP 14587

Dish
author from Thailand
1st half od the 20th c.
MAP 6519/2

Incense burner
author from Vietnam
16–17th c.
MAP 21268

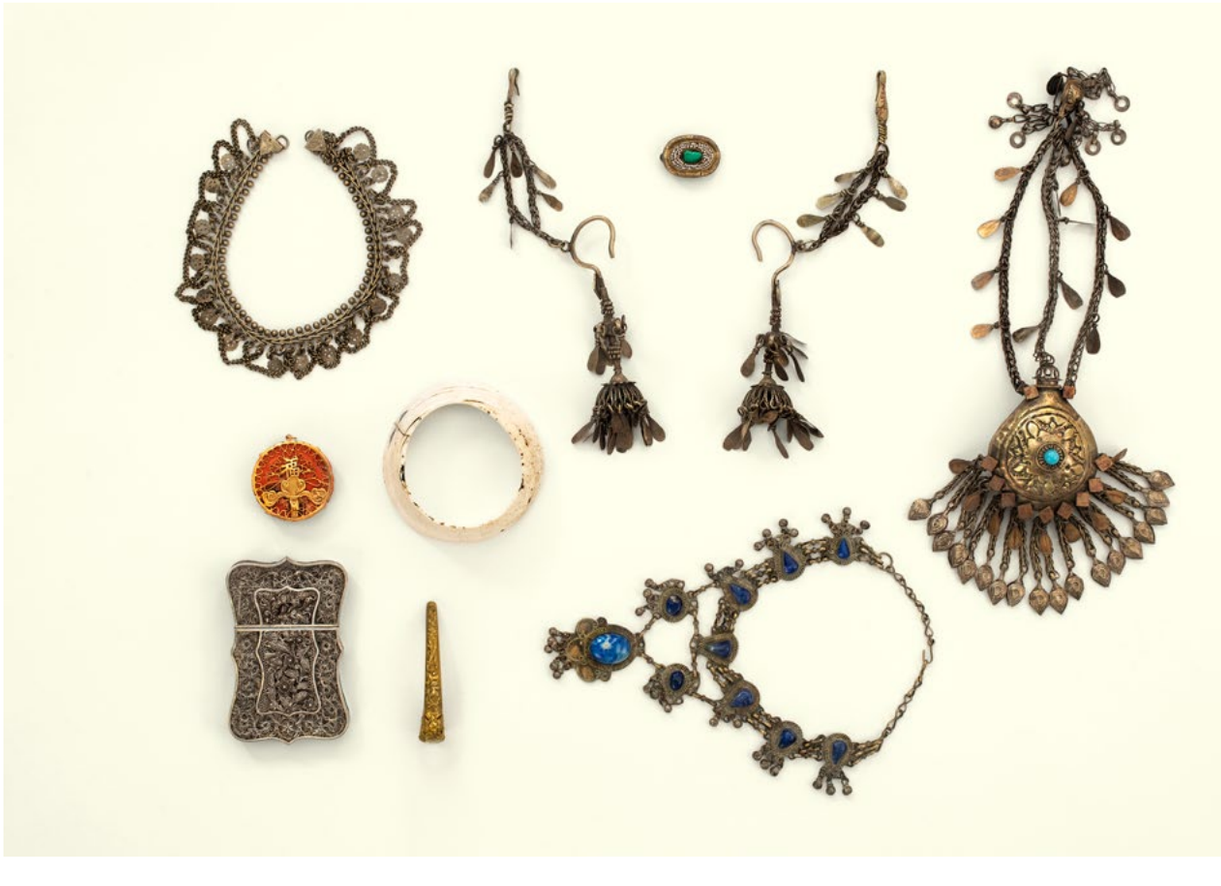

Photo 13

top row, from the left:

Ankle bracelet
author from South-East Asia
1st half of the 20th c.
MAP 16225

Earrings
author from Pashtun group, Afghanistan
2nd half of the 19th c.
MAP 3530

Barrette
author from Mongolia
3rd quarter of the 20th c.
MAP 6007

Perfume bottle
author from Afghanistan
1st half of the 20th c.
MAP 3225

mid row, from the left:

Pendant
author from China
mid-19th c.
MAP 8624

Bransoleta
author from Leh, Ladakh, India
2nd half of the 20th c.
MAP 14369

bottom row, from the left:

Cigarette box
author from Turkey or Armenia
2nd half of the 19th c.
MAP 12478

Fingernail guard
author from China
19/20th c.
MAP 3983

Necklace
author from Afghanistan
1st half of the 20th c.
MAP 4366

Western Canon and the Fallacy of Inclusiveness

There are many other challenges involved in writing about non-European visual culture from a perspective of European art history. This task involves questions regarding art produced across many periods, from various contexts (religious and sacred art should be regarded differently from everyday objects) and different geographical locations. It is clear that such a rich and varied material should be approached with sophisticated analytical tools and with specific research questions. Yet these tools and questions are often adopted or generated based on the Western canon of art. Because of the capitalist system, and the consequent Western domination in the world, West 'succeeded in establishing its art history as the only internationally valid canon able to bestow the legitimacy of art on a given form of creative expression' (Badovinac 2006).

From its outset art history has focused on the progress made by artists in convincing depiction of space, on significance of lifelikeness and the primacy of design, in the sense of the intellectual principle that guides the composition of the work. These categories neglect the culturally specific aspects of an artwork and are often too restricted to analyse objects that are not Leonardo's *Mona Lisa*. We would learn next to nothing by asking these questions in front of this contemporary copy of a 5th- or 6th-century crown from South Korea (**Photo 15**).

We may understand this object better by analysing its physical properties, for instance by observing the contrast between the filagree gilded leaves and the hardness of jadeite elements (jadeite has a hardness of 7 on the Mohs scale, while gypsum has a hardness of 2 and diamond of 10 on that scale). To get the sense of the significance of this artefact, we need to think about its function, the tradition of similar objects, the way in which the materials have been used, the sound of gilded leaves gently moved by the wind, when the crown was worn by the Silla kings. These observations bring our focus to the agency of the artefact or more specifically to its social role and ability to construct histories, to forge identities and establish interrelationships between other entities (Callon 1991, 140).

Such perspective is promoted by the new art historical strand, rooted in the posthumanist theories, that proposes to focus on objects themselves, and not on the thing as 'a vehicle for extraneous social and symbolic message' (Gell 1992, 43).

The inquiries into the agency of artworks, materials and skills draw attention of art historians to previously little-studied artefacts, such as Aboriginal paintings on bark of gum trees made using local earth pigments. One such a painting by Norman Mangawila (c. 1933-1991) shows a lizard on a tree and illustrates the sung myth about the spiritual life of the community from the Central Arnhem Land (**Photo 14**). Importantly, this artwork has been painted on commission from the Milingimbi Art Centre for commercial purposes. Similar strategies of marketing of Aboriginal painters, reflect the ambition to include non-Western artists into the global

Photo 14

"My Mother Nandi"
Norman Maṇawila Garrawurra Liyagawumirr clan, Duwala language group, Yirritja moiety Millingimbi, Arnhem Land, Australia before 1982
MAP 6489

exchange of artistic ideas and global collecting of art (Belting 2009). It is noteworthy, that the Asian art market is rapidly growing, with astronomical sums fetched at auctions organized by Christie's and Sotheby's in one of their Asian locations, including Beijing, Doha, Dubai, Hong Kong and Shanghai. At the same time, the art fairs, such as the immensely successful India Art Fair or Art Basel Hong Kong, are being curated in Asia by local curators, with a clear aim to provide a greater visibility to the contemporary non-Western artist. These auctions and fairs continue to have a positive effect on the global art scene, but they perpetuate the mechanisms, which have been constructed by Western institutions. Thus, the success of non-Western artists continues to be measured according to the criteria devised in Europe and in the States. Artistic success is determined by the grants or artistic residencies financed by Western institutions, by solo exhibitions organized in Western museums or galleries, by commercial success reflected in prices fetched by artworks at auctions or art fairs, and by the vastness of critical writings on any given artistic oeuvre. As pointed out in the postcards 29, 30, the inclusion of K.K. Hebbar's or Qi Baishi's paintings, that are on display in the current exhibition, seeks to question the arbitrary choices made by international institutions to promote art of the selected individuals, whilst often ignoring what should rightly be considered the mainstream artistic output of specific communities. At the same time, to succeed these selected artists need to be 'truthful' to their cultural heritage and

remain easily accessible and legible in the Western context. In other words, the apparent inclusiveness of the Western art history and its institutions, such as museums or art galleries, does not result in a real empowerment of the non-European artists.

The process of modernization, which in a sense created an obligation for the Western system to become more inclusive, resulted in the opening up to the art of 'Other' but merely through the individual representatives rather than through the inclusion of their own collective experiences, that would escape the categories devised for European realities. Consequently, non-European artists today have to assert their own identity whilst 'the newly interested West has already started to include them in its museum collections – where they find themselves estranged from their own original context' (Badovinac 2006). The successful, non-European artists receive a body of art historical writing, that often ignores the local art scene, or the visual culture to which their works belong, and instead inscribe these objects into a master narrative that remain nationalistic and hugely ideological.

Photo 15

Headband
author from the Dayak group, Kalimantan, Borneo, Indonesia
2nd half of the 20th c.
MAP 13679

Ceremonial crown
author from Minangkabau, Sumatra, Indonesia
2nd half of the 20th c.
MAP 17523

Crown
author from New Caledonia, France
2018
MAP 21472

Headband
author from Sumba, Indonesia
2nd half of the 20th c.
MAP 17934

Crown with *stūpa* on a stand
author from Myanmar
1st half of the 20th c.
MAP 19213-19215

Crown (copy)
author from South Korea
2nd half of the 20th c.
MAP 14882

Artistic Translations

Photo 16

Sītā and Hanumān in demon's Rāvaṇa garden

A. Muang Kanchanaburi, Thailand
2nd half of the 20th c.

MAP 16545

Horse

author from Fu Tu, Hubei, China
2001

MAP 19150

Yellow tiger

author from Fu Tu, Hubei, China
2001

MAP 19139

Objects from distinctive cultures found their way to European collections in a variety of different ways, from religious crusades and pillages, to global trade, diplomatic gifts and exchanges. These artefacts have been labelled as treasured possessions or curiosities and as such became enshrined in European *Wunderkammern*, or the cabinets of curiosities (Avery, Calaresu, Laven 2015). In these collections, objects would often be divided into the *artificialia* and *naturalia*. The two categories defined the main reasons for inclusion of an artefact into the cabinet of curiosity, namely the technical skill and mastery apparent in its form (*artificialia*), or its status of the exotica, a wonder of nature (*naturalia*)*. The objects collected reflected the interest in the complexity and beauty of the form devised in the context on non-European cultures, such as this powerfully colourful Chinese cut-out that seems to be too fragile to be handled, and was evidently created to be appreciated solely visually (**Photo 16**). It is painted with watercolour on the delicate tissue paper, in which the silhouette of the yellow tiger has been cut out, with outmost precision, using a knife. It is but one of the set of 55 Chinese cut-outs in the collection of The Asia and Pacific Museum in Warsaw and it testifies to the specialised manufacture of these artworks in the Hubei province. Tigers are believed to protect against the evil spirits and the vibrant colours together with the represented animal suggest that, originally, similar cut-outs might have been apotropaic objects, with a role to ward off harm.

At the same time, the interest in the natural world of the distant lands and specifically in how natural resources were used by local communities, brought about huge market for ivories and other artefacts, which we now deem ethically problematic, such as this work made with the kingfisher's feathers, characterised by the intense blue hue (Photo 17**). The sheer beauty of this artefact contrasts with the inherent suffering of the birds, killed to source the unique, natural material.**

The ongoing debate about the policies for ivories in museums' collection across the world is informed by the awareness of the abhorrent realities of the trade in the elephant's tusks (Good, Tyrell, Zhou, Macdonald 2019). The fear that the display of these alluring, smooth and off-white objects will generate continuous interest among the private collectors and the ever growing market for such artefacts, resulted in dramatic actions including the burn of the ivories that took place in April 2016 in Kenya (Cole 2018; Curnow 2018). The need to protect the contemporary wildlife in the areas of sourcing of ivory, has brought about the justified

* About those categories in relation to the Kunstkammer of Rudolph II see Kaufmann 1978, 24.

concerns about the need to destroy, deaccess, or at least to remove from the display all ivories preserved in public collections.

This European drive to own, at all costs, something unfamiliar, was nourished both by the curiosity and by the will to manifest the cultural triumph of the West, which could collect and display all artefacts from the 'conquered' regions across the globe. Objects were removed from their original cultural contexts in a highly arbitrary and selective manner. Collectors pursued, bought or chose only what seemed relevant to them, for a variety of reasons, including aesthetic, educational or financial purposes. The estrangement of the objects from their place of origin, informed the paradigm of Western art history researching and examining others, evaluating and inscribing them into oversimplified categories. The cabinets of curiosities created opportunities for critical production of knowledge, by comparing artefacts from distant lands. However, historically, this process often lacked the nuanced approach informed by the understanding of the context of these objects, which led to the adoption of oversimplified and generalized categories. The historic guests to the *Kunstkammer* could contemplate the nature, science and art of distant cultures and claim to understand it all.

The history of artistic translations was written from the Western perspective and has biased our perception towards the focus on Europe and on what its culture benefited from the interaction with other cultures (Contadini 1999). Consequently, the question of the centre and the periphery was integrated into the process of forming of the discipline. As argued by Deborah Cherry: 'Bourgeois subjects constructed themselves in relation to 'others'. And central to the making of this subjectivity was the museum's collection and display of art and design produced outside the west' (Cherry 2007, 4).

However, from a more positive perspective, through the studies on histories of collections and investigations into the global artistic translations, art history continues to recover the biographies of non-Western objects, to trace histories of artefacts from their making to their current locations*. For instance, illuminating studies by Avinoam Shalem show how Islamic artefacts, such as metalworks with sacred texts inscribed on them, became 'christianized' after being imported to Europe and embedded into an utterly distinct artistic and cultural milieux (Shalem 1998). The research on the provenance of these objects is one of the most significant and promising avenues for the global art history, but these investigations should always be extended into the study of the visual cultures and local contexts that are specific to the analysed objects.

* George Kubler, The Shape of Time: *Remarks on the History of Things* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1962).

Photo 17

Audience at court
Firoz and Fareed
India
2nd half of the 20th c.
MAP 12290

Lamp
author from India
1950s
MAP 21921

Hairpin with a phoenix and flowers
author from China
mid-19th c.
MAP 3967

***Netsuke* – Shouxing with a peach**
Gyokuyosai
Tokyo, Japan
1st half of the 19th c.
MAP 9114

Scene from the "Rāmāyaṇa"
author from Bali, Indonesia
2nd half of the 20th c.
MAP 3882

Orans with a ceremonial dish
author from Myanmar
1st half of the 20th c.
MAP 19869

Immortal He Xiangu
author from China
mid-19th c.
MAP 11792

Ornamental comb
author from Java, Indonesia
2nd half of the 20th c.
MAP 17172

Model of a junk ship
author from Vietnam
2nd half of the 20th c.
MAP 12477

A *wayang* figure – male
author from Java, Indonesia
1st half of the 20th c.
MAP 938

Physeter's tooth with drawing of a ship
author from China (?)
1st half of the 20th c.
MAP 14160

Photo 18

Buddha's Head
author from Java, Indonesia
8th c.
MAP 1810

Head of Lord Viṣṇu (?)
author from the Khmer group, Angkor, Cambodia
12th c.
MAP 16426

Goddess Durgā slays the Buffalo demon Mahiṣa
author from Nepal
18th c.
MAP 12403

Bodhisattva Guanyin (?)
author from China
8–10th c. (?)
MAP 6266

Bell
author from Java, Indonesia
8–10th c.
MAP 2092

Lord Kārttikeya
author from India
2nd half of the 19th c.
MAP 3760

Art History and Identities

The notion of identity is crucial for the understanding of the risks involved in art historical inquiry into works from the non-Western context. From the beginning of the Western collecting of objects from the East, there was a distinction between the complex and diverse map of European national patrimonies and the singular, unified 'Other'. Moreover, as observed by O'Doherty, the eternal, timeless quality of the cabinets of curiosities and of the museums creates a 'limbolike status' of these spaces and entrapped in them artefacts (O'Doherty 1995,15). Everything that enters a collection is bound to remain there forever. This seems to be particularly problematic for religious objects, which, at least to some visitors retain a distinct, sacred role. Such a devotional function is apparent in the form of this stone statuette of the four-armed Kārttikeya (Photo 18), presented frontally, with the front right hand raised in the gesture of protection, or *abhaya*, and his front left in the gesture of blessing, or *varada*. Behind Kārttikeya, carved in a low relief, is his eagle – peacock. The analysis of the depicted figures and gestures, as well as of the object's diminutive scale (30×11×7 cm), and of the protruding element at the bottom of the statuette, seems to suggest that it formed a part of larger setting. Perhaps it once belonged to a domestic altarpiece and originally would have been covered with coloured powders and decorated with fresh flowers, that would have enlivened its form and prompted piety among the beholders. The original cultural context of the object is further informed by the two letters inscribed in the telugu script at the front of its base, suggesting that the statuette comes from Southern India.

How should we look at this object, which once served as the focal point of private devotions? For the long time, the religious artefacts have been treated as any other secular artwork, and incorporated into what Wallach and Duncan described as 'a permanent triumphal procession, testifying to Western supremacy and world domination' (Duncan, Wallach 2004, 52). However, the perception of the sacred objects seems to be slowly changing, as the important questions about the reappropriation are being raised and dealt with in the ongoing provenance research programmes.

What continues to be the source of the greatest uneasiness, in writing and exhibiting Eastern art in the Western context, is the situation when Western art historians or curators are deliberately ignoring or oversimplifying the inherent differences between East and West. To give one example, in 1985 Pramod Chandra curated an exhibition in National Gallery of Art in Washington DC, for which he requested a set of bronze statuary of the Chola period from a series of temples in Tamil Nadu. As pointed out by Tapati Guha-Thakurta, in reference to the exhibition, 'the

Photo 19

***Lâgan* plate**
author from Uzbekistan
1970–80s
MAP 9282

***Lâgan* plate**
author from Uzbekistan
1970–80s
MAP 9279

Vase
author from China
1st half of the 20th c.
MAP 3449

Incense burner
author from Kathmandu, Nepal
2nd half of the 20th c.
MAP 5553

Jug
author from China
2nd half of the 20th c.
MAP 16962

mode of reference to all these sculptures as 'idols', in both Indian and American journalistic parlance, showed a continuous conflation of their 'sacred' and 'artistic identities' (Guha-Thakurta 2008, 169). The scholars in the catalogue publication analyzed the works from India in terms of the provenance, whilst the accompanying guided tours would enable the viewers to learn only about the attributes and powers of divinities. Thus, the West tried to render the art of 'Other' more manageable, through the use of the Western art historical terminology in order to describe something of an inherently different identity. Vidya Dehejia asserted, that India's cyclical concept of time, 'perhaps contributed to an indifference towards historical documentation' (Dehejia 1997, 7). Why then should the curators strive for a singular mega-narrative in relation to the Indian art? To satisfy the Western audience? It is erroneous, but ubiquitous in the methodological approach of the Western art historians to assume that in order to put together a comprehensive exhibition of the Eastern art they have to introduce the categories of various schools, genres, as these terms are transposed from the Western context, which is based on the linear conception of time. Consequently, what we as visitors to the Polish National Museums experience is the presentation of art history within the exhibition that was devised to orchestrate our 'walking and looking in a systematic and productive alliance, albeit one that proved to be more conducive to the apprehension of the vast exhibition en masse than the appreciation of the individuated work of art' (Leahy 2008, 75).

Photo 20

The Eight Immortals
author from China
2nd half of the 19th c.
MAP 15993

Buddha Akṣobhya
author from Tibet
2nd half of the 19th c.
MAP 7464

Conclusions

Thus, the apparent inclusiveness of the history of art seems to be problematised by the canon, the language, and the history of collecting that generated and reinforced the distinction of the Western and non-Western art. By writing about selected, singular works, art historians often evaluate and discuss the culture as 'Other' and in general. Consequently, the inclusion of the non-Western world into a frame of the Western art history serves predominantly the purpose of making it more manageable, by classifying it, whilst using the Western canon and models. This is the major discrepancy and the source of unease. Contemporary artists working, for instance, in Asia should be able to accomplish success by expressing global values of humanism in different media and techniques. Can art history succeed in understanding the universal language of art? One of the avenues that allows to analyse artworks from a perspective that is culturally specific, is the investigation into the sensory impact of objects on the beholders. Traditionally, art history favoured sight and this ocularcentric perspective has conditioned our appreciation of artworks. However, we might learn a great deal about artefacts such as this clay incense burner (**Photo 19**) or the small handheld bell from Java (**Photo 18**) by trying to reconstruct their functions and impact on the sensorium. We can investigate a range of multisensory stimuli that informed the reception of paintings, that were not only to be looked at but also to be heard. The auditory effect of depictions on contemporary beholders can be reconstructed, for instance, by imagining the sound of the pouring nectar from a vessel or of the bell ringing in Buddha's right hand (**Photo 20**). As today, the historic viewers, never engaged with artefacts using just one, isolated sense.

The non-Western art should not be described using the tools and vocabulary devised specifically for art produced elsewhere. Consequently, we still have to wait for the invention of the new interpretative schemes and new ways of displaying art, which will render the distinction between the centre and periphery obsolete, and allow truly decentralised map of the art world.

The richness of the global world resides in the multitude of different visual cultures, linked to the variety of images characteristic for any given place, time and community, and though they typically do not develop in complete isolation, their identity is distinct and should be interpreted as such. Understanding of the interactions and exchanges between different visual traditions is the key to appreciating the richness of visual cultures around the world. During the last fifty years, art history has begun to look at works of art in relation to the society, in which they were created, and the present exhibition, which this catalogue accompanies, represents an important addition to this scholarly endeavour.

See

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See

Imperial explorers excitedly traversed unknown lands – vast spaces, wild nature, and breathtaking scenery. In the 19th century, their expeditions were discussed for months and thanks to the reach and availability of the press, everyone talked about them, unlike at the beginning of the colonial era. Travel journals were also popular and widely read. Everyone wanted to know what faraway lands where Western civilization was yet to arrive looked like. Amazing adventures of white explorers – of course, white men. Publications and exhibitions documenting their expeditions into the 'unknown' emphasized the unruliness of nature and the primordial character of animals and people (who for many, were not entirely human) encountered there (Pratt 2011, 81). That is why the first museum exhibitions, demonstrations or (the wildly popular at the time) dioramas (i.e., scenes with mannequins and animals in scenography imitating architecture or the natural environment) were full of objects that demonstrated the absence of 'developed civilization' (mainly simple tools, often combined with an exhibition of stuffed animal bodies), exoticism, 'primitivism' and the inhuman face of the conquered world. The white colonizers watched and saw what the colonial narratives allowed them to see; they learned not to see people and their values.

In this essay, I demonstrate how colonial narratives developed contempt for non-European cultures and their representatives. In the first part, I deal with the images of the wilderness, inhumanity and objectification of the conquered lands. In the second part, I focus on museum exhibitions that perpetuated the violence and exploitation in the fantasy created by the white conqueror, and finally, in the third part, I introduce you to the current exhibition at The Asia and Pacific Museum in Warsaw. The exhibition's design and selection of objects introduce a new way of thinking: treating the achievements of Asian and Pacific cultures with equality and respect. Most importantly, the exhibition provides an important lesson about leading a dialogue with other cultures and their heritage.

Fig. 5

***Nova totius Terrarum Orbis tabula* [In hemispheres on the stereographic projection]**
F. de Wit
1705 (?)
The British Library King's Topographical Collection, Maps K.Top.4.10.8 tab.end
By permission of the British Library

Colonial narratives

The American researcher of travel writing language, Mary Louise Pratt, in her book entitled *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* depicts the male adventure of the colonizers and points out that it was accompanied by the imperial power of armaments, administration, and objectifying perceptions (Pratt 2011, 46-48). Ethnographers managed knowledge in the same way as the administrators. In 19th-century England or France, readers lived through the adventures of great conquerors, believing firmly that somewhere in the antipodes, their great countrymen, for the first time ever, touched the no man's land. *Terra nullius** – empty property, a world without culture and human presence. But this no man's land, reconstructed in the essays by the historical writer Sven Lindqvist, *Terra Nullius and Exterminate All the Brutes*, was already inhabited. 'Imperial gaze' is a term describing colonial practices that meticulously wiped out the presence of Indigenous people and their cultures so that colonizers could continue to tell the story of the white colonizers and their power (Lindqvist 2016).

The relationships between Europeans and people from other continents have been quite complex and ranged from astonishment and fascination, to disgust and condemnation. Colonial discourse was dominated by thinking that recognizes representatives of other cultures as inferior and 'savage.' Therefore, for many whites, the 'children of Cain' carried their fathers' sin in the form of their dark skin – for the whites, blackness equalled sin (Loomba 2011).**

This image of savage, primitive, amusing or simply inferior men with a different skin colour was perpetuated in 19th-century travel and fiction writing. Even in the 20th century, 'Murzynek Bambo' [Bambo the black child] was still described by a diminutive and comic book hero; Tintin is a brave boy with a white dog, patronizing nice but childish black people. In colonial narratives 'Murzynek Bambo' is never autonomous – even when he grows up, he still needs a white man to explain the world to him, to show him how to produce culture. This is a formula that, according to the scholar of South Asian colonialism, Ania Loomba, justified objectifying others. Since Europeans are taught from an early age that only they possess culture, an ability to think and develop knowledge, they are able to stand on the ruins of a conquered world and not see what is under their shoes.

Fig. 6

Victoria & Albert Museum in Mumbai
(today Mumbai, India)
D.H. sykes
1872
British Library, Photo 2/2(3)
By permission of the British Library

The advent of racism was a multifaceted process related to both an aversion to otherness and a need for economic and political domination. That is why, for white explorers, the dark skin of Indigenous people was an unambiguous sign that they were not actually human and even if they considered them human, then these people were 'inferior', 'more stupid', and fundamentally different from the whites. Colonial narratives only confirmed the belief that these Others and Strangers are not 'like us.' They are not people, or at least, as Ania Loomba realizes, they are not really human. Therefore, these Others can be killed, enslaved, and exploited according to the logic of violence that characterized all colonial relations.*

If we wanted to find the reasons for the development of such relations between Europeans and the colonized peoples, the most important thing is the colonizers' attitude towards other people. Since the development of industry in Europe (first manufactures, then the first steam-based factories), Europeans had to ensure a steady supply of raw materials and markets for their commodities. Thus, the colonized were treated as cheap or slave labour, and the economic structure of their countries was subordinated to the economic needs of colonial empires. Racism was thus a convenient tool, allowing one to convince oneself that the colonized people were born to serve their 'masters', needed 'strong leadership', and were so lazy, inert and senseless that they were only fit to follow orders and be forced into hard physical labour. In this way, fulfilling the empire's aspirations to a fast economic development and profit justified slavery and ruthless physical, and economic exploitation of the occupied territories. Racism served to strengthen the conviction that the actions of colonizers were morally sound.

In his journey following the traces of colonized Australia, Lindqvist describes a remarkable scene. While travelling across the continent, he encountered signs on the ground – scattered leaves and twigs, small stones and soil arranged in barely discernible ornaments. All that was First Nation's art that – according to the author – resembled a fleeting performance that must be seen 'here and now, before it is blown away by the wind and disappears before our eyes.** The European conquerors of Australia considered its first inhabitants to be animals. Lindqvist suspects that they may have trampled over this performative work of art more than once, ignoring the Indigenous people who created it. The white colonizer's imperial gaze did not permit

* *Terra nullius* means no man's land. In colonial times, this meant a space that could be occupied by European empires. Often, people talking about *terra nullius* did not take into account the existing inhabitants of such areas and deliberately ignored it. As Lindqvist demonstrates, for many Europeans, Australia was just such a 'no-man's land.'

** As early as in the Middle Ages, Europeans had a problem with categorizing people of a different skin colour, inhabitants of other lands. When the era of expeditions to the 'new lands' began, many missionaries and explorers began to refer to people with dark skin in this way. The majority of 'Cain's children' were Africans, as Ania Loomba writes about in her book *Colonialism/Postcolonialism*. Often, this term was a convenient strategy for building racist narratives.

* Of course, there have also been abolitionist movements and opposition to the use of slave labour, however, in this essay I am focusing on highlighting the origins of systemic violence and inequality which was very strong and took root in the mentality of Europeans for a long time to come.

** Understood as 'performance, performance art is a term that defines ephemeral actions performed by artists in the presence of viewers. Performance frequently involves paratheatrical activities, taking the form of events with a planned structure and time course. [...] used since the 1950s as a means of artistic expression.' (Kubalska-Sulkiewicz, Bielska-Łach, Manteuffel-Szarota 2004, 307).

noting such nuances; it was numb to other forms of art and cultural patterns. In the era of the empire, the white man did not know the kind of performance art we know today, so he sought works of art on canvas, carved in stone or wood, completely unaware that when it came to art, his views on performativity were rather regressive. In the eyes of the colonizers, the Other – who lacked European expression and pedigree, whose culture was based on dissimilar paradigms and created from different materials – was at worst a mere savage, and at best amusing or childlike. In order to exploit and destroy the Others, their humanity was rejected. The white colonizer did not look too closely and ask too many questions – colonial rule was more important.

Even today, it is difficult for us to see and understand Otherness. Somehow, we still inherit the cultural narrative convincing us that proper culture and civilization is European, 'Western.' After all, Paris was considered the capital of the world and anything beyond the 'old', 'good' European continent was savage and inconsistent with the established European cultural model. M.L. Pratt describes the patterns of aggression of this worldview in her analysis of the letters, diaries, and travelogues of 19th-century colonizers. The white man, even if he looked at the architecture or art of people from African or American cultures, did not really see them. Descriptions of Tanzanian lakes or the Nile always depicted wild, dangerous trails where the brave, white explorer faced an all-encompassing bareness – only he was the only human in the wild, the only representative of culture. The naked bodies of his guides, their 'animal-like' speech and 'lack' of culture disgusted him (Pratt 2011, 73-88).

This pattern described by Pratt meant one thing: when looking at a person, one may not see them. Reluctance, racism, prejudices shape our perception and create an image of a primitive presence, barely resembling a human being. As a consequence of this degradation, 'human zoos' have emerged.* There, during Sunday visits, elegant white gentlemen and their ladies would watch caged Pygmies or inhabitants of Indonesia and the Philippines in order to find out what the 'savages' looked like.

Ania Loomba describes a similar phenomenon, pointing to the fact that colonialism needed 'working animals', to perform all tasks that were either too laborious or degrading for the white man. Therefore, the Other man was categorized as non-human. Once another human being is deemed to be an 'animal', objectification and often a very difficult to reverse process of devaluation begin. Contemporary scholars of history and intercultural relations, such as Charles Patterson, Edward Said, and Robert J.C. Young, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak or Leela Gandhi show that colonialism was a strategy in which people were considered as animals, they were objectified and reduced to slaves (the fact that humans are indeed animals was superseded in European metaphysical narratives). One does not talk to objects, nor see their thinking or emotions as valid; one does not discuss art and culture with slaves.

* The idea of creating human zoos probably began on 25 February 1835 with 'exhibiting' African-American Joice Heth as a 'specimen' to watch and learn about the various 'bizarre' elements of the anatomy of human 'subspecies.' The show proved to be a success, and groups of people from Africa were soon brought to both the US and Europe, where they were caged and displayed as animals in a zoo. In this way, white people could learn what the 'savages' look like. At the turn of the 20th century, these shows enjoyed great popularity. Most of the people 'exhibited' were slaves or, like Saartije Baartman, were deceived and enslaved following false promises of work in Europe.

Museum – colonial histories

Individual sentiments, as well as shaping individual beliefs, have the power to change culture and its institutions, but need systemic action. Education, law and administration are elements of the systemic reworking of cultural patterns that influence individual thinking. By influencing each other, institutions, and individuals form a system of culture that can foster a mechanism of imperial enslavement, sometimes lasting centuries, mentally extending to our times. In other words, the imperial official needed his work to be meaningful, and the citizens of the empire wanted to believe that he was living in a just and ethical system. Therefore, colonialism had to be based on narratives reassuring people that no man's land lies bare and awaits the arrival of civilization, just as the 'savage' awaits a good 'master' and his vocation is to be a slave.

The first ethnographic museums were a showcase of imperial power and constituted an institutional union of the work of empire officials, ethnographers and colonial explorers with the average European citizen, aiming to instil in them the racist views of a 'white master' in them. The acquisition of land and slave labour was associated with the appropriation of all material goods. It was necessary to explain to the Europeans why they are so powerful and why they can rule over other nations. The power of the empire was visible in museums, and in a way, it was also shaped by the museum as a certain concept of cultural stability.

Galleries full of simple objects such as spears, machetes and exotic, even exciting masks assured enlightened Europeans that there was really no culture or art in the wider world. A testimony of 'unruliness', traces of 'primitivism,' 'non-cultures' frozen in time, hence notions such as 'primitive art' or 'primeval culture.' This freezing in time, the 'primordiality of savages' meant one thing: taking away the historical context of colonized cultures away and, consequently, making them non-cultures, empty ground. The British anthropologist of heritage, Jack Goody, has vividly called this process 'stealing history' – colonial strategies of erasing humanity and taking culture away from the colonized and the enslaved (Goody 2010, 11-19). Thus, the imperial museum became an important propaganda tool. Great buildings of European architectural glory (for example, the British Museum and its branches, the Habsburg museum complex in Vienna), a testimony to the development of civilization and the supremacy of resources, became a space for the exhibition and presentation of what was, in colonial narratives, unfamiliar to Europeans: unruliness, emotions, non-culture, non-humanity, plainness and primitivism.

Animals, plants, spears, masks, totems, wooden sculptures, stone statues accumulated in subsequent expeditions beginning in the 17th century, most often acquired without consideration for the intentions of their authors, their importance, or symbolism within a specific community. Masks, whether they served ritual or religious purposes or play, fell into one category of exoticism, as did sculptures and totems. Sacred places and objects were stripped of their sacred status when transferred into the space of the museum and became a trace of a non-European world that can be occupied

and subordinated. Objects of worship turned into mere exhibits (**Photo 21**). When James Clifford, an American anthropologist, begins to look at museums through a postcolonial lens, he sees, above all, harm. Here, in collections around the world, we can find evidence of the extermination and diminishing the importance of the legacy of various peoples (Clifford 2000, 23-24). Who were the artists, who were their patrons? It was not Michelangelo, the Sistine Chapel, or Sixtus IV or Julius II, for the museums to note their names carefully.

The expositions at colonial museums are full of anonymity and lack of information about the authors of the artefacts. There are many reasons for this: on the one hand, colonial collectors often did not ask about the authors, did not write down their names. On the other hand, institutions often lacked employees competent enough to carry out appropriate research – to read and understand inscriptions and signatures, or even know where such information about the author was located. After all, the answer to the question of authorship – that is, whom we consider to be the actual author of a given artwork – varies and depends on time and place. Many people participated in the process of creating miniatures in Persia – a miniaturist painter, a calligrapher, and a patron-commissioner. The latter two were considered the authors, which is why the painter did not sign his work, making him anonymous in the eyes of the viewer and the museum. It is true, however, that until the middle of the 20th century research on the provenance of non-European works in imperial museums was not conducted on a large scale. The main focus was on European works. The names of the artist, client, or patron, owner of the work of art, as well as stories and anecdotes related to the artwork were recorded. In the eyes of the colonizer, 'savage' artists were insignificant (Malraux 1985). The works by Khmer, Chin, Asamat or Naga artists were not properly inventoried, and the catalogue did not include the names of patrons, artists' muses or information about how they were created. The ethnographer removed what they wanted and placed whatever he considered important in the museum, with a commentary outlining their own narrative and interpretation of the colonized world. According to James Clifford, imperial museums perpetuated colonial loathing towards others, taught Europeans that other cultures are naïve and meaningless and – treated as decorative objects of aesthetics – can at best constitute an exotic inspiration for the great artists of imperial culture (Clifford 1997, 197-204).

In the 1980s, the French writer André Malreaux wrote that a girl from a sculpture from the Dogon Country (now part of Mali) encounters a Picasso's girl; he drew attention to the change in European mentality following the postcolonial teachings of Aimé Césaire, Frantz Fanon or Albert Memmi.* They pointed out that any dialogue must be preceded by

* I refer to Pablo Picasso taking inspiration from the MOMA exhibition 'Primitivism in the 20th century: affinity of the tribal and the modern.' According to Malraux, this is a way to tame otherness and understand another culture outside the context of colonial objectification. For Malraux, the artist overcomes the tension of the colonial 'civilized-savage' narrative and breathes new life to both the works of art and the culture of the colonized. The Western artist does not objectify, but enters into dialogue, and this for Malraux is the most important thing.

Photo 21
Sacral objects

Totem
author from the Chin State, Myanmar
2nd half of the 20th c.
MAP 19617

Goddess Tārā
author from Nepal
2nd half of the 20th c.
MAP 10084

Altar panel
author from Myanmar
2nd half of the 19th c.
MAP 19792

Korwar *kaku*
author from Ronsumbre family, Biak Island, Papua, Indonesia
1990s
MAP 21633

a change in perspective. In order for two works, two artists, to meet, we must perceive a human being as a human, restore their agency. According to Malreaux, such a process is possible thanks to artists breaking down barriers and their interpretation of the world and reality. Interestingly, this process of change began in the gallery, when Picasso was able to see works of art by African masters (Malreaux 1985). They were anonymous to him, but he began perceiving this art differently. The transformation, however, occurs gradually.

As Clifford reminds us, breaking down colonial narratives is not easy. The European colonial masters are reluctant to admit stealing and control. In today's perspective, Picasso's actions also constituted appropriation – he took inspiration from material forms without reflection or any concern for the meaning and context of their creation (Clifford 2000, 206-209). Still, artists' voices and what goes on in museums remains important.

The very idea of the museum is multidimensional. I believe that in order to understand this desire to own the past, to collect and catalogue works of art and everyday objects, and to understand the importance of such actions, one must look at the historical sources of this phenomenon. This will undoubtedly be the space of the temple of the muses. In *Phaedrus*, Plato described the space of the former temple of the muses, a holy place full of tame and orderly nature and statues, traces of intentional human activity (Plato 2002, 25-26, 96). It was a place where young Phaedrus, together with his teacher Socrates, could converse about soul, man, and values. The library-museum is the first example of a desire to collect for posterity and study objects in order to preserve ideas, inspiration, and history. What was later divided between a number of institutions, the Greeks and Romans combined into one, so the Library of Alexandria was not just a collection of artworks, but also a lecture hall, museum, research and academic institution. The library in Ephesus was similar, and additionally housed the tombstones of noteworthy citizens.

The first modern museums were established in the Napoleonic era, when empires demanded symbols of their power. Likewise, the British Empire triumphed over the rest of the world with great projects such as the British Museum, or the symbol of the colonial times – the Congo Museum in Brussels.

Museums are historical, political and ideological projects rather than real representations of the world. According to Malreaux, what goes on within a museum is predominantly a kind of playful interaction with reality, bringing out what is important, building meanings that shape social awareness. That is why Clifford became a great critic of museum exhibitions and their content and fought colonial narratives fossilized within museums and academic discourse, even when empires disappeared from the map of the world, in the last quarter of the 20th century (Clifford 2000, 205-231).

Exhibition – today

Welcome to The Asia and Pacific Museum exhibition. As we enter the first section, the Cabinet of Antiquities, we can bow our heads to the goddess Quan Âm (**Photo 22**) The author is unknown, Clifford's accusations remain valid – the person who took the lacquer-covered sculpture did not care, did not inquire about its author and their name. According to Clifford, this is a clear manifestation of our colonial guilt, a stain on the white conscience of people who have enjoyed the world's heritage, regardless of what they are responsible for.* To this day, our museums carry this poignant emptiness, the apparent lack of names. 'Author unknown' – a sign reminding us of the sin of omission, the debt incurred and the new duty of postcolonial exploration.

Standing before the goddess Quan Âm, however, we are facing dignity and mystery. The design of the exhibition shows this new approach of awakened sensitivity. Sculptures cease to be objects of conquered civilization; they begin to herald stories of their cultures and times. Hand-painted in the 17th century. Someone's hands slowly completed every detail, paying tribute to the great being, praying and sensing the power of her divinity. The current exhibition of The Asia and Pacific Museum in Warsaw follows the principle of mindfulness, the sculptures have been displayed and described in a way that allows us to reflect the logic of the cultural message.

It took us a century-long discussion, a clash between colonial and postcolonial narratives, to start to learn how to look and see. This learning takes place in the subsequent museum spaces we go through in search of lost meanings and stolen subjectivity that – once recovered – illuminate the halls of the Museum and this exhibition.

Thanks to the figure and iconography of the goddess Quan Âm, we can learn about Buddhism's journey through subsequent regions of India, China, Korea, and Vietnam. When Buddhism reaches China, we begin to contemplate one of its most beautiful manifestations, the Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara, the Lord who looks at the world with compassion, embodies it, and guides people on their path towards Enlightenment. Subsequent images of Avalokiteśvara present him as a female. In China, it is the goddess Guanyin – personifying compassion, mercy and fertility, and in Vietnamese Buddhism – the goddess Quan Âm.

There is a reason why the goddess of mercy, understanding, and compassion welcomes us to the Cabinet of Antiquities. The gods give us

* Of course, I refer to our responsibility for the plunder of objects of important cultural importance and about epistemological responsibility, related to whether our cognition is adequate to the culture in question. As Clifford demonstrates, colonial ethnography did not ask such questions.

Photo 22

Goddess Quan Âm
author from Vietnam
18–19th c.
MAP 14787

compassion and understanding, time for reconciliation, compassion, positive emotions and understanding. Together with the sculpture of goddess Quan Âm, the path to a deeper understanding of different cultures and ourselves opens before us. The Cabinet of Antiquities speaks to us in a different language, not just in terms of exhibitions, but also culture.

According to one of the most influential anthropologists of the 20th century, Clifford Geertz, understanding another culture leads us to deepen our awareness of who we are and the world around us (Geertz 2003). To understand the Other is to understand yourself better.*

The Cabinet of Antiquities gives us a chance to do this, introduces us to cultural meanings and symbols, and through reconciliation, it leads us towards knowledge. This is where the (forgotten in the colonial narrative) paths of the 'West' and 'East' meet. In ancient Europe, cognition was associated with ethics; according to Parmenides, Virtue of Justice opened the door to philosophical cognition. The entrances to the Library of Celsus in Ephesus from the 2nd century were guarded by four statues-metaphors: Wisdom, Knowledge, Intelligence, and Excellence.

Its designers realized that there is no knowledge without virtues and that these four goddesses working together can give us that, which is most important. The same gesture of virtue and knowledge opens our encounter and dialogue with Asian cultures offered by the exhibition at The Asia and Pacific Museum. Rejecting colonial objectification and racial prejudice requires a deep ethical awareness. The goddess of compassion responds to these efforts and shows us a path that we can take if only we open ourselves to diversity and other cultures.

The modern museum is the heir to the revolution of the 1970s and 1980s – a revolution of returning identity to the previously excluded Others, a revolution led by Clifford teaching us that the Other has a name, a history that cannot be erased, and that any practice of 'stealing history' is detrimental to both the colonized and the colonizers. Geertz also pointed out that getting to know another culture allows us to get to know our own.

Human consciousness needs this extension, a different perspective, because then the everyday and the 'normal' reveal different meanings. Without learning about the Other, we ourselves remain deprived. The presence of the Other teaches us, reveals the basic values, meanings, and the important elements of our culture (Geertz 2003, 100-101).

* In this context, the Other means a certain stigma. For Europeans, the colonized subjects were considered as Others, degraded and dehumanized for a long time. Seeing other people as the Other, and therefore 'not ours', is a deprecating interpretation of the colonial narrative. That is why Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak wrote about the Others as silent subjects, and the Other in this context expresses the tension between the identical, the European and the Other, a slave, a being without rights and without a name (taken by the colonizers themselves).

Contemplating Buddha (8th century, Java), Goddess Dūrga slaying the demon Mahiṣa (8th century, Java), Lord Ganesha (18th century, Tamil Nadu), Woman with a chest (13th century, China) – the Cabinet of Antiquities (**Photo 4, 23**) guides us through successive depictions of cultural meanings. Clifford taught us a completely different perspective; giving justice to culture, its objects and categories. The colonial view allowed museums to classify freely, ultimately naming reality at the discretion of the white colonizers. Clifford proposed to reverse the process by placing things in their accurate context. And so the visitors see Ganeśa as a god, the god of beginnings and the remover of obstacles in every sphere of life. To start something in the right way, and to ensure the success of our venture, it is good to sing a mantra asking for the support of the god Ganeśa. The contemporary museum visitor, entering the Cabinet of Antiquities, enters the zone of ancient wisdom and meanings hidden in values of non-European cultures. And right at the start, none other than Ganeśa is waiting for them. The very way of displaying the works has changed completely. The narratives of colonial appropriation have been replaced with a new look at non-European cultures: with respect and an attempt at dialogue. The exhibition at The Asia and Pacific Museum fulfils Clifford's demands for a new kind of museum exhibition.

The new, mindful museum order and the new composition of the exhibition space are a testament to the kind of dialogue that has today become the norm. This is precisely what Clifford demanded – we should stop pretending that we rule and that there is nothing to be done about this reign. For Clifford, the fact that we have lost and destroyed so many records of other cultures does not exempt us from being responsible for them. One can always try to extract meaning from sculptures and objects locked in museums, but it really depends on us to what extent we are able to take our thinking beyond our own cultural canons and cognitive comfort zone.

▶ Cabinet of Antiquities, Gallery, Art Cabinet, Cabinet of Natural History, Treasury, and Armoury are not just subsequent stages of exploring, travelling through other cultures on the way to reaching the essence of diversity, the power of what is different, the wealth of what is not ours. These are also stages of developing our sensitivity. Getting to know other cultures, their artworks, customs and everyday life is the foundation for openness. We will not understand the world until we become sensitive to the diversity of life around us. Most importantly, we must rid ourselves of the anthropocentric and Western-centric view on everything that surrounds us. An attempt to go beyond ourselves, beyond what is 'our' or 'mine' is also an attempt to see that within diversity, there are points of contact where otherness meets identity. The most interesting clues and traces emerge when it turns out that differences can lead to a shared experience of the world.

Photo 23

Lord Ganeśa
author from Tamil Nadu, India
18th c.
MAP 4425

Woman with a Chest – Longnü (?)
author from China
13th c. (?)
MAP 4382

The scrolls of calligraphy produced in the 20th century demonstrate the powerful influence of tradition or playing with traditions that are equally important in European, as in Korean or Japanese culture (**Photo 6**). The present is not detached from the past; regardless of the culture, the past lives on within small gestures of everyday life and art.

The objects of everyday use, the stories they tell us about other cultures and about ourselves, force us to step back from the belief in a radical, untranslatable Otherness (Fig. 27**). The contemporary museum – which came into being after Clifford and postcolonial revolutions – makes us realize that the world is not composed of a series of separate monads, but a culturally diverse entity that – thanks to borrowing from others and working through existing norms – continues to struggle, grow and interconnect in shared inspirations and similar problems.**

According to Geertz, we must take responsibility for the cultures in which we participate (Geertz 2003, 110-113). Cultural diversity offers more, but also demands more of us. We must learn to see and understand the surrounding dissimilarities; we must learn to respect each other. Clifford regarded Geertz as his teacher and followed his postulate of cultural responsibility understood as the basis of human relationships. Therefore, for Clifford, the museum has to become a space for meeting Others, teaching us how to listen and see another person, their values, and culture, and thus teach us about ourselves. Respecting diversity and cultural specificity means learning what it offers us in its otherness, but also seeing what is similar to our culture and what binds us together as people. The museum is therefore not only a space for narratives and reflections, but also a meeting space. Without the latter, it may again become a space of colonial appropriation and usurpation. That is why we need the museum to provide space for reflection and contemplation.

In a museum, just as in reality, everything can bear traces of cultures and their meanings; therefore it can become a space for exchange of meanings between cultures. The dialogue between different people and cultural meanings begins when we enter the exhibition and follow its narrative path.

The British-Ghanian cultural theorist Kwame Anthony Appiah often emphasized that despite all these differences, our steps will meet on one plane and, despite the differences in cultural conditioning, one point of convergence remains: our emotions. Everyone loves, hates, worries and enjoys, each of us, regardless of the cultural wealth we carry throughout life, has needs and emotional life that are very similar to other people (Appiah 1996, 99-105). Everyday life can be just as tiring for everyone. Therefore, according to Appiah, cosmopolitanism is born naturally, once we meet the Other and recognize the many shades and meanings of the same, shared human loneliness, weariness, the same monotony of everyday life. Each of us carries this, and everyone has unique dreams. Because of this, Appiah was not discouraged by ever-recurring racism and prejudices (of course, we must fight them, they should not define human relations).

According to Appiah, learning about others is a great lesson in sensitivity and openness to their subjectivity; it is also the best response to racism, prejudice and a neocolonial view of the world. Once again, we can repeat after Clifford that the museum space affords us this most important opportunity: getting to know and meet each other.

As is clear from Clifford's writing on anthropological research and cultural reconciliation, this is the task of modern museums – giving people back their voice and narratives and teaching them to respect others and their culture. In my opinion, this is also the task of changing our view of the world so that 'European' does not mean 'the one and only' or 'most important', where what is non-European is no longer 'simple' or 'primitive.' Racist narratives end with the acknowledgment that we are dealing with unique cultures, meanings, art, and everyday life. A contemporary museum has the task of deepening this view of the Other as a valuable human being, a person who MUST be seen. No more exploitation, no more negation or flippancy in interpreting other cultures. Culture is no longer understood in the singular with a tinge of total, white domination. The world is full of different cultures, colours and many responsibilities. The museum can be a space for all this diversity, an attempt to talk about the previously erased worlds and peoples; a space to meet and talk to others; a space for learning how to see. The museum says: SEE.

S E E

Photo 24

Glass
author from Herat, Afghanistan
2nd half of the 20th c.
MAP 17224

Glass
author from Herat, Afghanistan
2nd half of the 20th c.
MAP 8886

Bottle
author from Herat, Afghanistan
2nd half of the 20th c.
MAP 8877

Glass
author from Herat, Afghanistan
2nd half of the 20th c.
MAP 19308

Glass
author from Herat, Afghanistan
2nd half of the 20th c.
MAP 8882

Museum? What for?

Barbara Banasik

We have seen the exhibition, read the catalogue, but are we any closer to answering the questions asked in the title?

Museum?

The first part of the exhibition took us through a series of thematic rooms (Antiquities, Art, Natural History, Gallery, Treasury, Armoury), the predecessors of the contemporary institutions. The exhibition is divided into sections seen in many of the world's oldest museums, in particular the encyclopaedic ones described by Monika Stobiecka (see page 34), where you can find armouries, treasuries, prints and drawings collections as well as numismatic collections. Examples include the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna and the National Museum in Warsaw.

After World War II and especially in the 21st century we saw the rise of thematic museums devoted to a selected phenomenon or fragment of cultural heritage. Combined with the end of the colonial era and the development of critical postcolonial studies, this lead to the establishment in Europe and North America of many facilities that focused exclusively on Asia or other continents, as well as "museums of the cultures of the world", which, naturally, concentrated on the world beyond Europe.

When trying to define a museum we can take advantage of the interpretation provided by the International Council of Museums (ICOM):

"A museum is a non-profit, permanent institution in the service of society and its development, open to the public, which acquires, conserves, researches, communicates and exhibits the tangible and intangible heritage of humanity and its environment for the purposes of education, study and enjoyment"*.

The above definition, while still valid, is now under revision following a shift in the perception of the museum and its role over the last fifty years. Formerly, it was believed that the institution was a shrine of the arts, a place for reflection and contemplation. That is why, as we have explained in more detail on page 30, a new definition is being drafted. Let us have another look at it:

"Museums are democratising, inclusive and polyphonic spaces for critical dialogue about the pasts and the futures. Acknowledging and addressing the conflicts and challenges of the present, they hold artefacts and specimens in trust for society, safeguard diverse memories for future generations and guarantee equal rights and equal access to heritage for all people.Museums are not for profit. They are participatory and transparent, and work in active partnership with and for diverse communities to collect, preserve,

* ICOM Code of Ethics for Museums, glossary entry for "museum", https://icom.museum/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/ICOM-code-En-web.pdf (accessed: 21 September 2021).

research, interpret, exhibit, and enhance understandings of the world, aiming to contribute to human dignity and social justice, global equality and planetary wellbeing"*.

Museum professionals looking for answers to the ethical questions addressed in the second – problem-based – part of the exhibition (if and how to display artefacts made of endangered species, sacred objects or objects hailing from authoritarian states) can avail themselves of diverse documents called codes of ethics. One of them is the ICOM Code of Ethics for Museums.** Yet, the document, adopted in 1986, provides only general recommendations and requires a thorough revision, which is planned for 2022.

So, what is the museum or what can it be?

* https://icom.museum/en/news/icom-announces-the-alternative-museum-definition-that-will-be--subject-to-a-vote/ (accessed: 29 September 2021).

** Ibid.

The museum as a space for critical dialogue

In her essay Monika Stobiecka notes that museums display objects as "artworks" and points out that the decolonisation of exhibitions is also about reinstating contexts and meanings. If you look at the way artefacts from Asia and the Pacific region are showcased, you will notice that the problem is even more complex. Museums and historiography have classified these pieces as "aesthetic objects", ones that you look at or consider as illustrations for literary motifs (see a report from a 1833 exhibition of Indian sculpture in Vienna, page 13). The history of art, however, depreciated them as folk art belonging to the domain of ethnographic research (see Zuzanna Sarnecka's essay, page 53). What we are seeing here is double layer depreciation and triple layer colonisation that involves physical appropriation, stripping of status and context, and according of a new status that is considered as valuable by European standards.

Apart from being called folk art, non-European artefacts are also often classified as "ethnography" (which puts them on a par with everyday objects). According to the guidelines released by the Polish Chief Statistical Office, museum pieces must be assigned to categories such as: art, archeology, ethnography, military memorabilia, etc. Non-European artefacts are most usually classified as "ethnography", regardless of their form and meaning, whether they are bronze statues or bows and arrows.

What are the equalisation strategies that museums could implement then?

Discourse

Switching to the discourse used to talk about European objects, namely the discourse of art history. Alternatively, we could introduce a completely new kind of discourse to describe the world: one that would be the same for everyone (Zuzanna Sarnecka describes one of the options on the table, page 53).

No more aesthetization

Putting an end to the aestheticization of artefacts and showcasing them as nothing more than beautiful objects (as described by Monika Stobiecka, page 37). Instead, museums could show and display meaning. Musical instruments can serve as a good example here. Their essence is the sound they made and the melodies they were used to play: this is the most important cultural heritage they carry. Sound overrides vision in this case. Consequently, these objects' conservation should focus on the preservation of their musical functions and exhibition practices should follow suit. The same is true for theatre and other performing arts.

A living museum

Living museums where artefacts can be seen not only in glass display cabinets but in their original context.

This concept is not foreign to European museology: indeed, it is implemented by all residencies turned into museums, such as the Royal Castle in Warsaw, which recreates the historical decor, layout and functionality of the spaces. Visitors see historical paintings in the setting for which they were commissioned and created. The idea is not, however, to set up "exotic theme parks" or historical reconstructions, but to provide the relevant context: photographs, films, multimedia, books and drawings. Let the artefact be just a pretext, a lead, an element of the narrative. It is important for representatives of the original cultures to be engaged in the process: they should be consulted, involved in the preparation of the programme and events, and co-narrate the story that is being told about the world.

Other perspectives, broader horizons.

This task is very specialist: through the exhibitions they mount, museums challenge Eurocentrism and the belief in the universality of certain phenomena and concepts, for instance seeing the world in terms of the sacred and profane divide, the role and definition of art.

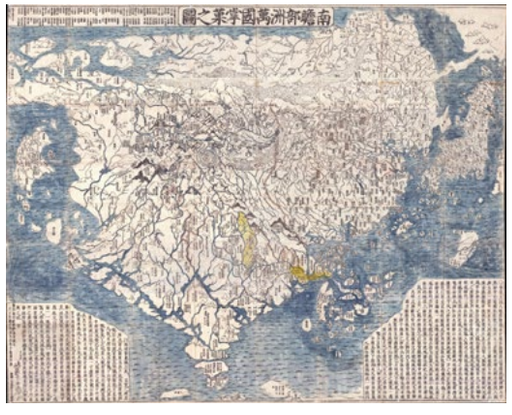


Fig. 7

Nansenbushu Bankoku Shoka No Zu (Outline Map of All Countries of the Universe)

Rokashi Hotan
woodcut
1710

This map represents the whole world according to Buddhist cosmogony together with numerous descriptions of monks' peregrinations.

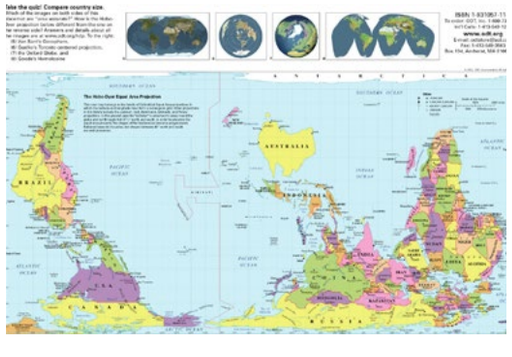


Fig. 8

World map in Hobo-Dyer projection South upwards

Mick Dyer (ODT, Inc.)
2007
Cornell University –
PJ Mode Collection of
Persuasive Cartography

What for?

Visitors entering the exhibition are welcomed by an anecdote from Mahatma Gandhi's last visit to the United Kingdom. Asked by a British journalist what he thought about the Western civilisation, he said without a moment's hesitation: "I think it would be a good idea!" (Vinay 2009, 281; 309).* The reply is a reflection of Gandhi's critical attitude towards the West. It should also inspire us to reflect on our own history and approach towards the world. There is a lot here realise: our Eurocentrism – when we believe that the western civilisation is the best of all (or perhaps that it is the only one there is); our localised thinking – when we base our judgements on our own heritage and we compare other ones with it; our insignificancy – when we realise that Europe takes up a very small fraction of the world while its history and heritage are just a tiny speck the history of the planet; and our ignorance – when we comprehend that Asian civilisations had existed thousands of years before the western one came into being and were much more powerful than the European culture. Gandhi did not depreciate European heritage, but pointed out to the fact that in a long historical perspective Britain, which dates a few hundred years back, is a much younger sister of India, which has (in principle) maintained its cultural continuity for a few thousand of years.

And so the anecdote's role is to encourage visitors to shift their perspective and look at Europe as "the rest of the world", a culture that emerged at the periphery and has been writing its history for a short period of time. Even Christianity – which seems to many the foundation of the western civilisation – was introduced and spread in India almost a thousand years before it did in the Polish lands. Thomas the Apostle arrived at the shores of present-day Kerala and spread the new faith across south India in the year 52, while "The Baptism of Poland" took place in 966. When Europeans began their colonial conquest of India in the 15th century they destroyed local churches, holy books and prayers as heresies and forced local residents to convert to "genuine" Christianity.

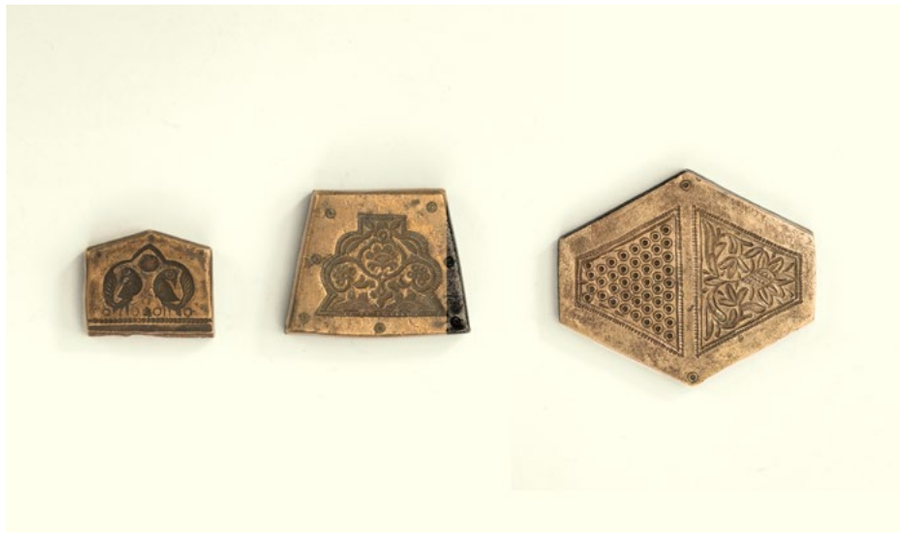
* Two versions of this anecdote are known, the other being cited in Gandhi 2008, 28, among others.

Museums shape our understanding of the world

Modern museology has created a "lack". By leaving out non-European artefacts from their display cabinets and expositions, they conjured up a vision of the world according to which no valuable art and heritage hails from beyond Europe. The lack and exclusion brought about the awkwardly and artificial iconography of orientalism (you can read more about this phenomenon on page 18), the representation of fictionalised, non-existent, worlds. What is wrong about that? It gave rise to stereotypes, prejudice and the false belief in Europe's cultural exceptionalism. Looking at modern exhibition practices, it is plain to see that our perception of the world is derivative – based on what we are told by the institutions we come into contact with: museums as well as research institutions, universities and cultural products such as literature and film.

It is important that we understand that what we learn about the world at the museum is double or even triple mediated. First, collectors filtered the reality around them with their eyes and selected certain objects for their collections. Then, curators enter into this complex web of choices to make their own in the course of constructing and reconstructing their vision of the world and their understanding of its processes. In their work they make use of scientific literature, which provides more analyses of the phenomena in question, made by researchers who – whether they want it or not – draw on their own experience, cultural models and understanding of the world.

All in all, when viewing a museum show we actually view a construct of the curator's sensitivity. We should, therefore, abandon the ambition to present the world "as it is", reject the illusion of objectivity, and remember that when in a museum, we are shown somebody's interpretation of reality.



Museums verify our vision of the world

This brings us to another question: What is more important, science or culture? Is it justified to keep artefacts purloined a few hundred years ago for research purposes? The Louvre displays a korwar (a sculpture personifying a dead individual) with a human skull (which makes it an "active" sculpture incorporating a predecessor), the British Museum showcases Egyptian mummies – the examples are countless. The investigation of the objects broadens our knowledge about the world: we know what they were made of, what chemical substances were used in the process, and what was the procedure of preparing the body. This knowledge, however, concerns the material aspect of funeral rites. What about their spiritual side – the meaning they had for a given community? Is this aspect of reality not worth preserving? If culture is equally important to us, should we not leave the dead at their final resting place? This concerns many other pieces associated with different spheres of human life. The question also could be asked in the context of medieval art galleries in Polish museums. The National Museum in Warsaw displays altars from Wrocław, Pruszcz Gdański and Grudziądz. Does the *Pietà* of Lubiąż belong in a museum or a church?

Photo 25

Jewellery stamp

author from Kabul, Afghanistan
1st half of the 20th c.

MAP 3078, MAP 3101, MAP 3207

These considerations are useful in understanding cultural appropriation, which means ripping objects or practices out of their original context and using them freely without any concern for the source culture. The practice often affects religious objects, which are frequently used as a fashion accessory (such as the pendant with Hindu god Lord Ganeśa worn by the pop singer Rihanna), or traditional local costumes (consider the popularity of the Hawaiian traditional outfit as a fancy dress costume). This does not mean we cannot use the heritage of cultures other than our own. We must, however, do it with care and respect for them, having checked the context and meaning of the elements that inspire you. In the Interaction Room and on the exhibition's website you may see maps that illustrate the migration of artistic motifs. One example is the "Chinese-style clouds" seen in Persian, Indian, Japanese and European painting. This manner of depicting clouds was so popular in Chinese art that it spread to other parts of the world.

The museum, as Joanna Hańderek rightly notes (see page 85), is a meeting and learning space; a place where you can get an understating of cultures, motivations, lifestyles and values different to yours; a setting where you can broaden your horizons and perhaps check your beliefs.

Photo 26

***Porhalaan* calendar**
author from the Batak group, Sumatra, Indonesia
2nd half of the 20th c.
MAP 17519

Brush tumbler
author from China
2nd half of the 19th c.
MAP 6545

Genre scene set in a garden
author from Canton, China
19thc.
MAP 21148

Shell with metal fittings
author from Tibet
1st half of the 20th c.
MAP 15600

Museums remind us of what we used to be, what the world we live was once like, and what the communities we are descended from

From the late Middle Ages onwards, a concept called Sarmatism had been gaining popularity in the Polish territories, culminating in the 17th century (**Fig. 9, 10, 13, 14**). According to it, the members of the Polish nobility were descendants of Iranian Sarmatians who conquered Polish lands in antiquity and turned the locals into slaves. The ideology had an enormous influence on fashion: the żupans, kontuszes, kontusz belts (also known as Slutsk sashes after their place of production) and baggy trousers (sirwal) worn by men at the time bore a strong resemblance to Persian and Mughal (from India) costumes. During the period we also adopted around 180 Turkish, 160 Arab and 60 Tatar words into the Polish language (Tazbir 1974, 45–49).

All Polish national museums as well as other exhibitions exploring the art and culture since the 16th century include Sarmatian portraits and outfits. They are an excellent example of a robust cultural exchange going on between Poland and Asia (in the realm of fashion as well as other fields), an exchange that we often forget about, thinking that international influences are the domain of the globalised world of today. Wouldn't it be much more interesting if Persian and Indian miniatures (**Fig. 11, 12**) were hung alongside the Sarmatian portraits, providing us with a broader context and pointing to the origins of Polish traditions?

The new museum definition put forward by the ICOM is based on a vision similar to the one described in this catalogue. Because what we are talking here is not a museum definition as such but the institution's role in the world of today, its social significance and the way it influences general views and beliefs. **And what if you were asked the question? What for?**

Fig. 9 (left)

Kontusz sash/belt

author from Poland or Morawy, Czechia
silk, metal threads brocading, au lance technique
2nd half of the 19th c.
National Museum in Warsaw

SZT 724 MNW

Fig. 10 (right)

Kontusz sash/belt

Jan Madżarski
Manufaktura Karola S. Radziwiłła
silk, metal threads brocading, au lance technique, taqueté faconné
Słuck, Belarus (then Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth)
1767-1780
National Museum in Warsaw

SZT 3015 MNW

Fig. 11 (upper left)

Audience at court

Firoz and Fareed
India
2nd half of the 20th c.

MAP 12290

Fig. 12 (upper right)

Rider on a black horse

author from India
guache on paper
2nd half of the 20th c.

MAP 12163

Fig. 13 (lower left)

Portrait of Artur Potocki

Jan Matejko
oil on oakwood board
1890
National Museum in Warsaw

128929 MNW

Fig. 14 (lower right)

Portrait of John III Sobieski, King of Poland

author from Poland
oil on canvas
2nd half of the 17th c.
National Museum in Warsaw

MP 3076 MNW

Photo 27

Blowpipe with 6 arrows
author from Papua (former Irian Jaya) or Nias, Indonesia
1st half of the 20th c.
MAP 276

Arrow for shooting pigs
author from Baliem Valley, Papua, Indonesia
pre-2017
MAP 21059

Three arrows
author from Papua New Guinea
2nd half of the 19th c.
MAP 11994
MAP 12017
MAP 11992

***Lun* arrow**
author from the Yala group, Waniok, Papua (former Irian Jaya), Indonesia
2001
MAP 19203

Arrow for shooting birds
author from Espiritu Santo, Vanuatu
2nd half of the 20th c.
MAP 8937

Signal arrow
author from China
1st half of the 20th c.
MAP 20438

Quiver with 12 poisoned arrows
author from Tanzania, Africa
1st half of the 19th c.
MAP 16310

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Photo 28

***Khukurī* knife**
author from Nepal
1st half of the 20th c.
MAP 20615

Dagger
author from Kiribati
2nd half of the 20th c.
MAP 8938

***Kris* dagger**
author from Madura, Indonesia
2nd half of the 20th c.
MAP 14975

***Kaṭāra* dagger**
author from Rajasthan, India
2nd half of the 19th c.
MAP 8053

Sztylet
author from East Sepik, Papua New Guinea
3rd quarter of the 20th c.
MAP 3244

***Pihiya kättha* knife**
author from Sri Lanka
1st half of the 19th c.
MAP 3787

***Ku-rai* dagger**
author from the Asmat group, Papua (former Irian Jaya), Indonesia
2001
MAP 18965

Catalogue notes

Cabinet of Antiquites

1. Goddess Quan Âm
author: unknown
place of origin: Vietnam
materials: wood, lacquerware, silver flakes, gold flakes
technique: carving, lacquerware
date: 18–19th c.
dimensions: 85 × 55 cm
purchase, 1995
MAP 14787

2. Bell
author: unknown
place of origin: Indonesia, Java
material: bronze
technique: cast, polishing
date: 8–10th c.
dimensions: 8,1 × 13,2 cm
donated by Andrzej Wawrzyniak, 1973
MAP 2092

3. Bodhisattva Guanyin
author: unknown
place of origin: China
materials: bronze, gold
technique: cast, gilding
date: 8–10th c. (?)
dimensions: 11,8 × 3,2 × 2,5 cm
purchase, 1982
MAP 6266

4. Buddha's Head
author: unknown
place of origin: Indonesia, Java
material: stone (sandstone feldspar)
technique: carving
date: 8th c.
dimensions: 13 × 6,6 × 9 cm
donated by Andrzej Wawrzyniak, 1973
MAP 1810

5. Lord Kārttikeya
author: unknown
place of origin: India
material: basalt
technique: carving
date: 2nd half of the 19th c.
dimensions: 30×11×7 cm
purchase, 1977
MAP 3760

6. Head of Lord Viṣṇu(?)
author: unknown
place of origin: Cambodia, the Khmer group, Angkor
material: sandstone
technique: carving
date: 12th c.
dimensions: 11×2,5×8,5 cm
purchase, 1999
MAP 16426

7. Goddess Durgā
author: unknown
place of origin: Nepal
materials: stone, dry pigments
technique: carving
date: 18th c.
dimensions: 13,4×9×3 cm
purchase, 1989
MAP 12403

8. Contemplating Buddha
author: unknown
place of origin: Indonesia, Java
material: tuff
technique: carving
date: 8th c. (?)
dimensions: 45×27,5×13 cm
donated by Andrzej Wawrzyniak, 1973
MAP 1793

9. Bodhisattva Guanyin
author: unknown
place of origin: China
material: quartzite sandstone
technique: carving
date: 581–618
dimensions: 29×14×16,5 cm
purchase, 1977
MAP 3723

10. Goddess Dūrga slays the Buffalo demon Mahiṣa
author: unknown
place of origin: Indonesia, Java
material: tuff
technique: carving
date: ca. 10th c.
dimensions: 55,5×24,5×13,5 cm
donated by Andrzej Wawrzyniak, 1973
MAP 1801

11. Lord Ganeśa
author: unknown
place of origin: India, Tamil Nadu
materials: wood, paint
technique: carving, polychrome
date: 18th c.
dimensions: 58,5×23×18 cm
purchase *in situ*, 1978
MAP 4425

12. Woman with a Chest – Longnü (?)
author: unknown
place of origin: China
materials: bronze, lacquer, paint
technique: cast, polychrome
date: 13th c. (?)
dimensions: 43×17,5×10,5 cm
purchase, 1978
MAP 4382

Gallery

13. Lama Rgyaltshabrje
[Gyaltsab Je]
author: unknown
place of origin: Mongolia
materials: clay, silk, water media, natural pigments
technique: stamping, painting, watermedia, stitching, embroidering
date: mid-19th c.
dimensions: 19 × 13,5 × 7,9 cm
purchase, 1982
MAP 6273/1

14. Three Figures
author: unknown
place of origin: Indonesia, Papua (former Irian Jaya), Agats, the Asmat group
materials: wood, acrylic paint
technique: carving, painting
date: 2nd half of the 20th c.
dimensions: 86×12,5×13 cm
purchase, 2003
MAP 17512

15. Woman (Queen?)
author: unknown
place of origin: Timor-Leste
material: brass
technique: cast
date: 3rd quarter of the 20th c.
dimensions: 91 × 26 × 23 cm
purchase, 2006
MAP 18926

16. Winged demon
author: unknown
place of origin: Indonesia, Bali
materials: wood, oil paint, gold
technique: carving, polychrome, gilding
date: 2nd half of the 20th c.
dimensions: 60×34×28,5 cm
donated by Włodzimierz Brzosko, 2005
MAP 18140

17. Amida Buddha
author: unknown
place of origin: Japan
materials: wood, lacquerware, gold
technique: carving, lacquerware, gilding
date: 18th c.
dimensions: 77×24×19,5 cm
purchase, 1983
MAP 7229

18. Buddha Calling the Earth to Witness
author: unknown
place of origin: Myanmar
materials: wood, lacquerware, gold, glass
technique: carving, lacquerware, gilding, inlay
date: 2nd half of the 19th c.
dimensions: 67×27×21 cm
purchase, 2008
MAP 19723

19. Illustration from the tale of Thạch Sanh, part 3
author: unknown
place of origin: Vietnam
materials: paper, watermedia
technique: woodcut, painting
date: 2nd half of the 20th c.
dimensions: 106×25,5 cm
donated by Jerzy Lobman, 2009
MAP 19915

20. "Calm Wave"
author: Chen Chi Chein
place of origin: Taiwan
materials: paper, ink, gold paint, silk (frame)
technique: calligraphy
date: 1995
dimensions: 194×46 cm
donated by the author, 1996
MAP 14844

21. Rice Plantation
author: unknown
place of origin: Indonesia, Bali
materials: cotton fabric, acrylic paint
technique: acrylic paint
date: 2nd half of the 20th c.
dimensions: 87,9×23 cm
donated by Alicja and Jerzy Kapuściński, 1995
MAP 14604

22.Chinese Pantheon
author: unknown
place of origin: China
materials: paper, ink, watermedia, silk (frame)
technique: watermedia
date: mid-19th c.
dimensions: 300×180; painting 150×90 cm
purchase, 1978
MAP 4399

23. Goddess Kālī standing on the body of Lord Śiva
author: Sana Devi
place of origin: India, Bihar, Mithila
materials: paper, watermedia
technique: watermedia
date: 1970s
dimensions: 75,4×55,1 cm
purchase *in situ*, 1978
MAP 4560

24. Scene from the "Mahābhārata"
author: Klungkung School
place of origin: Indonesia, Bali
materials: cotton canvas, watermedia
technique: watermedia
date: 1st half of the 19th c.
dimensions: 121×153 cm
donated by Andrzej Wawrzyniak, 1973
MAP 2168

25. Story of Calon Arang Witch
author: unknown
place of origin: Indonesia, Bali
materials: cotton canvas, watermedia
technique: watermedia
date: mid-19th c.
dimensions: 137×153 cm
donated by Waldemar Klimont, 2003
MAP 2168

26. Lord Śiva Naṭarāja
author: unknown
place of origin: India, Tamil Nadu
material: wood
technique: carving
date: 2nd half of the 20th c.
dimensions: 180×55,5×18 cm
donated by A.K. Misra, 1988
MAP 11651

27. The Eight Immortals
author: unknown
place of origin: China
materials: silk, silk wadding, paper, natural hair, watermedia, ink
technique: collage, appliqué, watermedia
date: 2nd half of the 19th c.
dimensions: 107×81,5 cm
purchase, 1998
MAP 15993

28. Buddha Akṣobhya
[Akshobhya]
author: unknown
place of origin: Tibet
materials: fabric, tempera paint
technique: tempera
date: 2nd half of the 20th c.
dimensions: 10,3×8,4 cm
purchase, 1978
MAP 4359

29. Cakrasaṃvara (?) Maṇḍala
author: unknown
place of origin: Mongolia
materials: fabric, tempera paint
technique: tempera
date: 1st half of the 20th c.
dimensions: 16,7×15,8 cm
purchase, 1979
MAP 5058

30. Emperor Bābur (copy)
author: unknown
place of origin: Uzbekistan, Samarkand
materials: leather, gouache paint, wood, string
technique: gouache
date: 2001
dimensions: 24×14; frame: 40×30,2 cm
donated by Franciszek Bogusławski, 2004
MAP 17545

31. "My Mother Nandi"
author: Norman Maṇawila, Garrawurra Liyagawumirr clan, Dhuwala language group, Yirritja moiety
place of origin: Australia, Northern Territory, Arnhem Land, Millingimbi
materials: bark of a eucalyptus tree, mineral pigments
technique: painting
date: before 1982
dimensions: 50×21,5×5 cm
purchase, 1982
MAP 6489

32. Buddha Akṣobhya
[Akshobhya]
author: unknown
place of origin: Tibet
materials: tempera paint, cotton fabric, silk, wood
technique: tempera
date: 2nd half of the 19th c.
dimensions: 48×33 cm
purchase, 1983
MAP 7464

Art Cabinet (Kunstkammer)

33. Perfume bottle
author: unknown
place of origin: Palestine
material: glass
technique: blown on a blowpipe
date: 2–5th c.
dimensions: 15,8×3,8 cm
donated by Brygitta and Wawrzyniec Węclewicz, 1982
MAP 6612

34. Glass
author: unknown
place of origin: Palestine
material: glass
technique: blown on a blowpipe
date: 3–6th c.
dimensions: 6,1×4,6 cm
donated by Brygitta and Wawrzyniec Węclewicz, 1982
MAP 6617

35. Glass
author: unknown
place of origin: Afghanistan, Herat
materials: glass, cobalt pigment, paint
technique: blown on a blowpipe, painting
date: 2nd half of the 20th c.
dimensions: 11,8×6,6 cm
donated by Tomasz Kamiński, 1985
MAP 8886

36. Bottle
author: unknown
place of origin: Afghanistan, Herat
materials: glass, cobalt pigment
technique: blown on a blowpipe
date: 2nd half of the 20th c.
dimensions: 20,5×8,5 cm
donated by Tomasz Kamiński, 1985
MAP 8877

37. Glass
author: unknown
place of origin: Afghanistan, Herat
materials: glass, paint
technique: blown on a blowpipe, painting
date: 2nd half of the 20th c.
dimensions: 8×6,2 cm
donated by Tomasz Kamiński, 2007
MAP 19308

38. Glass
author: unknown
place of origin: Afghanistan, Herat
materials: glass, cobalt pigment
technique: blown on a blowpipe
date: 2nd half of the 20th c.
dimensions: 13×6,4 cm
donated by Tomasz Kamiński, 1985
MAP 8882

39. Bottle
author: unknown
place of origin: Afghanistan, Herat
materials: glass, cobalt pigment
technique: blown on a blowpipe
date: 2nd half of the 20th c.
dimensions: 20,5×8,5 cm
donated by Tomasz Kamiński, 1985
MAP 8875

40. Glass
author: unknown
place of origin: Afghanistan, Herat
materials: glass, copper pigment
technique: blown on a blowpipe
date: 2nd half of the 20th c.
dimensions: 9×6,5 cm
donated by Tomasz Kamiński, 2001
MAP 17224

41. Betel spice container
author: unknown
place of origin: Indonesia, Sumatra
material: silver
technique: cast, forging, welding
date: 2nd half of the 19th c.
dimensions: 9×6,2 cm
donated by Andrzej Wawrzyniak, 1973
MAP 2037

42. Betel spice container
author: unknown
place of origin: Indonesia, Sumatra
material: silver
technique: cast, forging, welding
date: 2nd half of the 19th c.
dimensions: 6×7,7 cm
donated by Andrzej Wawrzyniak, 1973
MAP 2050

43. Snuffbox
author: unknown
place of origin: China
materials: clay, glaze, coral, nephrite, coin, metal, silk thread
technique: underglaze painting with cobalt, firing, cast, forging, turning
date: 18th c.
dimensions: 9,1×3,3 cm
purchase, 1986
MAP 10138

44. Snuffbox
author: unknown
place of origin: China
materials: chalcedony, brass, coral
technique: turning, carving, cast, forging
date: 2nd half of the 19th c.
dimensions: 6,7×3,9×3 cm
purchase, 1990
MAP 12986

45. Betel spice container
author: unknown
place of origin: Cambodia, the Khmer group
material: silver
technique: cast, repoussé, engraving
date: 3rd quarter of the 20th c.
dimensions: 6,2×6,8×5,7 cm
purchase, 2005
MAP 17884

46. *Hip maak* betel spice container
author: unknown
place of origin: Myanmar
materials: bamboo, lacquer, gold, glass
technique: weaving, lacquerware, inlay
date: 2nd half of the 20th c.
dimensions: 14,5×13,5 cm
purchase, 2007
MAP 19212

47. Bottle
author: unknown
place of origin: China
materials: clay, glaze
technique: cast, glazing
date: 14th c.
dimensions: 7,5×4,8 cm
purchase, 1995
MAP 14462

48. Cosmetics container
author: unknown
place of origin: India, Rajasthan
materials: wood, oil paints
technique: carving, polychrome
date: 2nd half of the 20th c.
dimensions: 16,3×5×11,5 cm
donated by Krishna Kumar Jajodia, 1984
MAP 8041

49. Jug
author: unknown
place of origin: China
materials: clay, silver
technique: cast, firing, silver-plating
date: 2nd half of the 20th c.
dimensions: 24×30,5×10,5 cm
donated by Jędrzej Wittchen, 2000
MAP 16962

50. Shell with metal fittings
author: unknown
place of origin: Tibet
materials: shell, tin-plated copper
technique: forging, repoussé, tin-plating
date: 1st half of the 20th c.
dimensions: 12×21,5×8 cm
purchase, 1997
MAP 15600

51. Genre scene set in a garden
author: unknown
place of origin: China, Guangzhou
materials: mother-of-pearl, wood (stand)
technique: carving
date: 19th c.
dimensions: total: 30×19; shell: 19,5×22 cm
transferred from The Royal Castle in Warsaw, 2000
MAP 21148

52. *Porhalaan* calendar
author: unknown
place of origin: Indonesia, Sumatra, Batak group
materials: bone, soot
technique: etching, blackening
date: 2nd half of the 20th c.
dimensions: 34,5×18×6,2 cm
donated by Barbara Chwilczyńska-Wawrzyniak, 2003
MAP 17519

53. Incense burner
author: unknown
place of origin: Vietnam
materials: clay, colour glaze
technique: turning, moulding, glazing
date: 16–17th c.
dimensions: 9,5×9,5 cm
donated by Krzysztof Findziński, 2018
MAP 21268

54. Bowl
author: unknown
place of origin: Vietnam
materials: clay, celadon glaze
technique: turning, etching, glazing
date: 15th c. (?)
dimensions: 8×13 cm
donated by Krzysztof Findziński, 2018
MAP 21228

55. Dish
author: unknown
place of origin: China
materials: clay, *jun* glaze
technique: turning, glazing
date: 12–13th c.
dimensions: 12×5 cm
donated by Krzysztof Findziński, 2018
MAP 21186

56. Plate
author: unknown
place of origin: China, Vietnam (?)
materials: clay, glaze, brass
technique: turning, glazing
date: 18–19th c.
dimensions: 13,5×2,6 cm
donated by Krzysztof Findziński, 2018
MAP 21183

57. Dish
author: unknown
place of origin: Mesopotamia (Iraq, Iran, Turkey, Syria, Kuwait)
material: alabaster
technique: turning, engraving
date: 1st c. BCE
dimensions: 3,5×8,5×3,2 cm
donated by Józef Osek, 1998
MAP 15941

58. Brush tumbler
author: unknown
place of origin: China
material: ivory
technique: carving
date: 2nd half of the 19th c.
dimensions: 9,1×5,4 cm
donated by Brygitta and Wawrzyniec Węclewicz, 1982
MAP 6545

59. Container
author: unknown
place of origin: Vietnam
materials: clay, cobalt pigment
technique: moulding, firing, underglaze painting
date: 15–16th c.
dimensions: 7,5×8 cm
purchase, 1995
MAP 14484

60. Vase
author: unknown
place of origin: Vietnam
materials: clay, cobalt pigment, glaze
technique: firing, underglaze painting
date: 15/16th c.
dimensions: 9,9×10,9 cm
purchase, 1995
MAP 14587

61. Dish
author: unknown
place of origin: Thailand
material: alabaster
technique: turning, carving
date: 1st half of the 20th c.
dimensions: 2,4×6,9 cm
donated by Brygitta and Wawrzyniec Węclewicz, 1982
MAP 6519/2

62. *Lâgan* plate
author: unknown
place of origin: Uzbekistan
materials: clay, engobe, glaze
technique: painting, glazing
date: 1970–80s
dimensions: 6×25,5 cm
purchase, 1985
MAP 9282

63. *Lâgan* plate
author: unknown
place of origin: Uzbekistan
materials: clay, engobe, glaze
technique: painting, glazing
date: 1970–80s
dimensions: 6×25 cm
purchase, 1985
MAP 9279

64. Incense burner
author: unknown
place of origin: Nepal, Kathmandu
material: clay
technique: modelling, firing
date: 2nd half of the 20th c.
dimensions: 19,5×21×13 cm
donated by Andrzej Wawrzyniak, 1980
MAP 5553

65. Vase
author: unknown
place of origin: China
materials: zinc, brass, lacquerware
technique: cast, lacquerware
date: 1st half of the 20th c.
dimensions: 25,5×18 cm
purchase, 1976
MAP 3449

66. Sītā and Hanumān in demon's Rāvaṇa garden
author: A. Muang
place of origin: Thailand, Kanchanaburi
materials: leather, watermedia
technique: cut, polychrome
date: 2nd half of the 20th c.
dimensions: 35,7×35,2 cm
purchase, 1999
MAP 16545

67. Horse
author: unknown
place of origin: China, Hubei, Fu Tu
materials: coloured paper
technique: knife-cut
date: 2001
dimensions: 10,5×8,5 cm
purchase, 2007
MAP 19150

68. Yellow tiger
author: unknown
place of origin: China, Hubei, Fu Tu
materials: paper, watermedia
technique: knife-cut, watercolour
date: 2001
dimensions: 8,5×7,5 cm
purchase, 2007
MAP 19139

Cabinet of Natural History

69. Kauri shell
place of origin: Indonesia
date: 3rd quarter of the 20th c.
dimensions: 3×6,3×4,4 cm
donated by Andrzej Wawrzyniak, 1973
MAP 2837

70. Nautiloid shell
place of origin: Vanuatu, Malekula
date: 3rd quarter of the 20th c.
dimensions: 10,6×14,3×7,4 cm
donated by Maciej T. Bocheński, 1976
MAP 3224

71. Kauri shells
place of origin: Indonesia
date: 3rd quarter of the 20th c.
dimensions: 4,5–5,1×7,4–8,5×5,4–6,1 cm
donated by Andrzej Wawrzyniak, 1973
MAP 2836

72. Shells
place of origin: Indonesia
date: 3rd quarter of the 20th c.
dimensions: 4,8–8,7×6,2–10,5 cm
donated by Andrzej Wawrzyniak, 1973
MAP 2838

73. Shells
place of origin: Indonesia
date: 3rd quarter of the 20th c.
dimensions: length 1–10 cm
donated by Andrzej Wawrzyniak, 1973
MAP 2839

74. Shells
place of origin: Indonesia
date: 3rd quarter of the 20th c.
dimensions: length 5,5–7,5 cm
donated by Andrzej Wawrzyniak, 1973
MAP 2840

75. Shells
place of origin: Indonesia
date: 3rd quarter of the 20th c.
dimensions: length 4,5–6 cm
donated by Andrzej Wawrzyniak, 1973
MAP 2841

76. Shells
place of origin: Indonesia
date: 3rd quarter of the 20th c.
dimensions: 0,5–2,5 cm
donated by Andrzej Wawrzyniak, 1973
MAP 2842

77. Starfish
place of origin: Indonesia
date: 3rd quarter of the 20th c.
dimensions: 12×2 cm
donated by Andrzej Wawrzyniak, 1973
MAP 2843

78. White coral
place of origin: Indonesia
date: 3rd quarter of the 20th c.
dimensions: length 3–15 cm
donated by Andrzej Wawrzyniak, 1973
MAP 2844

79. Red coral
place of origin: Indonesia
date: 3rd quarter of the 20th c.
dimensions: length 5–15 cm
donated by Andrzej Wawrzyniak, 1973
MAP 2845

80. Basalt
place of origin: Indonesia, Java
dimensions: 6,5×5,3; 6×4,5 cm
donated by Andrzej Wawrzyniak, 1973
MAP 2846

81. Quartz
place of origin: Indonesia, Java
dimensions: 7×4×2; 9,6×6,9×3,8 cm
donated by Andrzej Wawrzyniak, 1973
MAP 2847/1; 2

82. Amethyst
place of origin: Indonesia, Java
dimensions: 11,5×7,5×5,5 cm
donated by Andrzej Wawrzyniak, 1973
MAP 2848

83. Stone in a limestone shell
place of origin: Indonesia, Java
dimensions: 3,5×3×2 cm
donated by Andrzej Wawrzyniak, 1973
MAP 2849

84. Sandalwood
place of origin: Vanuatu, Efate, Moso
date: mid-20th c.
dimensions: 17,5×4,5×4 cm
donated by Leszek Kosek, 1986
MAP 9617

Treasury

85. Oil lamp
author: unknown
place of origin: India, Odisha
material: brass
technique: *ḍoukra* wax casting
date: 2nd half of the 20th c.
dimensions: 18×19×8 cm
donated by Escorts Ltd from Kolkata, 1983
MAP 7156

86. Oil lamp *sukundā*
author: unknown
place of origin: Nepal
material: brass
technique: cast
date: 2nd half of the 19th c.
dimensions: 26,5×26,5×12,5 cm
purchase, 2008
MAP 19839

87. Offering bowl
author: unknown
place of origin: Laos
materials: brass, silver
technique: cast, repoussé, silver-plating
date: 20th c.
dimensions: 26×27; base 16,5 cm
purchase, 1987
MAP 10532

88. Offering vessel *hsun ok*
author: unknown
place of origin: Myanmar
materials: bamboo, wood, thayo lacquerware, stones and glass
technique: weaving, lacquering, gilding, inlay
date: 2nd half of the 19th c.
dimensions: 53×35 cm
purchase, 2008
MAP 19582

89. Sārangī player
author: unknown
place of origin: India, Rajasthan
material: silver
technique: repoussé, welding
date: 2nd half of the 20th c.
dimensions: 21,9×6,5×8 cm
purchase, 1977
MAP 3730

90. Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī
author: unknown
place of origin: Nepal or Tibet
materials: bronze, gold, glass beads
technique: cast, gilding, inlay
date: 18th c.
dimensions: 20,3×14,2×10,4 cm
purchase, 1977
MAP 3940

91. Goddess Durgā slays the Buffalo demon Mahiṣa [Mahisha]
author: unknown
place of origin: India
material: alabaster
technique: carving
date: 2nd half of the 20th c.
dimensions: 10,9×6×3,1 cm
donated by Escorts Ltd from Kolkata, 1983
MAP 7193

92. Buddha Śākyamuni
author: unknown
place of origin: Thailand
materials: brass, lacquerware, gold
technique: cast, lacquering, gilding
date: 2nd half of the 19th c.
dimensions: 21,5×11,2×6,5 cm
purchase, 1985
MAP 9095

93. Crown
author: unknown
place of origin: New Caledonia, France
materials: pandanus leaves, pigment
technique: weaving, dyed
date: 2018
dimensions: 10,3×16,5×27,5
donated by Karolina Kania,cm 2018
MAP 21472

94. Crown with *stūpa* on a stand
author: unknown
place of origin: Myanmar
materials: zinc (crown and *stūpa*), bamboo (stand), thayo lacquerware, gold flakes, glass
technique: cutting, soldering, lacquering, gilding, inlay
date: 1st half of the 20th c.
dimensions: 42,9×22 cm
purchase, 2007
MAP 19213-19215

95. Ceremonial crown
author: unknown
place of origin: Indonesia, Sumatra, Minangkabau
materials: brass, tin
technique: cutting, bending, punching, bush hammering, die-cutting, tinning, colouring
date: 2nd half of the 20th c.
dimensions: 34×37,5×8,5 cm
donated by Andrzej Wawrzyniak, 2003
MAP 17523

96. Headband
author: unknown
place of origin: Indonesia, Borneo, Kalimantan, Dayak group
materials: cotton fabric, wool threads, porcupine needles
technique: stitching, embroidering
date: 2nd half of the 20th c.
dimensions: 26×24,5 cm
purchase *in situ*, 1993
MAP 13679

97. Headband
author: unknown
place of origin: Indonesia, Sumba
materials: brass, silver
technique: bending, repoussé, soldering, silver-plating
date: 2nd half of the 20th c.
dimensions: 19×22×19,5 cm
purchase, 2005
MAP 17934

98. Crown (copy)
author: unknown
place of origin: South Korea
materials: gold, jade, frame: velvet, wood, glass
technique: die-cutting, forging, bending
date: 2nd half of the 20th c.
dimensions: 42×14 cm
donated by Chung Kie Ok, 1996
MAP 14882

99. Cigarette box
author: unknown
place of origin: Turkey, Armenia (?)
materials: silver
technique: filigree
date: 2nd half of the 19th c.
dimensions: 10×6,3×1 cm
donated by Edward Obertyński, 1990
MAP 12478

100. Hair clip
author: unknown
place of origin: Mongolia
materials: gold-plated silver, river pearls, turquoise
technique: forging, engraving, gilding, inlay
date: 3rd quarter of the 20th c.
dimensions: 3×2×1 cm
purchase, 1981
MAP 6007

101. Pendant
author: unknown
place of origin: China
materials: gold, coral
technique: carving, forging
date: mid-19th c.
dimensions: 4,5×4,3×1,2 cm
purchase, 1984
MAP 8624

102. Perfume bottle
author: unknown
place of origin: Afghanistan
materials: white metal, brass, turquoise
technique: forging, repoussé, die-cutting, inlay
date: 1st half of the 20th c.
dimensions: 31×12×4 cm
purchase, 1976
MAP 3325

103. Earrings
author: unknown
place of origin: Afghanistan, Pashtun group
material: brass
technique: forging, punching, engraving
date: 2nd half of the 19th c.
dimensions: 19×9,5 cm
purchase, 1977
MAP 3530

104. Fingernail guard
author: unknown
place of origin: China
material: gold
technique: repoussé
date: 19/20th c.
dimensions: 7×1,5×3 cm
purchase, 1977
MAP 3983

105. Necklace
author: unknown
place of origin: Afghanistan
materials: brass, lapis lazuli
technique: forging, die-cutting
date: 1st half of the 20th c.
dimensions: 24,5×12 cm
purchase, 1978
MAP 4366

106. Bracelet
author: unknown
place of origin: India, Ladakh, Leh
material: shell
technique: cutting
date: 2nd half of the 20th c.
dimensions: 9×8,7
purchase, 1995
MAP 14369

107. Ankle bracelet
author: unknown
place of origin: South-East Asia
material: brass
technique: stamping, die-cutting
date: 1st half of the 20th c.
dimensions: 29,5×3,7 cm
donated by Maria Giedwiedź, 1998
MAP 16225

108. Forehead jewellery
author: unknown
place of origin: Afghanistan
materials: cotton fabric, cotton and metal threads, turquoise, coral, silver, tin, mirrors, beads
technique: stitching, embroidering, casting, forging, die-cutting
date: 1st half of the 20th c.
dimensions: 16×23 cm
purchase, 1992
MAP 13516

109. M*amuli* jewellery
author: unknown
place of origin: Indonesia, Sumba, Malay group
material: metal
technique: bending, cutting, soldering
date: 2nd half of the 20th c.
dimensions: 19,5×20×3 cm
purchase, 2005
MAP 17935

110. Necklace
author: unknown
place of origin: India
materials: silver, cotton threads, silk threads
technique: forging, repoussé
date: 2nd half of the 20th c.
dimensions: 28×14,5 cm
purchase, 1999
MAP 16592

111. Earrings (copy)
author: unknown
place of origin: South Korea
materials: gold-plated silver
technique: cast, gilding, granulation, filigree
date: 2nd half of the 20th c.
dimensions: 10,5×3 cm
donated by Marek Machowski, 2008
diplomatic gift from colleagues from Korea
MAP 19445

112. *Kapāla* container
author: unknown
place of origin: Mongolia
materials: brass, copper, lacquerware, tin
technique: forging, repoussé, engraving, riveting, soldering
date: 2nd half of the 20th c.
dimensions: 10,2×6,3×7,2 cm
purchase, 1978
MAP 4328

113. Jewellery stamp
author: unknown
place of origin: Afghanistan, Kabul
materials: brass
technique: cast
date: 1st half of the 20th c.
dimensions: 5,6×4,6×0,4 cm
purchase, 1976
MAP 3078

114. Jewellery stamp
author: unknown
place of origin: Afghanistan, Kabul
materials: brass
technique: cast
date: 1st half of the 20th c.
dimensions: 3,1×4×0,6 cm
purchase, 1976
MAP 3101

115. Jewellery stamp
author: unknown
place of origin: Afghanistan, Kabul
materials: brass
technique: cast
date: 1st half of the 20th c.
dimensions: 2,1×2,6×0,6 cm
purchase, 1976
MAP 3207

116. Hair pin
author: unknown
place of origin: Indonesia, Java
materials: brass (?)
technique: forging, welding, cast, bending
date: 3rd quarter of the 20th c.
dimensions: 9×2,2×1,2 cm
donated by Andrzej Wawrzyniak, 1973
MAP 2690

117. Headband
author: unknown
place of origin: China
materials: brass, kingfisher feathers, pearls, gold
technique: forging, welding, gilding, glueing
date: mid-19th c.
dimensions: 9×13,5×2 cm
purchase, 1977
MAP 3961

118. Attire ornament
author: unknown
place of origin: India, Ladakh
materials: white metal, turquoise
technique: die-cut, welding, filigree, encrusting
date: 2nd half of the 19th c.
dimensions: 64 (total 110)×50×1 cm
purchase, 2007
MAP 19181

119. Arm bracelet
author: unknown
place of origin: Papua New Guinea, Western Highland
materials: phloem, shells
technique: weaving
date: 2nd half of the 20th c.
dimensions: 24,4×15,3×5 cm
donated by Ernest Golly, 1982
MAP 5918

120. *Mwali* armband
author: unknown
place of origin: Papua New Guinea, Kiriwina Islands (Trobriand Islands)
materials: shells, string
technique: cutting, drilling, tying
date: 2nd half of the 20th c.
dimensions: 17,5×7,8×10 cm
purchase, 1979
MAP 4866

121. Necklace
author: unknown
place of origin: Papua New Guinea, Western Highland, Mount Hagen
materials: shell, cane, string, feathers, cotton fabric
technique: incision, tying
date: 2nd half of the 20th c.
dimensions: 44×17×4,5 cm
purchase, 1979
MAP 4859

122. Necklace
author: unknown
place of origin: France, French Polynesia, Tahiti (?)
materials: shells, synthetic string, metal
technique: threading
date: 2nd half of the 20th c.
dimensions: 43×4×3 cm

donated by Edward Obertyński, 1990
MAP 12479

123. Hat finial
author: unknown
place of origin: Mongolia
materials: copper, bronze, gold, almandine
technique: forging, welding, carving, filigree, sanding
date: 2nd half of the 20th c.
dimensions: 11,6×2,3×2,3 cm
purchase, 1984
MAP 8666

124. Hairpins
author: unknown
place of origin: Myanmar
materials: brass, silver
technique: forging, filigree
date: 3rd quarter of the 20th c.
dimensions: 9,5×2×2 cm
purchase: 2008
MAP 19567

125. Fragment of a hairpin
author: unknown
place of origin: China
materials: jade
technique: carving
date: 2nd half of the 20th c.
dimensions: 6,7×1,5 cm
purchase, 2008
MAP 19467

126. Fragment of a hairpin
author: unknown
place of origin: China
materials: jade
technique: carving
date: 2nd half of the 20th c.
dimensions: 6,7×1,5 cm
purchase, 2008
MAP 19468

127. Flask
author: unknown
place of origin: India
materials: brass
technique: cast, engraving
date: 1st half of the 20th c.
dimensions: 9,8×3,4×1,6 cm
donated by Brygitta and Wawrzyniec Węclewicz, 1982
MAP 6537

128. Ear-plugs
author: unknown
place of origin: Myanmar, Naga group
materials: lagenaria, clay, kauri shells, glass beads
technique: inlay
date: 2nd half of the 20th c.
dimensions: diameter: 6,5×6; 7,3×5,5 cm
purchase, 2007
MAP 19271/a-b

129. Nose ring
author: unknown
place of origin: Pakistan, Pashtun group
materials: brass,
glass technique: forging, incrusting
date: 2nd half of the 20th c.
dimensions: 7×6,3 cm
donated by Witold S. Iżycki, 1987
MAP 10487

130. Neckless
author: unknown
place of origin: Afghanistan, Pashtun group
materials: white metal, glass, plastic
technique: forging, die-cut, inlay
date: 2nd half of the 20th c.
dimensions: 8,9×27,7 cm
purchase, 1993
MAP 13514

131. Hair jewellery
author: unknown
place of origin: Afghanistan, Pashtun group
materials: zinc, silver, glass beads, glass
technique: cast, inlay
date: 3rd quarter of the 20th c.
dimensions: 6×7,3 cm
purchase, 1977
MAP 3536

132. Belt buckle
author: unknown
place of origin: Azerbaijan
materials: brass, gold, garnet stone
technique: gilding, filigree, granulation, inlay
date: end of the 19th c.
dimensions: 2,7×6,8×1,7 cm
purchase, 2005
MAP 18413

133. *Sasakan* hairpin
author: unknown
place of origin: Indonesia
materials: brass, glass
technique: forging, inlay
date; 3rd quarter of the 20th c.
dimensions: 12,6×4,7×1 cm
purchase *in situ*, 2005
MAP 17953

134. Belt
author: unknown
place of origin: Afghanistan, Pakistan (?)
materials: brass, semi-precious stones, carnelians
technique: forging, welding, inlay
date: 1st half of the 20th c.
dimensions: 9×81×1,6 cm
donated by Romuald Farat, 2000
MAP 16849

Armoury

135. Shield
author: unknown
place of origin: Indonesia, Borneo, Kalimantan, Dayak group
materials: wood, natural pigments
technique: carving, engraving, painting
date: 1st half of the 20th c.
dimensions: 70,2×27,5×9,3 cm
donated by Andrzej Wawrzyniak, 1973
MAP 312

36. Headgear
author: unknown
place of origin: Myanmar, Chin State, Naga group
materials: rattan, canvas (lining), buffalo horns, shells, teeth, tusks, bone, feathers, fur, cotton thread
technique: weaving, tying
date: 2nd half of the 20th c.
dimensions: 30×20×20 cm
purchase, 2007
MAP 19261

37.Shield
author: unknown
place of origin: Indonesia, West Papua, Asmat group
materials: wood, mineral pigments, plant fibre
technique: carved, painted, tied
date: 2nd half of the 20th c.
dimensions: 163×59×5 cm
purchase, 2007
MAP 18955

38. Spear-thrower
author: unknown
place of origin: Papua-New Guinea, East Sepik, Iatmul group (?)
materials: bamboo, wood, phloem, soot
technique: cutting, braiding, blackening
date: 2nd half of the 20th c.
dimensions: 98,5×3×7,3 cm
donated by Sławomir Białostocki, 1986
MAP 10000

139. Arrow
author: unknown
place of origin: Papua New Guinea
materials: bamboo, wood, phloem, orchid stems, sea urchin spines
technique: cutting, burnt patterns
date: 2nd half of the 19th c.
dimensions: 134 cm
transferred from Central Museum Depository in Kozłówka, 1988
from the collection of German museums in Wrocław
MAP 11992

140. Arrow
author: unknown
place of origin: Papua New Guinea
materials: bamboo, wood, phloem, orchid stems
technique: cutting, burnt patterns
date: 19th c.
dimensions: 123 cm
transferred from Central Museum Depository in Kozłówka, 1988
from the collections of German museums in Wrocław
MAP 11994

141. Arrow
author: unknown
place of origin: New Guinea
materials: bamboo, wood, phloem, metal
technique: cutting, braiding, forging
date: 19/20th c.
dimensions: 125 cm
transferred from Central Museum Depository in Kozłówka, 1988
from the collections of German museums in Wrocław
MAP 12017

142. *Lun* arrow
author: unknown
place of origin: Indonesia, Papua (former Irian Jaya), Waniok, Yala group
materials: bamboo, rattan, wood, orchid stems
technique: cutting, tying, braiding
date: 2001
dimensions: 111 cm
purchase, 2007
MAP 19203

143. Arrow for shooting birds
author: unknown
place of origin: Vanuatu, Espiritu Santo
materials: bamboo, wood, phloem
technique: cutting, tying
date: 2nd half of the 20th c.
dimensions: 103,5 cm
donated by Maciej T. Bocheński, 1985
MAP 8937

144. Arrow for shooting pigs
author: unknown
place of origin: Indonesia, Papua, Baliem
materials: wood, bamboo, plant fibre
technique: carving
date: pre-2017
dimensions: 105 cm
donated by Jan Cieplak, 2017
MAP 21059

145. Signal arrow
author: unknown
place of origin: China
materials: wood, phloem, feathers, leather
technique: cutting, braiding
date: 1st half of the 20th c.
dimensions: 97,3 cm
donated by Katarzyna Żukrowska, 2011
MAP 20438

146. Javelin
author: unknown
place of origin: Indonesia, Borneo, Kalimantan
materials: steel, wood, paint, bones, beads, plant fibre, animal teeth, fur
technique: forging, damascening, cutting, polychrome, braiding
date: 1st half of the 20th c.
dimensions: 103×8,5×5,5 cm
donated by Andrzej Wawrzyniak, 1973
MAP 133

147. *Woomera* spear-thrower
author: unknown
place of origin: Australia
materials: wood
technique: engraving
date: 1970s
dimensions: 71×10,5×2 cm
donated by Andrzej Weber, 2014
MAP 20700

148. Club
author: unknown
place of origin: Oceania-Melanesia
materials: wood, plant fibre twine
technique: cutting, polishing
date: 2nd half of the 19th c.
dimensions: 161 cm
transfer from Central Museum Depository in Kozłówka, 1988
from the collections of German museums in Wrocław
MAP 11972

149. *Hyeopdo* spear
author: unknown
place of origin: Koreans
materials: steel, wood, cotton tape
technique: forging
date: mid-19th c.
dimensions: 182 cm
transfer from Central Museum Depository in Kozłówka, 1989
from the collections of German museums in Wrocław
MAP 11973

150. Blowpipe with 6 arrows
author: unknown
place of origin: Indonesia, Papua (former Irian Jaya), Nias (?)
materials: bamboo, phloem, leaves
technique: cutting
date: 1st half of the 20th c.
dimensions: 41×7×2,5 cm
donated by Andrzej Wawrzyniak, 1973
MAP 276

151. Quiver with 12 poisoned arrows
author: unknown
place of origin: Africa, Tanzania
materials: leather, metal, reed, resin, fabric
technique: cutting, forging, braiding
date: 1st half of the 19th c.
dimensions: 70×7,2×6 cm
donated by Danuta and Marian Szella, 1999
a memento of Henryk Szella
MAP 16310

152. Boomerang
author: unknown
place of origin: Australia,
materials: wood, synthetic paintstechnique: cutting, polishing, paintingdate: 2nd half of the 20th c.dimensions: 5,5×36,5×0,5 cmdonated by Monika and Mieczysław Strzechowski, 1990
MAP 12936

153. *Ku-rai* dagger
author: unknown
place of origin: Indonesia, Papua (former Irian Jaya), Asmat group (Safan I)
materials: cassowary bone, plant fibre string, adlay seeds, cassowary feathers
technique: cutting, weaving, tying
date: 2001
dimensions: 35×7×5 cm
purchase, 2007
MAP 18965

154. Dagger
author: unknown
place of origin: Kiribati
materials: wood, fish teeth, string
technique: cutting, tying
date: 2nd half of the 20th c.
dimensions: 60×3,6×1,7 cm
donated by Maciej T. Bocheński, 1985
MAP 8938

155. *Kris* dagger
author: unknown
place of origin: Indonesia, East Java, Madura
materials: iron, brass, animal bone
technique: forging, damascening, carving, patina
date: 2nd half of the 20th c.
dimensions: 45×13,5×3,2 cm
purchase, 1996
MAP 14975

156. Dagger from a *tumbak* spear
author: unknown
place of origin: Indonesia,
materials: steel, bamboo, Java wood, white metal, brass
technique: forging, damascening, lacquering
date: 19th c.
dimensions: 62,2×3,3 cm
purchase, 2006
MAP 18798

157. Dagger
author: unknown
place of origin: Papua New Guinea, East Sepik
materials: cassowary bone
technique: cutting, engraving
date: 3rd quarter of the 20th c.
dimensions: 23,2×3×1 cm
donated by Nicolai Michoutouchkine, 1976
MAP 3244

158. *Pihiya kättha* knife
author: unknown
place of origin: Sri Lanka
materials: steel, bone, brass, silver
technique: hot forging
date: 1st half of the 19th c.
dimensions: 31×3,8×2,8 cm
purchase, 1977
MAP 3787

159. *Khukurī* knife
author: unknown
place of origin: Nepal
materials: steel, wood, brass, cotton fabric, cotton and

plant fibres
technique: forging, engraving, stitching, weaving
date: 1st half of the 20th c.
dimensions: 32,7×5,7×4,1 cm
donated by Roman Gutaj, 2013
MAP 20615

160. *Kaṭāra* dagger
author: unknown
place of origin: India, Rajasthan
materials: steel
technique: forging
date: 2nd half of the 19th c.
dimensions: 37,5×8×2,5 cm
donated by Krishna Kumar Jajodia, 1984
MAP 8053

161. Sword
author: unknown
place of origin: India, Nagaland, Naga group
materials: steel, wood, animal fur, rattan
technique: forging, weaving
date: 1st half of the 19th c.
dimensions: 71 cm
purchase, 2005
MAP 17903

Endangered species

162. Audience at court
author: Firoz and Fareed
place of origin: India
materials: gouache paint, ivory
technique: gouache
date: 2nd half of the 20th c.
dimensions: 21,2×13,7 cm
donated by Edward Ochab, 1989
diplomatic gift from Indira Gandhi
MAP 12290

163. Lamp
author: unknown
place of origin: India
materials: ivory, plastic fitting
technique: carving
date: 1950s
dimensions: 44×11 cm
donated by Piotr and Krystyna Ogrodziński
diplomatic gift from the Indian government
MAP 21921

164. Hairpin with a phoenix and flowers
author: unknown
place of origin: China
materials: brass, kingfisher feathers, silk, beads, pearls, silk threads
technique: forging, welding, glueing
date: mid-19th c.
dimensions: 19×15×8 cm
purchase, 1977
MAP 3967

165. *Netsuke* – Shou Xing with a peach
author: Gyokuyosai
place of origin: Japan, Tokyo
materials: ivory
technique: carving
date: 1st half of the 19th c.
dimensions: 3,8×4,3×2,7 cm
purchase, 1985
MAP 9114

166. Scene from the "Rāmāyaṇa"
author: unknown
place of origin: Indonesia, Bali
materials: bone, wood
technique: carving
date: 2nd half of the 20th c.
dimensions: 28×7,2×6,6 cm
purchase, 1977
MAP 3882

167. Orans with a ceremonial dish
author: unknown
place of origin: Myanmar
materials: bone, wood
technique: carving
date: 1st half of the 20th c.
dimensions: 17×5 cm
purchase, 2010
MAP 19869

168. Immortal He Xiangu
author: unknown
place of origin: China
materials: ivory
technique: carving
date: mid-19th c.
dimensions: 20×6×2,5 cm
donated by Customs Office via The Royal Castle in Warsaw, 1988
MAP 11792

169. Comb
author: unknown
place of origin: Indonesia, Java
materials: tortoiseshell, brass, glass
technique: cutting, filigree, inlay, welding
date: 2nd half of the 20th c.
dimensions: 10×3,7×0,7 cm
donated by Barbara Chwilczyńska-Wawrzyniak, 2000
MAP 17172

170. Model of a junk ship
author: unknown
place of origin: Vietnam
materials: horn, tortoiseshell, metal, wood
technique: carving, cutting
date: 2nd half of the 20th c.
dimensions: 15,8×15,6×3,3 cm
donated by Edward Obertyński, 1989
MAP 12477

171. *Wayang* figure – male
author: unknown
place of origin: Indonesia, Java
materials: tortoiseshell, plastic (base)
technique: cutting
date: 1st half of the 20th c.
dimensions: 6,9×3,7 cm
donated by Andrzej Wawrzyniak, 1973
MAP 938

172. Physeter's tooth with drawing of a ship
author: unknown
place of origin: China (?)
materials: animal tooth, paint
technique: painting
date: 1st half of the 20th c.
dimensions: 15×6,5×3,8 cm
purchase, 1994
MAP 14160

Sacral objects

173. Totem
author: unknown
place of origin: Myanmar, Chin State
materials: wood
technique: carving
date: 2nd half of the 20th c.
dimensions: 169×12×20 cm
purchase, 2008
MAP 19617

174. Goddess Tārā
author: unknown
place of origin: Nepal
materials: brass, dry pigments
technique: cast
date: 2nd half of the 20th c.
dimensions: 9,5×7×5,5 cm
purchase, 1986
MAP 10084

175. Altar panel
author: unknown
place of origin: Myanmar
materials: wood, lacquerware, gold, glass, ornamental stones
technique: carving, lacquering, gilding, inlay
date: 2nd half of the 19th c.
dimensions: 129×92×14 cm
purchase, 2008
MAP 19792

176. Korwar *kaku*
author: Ronsumbre family
place of origin: Indonesia, Papua, Biak Island
materials: wood
technique: carving
date: 1990s
dimensions: 49×17×19,5 cm
purchase, 2018
MAP 21633

History of great names or popular styles

177. "Fresh aroma and rich colours"
author: Qi Baishi
place of origin: China, Beijing
materials: paper, ink
technique: ink
date: 1954
dimensions: 68,5×48,5 cm
donated by Andrzej Strumiłło, 1978
MAP 3994

178. Qilin sends his sons
author: unknown
place of origin: China
materials: glass, tempera paint, silver paint, wood, brass (frame)
technique: tempera
date: 1st half of the 20th c.
dimensions: 45,5×35,5×2,5 cm
purchase, 2007
MAP 19075

179. Immortal Magu
author: unknown
place of origin: China
materials: glass, tempera paint, silver paint, wood, brass (frame)
technique: tempera
date: 1st half of the 20th c.
dimensions: 47×36,5×2,7 cm
purchase, 2007
MAP 19069

179. Still nature with fruit and flowers
author: unknown
place of origin: China
materials: glass, tempera paint, wood, brass (frame)
technique: tempera
date: 1st half of the 20th c.
dimensions: 40×54,5 cm
purchase, 2007
MAP 19096

180. Tarpa player
author: K.K. Hebbar
place of origin: India
materials: oil paint, canvas
technique: oil paint
date: 2nd half of the 20th c.
dimensions: 51,5×41,5 cm
purchase, 1977
MAP 3774

181. Godddess Gajalakṣmī
author: S. Murugakani (author), J. B. Khanna and Co. (publisher)
place of origin: India, Tamil Nadu, Chennai
materials: paper, printing ink
technique: chromolithography
date: 3rd quarter of the 20th c.
dimensions: 48,4×35,5 cm
purchase, 1988
MAP 4802

182. Lord Kārttikeya and two Śaktis
author: J. B. Khanna and Co. (publisher)
place of origin: India, Tamil Nadu, Chennai
materials: paper, printing ink
technique: chromolithography
date: 2nd half of the 20th c.
dimensions: 36,5×25,5 cm
donated by Andrzej Wawrzyniak, 1978
MAP 4813

183. Lord Śiva, Goddess Ambikā and Hanumān
author: unknown
place of origin: India
materials: paper, printing ink, plastic
technique: chromolithography, lamination
date: 2nd half of the 20th c.
dimensions: 34×24 cm
donated by Andrzej Wawrzyniak, 2012
MAP 20511

184. Dalang with a theatre puppet
author: Nyoman Gunarsa
place of origin: Indonesia
materials: acrylic paint, canvas
technique: acrylic
date: ca. 1970
dimensions: 92×74 cm
donated by Andrzej Wawrzyniak, 1973
MAP 2224

185. Scene from the "Rāmāyana" – Sītā and the deer
author: unknown
place of origin: Indonesia, Java
materials: cotton fabric, synthetic dye
technique: batik
date: 2nd half of the 20th c.
dimensions: 90×68 cm
purchase, 1985
MAP 9062

186. Punakawan brothers – Petruk, Bagong i Gareng
author: unknown
place of origin: Indonesia, Java, Ciberon
materials: glass, acrylic-resin paint, wood
technique: acrylic-resin paint
date: 3rd quarter of the 20th c.
dimensions: 48,6×38,5×2 cm
purchase, 2004
MAP 17557

187. Prince Panji talking with his brother
author: unknown
place of origin: Indonesia, Java, Ciberon
materials: glass, acrylic-resin paint, wood
technique: acrylic-resin paint
date: 3rd quarter of the 20th c.
dimensions: 45×34,7×2,5 cm
donated by Andrzej Wawrzyniak, 2003
MAP 17528

History of the objects

188. Postcard – seaside landscape
author: unknown
place of origin: Japan
materials: rice paper, watercolour, cardboard
technique: woodcut, watercolour
date: 1st half of the 20th c.
dimensions: 9,1×14,1 cm
purchase, 1992
MAP 13168

189. Postcard – Tokaido, Fujisawa Station
author: unknown
place of origin: Japan
materials: rice paper, watercolour, cardboard
technique: woodcut, watercolour
date: 1st half of the 20th c.
dimensions: 9×14,1 cm
purchase, 1992
MAP 13169

190. Seal
author: unknown
place of origin: Japan
materials: canvas, plastic, leather case
technique: carving, glueing, lacquering
date: pre-2015
dimensions: seal: 6×1; case: 9×2 cm
donated by Andrzej Frołow, 2016
MAP 20921

191. Club
author: unknown
place of origin: Oceania-Polynesia
materials: wood
technique: carving
date: 2nd half of the 19th c.
dimensions: 80×4,5 cm
transferred from Central Museum Depository in Kozłówka, 1988
from the collection of German museums in Wrocław
MAP 11980

Regims

192. Winter in Myohyang Mountains
author: Kim Cheol
place of origin: North Korea
materials: Japanese paper, watercolour, ink
technique: painting
date: 1997
dimensions: 84×64 cm
purchase, 1997
MAP 15627

193. Autumn in the Kumgang Mountains
author: Kim Cheol
place of origin: North Korea
materials: Japanese paper, ink, watercolour
technique: painting
date: 1994
dimensions: 94×58,5 cm
purchase, 1997
MAP 15628

Contemplation Room

194. Devil's work ball
author: unknown
place of origin: China
materials: ivory
technique: carving
date: 1950s
dimensions: 26×6 cm
donated by Barbara Świetlicka, 2014
MAP 20706

195. Lord Ganeśa
author: unknown
place of origin: India, Odisha
materials: coconut paper, gouache paint
technique: gouache
date: 2nd half of the 20th c.
dimensions: 45,5×53,8 cm
purchase, 2006
MAP 18519

Exhibition

Muzeum? What for?

19.11.2021–11.09.2022

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Exhibition coordinator
Aleksandra Fudalej

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