



Our Owl is Pink

Colourful Stories

Exhibition booklet

Thank you for returning it after your visit!

**Museum der
Kulturen Basel**

Our Owl Is Pink

Colourful Stories

Colours make the world look bright.
They're fascinating
and spark our imagination.

People lend meaning to colours.
These meanings vary.
People express feelings with colours
and use them to communicate with others.

The things in this exhibition
tell stories about colours.
They tell how people
extract and produce colours
and how they trade in them.
They show how people use
colours for protection and adornment
and how colours unite people.

In doing so, we encounter
many shades of colours:
Some are bright or vivid.
Others are soft or pale.

This exhibition was developed
in collaboration with children
and people who are visually impaired,
blind, hearing impaired or completely deaf.
Their way of seeing things is part of the
exhibition.

You can explore the colours with all your senses
It includes many interactive stations and a large
creative space – a space in which you can
create something yourself.

Colours are not only for the eye.
Colours touch us.

**Anyway, where is our owl?
And why is it pink?**

Visit the exhibition
and see for yourself!

Our Pink Owl and Its Friends

Imagine an owl.

What are its colours?

Usually, we think of owls of
having white, brown or grey feathers.

But here at the museum the owl is pink!

It certainly stands out.

It looks surprising and unfamiliar.

This makes us wonder.

Why is the owl pink?

Who chose its colour?

And why does it look so bright?

It shows us:

Colours change

the way we see the world.

Colours spark the imagination.

Colours allow us to create,
and render our ideas visible.

And, all of a sudden, owls can be pink.

Hello! I'm the pink owl! So, you actually found me! I know, I'm rather noticeable amidst my brown, white, and grey friends. You've probably never seen an owl like me before. I'm a flute from Mexico. There, many things are painted in the colour *Rosa Mexicano*.

We owls see colours differently from human beings. And we have very good ears! I've heard many stories about coloured things. Follow my lookalikes in the exhibition and join me in exploring the world of colours!

- 1 **Owl vessel flute**
maker unknown to us | Metepec, Edo. de Mexico, Mexico | before 1973 | ceramic | collection Marcelle Geiger-Vifian | IVb 6199
- 2 **Owl figure**
maker unknown to us | Dokra, central India, India | before 1964 | brass | Kristin and Alfred Bühler-Oppenheim, purchased in 1964 | IIa 2878
- 3 **Owl figure**
maker unknown to us | Bali, Indonesia | before 1938 | wood | Ernst Schlager, Sandoz AG, gifted in 1938 | IIc 7045
- 4 **Owl figure**
maker unknown to us | Acoma, New Mexico, USA | ca 1970 | clay, colour | Christian Fenimore Feest, purchased in 2021 | IVa 2549
- 5 **Owl figure**
maker unknown to us | San Martín Tilcajete, Oaxaca, Mexico | before 1998 | wood, metal | collection Marcelle Geiger-Vifian | IVb 6369
- 6 **Owl figure**
maker unknown to us | Oaxaca, Mexico | 1974 | wood, metal | Thomas Meyer, purchased in 1974 | VI 42803
- 7 **Owl stirrup vessel**
maker unknown to us | Peru | 800–100 BC | clay | Bequest Hans Röthlingshöfer in 2005 | IVc 25815
- 8 **Owl vessel flute**
maker unknown to us | Peru | before 1998 | clay | collection Marcelle Geiger-Vifian | IVc 26561
- 9 **Owl vessel flute**
maker unknown to us | Recuay, Peru | before 1998 | clay | collection Marcelle Geiger-Vifian | IVc 26590.04

- 10 **Owl vessel flute**
maker unknown to us | Peru | before 1998 | clay | collection Marcelle Geiger-Vifian | IVc 26660
- 11 **Owl vessel flute**
maker unknown to us | Peru | around 1980 | clay | collection Marcelle Geiger-Vifian | IVc 26601.02
- 12 **Owl vessel flute**
maker unknown to us | Ayacucho, Peru | before 1982 | clay | collection Marcelle Geiger-Vifian | IVc 26612
- 13 **Owl vessel flute**
maker unknown to us | Peru | before 1991 | clay | collection Marcelle Geiger-Vifian | IVc 26630
- 14 **Owl pendant**
maker unknown to us | Antigua, Guatemala | 1974 | ceramic, metal | Thomas Meyer, purchased in 1974 | VI 42720I
- 15 **Owl pendant**
maker unknown to us | Antigua, Guatemala | 1974 | ceramic, metal | Thomas Meyer, purchased in 1974 | VI 42720m
- 16 **Owl figure**
maker unknown to us | Tonalá, Jalisco, Mexico | ca 1975 | clay | Hans Jörg and Eliane Landolt-Sauvant, purchased in 1979 | VI 51154a-d
- 17 **Owl figure**
maker unknown to us | Tlaquepaque, Jalisco, Mexico | ca 1975 | clay | Hans Jörg and Eliane Landolt-Sauvant, purchased in 1979 | VI 51166a-d
- 18 **Owl figure**
maker unknown to us | Aztec | central Mexico, Mexico | mid-14th c. – 1521 | basaltic lava | collection Lukas Vischer, gifted in 1844 | IVb 632
- 19 **Tawny owl (*Strix aluco*)**
NMB-AVES-14625 | on loan from the Naturhistorisches Museum Basel

Colour Makes the Difference

When people make things
the material plays an important part.

If the material is left uncoloured,
shapes, patterns and
structures come to the fore.

But often, people wish for colours.
They make things look special.

Colour highlights details.
It lends things meaning
and creates a special mood.

In this room we present things
that become increasingly colourful
in the process of making.
As well as things where colour
makes all the difference.

Devotional Images

Colourful Saints

In Catholicism, devotional images guide people in everyday life and in their faith.

They are placed in prayer and songbooks. Or hang up at home or in the stable for protection. Some people wear them on the body or consign them to a grave.

These cards were printed in large numbers. Sometimes the makers or the customers coloured them by hand.

The images show saints and scenes from their life, such as miracles or their martyrdom.

In this way, people who could not read or write were able to follow the stories.

Adding colour made the pictures look more life-like and easier to understand.

Not everyone was happy with that. Members of the Protestant church objected to such images.

In prayer or for protection, a believer usually carries only one card on him or her. Assembling several at a time here at the museum allows us to highlight similarities and distinctive features:

Skin & Wings

In biblical images these are usually depicted in light colours.

Occasionally the skin is not coloured at all, or else the cheeks are tinted slightly pink.

And, by the way, what is the colour of angel wings?

Emphases

Occasionally, certain colours stand out prominently.

In some pictures, it's a vibrant turquoise.

In others, red is used to highlight certain features.

Vagueness & Depth

In some cases, the detailed print is overlaid with loose brushstrokes. At times, the colouring is extremely subtle.

And sometimes, the colouring lends the image added depth, for example, with regard to the arrangement of folds.

Variation

The same motifs are sometimes rendered without colour or in varying shades.

Light

Colour is often used to emphasize heavenly light.

Halos often shine in different colours.

Children and childbirth

Images of the expectant Virgin Mary were, and still are, venerated at pilgrimage sites and in the hope of being blessed with children. Other holy women act as patron saints of midwives and wetnurses.

This print was modelled on the miraculous picture of the expectant Virgin Mary featured in the Church of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary and St Charles the Great in Prague. It was painted by the Baroque artist Johann Georg Heinsch in 1697.

20 'S. Maria Carloviensis'
printer unknown to us | Prague, Czech Republic | 19th c. | paper, intaglio print, coloured | bequest Eduard Hoffmann-Krayer in 1938 | VI 14176

This print was modelled on the miraculous image of the expectant Virgin Mary in the church of Ohlsdorf in Upper Austria; it was painted by Christian Degenhart in 1657. Mary's head is encircled by an aureola, angels are holding a crown above her head, and the Christ monogram HIS is featured on her rounded belly. She is standing on a globe while crushing the serpent of the Garden of Eden with her foot.

21 'Miraculous Image of Our Lady'
printer unknown to us | Ohlsdorf, Austria | 19th c. | paper, intaglio print, coloured | bequest Eduard Hoffmann-Krayer in 1938 | VI 14208

The expectant Virgin Mary visits her cousin Elisabeth and utters the prayer 'Magnificat anima mea dominum' (my soul praises the Lord) to express her gratitude for the imminent birth of her son. Elisabeth, however, exclaims: 'Why has the mother of my Lord come to visit me?' (Unde hoc mihi ut veniat mater domini mei ad me).

22 Magnificat
Martin Engelbrecht | Augsburg, Bavaria, Germany | 18th c. | paper, intaglio print, coloured | bequest Eduard Hoffmann-Krayer in 1938 | VI 14203

23 The Visitation of Mary
maker unknown to us | Europe | 18th c. | paper, intaglio print, coloured | collection Anton Pachinger, bequest Eduard Hoffmann-Krayer in 1938 | VI 14292

The scene depicts the pregnant Virgin Mary looking for a place to stay in Bethlehem together with her husband Joseph. The Latin inscription 'Sui eum non receperunt' (Even his own people did not accept him) explains that the family-to-be was turned down everywhere. While the couple still look hopeful, the angels in Heaven are weeping.

- 24 **Looking for Shelter**
Georg Frehling | Augsburg, Bavaria, Germany | 18th c. | paper, copperplate engraving, coloured | bequest Eduard Hoffmann-Krayer in 1938 | VI 14204

Saint Agatha lived in Catania in Sicily in the 3rd century AD. Being the daughter of a rich family she had many suitors. Early in life already, she found her way to the Christian faith and promised God that she would remain a virgin which is why she turned down all marriage proposals, including that of Quintianus, a powerful man. Upon this he had her breasts cut off. Despite the torture, she remained true to her vow for which he had her executed.

Shortly after that, Mount Etna erupted. The people of Catania marched towards the lava flow, carrying Agatha's veil with them upon which the lava came to a halt. This is why Agatha serves as patron saint of firefighters.

In images she is often depicted carrying a basket which contains her severed breasts. She is also regarded as the patron saint of midwives and wetnurses.

- 25 **Saint Agatha**
Michael Gleich | Augsburg, Bavaria, Germany | 18th c. | paper, intaglio print, coloured | collection Anton Pachinger, bequest Eduard Hoffmann-Krayer in 1938 | VI 14037
- 26 **Saint Agatha**
Joseph Christian Kempter | Augsburg, Bavaria, Germany | 18th c. | paper, intaglio print, coloured | collection Anton Pachinger, bequest Eduard Hoffmann-Krayer in 1938 | VI 14036, VI 14055 and VI 14056
- 27 **Saint Agatha**
Lithographie & Kunsthandlung zum Freyenhof | Lucerne, Switzerland | 19th c. | paper, lithography, coloured | bequest Eduard Hoffmann-Krayer in 1938 | VI 14061
- 28 **Saint Agatha**
Aloys Schön | Augsburg, Bavaria, Germany | 19th c. | paper, intaglio print, coloured | bequest Eduard Hoffmann-Krayer in 1938 | VI 14064+65

Saint Ursula is recognizable by her crown and the arrows in her arm. She is believed to be one of the many young women who were persecuted as Christians in the Roman Empire. Ursula is called upon for many purposes, among others for a good marriage, during pregnancy and childbirth.

- 29 **Saint Ursula**
Michael Gleich | Augsburg, Bavaria, Germany | 18th c. | paper, copperplate engraving, coloured | collection Anton Pachinger, bequest Eduard Hoffmann-Krayer in 1938 | VI 13196

Various Patron Saints

Archangel Michael battles against all forces hostile to God. He is often shown dressed as a soldier, carrying a shield and a sword.

- 30 **Holy Archangel Michael**
maker unknown to us | Europe | 18th c. | laid paper, intaglio print, coloured | collection Anton Pachinger, bequest Eduard Hoffmann-Krayer in 1938 | VI 13789

Willibold is the patron saint of the Iller Valley (Baden-Württemberg). Here, colour has been used very sparingly. The name of the patron saint was added to his flask, using blue paint.

- 31 **Saint Willibold**
maker unknown to us | Europe | 18th c. | paper, copperplate engraving, coloured | collection Anton Pachinger, bequest Eduard Hoffmann-Krayer in 1938 | VI 13350

According to legend, Saint George once killed a dragon. He ranks as the patron saint of knights and warriors but is also invoked to protect against snakes, syphilis, lepra, and the plague.

- 32 **Saint George**
Philipp David Danner | Augsburg, Bavaria, Germany | 18th c. | paper, copperplate engraving | collection Anton Pachinger, bequest Eduard Hoffmann-Krayer in 1938 | VI 13537

- 33 **Saint George**
Joseph Christian Kempter | Augsburg, Bavaria, Germany | 18th c. | paper, intaglio print, hand coloured | collection Anton Pachinger, bequest Eduard Hoffmann-Krayer in 1938 | VI 13534

Beneath the Cross we see Saint Florian, patron saint of firefighters, equipped here with a pitcher of water, und Saint Wenceslaus, the patron saint of Bohemia.

34 Christ on the Cross

Wenzel Hoffmann | Prague, Czech Republic | 1st half of 18th c. | paper, intaglio print, coloured | collection Anton Pachinger, bequest Eduard Hoffmann-Krayer in 1938 | VI 13779

As a young man, Saint Leonard often visited prisoners and campaigned for their release. Later, he withdrew to the woods but kept on praying for the imprisoned and people in need. According to legend, the shackles of many prisoners are said to have broken as a result which is why he is also known as the Saint of Chains.

35 Saint Leonard

maker unknown to us | Europe | 1830 | paper, intaglio print, coloured | collection Anton Pachinger, bequest Eduard Hoffmann-Krayer in 1938 | VI 15113

Saint Catherine died a martyr in Alexandria for never renouncing her Christian faith. It is told that, before her execution, she was able to convert half of the emperor's leading philosophers along with the empress herself to Christianity thanks to her wit and intelligence.

36 Saint Catherine

Wenzel Hoffmann Verlag | Prague, Czech Republic | 19th c. | paper, intaglio print, coloured | collection Anton Pachinger, bequest Eduard Hoffmann-Krayer in 1938 | VI 13816

According to legend, Erasmus was bishop of Antioch around AD 300 in modern-day Turkey. During the persecution of Christians, Erasmus was arrested and tortured on several occasions, but each time he was saved by angels. It is told that the Archangel Michael accompanied Erasmus on his escape to Italy. During a violent storm on the voyage, Erasmus was able to calm the sea by praying. He later became the patron saint of sailors and seafarers.

37 Saint Erasmus

Mathias Gentner Verlag | Augsburg, Bavaria, Germany | early 19th c. | paper, intaglio print, coloured | collection Anton Pachinger, bequest Eduard Hoffmann-Krayer in 1938 | VI 13636

Notburga grew up in poverty and worked for a farmer. He demanded that she worked on Sundays, the Christian day of rest. Notburga refused, raising her sickle with the words: 'May my sickle decide my fate!' Miraculously, the sickle slipped from her hand and remained suspended in mid-air. From that day on, no one dared to tell Notburga what to do. She later became the patron saint of servants and peasants.

38 Saint Notburga

Georg Frehling | Augsburg, Bavaria, Germany | 18th c. | paper, copperplate engraving, coloured | bequest Eduard Hoffmann-Krayer in 1938 | VI 14154

Appollonia was a martyr in the 3rd century AD. She was tortured for her faith, in particular by having all her teeth pulled out which is why she is usually depicted holding a pair of tongs and invoked when a person suffers from toothache. She died by fire.

39 Saint Apollonia

Aloys Schön | Augsburg, Bavaria, Germany | around 1800 | paper, copperplate engraving, coloured in on case | collection Anton Pachinger, bequest Eduard Hoffmann-Krayer in 1938 | VI 13732, VI 13733

Protection against the Plague

This sheet is a protection against 'war, hunger, pestilence, and hardship'. At the centre is an image of 'Mary, help us', behind it a cross bearing the abbreviations of the Blessing of St Zacharias. On the clouds to the left and right we find the two plague saints, Roch and Sebastian. On medallions, the saints Xaver, Benedict, Charles Borromeo, Cajetan, and Rosalia are invoked for their intercession. On the points of the star and the rays of light, we read an invocation asking for protection from the plague: 'Oh noble star, oh gentle one, please keep the plague far from us. Send us your grace, and avert your wrath'.

40 Blessing against plague and cholera

Franz Barth | Vienna, Austria | 19th c. | paper, intaglio print, coloured | collection Anton Pachinger, bequest Eduard Hoffmann-Krayer in 1938 | VI 12992

The copperplate engraving was modelled on an etching by Cornelius Galle around 1650. On it we see an old man bowing in prayer before the Virgin Mary with Baby Jesus while the Angel of Death, bearing sword and skull, steps back from her. In the foreground we see Saint Christopher bearing Baby Jesus on his shoulders, Saint John the Baptist (wearing animal skin), Saint Sebastian (pierced with arrows), and Saint Roch (pointing to a bubo).

- 41 Protective sheet, plague patron saint
Cornelis van Merlen | Antwerp, Belgium | 18th c. | parchment, copperplate engraving, coloured | collection Anton Pachinger, bequest Eduard Hoffmann-Krayer in 1938 | VI 13047

Roch of Montpellier ranks as one of the leading plague saints. He lived in the 14th century, studied medicine, and undertook a pilgrimage to Rome. On the way, he treated plague victims until he himself became afflicted. According to legend, he withdrew to the forest so as not to infect others. There, it is said that a dog kept him supplied with bread. The image shows him as a pilgrim featuring a bubo on his knee.

- 42 Saint Roch
Paul Joseph Busch | Augsburg, Bavaria, Germany | late 18th c. | paper, copperplate engraving, coloured | collection Anton Pachinger, bequest Eduard Hoffmann-Krayer in 1938 | VI 13070

This protective slip of paper was once affixed to a bed for the purpose of protecting those resting there by means of the double Cross, an image of Mary of Landshut, and the five wounds inflicted on Jesus on the Cross.

- 43 Protective slip of paper
maker unknown to us | Bruck, Salzburg, Austria | 18th c. | paper, woodcut, coloured | collection Anton Pachinger, bequest Eduard Hoffmann-Krayer in 1938 | VI 13165

Saint Rosalia is considered one of the leading patron saints against the plague. She was born in the 12th century of noble descent at the Sicilian royal court. However, she retired to live in a cave on Mount Pellegrino where she lived and finally died in solitude. Her bodily remains – adorned with a wreath of roses – was finally discovered in 1625, at the same time that the plague epidemic ended in Palermo – an event that was attributed to her.

- 44 Saint Rosalia
Franz Maulini | Prague, Czech Republic | 19th c. | paper, aquatint, coloured | collection Anton Pachinger, bequest Eduard Hoffmann-Krayer in 1938 | VI 13202

- 45 Saint Rosalia
Johann Martin Will | Augsburg, Bavaria, Germany | late 18th c. | paper,
intaglio print, coloured | collection Anton Pachinger, bequest Eduard
Hoffmann-Krayer in 1938 | VI 13276

House blessing

Cards like this were blessed on Epiphany, 6 January, and then affixed to houses for the purpose of protection. They often included blessings in writing such as 'Oh blessed star, please cast your light on this house'. The letters C + M + B stand for Christus Mansionem Benedicat, meaning 'May Christ bless this house'.

- 46 Epiphany card
maker unknown to us | Bruck, Salzburg, Austria | 18th c. | paper, intaglio
print, coloured | bequest Eduard Hoffmann-Krayer in 1938 | VI 14659
- 47 Epiphany card
Johann Martin Will | Augsburg, Bavaria, Germany | 18th c. | paper, intaglio
print, coloured | collection Anton Pachinger, bequest Eduard Hoffmann-
Krayer in 1938 | VI 14674

'Christ's sacred friendship' shows Jesus and John the Baptist facing one another. In the background are Jesus' parents Mary and Joseph, the grandparents Anna and Joachim, and John's father Zacharias.

- 48 'Christ's sacred friendship'
Verlag M. Krempelsetzer | Urfahr near Linz, Austria | 18th/19th c. | laid
paper, intaglio print, coloured | collection Anton Pachinger, bequest Eduard
Hoffmann-Krayer in 1938 | VI 13811

Death and Christ on the Cross

Beneath the Cross we have Saint Florian, the patron saint of firefighters equipped with a pitcher of water, and Saint Wenceslaus as patron saint of Bohemia. Below there is a quotation from the Gospel of Saint John: 'God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, so that we might live through Him'.

- 49 Christ on the Cross
Wenzel Hoffmann | Prague, Czech Republic | first half of 18th c. | paper,
intaglio print, coloured | collection Anton Pachinger, bequest Eduard
Hoffmann-Krayer in 1938 | VI 13779

Christ on the Cross is flanked by two miraculous images (Mariazell, Sonntagberg, Maria Taferl). The inscription below explains that this picture is to be kissed 'with devotion' upon which, given the authority of two popes, the person will be required to offer less penance for their sins. Beneath the Cross there is a short prayer: 'Lord Jesus Christ, unto thy hands I commend myself at the hour of death'.

50 Indulgence cards
maker unknown to us | Maria Zell, Austria | 19th c. | paper, copperplate engraving, coloured | collection Anton Pachinger, bequest Eduard Hoffmann-Krayer in 1938 | VI 14762 and VI 14763, VI 14771 and VI 14793

The text next to Jesus Christ's bloodied body on the Cross also promises that the person who kisses the image 'with devotion' shall be granted an indulgence by two popes. In addition, having come into contact with a 'genuine' fragment of the true Cross, the paper is believed to be consecrated.

51 Indulgence card
maker unknown to us | Steyr, Austria | 18th c. | paper, intaglio print, coloured | collection Anton Pachinger, bequest Eduard Hoffmann-Krayer in 1938 | VI 14764

Batik

Colour in Steps

Making things colourful costs time and effort.

A case at hand is batik. Batik is a technique for dyeing cotton fabrics. Batik is done in steps.

First, a design is drawn or stamped on a piece of fabric using liquid wax.

The fabric is then dipped in a dye bath. The waxed areas do not absorb the dye, thus creating a design.

By repeating the process with other dyes the fabric becomes increasingly colourful.

The island of Java is in Indonesia. It is well-known for its batik cloths with their many colours and detailed patterns.

People wear these cloths in everyday life and for festive occasions.

Depending on region, patterns, motifs, and colours hold very specific meanings for people: they bring good fortune, prevent mishaps, are intended for specific stages in life or, in earlier days, could only be worn by members of a sultan's court in central Java. Today, many of these restrictions have been relaxed and people across Indonesia enjoy Javanese batik. For civil servants it makes up part of their uniform on special days, and modern fashion designers often use the designs for their creations.

Today batik is also an important economic factor. In 2009, UNESCO added Javanese batik as 'Indonesian Batik' to the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

Batik is a Javanese term and literally means 'dot'. In fabrics, batik refers to a special dye method – namely resist dyeing. This involves applying liquid wax to a pre-woven cotton cloth. The wax-covered areas will not absorb any colour during the dye process (hence resist). The process is repeated for each single colour. The wax is applied by using two different methods: women use a *canting* to apply the wax by hand (hand-drawn batik *batik tulis*) while the men use a stamp for the purpose (printed batik *batik cap*).

The work process shown here describes hand-drawn *batik kulis* on a cloth from central Java. Traditional textiles from this region feature only four colours: the natural colour of the cotton, blue, brown and dark blue/black (blue dyed over with brown).

- a The basis is a finely woven cotton cloth of best quality.
- b1 A pencil drawing of the intended motif, in this case, *kupu gandrung*, butterfly in love, is set out on a sheet of paper.
- b Once the cotton cloth has been washed and starched, the pattern is transferred from the paper template to the fabric.
- c Using the *canting*, the outlines of the motif are applied to the cotton cloth in wax. The wax includes bee's wax, vegetable and mineral wax added with resin and an adhesive.
- d The outlines of the motif are then traced on to the cloth's reverse, again using wax and making sure that they perfectly aligned.

- e The pattern is enhanced by filling in the shapes with dots and lines.
- f The same is done on the cloth's reverse, thus finalizing the motif.
- g Additional dark wax is added to the areas that are meant to remain plain until the end. Only the areas that have been left uncovered will absorb the colour.
- h The same is done on the cloth's reverse. The fabric is now ready for the first dye.
- i Blue dye using indigo: the cloth is dipped into the vat containing the indigo dyestuff and then left to dry in the sun. This process is repeated up to thirty times. It takes between fourteen days and three weeks until the colour is rich and resistant to light and washing.
- k Using a hot knife, the wax is scraped off the areas that are to be coloured brown
- l The same is done on the cloth's reverse.
- m Next, the areas that are to remain blue are again covered with wax so they will not absorb any brown.
- n As before, the same is done on the cloth's reverse.
- o Brown dye with *soga jambal*: the cloth is dipped into a brew of various tree barks, primarily *Caesalpinia* spp., and then hung up again. This process, too, must be repeated many times, that is, until the colour attains the desired shade. After that, the fabric is dipped into a lime water solution.
- p After completing the two dye processes, the fabric is rinsed in boiling water to get rid of all the wax remains. The wax is collected and later used for more simple types of batik. A high-quality batik textile is expected to be clean, with no streaks or stains, and identical on both sides.

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Sixteen work steps in making hand-drawn batik *batik tulis*

maker unknown to us | central Java, Indonesia | 1st half of 20th c. | cotton, woven, wax, indigo, *soga jambal* | collection Jaap and Laurens Langewis, purchased in 1956 | Ilc 14992a-p

- 53 Batik tool *canting* for drawing lines and filling in small spaces
maker unknown to us | Yogyakarta, central Java, Indonesia | early 20th c. | copper, wood, string, nail, wax | gifted by Eugen Paravicini in 1923 | Ilc 2095
- 54 Batik tool *canting* (without wooden handle) for drawing a four-petalled flower
maker unknown to us | Java, Indonesia | 1st half of 20th c. | copper | gifted by Ruth Moppert-Vischer in 1957 | Ilc 15171

The work process shown here describes the printing method *batik cap*. Stamping is ideal for designs that are repeated across an entire fabric, or across a large area of it.

- 1A Using the first stamp, wax is applied to the cotton fabric that has been washed and starched.
 - 2A Blue dye with indigo: the cloth is dipped into a vat containing the indigo dyestuff and then left to dry in the sun. The process is repeated many times until the colour is rich and resistant to light and washing.
 - 3A The wax is completely removed in boiling water.
 - 4A Using the second stamp, wax is applied to those spots that are to appear as fine white dots against the background.
 - 5A In addition, the larger blue and white sections that will not be dyed over with *soga* are also covered with wax.
 - 6A Brown dye with *soga*: the cloth is dipped into a brew of various tree barks, primarily *Caesalpinia spp.*, and then hung up again. This process, too, must be repeated many times, that is, until the colour attains the desired shade.
 - 7A After that, the fabric is dipped into a lime water solution.
 - 8A The finished dyed fabric. All wax remains have been removed by boiling in hot water.
- 55 Eight work steps in making printed batik *cap*
maker unknown to us | Jakarta (Palmerah), Java, Indonesia | 1st half of 20th c. | cotton, wax, indigo, *soga* | gifted by Paul Schudel in 1951 | Ilc 12017-24

Tree batik stamps cap required for creating the batik design *sido mukti*

The *sido mukti* design is meant to secure wealth and good fortune; *sido* means ongoing and *mukti* means wealth and good fortune. This explains why, in central Java, the bride and groom wear batik fabrics featuring the *sido mukti* design at their wedding. The diagonal pattern depicts four individual motifs inside four rhombuses: at the top a house, to the left and right stylized Garuda wings, and at the bottom a flower.

The first stamp *cap klowong* is used to cover all the areas that are to be white or brown.

The second stamp is used to apply wax to those spots that are to form white dots around the four motifs in the background.

The third stamp is used in place of the second stamp if the background around the four motifs is to be almost entirely white.

56 Three batik stamps *cap*
 studio of Hani Winotosastro | Yogyakarta, central Java, Indonesia | around
 1990 | copper, soldered | Annegret Haake and Hani Winototsastro, gifted
 in 1991 | Ilc 21550-52

Carnival Masks

Colours Express Feelings

At the Basel carnival
we encounter many colourful figures
Masks are referred to as Larven.

They are made in special studios.
The blanks are painted white and
still need finishing.

You find many different faces:
some look plain, others very detailed.

When you add colour,
the mask's expression changes.
Some faces look cheerful,
others look more serious, even wild.

Colours make masks come alive.

25 carnival masks from the mask studio Ettore Guggenbühl | Basel, Switzerland | after 1970 | papier-mâché, colour | Sabine Vulic-Guggenbühl, gifted in 2010

57	Mask Waggis VI 70717.08	70	Mask Vagabund VI 70721.16
58	Mask Freiheitsstatue / Elsässere VI 70721.51	71	Mask Hexe / Alte Maa VI 70718.03
59	Mask Pierrot VI 70714.04	72	Mask Blätzli / Harlequin / Pierrot / Ueli VI 70714.01
60	Mask Clown VI 70715.06	73	Mask Waggis VI 70717.15
61	Mask Alti Dante VI 70713.01	74	Mask no. 33 VI 70721.56
62	Mask Waggis VI 70717.10	75	Mask Clown VI 70715.07
63	Mask no. 149 VI 70721.30	76	Mask Waggis VI 70717.11
64	Mask Alte Maa / Teufel VI 70721.32	77	Mask no. 98 VI 70721.18
65	Mask Käasperli VI 70716.03	78	Mask Blätzli / Harlequin / Pierrot / Ueli VI 70714.07
66	Mask Clown VI 70715.03	79	Mask Vogel / Wolf / Fuchs VI 70719.01
67	Mask no. 161 VI 70721.34	80	Mask Clown VI 70715.01
68	Mask Waggis VI 70717.05	81	Mask Waggis VI 70717.18
69	Mask Hexe VI 70718.01		

Tsha-Tsha

Painted and Unpainted

Tsha-Tsha are small votive tablets made of unfired clay.

They come from Tibet and other Buddhist countries such as Thailand and Myanmar.

Votive tablets are small offerings people make to show gratitude or in the hope of protection through their spiritual power.

The tablets are placed in monasteries, on altars or in especially spirit-laden places, for instance, in caves, on mountain passes or at sacred lakes.

Tsha-Tsha are made using wooden or metal forms.

After drying they are occasionally painted or decorated with gold.

In the process of making people recite special incantations. The words convey spiritual energy to the votive tablets and to all those who come into contact with them.

Enlightened beings

- 82 Votive tablet *tsha-tsha* with Buddha Akshobhya
maker unknown to us | 1939 | Ladakh, Tibet | clay, pigments | Freiwilliger
Museumsverein Basel, on deposit since 1939 | Ilb 1427
- 83 Votive tablet *tsha-tsha* with Buddha Simhasvara
maker unknown to us | 18th c. | Tibet | clay, pigments, gilded | Gerd-
Wolfgang Essen, purchased in 1998 | Ild 14334
- 84 Votive tablet *tsha-tsha* with Buddha Amitayus, Buddha Shakyamuni,
Bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara
maker unknown to us | before 1939 | Ladakh, Tibet | clay, pigments | Paul
Wirz, purchased in 1939 | Ilb 1519

Altar Shrines

Tsha-Tsha can also be placed in small shrines or amulets. They are used in meditation and for personal protection.

- 85 Ritual implement *ga'u*
maker unknown to us | no date | Tibet | silver, gold, turquoise | Gerd-
Wolfgang Essen, purchased in 1998 | Ild 14145.01
- 86 Votive tablet *tsha-tsha* with Guru Padmasambhava
maker unknown to us | no date | Tibet | clay | Gerd-Wolfgang Essen,
purchased in 1998 | Ild 14145.02

Buddha Shakyamuni

Upon enlightenment, Siddhartha Gautama became Buddha Shâkyamuni. According to tradition, Buddha Shâkyamuni was neither the first nor the last Buddha. Mahâyâna Buddhism teaches that up to 1,000 Buddhas will be born during the current world age.

- 87 Votive tablet *tsha-tsha*
maker unknown to us | before 1939 | Ladakh, Tibet | clay | Freiwilliger
Museumsverein Basel, on deposit since 1939 | Ilb 1441
- 88 Votive tablet *tsha-tsha*
maker unknown to us | before 1931 | Lamphun, Thailand | clay | Rudolph
Iselin, gifted in 1949 | Ilb 1594

Buddhas of the Three Ages

Since the 11th century, a popular motif on votive tablets in Southeast Asia includes the Buddhas of the Three Ages: Buddha Shâkyamuni (present), Buddha Dîpankara (past), and Buddha Maitreya (future). They stand for the timelessness of Buddhist teachings.

- 89 Votive tablet *tsha-tsha*
 maker unknown to us | before 1930 | Chiang Mai, Thailand | clay | Rolf
 Eisenhofer, purchased in 1930 | Ilb 312
- 90 Votive tablet *tsha-tsha*
 maker unknown to us | no date | Tibet | clay, wood, pigments | Gerd-
 Wolfgang Essen, purchased in 1998 | Ild 14338

Buddha Maitreya

Maitreya, the Buddha of the future, has been very popular in Myanmar ever since the 9th century. He is shown seated on a throne surrounded by reliquaries. The tablet has the shape of the leaf of the tree under which Buddha Shâkyamuni attained enlightenment.

- 91 Votive tablet *tsha-tsha*
 maker unknown to us | probably 12th c. | Mandalay, Myanmar | clay | Robert
 Vogel-Sarasin, gifted in 1900 | Ilb 34

Model of a Stûpa

Tsha-tsha come in different shapes and sizes: as relief images or as fully three-dimensional miniature stûpas. Stûpas are reliquaries and may hold the ashes of deceased individuals. Their tiered form symbolizes the stepped path to enlightenment.

- 92 *tsha-tsha* cast
 maker unknown to us | no date | Mongolia | metal, wood | Richard Robert
 Ernst and Magdalena Ernst-Kielholz | Ild 16071
- 93 Votive offering *tsha-tsha*
 maker unknown to us | before 1939 | Ladakh, Tibet | clay, pigments |
 Freiwilliger Museumsverein Basel, on deposit since 1939 | Ilb 1445

On the Path to Ultimate Enlightenment

Bodhisattvas embody boundless compassion and help other beings on the path to ultimate enlightenment before attaining it themselves. They are invoked in times of distress and provide protection against all forms of danger.

- 94 Votive tablet *tsha-tsha* Bodhisattva Sitataârâ in 21 shapes
 maker unknown to us | no date | Tibet | clay, pigments | Gerd-Wolfgang
 Essen, purchased in 1998 | Ild 14336
- 95 Votive tablet *tsha-tsha* Bodhisattva Manjushrî
 maker unknown to us | before 1939 | Ladakh, Tibet | clay | Freiwilliger
 Museumsverein, on deposit since 1939 | Ilb 1439
- 96 Votive tablet *tsha-tsha* with Bodhisattva Tara
 maker unknown to us | before 1939 | Ladakh, Tibet | clay | Freiwilliger
 Museumsverein Basel, on deposit since 1939 | Ilb 1433
- 97 *tsha-tsha* cast
 maker unknown to us | no date | Tibet | Gelbmetall | Gerd-Wolfgang Essen,
 purchased in 1998 | Ild 14158
- 98 *tsha-tsha* cast with clay indentation
 maker unknown to us | no date | India, Basel | brass, clay | Alfred Bühler,
 gifted in 1967 | Ild 6734a+b

Vyshyvanka

Political Messages Through Embroidered Blouses

Politicians often use clothing to show what they stand for.

So did the Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelenskyy.

In 2022 he wore an olive-green shirt with black embroidering in the style of the Vyshyvanka.

Vyshyvanka are white blouses with colourful embroidery.

They originally come from Ukraine.

The patterns carry special meaning.

Originally, the people believed that they were able to ward off evil forces.

Especially at openings such a sleeve or neckline they were said to be highly effective.

It was customary to dress the deceased in such a blouse before they were buried.

Until the mid-20th century, vyshyvanka were worn particularly on feast days and special occasions.

When Ukraine became independent in 1991, people began to take a greater interest in their traditional culture and vyshyvanka also gained in popularity again.

Ever since the Russians occupied the Krim in 2014 and particularly after they invaded Ukraine in 2022 the blouses have signified resistance and solidarity.

Richness in colour and the diagonally worked, opaque satin stitches are typical of the regions in western Ukraine, while in central and eastern Ukraine cross stitches in black and red are more common. Before synthetic yarn came into use, dyeing was a labour-intensive process. Green was difficult to produce which is why the green patches in the design are worked with glass beads.

99 Vyshyvanka blouse
maker unknown to us | Transcarpathia, Ukraine | around 1880 | linen, cotton (yarn), glass beads | G. Jakubowicz, purchased in 1991 | VI 64549

Richly decorated blouses like this were worn on festive occasions. On the upper part of the sleeve, we have an abstract tree; it signifies the growth of a family. At the very bottom, the embroidery is black; it stands for the earth and for past generations. From it grow the trunk and branches in full bloom – they represent the future generations.

100 Vyshyvanka blouse
maker unknown to us | Transcarpathia, Ukraine | around 1880 | linen, cotton (yarn), metal threads, sequins | G. Jakubowicz, purchased in 1991 | VI 64547

The Ukrainian brand Etnodim draws inspiration from historical embroidery and merges it cleverly with the life of present-day Ukrainians. Ancient symbols signifying unmarried girls are fused with the Tinder logo; symbols of good news with the Instagram icon. On this blouse, the 'Tree of Life' bears blossoms bearing the outline of those Ukrainian towns and villages that have suffered most from Russia's war of aggression to date. These include on the left from top to bottom: Snake Island, Volnovakha, Chornobaivka, and Mariupol. On the right from top to bottom: Kharkiv, Cherson, Irpin, Buchach, and Chernihiv.

On this, the brand comments: 'This embroidered shirt was created to become a symbol and form of the front of civilians defending Ukraine. After all, we are fighting today to the best of our ability [...] We dedicate it to the courage of Ukrainians.'

101 Vyshyvanka blouse
Etnodim brand | Kiev, Ukraine | 2025 | linen, cotton (yarn) | Tabea Buri, purchased in 2026 | VI 72620

Adorning Cows

Gratitude in Colour

In the Alps, cows and goats spend the summer on high-altitude pastures.

Life up there can be dangerous, for example, due to storms and steep paths.

This is why, to this day, people celebrate the return of the shepherds and their animals to the valley.

This cattle drive is known as Alpabzug. Each region has its own traditions.

These include colourful decorations on the animal's heads and foreheads and straps for the large bells.

The colours indicate how grateful the shepherds are for a good summer and for the animals' safe return.

In the 1960s, the Museum der Kulturen Basel commissioned several shepherds and shepherdesses in Austria to make cow ornaments for the museum. What is striking about them are the bright colours and shiny elements that contrast with the muted hues of the animals themselves.

From Styria, the museum received pieces which were then mounted on cardboard. A speciality of the region in those days was to adorn certain animals with black and purple 'Klagkränze' (wreaths of mourning) when a household member had died that summer.

- 102 **Cow adornment *G'sichtskranz***
maker unknown to us | Ennstal, Styria, Austria | 1965 | linen, glossy and silver paper, metal foil, mirror, silk ribbon, wood | Karl Haiding, purchased in 1965 | VI 32368
- 103 **Cow adornment for autumn cattle drive**
maker unknown to us | Ennstal, Styria, Austria | 1965 | glossy paper, metal foil, linen ribbon, silk ribbon, wood, wire | Karl Haiding, purchased in 1965 | VI 32369
- 104 **Cow adornment *G'sichtskranz***
maker unknown to us | Ennstal, Styria, Austria | 1965 | gold ribbon, crepe paper, fir cone | Karl Haiding, purchased in 1965 | VI 32374
- 105 **Neck collar for cows**
maker unknown to us | Ennstal, Styria, Austria | 1965 | gold ribbon, crepe paper | Karl Haiding, purchased in 1965 | VI 32375

Photographs Coloured by Hand

In the early days, photographs used to be black-and-white
There were no colour photos.

However, people wished for colourful pictures which is why some of the photos were hand-coloured afterwards to make them look more like reality.

This technique was referred to as colourizing. It required a great deal of skill.

Every hand-coloured photograph is unique.

Translucent colours

When Japan opened up to Western travellers and trade, photo technology also spread quite quickly. Colourists, long versed in toning woodcut prints, began collaborating with photographers. Using delicate, translucent colours and carefully composed images, they began depicting landscapes, temples, and cities full of atmosphere. They sold their pictures to Western travellers and thus shaped the way Japan was perceived across the world. They are an expression of the longings and desires that became projected onto the country.

- 106 **Lake Chūzenji**
photo studio A. Farsari & Co. | Tochigi Prefecture, Japan | before 1949 | albumen print on card, colorized | collection heirs of Mrs Geigy, gifted in 1949 | (F)Ild 1281
- 107 **Torii at the entrance of the Toshugu shrine**
photo studio A. Farsari & Co. | Nikko, Tochigi Prefecture, Japan | before 1949 | albumen print on card, colorized | collection heirs of Mrs Geigy, gifted in 1949 | (F)Ild 1286
- 108 **Landscape near Miyanoshita**
photo studio A. Farsari & Co. | Kanagawa Prefecture, Japan | before 1949 | albumen print on card, colorized | collection heirs of Mrs Geigy, gifted in 1949 | (F)Ild 1287
- 109 **Untitled**
photographer unknown | Japan | before 1952 | albumen print on card, colorized | collection Lina Paravicini-Weiss, bequest in 1952 | (F)Ild 1361
- 110 **View of the Sumida River**
photo studio Kusakabe Kimbei | Tokyo, Japan | before 1897 | 1952 albumen prints in photo albums, colorized | collection Robert Vogel-Sarasin | Felix Speiser-Courvoisier, gifted in 2020 | (F)Ild 7050 and (F)Ild 7051

Stereotypes in Colour

The Italian photographer Felice Beato moved to Yokohama in 1863 where he opened a photo studio and began working with local photographers and colourists. Apart from land and cityscapes, they produced cliched photographs of Japanese people and carefully staged everyday scenes. They were specifically made for Western travellers. The garments and patterns were colourized and highlighted with great care. When enlarged, the brush strokes and coloured areas are clearly visible, revealing the added touches of colour.

- 111 **Untitled**
 probably photo studio Felice Beato | Japan | 1872 | albumen print on card, colorized | collection heirs of Karl Zahn-Burckhardt, gifted in 1948 | (F)Ild 1246
- 112 **Untitled**
 photo studio Felice Beato | Japan | before 1872 | albumen print on card, colorized | collection heirs of Karl Zahn-Burckhardt, gifted in 1948 | (F)Ild 1247
- 113 **Untitled**
 photo studio Felice Beato | Japan | before 1872 | albumen print on card, colorized | collection heirs of Karl Zahn-Burckhardt, gifted in 1948 | (F)Ild 1250
- 114 **Untitled**
 photo studio Felice Beato | Japan | before 1872 | albumen print on card, colorized | collection heirs of Karl Zahn-Burckhardt, gifted in 1948 | (F)Ild 1257

Colouring as a Profession

Colourists were employed in photo studios where their job was to add colour to photographs and prints. The selection of colours, knowing which aspects to highlight, and the actual colouring process required a high degree of skill; the end product depended on the expertise and interpretation of the colourist in charge. In order to convey an impression of their task, the work process was staged and photographed, having the men pose with a brush in hand. Other equipment such as worktables and small dishes containing pigments were placed in full view.

- 115 Colourist in Felice Beatos photo studio
photo studio Felice Beato | Yokohama, Japan | 1868 | Facsimile from an albumen print, colourized | J. Paul Getty Museum, 2007.26.182. Digital image courtesy of Getty's Open Content Program
- 116 Colourist at work
photo studio Kusakabe Kimbei | Japan | 1880s–1890s| Facsimile from an albumen print, colourized | Courtesy of the Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, Harvard University, 2003.1.2223.390

A Family from Basel in Japan

Around the mid-1880s, the family of Johann Rudolf and Susanna Catharina Merian-Zaeslin from Basel lived in Yokohama for several years. They always remained connected with their home country. They named their residence Villa Basilea and routinely celebrated Swiss holidays and anniversaries. The events and venues were caught on camera by professional photographers. Afterwards, the pictures were colourized and kept as mementos. Opaque colours were used for the flags.

- 117 '500th anniversary of the Battle of Sempach, 1386'
unknown photo studio | Yokohama, Japan | 1886 | albumen print, colorized | collection Johann Rudolf Merian-Zaeslin | Hans Lanz, gifted in 1998 | (F)Ild 2726 and (F)Ild 2727
- 118 Johann Rudolf and Susanna Catharina Merian-Zaeslin with children in front of Villa Basilea
unknown photo studio | Yokohama, Japan | before 1894 | albumen print, colorized | collection Johann Rudolf Merian-Zaeslin | Hans Lanz, gifted in 1998 | (F)Ild 2729

- 119 '[Illegible] picnic for Merian's'
unknown photo studio | Ikegami, Tokyo, Japan | 1893 | albumen print,
colorized | collection Johann Rudolf Merian-Zaeslin | Hans Lanz, gifted in
1998 | (F)Id 7088

Colourful Cats – Spot the Differences!

Around 1920, cats were a popular motif on postcards in Berlin. They were photographed in studios, wearing bows and positioned on cushions or in baskets. The postcards were sold in two different sizes and a range of colours. The order book reveals that the same motif was rendered in varying colours. Using both translucent and opaque paints, new elements were added or existing details highlighted. In this way, black-and-white photographs were turned into colourful postcards for every taste.

- 120 Order book for postcards
Photochemie Berlin N. 113 | Berlin, Germany | ca 1920 | paper, silver
gelatine prints (colorized) | collection Rosmarie Müller, procured by the
Department of Education, Canton Basel-Stadt, gifted in 2010 | VI 70941

A Burst of Colours

Green stones, yellow feathers or red heartwood.

Strong colours are found in nature,
but they are rare.

To obtain these colours and make dyes from them,
people need a lot of knowledge, time and skill.

These dyes were valuable
and so were used for special purposes.

Synthetic dyes have been produced
since the mid-19th century.

Dyes became cheaper and
more people were able to buy them.

The trade in dyestuffs was often linked
to colonization.

The repercussions of this on people
and the environment are felt to this day.

At the same time, new possibilities emerged:
things could be designed differently
and the meanings of colour changed.

Textiles

Crimson and the Colonial Trade

Crimson is a red pigment.
It is obtained from scale insects called cochineal.
They live on prickly pear cacti.

In Central and South America people have long used crimson to colour textiles, for instance, for important individuals or for special occasions.

Many cochineal insects are needed to make even a small amount of dye.
For 50 grammes of crimson, as many as 100,000 of them are needed.

After the late 16th century, cochineal became an important commodity.
Spain was then a colonial power.
It controlled the trade in the red dyestuff between America and Europe.

In the 20th century, new uses were found for crimson, for instance, in food production and cosmetics.

- 121 **'Ojillos' rug**
Andrés Gutiérrez Sosa | Zapotec | Teotitlán del Valle, Oaxaca, Mexico | 2007 | wool, cochineal, Tejute leaves, lime juice, indigo, moss | Andrés Gutiérrez Sosa, purchased in 2007 | IVb 5791
- 122 **Wrap-around skirt for a woman's festive dress**
Laureano Sánchez Martínez | Zapotec | Santa Ana del Valle, Oaxaca, Mexico | 2007 | wool, cochineal | Laureano Sánchez Martínez, purchased in 2007 | IVb 5811
- 123 **Poncho**
Aymara | Bolivia | around 1966 | wool | Claudia Andujar, purchased in 1967 | IVc 11365
- 124 **Man's poncho**
Aymara | Cuzco, Peru | around 1990 | wool | Gerhard Baer, purchased in 1995 | IVc 24996
- 125 **'Movimiento' rug**
Andrés Gutiérrez Sosa | Zapotec | Teotitlán del Valle, Oaxaca, Mexico | 2007 | wool, cochineal, Tejute leaves, lime juice | Andrés Gutiérrez Sosa, purchased in 2007 | IVb 5788
- 126 **Colour sample**
Andrés Gutiérrez Sosa | Zapotec | Teotitlán del Valle, Oaxaca, Mexico | 2007 | wool, cochineal, Tejute leaves, lime juice (dipped once) | Andrés Gutiérrez Sosa, purchased in 2007 | IVb 5789.01
- 127 **Colour sample**
Andrés Gutiérrez Sosa | Zapotec | Teotitlán del Valle, Oaxaca, Mexico | 2007 | wool, cochineal, Tejute leaves, lime juice (dipped twice) | Andrés Gutiérrez Sosa, purchased in 2007 | IVb 5789.02
- 128 **Colour sample**
Andrés Gutiérrez Sosa | Zapotec | Teotitlán del Valle, Oaxaca, Mexico | 2007 | wool, cochineal, Tejute leaves, lime juice (dipped three times) | Andrés Gutiérrez Sosa, purchased in 2007 | IVb 5789.03

Textiles

Purple Dye Snails and Indigenous Knowledge

Indigenous communities
in the state of Oaxaca
in southern Mexico obtain
a valuable dye from murex snails.

These snails live in the sea.
They produce a milky-white secretion.
Exposure to sunlight
causes its colour to change.
It turns into a deep crimson
we call purple.

In Oaxaca purple is mainly used
for women's festive wear.

Specialists search for snails in crevices along the rocky shore at low tide. There is no need to harm the creatures for their secretion and they recover once it has been harvested. Their numbers are nonetheless in decline. For one gramme of dye, up to 10,000 snail glands need to be 'milked'.

- 129 Wedding dress skirt
 Mixtec | Pinotepa de Don Luis, Oaxaca, Mexico | 1988 | cotton, silk, purple,
 indigo | Susanne Hammacher, purchased in 1988 | IVb 5302
- 130 Wedding dress blouse
 Mixtec | Santa Catarina Mechoacan, Oaxaca, Mexico | around 1972 | cotton,
 purple | collection Valentin Jaquet | ME 832

Camwood

Valuable Dye Source

Tukula is a red pigment based on powdered camwood.

In the Kuba Kingdom (17th-19th century) in present-day Congo in central Africa, its powder was stored in wooden boxes. The red dye it produced was very valuable.

The Kuba used the red powder cosmetically on the skin and hair, and to colour cloth and woodcarvings.

It was also important in funerary rites: its paste was used to anoint bodies before burial.

Women mixed the powder into a paste and shaped it into small figurines. These figurines were offerings for the deceased.

- 131 **Camwood**
Côte d'Ivoire | before 1937 | camwood | Ludwig Geiger, purchased in 1937 | III 1061
- 132 **Camwood**
Cameroon | before 1935 | camwood | Peter Valentin-Ingold, 1935, gifted in 1970 | III 6424
- 133 **Camwood paste figurine *mboong itool***
maker unknown to us | Kuba | Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo | before 1948 | powdered camwood, sand and water, baked | Hans Himmelheber, purchased in 1948 | III 5652
- 134 **Box with lid *ngedi mu ntey***
maker unknown to us | Kuba | Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo | before 1948 | wood, traces of powdered camwood | Hans Himmelheber, purchased in 1948 | III 4547
- 135 **Box with lid *ngedi mu ntey***
maker unknown to us | Kuba | Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo | unknown date | wood, traces of powdered camwood | by exchange in 1967 | III 17670 a-b

Buffalo Masks

Paint from Europe

These masks come from Cameroon.

Duala carvers made them.

These masks represent Nyati, the buffalo.

The buffalo is considered to be strong and courageous.

These masks were worn during festivities and dance performances.

The performers mimicked the movements of the buffalo.

These masks are decorated with synthetic paint from Europe.

To make paint from natural materials was time-consuming and expensive.

This is why ready-made paint that reached Africa in the colonial trade was in great demand in the early 20th century.

Masks

What Colour Does the Devil Wear?

The Diablada comes from Bolivia and Peru. It is a folk dance that uses masks resembling the Devil.

'Diablo' is Spanish for 'devil'. The dance represents the battle between good and evil.

In it, the Devil is often dressed in red. The red colour suggests the fire and heat of Hell. It also symbolizes strong emotions like anger, power, and desire.

In South America, the Devil does not solely represent evil. Sometimes he is shown to be a comical and clumsy figure, for instance, in Mexican Nativity plays.

They employ humour to criticize events in society.

- 137 Diablada costume, a carnival outfit made for the piccolo and drum group
DéjàVü
Cochabamba, Bolivia | 2001 (?) | synthetic fibres, lurex, sequins, plastic
beads, pasteboard, metal, foam, papier-mâché, acrylic paint | private loan
- 138 Mask of a devil's costume for a Nativity play
Mexico City, Mexico | 2014 | papier-mâché | AMEX Basel, purchased on
behalf of MKB | IVb 5854.01-05
- 139 Devils on a carnival float
Manuel Jiménez | Arrazola, Oaxaca, Mexico | around 1973 | wood, paint,
metal | gifted by Marcelle Geiger-Vifian | IVb 6364.01-03

Rosa Mexicano

Colour and Identity

Rosa mexicana is a specific colour from Mexico.

It is a strong and bright pink.

In the early 20th century, the Mexican government promoted arts and crafts production to enable farmers to improve their incomes.

New designs and colours were created at the time, vivid Mexican pink among them.

It was used to paint houses and furniture, and to dye cloth.

In Mexico today, Mexican pink represents a positive attitude to life.

While the fashion designer Ramón Valdiosera is seen as the man who put Mexican pink on the map in the 1940s, the artist Diego Rivera is said to be responsible for introducing the use of bright acrylic paint in ceramics production in the city of Metepec. His artwork also immortalizes the papier-mâché figures in bathing costumes that were first made in the town of Celaya at the end of the 19th century. They were sold as toys at fairgrounds where animals and fantasy figures made of wood were also on offer.

- 140 **Lupita doll 'Cecilia'**
maker unknown to us | Celaya, Guanajuato, Mexico | 1994 | papier-mâché |
collection Robert and Cécile Hiltbrand-Grimmeisen, gifted in 2014 |
RH 15773
- 141 **Lupita doll 'Sofia'**
maker unknown to us | Celaya, Guanajuato, Mexico | 1994 | papier-mâché |
collection Robert and Cécile Hiltbrand-Grimmeisen, gifted in 2014 |
RH 15774
- 142 **Lupita doll 'Dora'**
maker unknown to us | Celaya, Guanajuato, Mexico | 1976 | papier-mâché |
collection Robert and Cécile Hiltbrand-Grimmeisen, gifted in 2014 |
RH 9239
- 143 **Mermaid 'Sirena'**
maker unknown to us | Metepec, State of Mexico, Mexico | around 1973 |
clay, acrylic paint | collection Robert and Cécile Hiltbrand-Grimmeisen,
gifted in 2014 | RH 4727
- 144 **Squirrel**
maker unknown to us | Arrazola, Oaxaca, Mexico | around 1973 | wood,
color | Collection Marcelle Geiger-Vifian | IVb 6367
- 145 **Squirrel**
maker unknown to us | Arrazola, Oaxaca, Mexico | around 1973 | wood,
paint | collection Marcelle Geiger-Vifian | IVb 6365
- 146 **Horse or giraffe**
maker unknown to us | Arrazola, Oaxaca, Mexico | no date | wood, paint |
collection Marcelle Geiger-Vifian | IVb 6376

Masks

Greenstone for Dignitaries

Greenstones such as jade or serpentine are rare and valuable.

Long before the Spaniards arrived in 1521, people in North and Central America had a special appreciation of them.

They wore greenstone as items of jewellery such as pendants, pectorals, or as masks during festivals.

Greenstone also had an important role in burials. Masks fashioned from it were placed in the graves of important individuals.

Offerings of greenstone were also made by those praying for soil fertility and protection from the gods.

- 147 **Mask**
Teotihuacán | Mexico | 200 BC – AD 600 | opihalcite | collection Lukas Vischer 1828–1837, family gift from a bequest, 1844 | IVb 667
- 148 **Mask**
Mixtec | Mexico | 11th–15th c. | opihalcite | collection Lukas Vischer 1828–1837, family gift from a bequest, 1844 | IVb 665
- 149 **Mask**
Olmec | Mexico | 11th–5th c. BC | serpentine, pigments | collection Lukas Vischer 1828–1837, family gift from a bequest, 1844 | IVb 664
- 150 **Mask**
Tlaxcala-Puebla | Tizatlán, Tlaxcala, Mexico | 11th–15th c. | jadeite | collection José Luciano Castañeda around 1807, collection Lukas Vischer 1828–1837, family gift from a bequest, 1844 | IVb 666

Feathers

Green Protection

Green feathers help to camouflage Amazon parrots and parakeets in

the rainforests of South America.

Their green plumage makes the birds practically invisible in the trees.

The vibrant colour captivates many people.

They collect the feathers

when the birds moult

and use them to make jewellery.

During celebrations among the indigenous Kofan community of Colombia, only the most important men can wear large feather headdresses that are made with many rows of parrot and parakeet feathers. The feathers protect the wearer and signal his role as a shaman who, bird-like, can fly to the spirit world to cure illness or find solutions to problems.

- 151 Feather headdress
Kofan | Santa Rosa de Sucumbios, Putumayo, Colombia | around 1970 | feathers (Amazon parrot, parakeet), plant fibre | Borys Malkin, purchased in 1972 | IVc 15247

Feather ball is a popular game in South America. People use their hands, head or other parts of the body to play it. The shuttlecock consists of a weight and feathers that stabilize its flight.

- 152 Shuttlecock
Bororo | Mato Grosso, Brazil | around 1965 | feathers, plant fibres, maize husk paper | Borys Malkin, purchased in 1967 | IVc 11011

- 153 Blue fronted amazon (*Amazona aestiva*)
NMB-AVES-6476 | on loan from the Naturhistorisches Museum Basel

Rose Chafer

Iridescent Green

Humans have long made use
of insect bodies to make art.

With its metallic sheen,
the rose chafer's dazzling green
catches the eye.

People in the highlands
of Papua New Guinea

were fascinated by the colour.
Such vibrant shades of green
barely existed around them.

The Chimbu used the insects
to adorn their headbands and belts.
The iridescent bodies were carefully
mounted on plaited grass.

Ceramics

Wet behind the Ears

Until pottery is fired,
it remains soft and malleable.
In that state it is called 'green'.
Green here does not refer to colour;
it means that a piece is unfinished.

To add colour to pottery wares,
a glaze is applied to them before firing.

If potters add copper or iron oxide
to their glaze,
its colour changes in the kiln.
Firing produces a vibrant green.

Shades of green can vary greatly
from olive to light or dark green to turquoise.

After firing, pottery wares are no longer 'green'
in the sense of unfinished,
but instead in terms of colour;
and many an animal figure literally
is no longer wet behind the ears.

Certain household items are entirely coated in green glaze. In another ceramic practice, green is used as a slip in which patterns are made. In another technique again, glaze is trailed to produce a random pattern (broom finish), or it is poured on to produce a marble-like effect.

- 155 **Display plate**
maker unknown to us | Langnau, Bern, Switzerland | 1728 | ceramic |
Historisches Museum Basel, gifted in 2025 | HM 1908.0289
- 156 **Plate**
Maker unknown to us | Fabro, Umbria, Italy | around 1970 | ceramic |
collection Robert and Cécile Hiltbrand-Grimmeisen, gifted in 2014 |
RH 11894
- 157 **Tiled stove base modelled on a dog**
maker unknown to us | Lampenberg, Basel-Land, Switzerland | 19th c. |
ceramic | August Meyer, purchased in 1912 | VI 5145
- 158 **Piggy bank**
maker unknown to us | Nis, Serbia | ca 1960 | ceramic | Robert Hiltbrand,
gifted in 1962 | VI 28703
- 159 **Hedgehog**
maker unknown to us | Urzędów, Kraśnik, Poland | 20th c. | ceramic |
collection Robert and Cécile Hiltbrand-Grimmeisen, gifted in 2014 |
RH 143
- 160 **Savings box**
maker unknown to us | Heimberg, Bern, Switzerland | around 1900 |
ceramic | Ch. Haueter, purchased in 1908 | VI 2190
- 161 **Bowl**
maker unknown to us | Langnau, Bern, Switzerland | 1723 | ceramic |
Historisches Museum Basel, gifted in 2025 | HM 1895.0180
- 162 **Milk jug**
Maker unknown to us | Ficulle, Umbria, Italy | around 1970 | ceramic |
collection Robert and Cécile Hiltbrand-Grimmeisen, gifted in 2014 |
RH 3935

Feathers

Signalling Ethnicity

In the Amazonian rainforest of Brazil, many indigenous communities make jewellery with feathers.

People wear such jewellery to show which group they belong to.

Within a community, people wear different types of feather jewellery. It can look different depending on individuals' age and the tasks they perform.

Certain colours and colour combinations remind people of their ancestors.

Yellow feathers often symbolise the power of the sun and life.

The featherwork of the Ka'apor in Brazil is particularly elaborate. Women and men adorn themselves with wooden combs to which they attach festoons of feathers. In contrast, only village headmen are permitted to use feather headdresses containing the yellow tail feathers of the crested oropendola. The legendary hero of the Ka'apor, Maíra, is said to have worn one.

- 163** Feather headdress
Ka'apor | Aldeia Tuxaua Piarú, Rio Gurupi, Maranhão, Brazil | 1948 | feathers of the crested oropendola, cotinga, scarlet macaw, and red-billed curassow, plant fibres, wood, cotton | collection Armin Caspar 1948, Marianne and Celia Caspar, purchased in 2018 | IVc 26895
- 164** Feather headdress
Ka'apor | Aldeia Tuxaua-Piarú, Rio Gurupi, Maranhão, Brazil | 1963–1964 | feathers of the crested oropendola, cotinga, scarlet macaw, and red-billed curassow, plant fibres, wood, cotton | collection Armin Caspar 1948, Marianne and Celia Caspar, purchased in 2018 | IVc 11318
- 165** Comb
Ka'apor | Aldeia Tuxaua Piarú, Rio Gurupi, Maranhão, Brazil | 1948 | toucan, cotinga, red-billed curassow feathers, plant fibres, wood | collection Armin Caspar 1948, Marianne and Celia Caspar, purchased in 2018 | IVc 26901
- 166** Two crested oropendolas (*Psarocolius decumanus*)
NMB-AVES-1347 (M), NMB-AVES-1349 (F) |
on loan from the Naturhistorisches Museum Basel

Glass Beads

Yellow Amulets

These amulets are shaped like a scorpion. They were made by the Bedja, who live in the desert borderlands between Egypt and Sudan.

These amulets were intended to offer protection from scorpion stings and evil forces.

In the 17th century, merchants began to export glass beads from Europe to Africa.

Glass beads were in great demand there. New styles of clothing and jewellery were created with them.

167 Five scorpion-shaped amulets
Bedja | Nubian Desert, Egypt / Sudan | before 1956 | wire, glass beads |
collected by Ludwig Keimer, consigned by Stiftung C.L. Burckhardt-
Reinhart, gifted in 1956 | III 4692a, d, f, g, h

Orchid Bast

Highlighted in Yellow

New Guinea is home to roughly 3,000 orchid species.

The people make use of the stems of the *Dendrobium* genus for decorative purposes. They use them to adorn pleated bracelets, belts or bags.

Their rich yellow sets them apart from other natural fibres. The colour is very vibrant.

- 168 Bag
maker unknown to us | Papua Selatan-Province, Papua, Indonesia | vegetable fibres, orchid bast | Paul Wirz, gifted from bequest in 1958 | Vb 15094
- 169 Belt
maker unknown to us | Highland Provinces, Papua New Guinea | vegetable fibres, orchid bast | bequest Paul de Rautenfeld in 1991 | Vb 30416

Saffron

Handpicked Yellow

Yellow saffron is considered the world's most expensive spice.

Each flower of the saffron crocus (*Crocus sativus*) produces three red threads.

They give saffron its aroma and its yellow colour.

The threads are harvested by hand.

It takes between 150,000 and 200,000 flowers to produce one kilogram of saffron.

Saffron is not only used in cooking:

In antiquity, it was used to display wealth.

From Persia to Greece, its use as a yellow dye for clothing, hair, and nails was widespread.

In the Middle Ages, saffron was used in manuscript illumination as a substitute for gold leaf.

To this day, it is also used in perfumes.

From Natural to Synthetic Dyes

For thousands of years, people have used colourants derived from plants and animals. A turning point came in 1856, when the English chemist William Henry Perkin discovered the synthetic dye mauveine. This purple colour became a commercial success and marked the beginning of the rise of synthetic dyes.

Synthetic dyes are more resistant to light and washing, and their production is cheaper and faster. With the Industrial Revolution, the demand for textiles increased enormously. The production of natural dyes could not keep up with mass production and was gradually replaced. The modern chemical industry began during this period. Today's large corporations, such as Novartis, started with the production of synthetic dyes.

Natural Colours Valued and Rediscovered

Today, natural dyes are experiencing a revival. With growing environmental and health awareness, demand for products without synthetic additives is increasing. Plant-based dyes such as indigo, turmeric, or beetroot are environmentally friendly, biodegradable, and well tolerated.

This trend is also visible on social media and in DIY books, with numerous instructions on how to produce and use natural dyes for textiles, cosmetics, or recipes. Independently of such trends, knowledge about natural dyes has been passed down and developed over generations in many communities.

Saffron Attracts

Approximately 90% of the world's saffron production comes from Iran. Only the red saffron threads are harvested; the violet petals are usually discarded. The women's cooperative in the Iranian village of Khorashad has found a use for these petals: they dye cotton yarn violet and weave it into two-coloured scarves. For the yellow, the more affordable flowers of the reseda plant are used.

- 170 Saffron petals and scarf
 Shirin Persia | Khorashad, Iran | acquired for the exhibition
- 171 Fabric dyes in saffron yellow and violet
 Haute Couture | acquired for the exhibition

Indigo

Dark Blue with a History

The use of indigo as a dyestuff is a long-established tradition. In many areas, distinct techniques and specific designs evolved over centuries.

During the colonial era, indigo was in great demand on the world market. Cloth dyed with indigo was traded between Europe, Africa and America. It even functioned as a means of payment in the trade with enslaved people.

At the end of the 19th century, a synthetic dark blue dye was developed in Germany. It replaced dye made from the indigo plant.

Artificial indigo dye has been used for blue jeans around the world since the 1960s.

The blue fabric used for jeans is called denim, a word derived from the French for 'from Nîmes'. Made famous around the world by the American Levi Strauss brand, denim was first made in that French city. Only the warp threads are dyed indigo before weaving. As the dye attaches only to the surface of the fibre, the colour fades with frequent washing. Even before they are sold, jeans are often deliberately faded and frayed by rubbing before they go on sale.

172 **Jeans**

ZUIKI | Place of manufacture unknown to us, sold in Udine, Italy | 21st c. | cotton | Tamara Posillipo and Dominik Wunderlin, purchased in 2015 | VI 71483

The boubou is worn in West Africa by men and often women too. It is a wide-sleeved robe, styled simply for everyday use or more elegantly for special occasions. Garments dyed in strong shades of indigo were once very popular. On being finished, embroidered decoration was applied to a garment's neckline. These boubous from Cameroon and Guinea were prestige garments intended for a dignitary and a ritual specialist, respectively.

173 *boubou robe*

maker unknown to us | Bali | Bali-Nyonga, Cameroon | before 1908 | cotton, indigo | Basel Mission Collection, on deposit from around 1981, gifted in 2015 | III 26466

174 *boubou robe with cap*

maker unknown to us | Guinea | before 1862 | cotton, indigo | Basel Mission Collection, on deposit from around 1981, gifted in 2015 | III 26310 a-b

Before being dyed in indigo, this cloth had its geometric design created using the oversewn raffia stitch-resist technique. The design and the technique originally spread through trade with Nigeria's Wukari region. This cloth called *ndop* is originally a symbol of royal power and wealth and has also been made in the Cameroon Grasslands since the reign of King Ibrahim Njoya (1887–1931). The Bamum and Bamileke peoples used it during ceremonial occasions such as funerary and mourning rites. It was also exchanged between kings and chiefs in the Grasslands.

How the French colonial official Henri Relly acquired this item remains unclear: did he receive it as a diplomatic gift or acquire it in suspect circumstances?

- 175 *ndop* cloth
Bamum | maker unknown to us | Cameroon | before 1953 | cotton, indigo | Henri Relly, purchased | III 12115
- 176 Three cakes of indigo
Republic of Benin | 1963 | indigo | collected by René Gardi, consigned by Verband Schweizerischer Konsumvereine VSK, gifted in 1968 | III 17626
- 177 Powdered indigo
Zaria, Nigeria | 1980 | indigo | Renée Boser-Sarivaxévanis, purchased in 1980 | III 21679
- 178 Indigo plant
Renée Boser-Sarivaxévanis | Sawana, Burkina Faso | 21.07.1974 | transparency | (F)III 101199
- 179 Indigo dyeing
Bernhard Gardi | Iseyin, Nigeria | 20.03.1974 | transparency | (F)III 100809

Glass Beads

Blue Tears of Heaven

Glass beads from Bohemia, Venice and Russia arrived in North America with traders in the 18th century.

They introduced glass beads to the prairie grasslands of the interior.

Indigenous communities began to work with them.

They decorated their clothing and leather goods with them.

Blue glass beads were particularly favoured.

The colour blue had a special meaning for people. They associated it with the sky, water and protection.

- 180** **Moccasins**
Cheyenne | USA | 2nd half 19th c. | leather, glass beads | Etienne Loppé,
purchased in 1909 | IVa 113a, b
- 181** **Pair of cuffs**
maker unknown to us | USA | possibly early 20th c. | leather, glass beads,
metal | Ella Clavel-Simonius, gifted in 1971 | IVa 2386a, b
- 182** **Knife Sheath**
maker unknown to us | USA | possibly late 19th c. | leather, glass beads,
mother-of-pearl | Max Oser, gifted in 1941, formerly Buffalo Bill Collection |
IVa 797
- 183** **Knife Sheath**
maker unknown to us | USA | possibly late 19th c. | leather, glass beads,
mother-of-pearl | Max Oser, gifted in 1941, formerly Stafford Beadwork
Collection | IVa 796
- 184** **Moccasins**
maker unknown to us | USA | possibly early 20th c. | leather, glass beads,
metal | Ella Clavel-Simonius, gifted in 1971 | IVa 2387a, b
- 185** **Moccasins**
Ute | USA | possibly late 19th c. | leather, glass beads | Max Oser, gifted in
1941 | IVa 795a, b

String Bags

Multi-coloured and Eye-catching

For the women of Papua New Guinea, string bags are very important.

They carry almost everything in them, from their garden produce to their infants.

Women used to make their bags from various natural fibres.

They then dyed the fibres.

At first, they used natural colours, before they switched to synthetic ones.

In recent decades, they started using synthetic materials such as nylon.

This has given their bags a jazzier look.

- 186 *wut* string bag
maker unknown to us | Maprik District, East Sepik Province, Papua New Guinea | nylon | Brigitta and Jörg Hauser-Schäublin, purchased in 1980 | Vb 28563
- 187 *wut* string bag
Kwaikwai | 1980 | Palimbei, East Sepik Province, Papua New Guinea | nylon | Florence Weiss, purchased in 1980 | Vb 28808
- 188 *wut* string bag
Tubwimoe | 1980 | Palimbei, East Sepik Province, Papua New Guinea | plant fibres | Florence Weiss, purchased in 1980 | Vb 28774
- 189 *wut* string bag
Kasoagwi | 1980 | Palimbei, East Sepik Province, Papua New Guinea | plant fibres | Florence Weiss, purchased in 1980 | Vb 28777

Textiles

Colourful Silk

In the 19th century, Merina women in Madagascar produced colourful silk scarves.

Indian traders introduced silk to the island in the mid-17th century.

Imerina developed as a centre of silk manufacture. Around 1820, the Merina community began to breed imported silkworms. This enabled them to produce mulberry silk for their own needs.

Mulberry silk differed from the wild silk produced by native silkworms. The ancestral rules and rituals did not apply to mulberry silk.

This allowed Merina weavers to try new things, whether it was man-made colours, new designs or different techniques.

Glass Beads

Colourful Aprons

In Cameroon girls and women of the Kapsiki community once wore an apron made with glass beads; its name was pikuran.

They wore it mainly for celebrations and other special occasions.

Such aprons indicated a woman's age, wealth, social and marital status.

In the course of Islamisation and nation building, rules evolved that required women to be fully clothed. This explains why the aprons vanished from day-to-day life. The glass bead aprons here were probably made and worn for the benefit of tourists.

- 191 *pikuran* glass bead apron
maker unknown to us | Kapsiki | Northern Cameroon, Cameroon | before 1956 | glass beads, cotton, cowrie shells | Bernhard Gardi, purchased in 1997 | III 27002
- 192 *pikuran* glass bead apron
maker unknown to us | Kapsiki | Northern Cameroon, Cameroon | before 1956 | glass beads, cotton, cowrie shells | Bernhard Gardi, purchased in 1997 | III 27001

Feathers

New Colours, New Diversity

On Papua New Guinea's Feni Islands,
people use feathers
for dances and performances.

In the past, they mainly used three colours:
Red, Black, and White.
Each colour had a particular meaning.

Nowadays people use new colours
such as pink, blue or purple.
These are synthetic colours.

Dances have changed too.
Nowadays people perform them
when a school or church opens, for instance.

Colour still has an important role to play.
It reinforces meaning and today
is stronger and more varied than before.

- 193 *kangal (lo utun)*, dancer's headdress
Jacob Kiapbubuk | probably 2001 | Kamgot, Feni Islands, New Ireland
Province, Papua New Guinea | wood, fibres, feathers, bamboo | Antje
Denner, accessioned in 2002 | Vb 31111
- 194 *tumbuan* mask
Paul Nepuar | 2004 | Banakin, Feni Islands, New Ireland Province, Papua
New Guinea | plant fibres, pigments, wood, feathers | Antje Denner,
purchased in 2004 | Vb 31231
- 195 *kangal (lo liu)*, dancer's headdress
Joe Simail and Paul Vigelmat | probably 2001 | Farangot, Feni Islands, New
Ireland Province, Papua New Guinea | wood, fibres, feathers | Antje Denner,
accessioned in 2002 | Vb 31109

Labels

Colourful images for colourful dyes

Basel companies such as Rohner, CIBA, and Geigy (today Novartis) produced artificial dyes from the late 19th century onward and sold them in many countries.

They designed the packaging of the dyes with colourful labels. These labels also show images from Asian countries.

The images are often very colourful and simplified. They present Asia as foreign and different.

The labels therefore tell not only about the trade in goods, but also about what kinds of images of other regions were circulated.

- 196 **Label Two pheasants with a flowering bush**
J.G. Geigy Soc. An. | Japan | ca. 1910 | chromolithography, paper | Ciba, gifted in 1983 | Ild 10374
- 197 **Label Babulnath Temple**
Geigy | India | after 1942 | chromolithography, paper | Ciba, gifted in 1983 | Ila 8139
- 198 **Label Roman monument**
Geigy | India | after 1942 | chromolithography, paper | Ciba, gifted in 1983 | Ila 8136
- 199 **Label Basilisk**
J.R. Geigy S.A. | India | after 1942 | chromolithography, paper | Ciba, gifted in 1983 | Ila 8141
- 200 **Label Boat**
Geigy | India | after 1942 | chromolithography, paper | Ciba, gifted in 1983 | Ila 8138
- 201 **Label Horse Riding Festival Buzkashi**
Geigy | India | after 1942 | chromolithography, paper | Ciba, gifted in 1983 | Ila 8151
- 202 **Label Chariot**
Rohner Ltd. Chemical Works | India | no date | chromolithography, paper | Ciba, gifted in 1983 | Ila 8149
- 203 **Label Sea god**
Geigy | India | after 1942 | chromolithography, paper | Ciba, gifted in 1983 | Ila 8137
- 204 **Label Two peacocks**
Geigy | India | after 1942 | chromolithography, paper | Ciba, gifted in 1983 | Ila 8135
- 205 **Label Woman with a jug**
Rohner Ltd. Chemical Works | India | after 1942 | chromolithography, paper | Ciba, gifted in 1983 | Ila 8148
- 206 **Label Tiger and Dragon in a Thunderstorm**
J.G. Geigy S.A. | Japan | ca. 1910 | chromolithography, paper | Ciba, gifted in 1983 | Ild 10375
- 207 **Label Fire**
Rohner Ltd. Chemical Works | India | after 1942 | chromolithography, paper | Ciba, gifted in 1983 | Ila 8146

- 208 **Label Phoenix**
Geigy | India | after 1942 | chromolithography, paper | Ciba, gifted in 1983 |
Ila 8143
- 209 **Label Elephant**
Geigy | India | after 1942 | chromolithography, paper | Ciba, gifted in 1983 |
Ila 8140
- 210 **Label A person with a shield and a spear**
Geigy | Mumbai, Maharashtra, India | after 1942 | chromolithography, paper |
Ciba, gifted in 1983 | Ila 8133
- 211 **Label Lion on a barrel**
Gesellschaft für Chemische Industrie Basel | India | after 1942 |
chromolithography, paper | Ciba, gifted in 1983 | Ila 8150
- 212 **Label Gazelle**
Geigy | India | after 1942 | chromolithography, paper | Ciba, gifted in 1983 |
Ila 8142
- 213 **Label Turtle and Phoenix**
J.G. Geigy Soc. An. | Japan | ca. 1910 | chromolithography, paper | Ciba,
gifted in 1983 | Ild 10373
- 214 **Label Lion on a pedestal**
Geigy | India | after 1942 | paper | Ciba, gifted in 1983 | Ila 8132d
- 215 **Label Merchants, kites, Japanese flags**
J.R. Geigy S.A. | Japan | 1900-1920 | chromolithography, paper | Ciba,
gifted in 1983 | Ild 10376
- 216 **Label Trimurti**
Rohner Ltd. Chemical Works | India | after 1942 | chromolithography,
paper | Ciba, gifted in 1983 | Ila 8147
- 217 **Label Rosental-Site**
J.R. Geigy S.A. | India | after 1942 | paper | Ciba, gifted in 1983 | Ila 8134

Showing Colour

Colour as Expression of Identity

Colours tell stories about us.

With certain colours, we can show where we belong and what we stand for.

In a sports stadium, it is often immediately clear who is cheering for which team.

With pins in a certain colour, we can show support for those affected and their families.

At demonstrations, we use colours to express belonging and solidarity.

Look around: here you will find examples of colours that show who we are.

Which colours show where you belong?

Which object would you add to this section?

The museum team regularly adds items requested by visitors to this section.

Welcome to our Creative Space

Here colour comes alive!

Grab a pencil, paper, string, glitter and feathers,
and start making your own designs.

Let our exhibition inspire you.

Experiment, mix different colours,
and come up with new ideas.

Together we can design
some colourful artwork for our walls.

Everything you need
is to hand.

Have fun!

What Happens to the Works?

We photograph parts of the pieces and display them in the exhibition.

Creative Space Programme

A workshop is held on the first Sunday of the month.

Programme and registration: www.mkb.ch

On Saturdays a member of the Museum's education team will be present.

Here are the dates: www.mkb.ch

Tours and workshops are available for school classes.

For schools in Basel-Stadt and Basel-Land, the offer is free of charge.

Information and registration: www.mkb.ch