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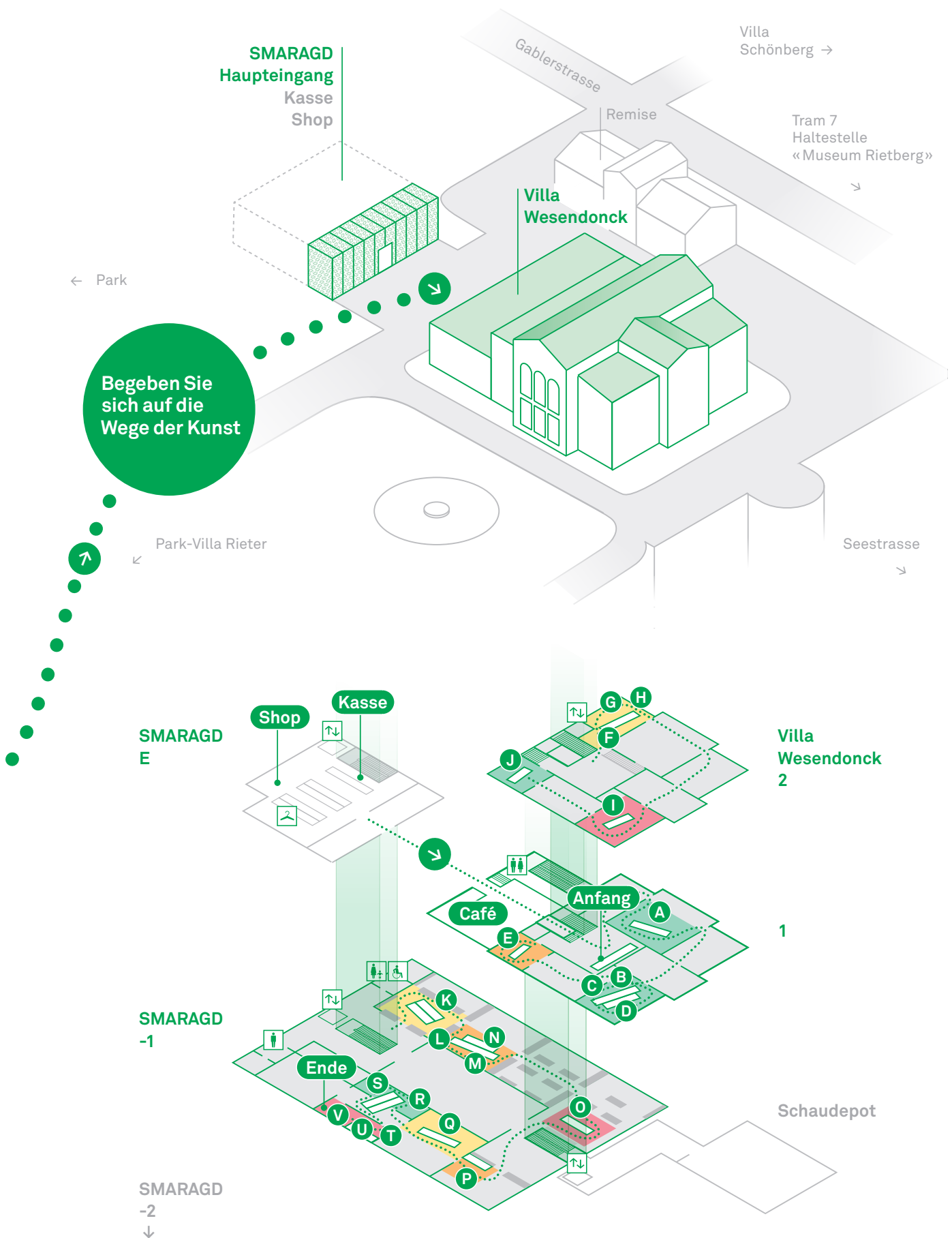
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17.06.2022–
25.06.2023

Wege der → Kunst

Wie die Objekte ins
Museum kommen





Wie die Objekte ins Museum kommen

Die Sammlungen sind das Herzstück des Museums Rietberg. Die Kunstwerke beeindrucken in ihrer ästhetischen Präsentation und erzählen vom weltweiten Kunstschaffen.

Mit *Wege der Kunst* erweitert das Museum Rietberg die Erzählungen zu seinen Sammlungen und entwickelt einen ganz neuen Blickwinkel. Nicht die Künstlerinnen und Künstler und deren Schöpferkraft stehen im Mittelpunkt, sondern ein ebenso grundsätzlicher Themenkomplex: Wie sind die Sammlungen überhaupt zustande gekommen? Weshalb befinden sich die Kunstwerke in Zürich und wie gelangten sie ins Museum? Welche Stationen haben sie dabei durchlaufen und wie haben sie sich dabei verändert?

Im Zentrum stehen die Biografien der Werke. Jedes Objekt hat sein eigenes Leben, seine eigene Geschichte. Es wurde aus einem bestimmten Grund erschaffen. Es wechselte Besitzerinnen und Besitzer und durchquerte auf seinem Weg die unterschiedlichsten Kulturen und Regionen der Welt; es diente verschiedenen Zwecken, nahm wechselnde Bedeutungen an, veränderte seine Wertigkeit und manchmal auch seine Gestalt auf dem Weg ins Museum.

Die Provenienzforschung beschäftigt sich mit diesen Objektbiografien. Sie rekonstruiert Besitzverhältnisse, Erwerbsumstände und Handwechsel, sie erforscht die Aktivitäten von Händlerinnen und Händlern, Sammlerinnen und Sammlern und untersucht die politischen, rechtlichen, wirtschaftlichen und sozialen Rahmenbedingungen zum Zeitpunkt der Besitzübertragung.

Indem wir erstmals die bewegte Reise der Werke vom Ort ihrer Entstehung bis ins Museum erforschen, hinterfragen wir zugleich die Geschichte unserer Institution und ihr Selbstverständnis. Aus den Erkenntnissen ergeben sich ganz neue Verantwortlichkeiten, aber auch neue Möglichkeiten im Umgang mit den Sammlungen.

How Objects Get to the Museum

The collections are the heart of the Museum Rietberg. The artworks impress in their aesthetic presentation and tell the story of the worldwide artistic work.

With *Pathways of Art*, the Museum Rietberg is expanding the stories about its collections and developing an entirely new point of view. It focuses not on the question of artists and their creative powers but on another, equally fundamental question: How did the collections come about in the first place? Why are the artworks in Zurich, and how did they get to the museum? What hands did they pass through, and how have they changed in the process?

The focus is on the biographies of the works themselves. Every object has its own life, its own story. It was created for a specific reason. It changed owners; on its pathway it crossed widely different cultures and regions of the world; it served different purposes, took on changing meanings, changed its values and sometimes even its form on its path into the museum.

Provenance research is concerned with these biographies of the objects. It reconstructs ownership, the circumstances of acquisition, and changing hands. It explores the activities of dealers and collectors and studies the political, economic, and social conditions at the time ownership was transferred.

By studying for the first time the eventful journeys of artworks from their place of origin to the museum, the museum is also questioning its own history and understanding of itself. Entirely new responsibilities result from this knowledge but also new opportunities for dealing with the collections.

Fokusraum Sammeln

Focus Room Collecting

Was wird wo und wie gesammelt?

What is collected where and how?

Unter welchen Umständen werden Objekte erworben?

Under what circumstances are objects acquired?

Wer sammelt und wozu?

Who collects and why?

Wann gilt eine Erwerbung als problematisch?

When is an acquisition considered problematic?

Sammeln

Im Bestand des Museums Rietberg befinden sich zahlreiche Sammlungen von Privatpersonen. Die meisten kamen als Geschenk oder als Legat ans Museum, andere wurden mit städtischen oder privaten Geldern angekauft. Das Museum ist daher stark von Sammlerinnen und Sammlern geprägt. In der Ausstellung wird eine Auswahl dieser Persönlichkeiten vorgestellt und ihre Beziehung zu den Kunstwerken beleuchtet.

Sammlungen faszinieren. Das Sammeln von Weltkunst setzt Interesse, Wissen und eine Offenheit für Ungewohntes voraus, und je nach Sammelgebiet auch finanzielle Mittel. Sammlungen erzählen von Begeisterungsfähigkeit, Beharrlichkeit und Leidenschaft. Sie können aber ebenso Ausdruck von Herrschaftsanspruch und Machtdemonstration sein. So sind die Wege der Kunstwerke nach Europa nicht nur mit dem Kunstmarkt, sondern mit Bereicherung und Unrecht, manchmal sogar mit illegaler Ausfuhr und Plünderung verbunden.

Deshalb fragt diese Ausstellung auch nach den Hintergründen des Sammelns: Wann, wo und wie wechselten die Kunstwerke ihre Besitzer? Wurden sie angekauft, getauscht oder anderweitig angeeignet? Geschah dies im Herkunftsland, auf Reisen, beim Antiquar oder auf dem Kunstmarkt?

Unter dem Stichwort «Sammeln» wird ersichtlich, wie unterschiedlich motiviert das Sammeln sein konnte: Den einen war die Sammlung ein Alter Ego, eine grosse Leidenschaft oder sinnvolle Nebenbeschäftigung. Anderen diente sie als Geldanlage, verlieh ihnen soziales Prestige oder war Demonstration ihrer Macht.

Collecting

The holdings of the Museum Rietberg include many collections of private individuals. Most of them came to the museum as gifts or bequests; others were purchased with municipal or private funds. The museum is therefore powerfully shaped by collectors. The exhibition presents a selection of these personalities and sheds light on their relationship to the works of art.

Collections are fascinating. Collecting world art presumes an interest, knowledge, and openness to the unfamiliar and, depending on the collecting area, financial means as well. Collections tell of enthusiasm, persistence, and passion. They can, however, also express a claim to authority and demonstration of power. The pathways of art to Europe are connected not only with the art market but also with enrichment and injustice and sometimes even with illegal exportation and looting.

That is why this exhibition also looks into the background of collecting: When, where, and how did the artworks change owners? Were they purchased, exchanged, or otherwise appropriated? Did it happen in their land of origin, while travelling, from an antiquarian, or on the art market?

Under the motto "Collecting" it becomes clear how different the motivations for collecting can be. For some, collecting was an alter ego, a great passion, or a sensible sideline; for others, it served as an investment, lent social prestige, or was a demonstration of their power.

Fokusraum Zeigen

Focus Room Displaying

Was wird gezeigt?

What is displayed?

Wie wird ein Objekt zu Kunst?

How does an object become art?

Wie werden Objekte inszeniert?

How are objects presented?

Was wird nicht gezeigt?

What is not shown?

Zeigen

Die wenigsten Werke in den Sammlungen waren ursprünglich für eine Präsentation im Museum bestimmt. Viele waren für den religiösen Gebrauch oder eine rituelle Verwendung vorgesehen. Einige erfüllten repräsentative Zwecke, dienten als Dekor in Wohnräumen, der Liebhaberei oder dem wissenschaftlichen Studium. Betrachtet wurden sie im privaten Rahmen, in auserwählten Gruppen, zu bestimmten Anlässen oder während religiöser Zeremonien. Für die breite Öffentlichkeit waren sie nicht zugänglich. Auf dem Weg ins Museum erfuhren die Werke eine Umdeutung. Sie wurden primär unter ästhetischen Gesichtspunkten bewertet und nach westlichen Kunstbegriffen kategorisiert.

In Europa erhielt das kunst- und kulturinteressierte Publikum ab Mitte des 19. Jahrhunderts über die grossen Weltausstellungen sowie ab Anfang des 20. Jahrhunderts über Präsentationen in Galerien, Kunstgewerbemuseen und in Kunsthallen einen Zugang zur nichtwestlichen Kunst. Ausstellungskataloge mit ihren Abbildungen waren für die Bekanntmachung dieser Kunst zentral. Insbesondere die Fotografie spielte bei der Rezeption, Verbreitung und Musealisierung der nichtwestlichen Kunst eine grosse Rolle.

Bei den Geschichten rund ums «Zeigen» stellen wir auch die eigene Ausstellungspraxis in Frage. Wie wird nicht-westliche Kunst in westlichen Museen gezeigt? Wie wird Kunst in privaten Bereichen und in ihrem ursprünglichen Kontext inszeniert? Welches sind geeignete Formen der Präsentation, die unterschiedliche Betrachtungsweisen ermöglichen?

Displaying

Hardly any works in the collection were originally intended for presentation in a museum. Many were designated for religious or ritual use. Some were status symbols or served as decoration in homes, as an amateur pursuit, or scholarly study. They were viewed in private spaces, in selected groups, on specific occasions, or during religious ceremonies. They were not accessible to the general public. On their pathway to the museum, the works were reinterpreted. They were judged from primarily aesthetic perspectives and categorized according to Western concepts for art.

From the mid-nineteenth century onward, the audience for art and culture in Europe had access to non-Western art in the large world's fairs as well as in the early twentieth century in presentations in galleries, applied arts museums, and other art venues. Exhibition catalogues and their illustrations were central to the dissemination and publication of such art. Photography in particular played a large role in the reception, spread, and musealization of non-Western art.

In the stories about "Displaying," we also question our own exhibition practice. How is non-Western art shown in Western museums? How is art presented in private areas and in its original context? What are the appropriate forms of presentation that will make different ways of considering it possible?

Fokusraum Handeln

Focus Room Dealing

Wer bestimmt den Wert eines Objektes?

Who determines the value of an object?

Welche Rolle haben fragmentierte Objekte?

What role do fragmented objects play?

Wer manipuliert die Werke und zu welchem Zweck?

Who manipulates the works and to what end?

Was setzt das Handeln mit Kunst voraus?

What assumptions does trading in art make?

Handeln

Händlerinnen und Händler spielten bei der Vermittlung von aussereuropäischer Kunst eine wichtige Rolle. Häufig reagierten sie nicht nur auf die bestehende Nachfrage, sondern brachten auch neue, noch unbekannte Kunstgattungen auf den Markt. Damit beeinflussten sie den Geschmack der Sammlerinnen und Sammler und prägten das Kunstverständnis nachhaltig. Ihre Verdienste sind dabei zwiespältig. Einerseits führten sie ihre Kunden und Kundinnen in nichtwestliche Denkmuster ein, andererseits befeuerten sie bestehende Vorstellungen von anderen Kulturen, um ihre Absatzmärkte zu stärken.

Der stetig zunehmende Handel mit aussereuropäischer Kunst führte ab dem Beginn des 20. Jahrhunderts zu einem gewaltigen Abfluss von Kulturgut aus den Herkunftsländern. Die Nachfrage und die guten Verdienstmöglichkeiten motivierten viele Menschen zu Verkauf, Diebstahl, unkontrollierten Ausgrabungen und Plünderungen. Ungleiche Machtverhältnisse, koloniale Strukturen und gesellschaftliche Umwälzungen trugen ebenfalls massgeblich dazu bei.

Unter dem Aspekt «Handeln» thematisieren wir, wie das Geschäft mit Kunstwerken dazu führte, dass die Objekte aus ihrer Umgebung herausgerissen und in neue Bedeutungszusammenhänge versetzt wurden. Die Kunstwerke wurden für einen bestimmten Ort produziert und erfüllten ihre Bestimmung im Zusammenspiel mit anderen Objekten. Stehen sie isoliert im Museum, kann man sie als Fragmente bezeichnen. Manche wurden von Wänden abgeschlagen oder auseinandergeschnitten, sind also auch tatsächlich physische Bruchstücke.

Dealing

Dealers played an important role in disseminating non-European art. Often they were not simply responding to existing demand but bringing new, still unknown art genres to the market. In doing so they influenced the taste of collectors and had a lasting effect on our understanding of art. The services they rendered in the process are ambiguous. On the one hand, they introduced customers to non-Western ways of thinking; on the other, they traded on existing ideas about other cultures to improve their markets for sales.

The ever-increasing trade in non-European art led to an enormous flow of cultural assets away from their lands of origin in the early twentieth century. The demand and opportunities for financial gain motivated many people to sell, steal, illegally excavate, and loot. Unequal power relationships, colonial structures, and social revolutions also contributed decisively to this process.

Under the rubric "Dealing" we address themes of how trading in art works leads to the objects being torn out of their surroundings and transposed to new contexts of meaning. Works of art are produced for a specific place and fulfil their purpose in an interplay with other objects. When they are standing in isolation in a museum, they can be described as fragments. Some were chiseled from walls or cut apart and are therefore also literally physical fragments.

Fokusraum Wissen

Focus Room Knowing

Wie wird Wissen produziert?

How is knowledge produced?

Wer erforscht die Kunst?

Who researches art?

Wie wird Wissen überliefert?

How is knowledge passed on?

Was wissen wir nicht?

What do we not know?

Wissen

Sammlungen werden heute als Archive des Wissens begriffen. Jedes Werk trägt Wissen in sich, das heisst, es kann viele verschiedene Geschichten erzählen. Diese offenbaren sich aber nicht von allein, sondern wollen erforscht und rekonstruiert werden. Um die uns noch unbekanntesten Geschichten offenzulegen, stellen wir Fragen: Was meinen wir über die Objekte zu wissen und woher kommt unser Wissen? Wie wurde es überliefert und was vermitteln wir weiter? Welches Wissen fehlt uns?

Häufig tragen die Werke Spuren ihrer Geschichte. Nummern, Kleber oder Etiketten, die von den Sammlerinnen und Sammlern, Galerien, Ausstellungen oder auch Zollbehörden stammen, geben Hinweise auf frühere Besitzerinnen und Besitzer. Im Laufe ihrer Überlieferungsgeschichte wurden manche Werke restauriert, übermalt oder zusammengesetzt. Bei der Entdeckung und Deutung dieser Manipulationen leisten die Restauratorinnen und Restauratoren mit naturwissenschaftlichen Analysen einen wichtigen Beitrag.

Eine grosse Chance, Geschichten freizulegen und zu teilen, bietet die globale Vernetzung durch digitale Medien. Museen machen ihre Sammlungen, Archive und Forschungsergebnisse öffentlich zugänglich. Auch die Provenienzen der Werke werden sichtbar gemacht. Diese Transparenz fördert den Austausch mit den verschiedensten Personen und Interessensgruppen weltweit. Davon handeln die Beispiele im Kapitel «Wissen». Im Dialog mit Wissenschaftlerinnen und Wissenschaftlern, Museen der Herkunftsländer, Nachfahren von Besitzerinnen und Besitzern, Künstlerinnen und Künstlern, und vielen anderen Akteurinnen und Akteuren können wir vorhandenes Wissen um viele Facetten erweitern.

Knowing

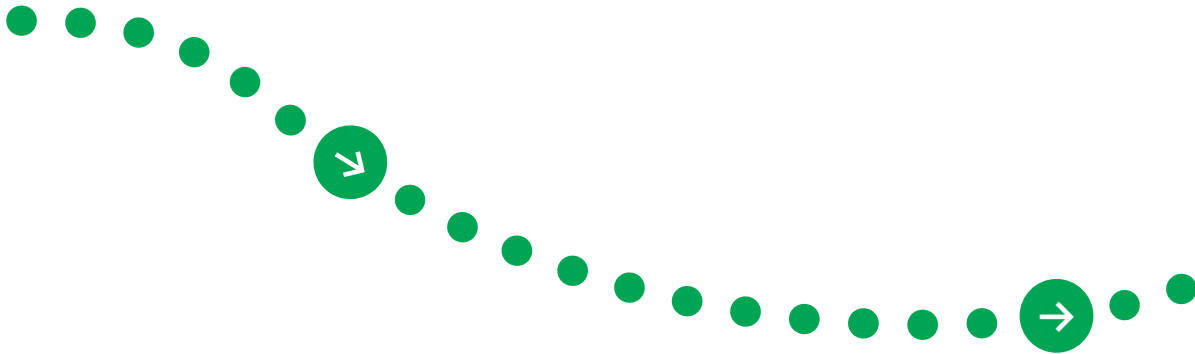
Collections today are understood as archives of knowledge. Every work bears knowledge within it, that is to say, it can tell many different stories. Yet they are not revealed on their own but have to be studied and reconstructed. In order to uncover the stories that are not known to us, we ask questions: What do we think we know about the objects, and from what do we derive our knowledge? How was it passed on, and how do we convey it further? What don't we know?

Works often bear traces of their history. Numbers, stickers, or labels from collectors, galleries, exhibitions, and even customs offices provide clues about their previous owners. Over the course of their history, some works are restored, overpainted, or assembled. By discovering and interpreting these manipulations, restorers make an important contribution with their scientific analyses.

One great opportunity to reveal and share stories is offered by the global networking of digital media. Museums make their collections, archives, and research results accessible to the public. The provenance of works is also made visible. This transparency encourages exchange with a wide variety of people and interest groups internationally. The examples in the section "Knowing" address that. In the conversations and debates among scholars, museums in the countries of origin, descendants of former owners, artists, and many other actors, we can add many new facets to existing knowledge.

Ausblick

Outlook



Perspektiven

Die Objekte in der Ausstellung haben oft eine ereignisreiche Reise hinter sich. Ihre Lebensgeschichten erzählen nicht nur etwas über ihre Herkunft, sondern auch über die vielfältigen Beziehungen zwischen der Schweiz und anderen Ländern und Kulturen. Der Blick auf die Menschen, die die Kunstwerke erworben, ausgestellt, gehandelt und erforscht haben, lässt die globalen sozialen, wirtschaftlichen und politischen Hintergründe sichtbar werden, vor denen die Objekte entstanden, weitergegeben und manchmal auch umgestaltet und umgedeutet worden sind.

Viele der Geschichten sind ambivalent. Sie bergen Widersprüche und regen zum Nachdenken an: über Sammel- und Handelspraktiken, die Vermittlung von Wissen, den Austausch mit den Herkunftsländern, aber auch die Rolle des Museums, Formen der Präsentation und die Zukunft der Objekte. Die Auseinandersetzung mit den Objektgeschichten fordert uns heraus, die Artefakte über den ursprünglichen Kontext ihrer Entstehung hinaus zu betrachten. Es geht nicht zuletzt auch um unsere persönliche Beziehung zu den Objekten: Was können wir aus der Lebensgeschichte eines jeden Kunstwerks über die Vergangenheit erfahren? Was lernen wir über unsere eigene Zeit und Gesellschaft, die sich im Umgang mit den Kunstwerken widerspiegelt?

Das Museum Rietberg unterhält seit Jahrzehnten verschiedene Kooperationsprojekte mit mehreren Herkunftsländern der Objekte. Die Sammlungsgeschichte ist ein wichtiger Teil dieser Zusammenarbeit. Im Rahmen der Projekte findet ein Austausch über die gemeinsame Geschichte statt, die sich in den Objekten manifestiert. Diese bilden somit Brücken zwischen den diversen Kulturen und sind auch Ausgangspunkt für zukünftige Beziehungen.

Perspectives

The objects in the exhibition often have an eventful journey behind them. Their life stories tell us not only about their origins but also about the diverse relationships between Switzerland and other countries and cultures. They offer a view of the people who acquired, exhibited, traded, and studied works of art. They reveal the global social, economic, and political backdrops against which the objects have been produced, passed on, and sometimes also redesigned and reinterpreted.

Many of the stories are ambiguous. They conceal contradictions and stimulate reflection: about practices of collecting and trading but also about the role of the museum, forms of presentation, and the future of the objects. Coming to terms with the histories of objects challenges us to consider artifacts beyond the original context of their creation. It is not least about our own personal connection to the objects: What can we learn about the past from the life story of each work of art? What do we learn about our own time and society that is reflected in our approach to works of art?

The Museum Rietberg has been pursuing various cooperative projects with several of the countries of origin of these objects. Their collecting history is an important part of that collaboration. In the framework of these projects, exchange takes place about the shared history manifested in the objects. They therefore not only build bridges between different cultures but are also the springboard for future relationships.

Einführung in die Ausstellung

Rundgang und Fokusräume

Aus den vielen Geschichten, die unsere Kunstwerke erzählen, haben wir zweiundzwanzig ausgewählt (A-V). Wir zeigen sie in den Räumen der Sammlungen, wo sie in einen Dialog mit den Kunstwerken aus der Dauerausstellung treten. Die Auswahl der Geschichten hat keinen Anspruch auf Vollständigkeit. Vielmehr soll sie einen Einblick geben, wie vielfältig die Biografien von Objekten sein können und welche Geschichten in den Sammlungen stecken.

Die Ausstellung ist als ein Rundgang durch das ganze Haus organisiert. Vier übergeordnete Themenfelder gliedern die Ausstellung und werden farblich unterschieden: Sammeln, Zeigen, Handeln sowie Wissen. Diese Themen beziehen sich auf zentrale Momente in den Lebensgeschichten der Kunstwerke. Sie verweisen auf Begegnungen und Beziehungen zwischen Objekten und Personen. Als Schaltstellen der Ausstellung dienen vier sogenannte Fokusräume. Sie führen in die übergeordneten Fragestellungen ein und bieten interaktive Vertiefungsmöglichkeiten.

Die Exponate hier im Foyer stehen stellvertretend für die Geschichten, die in der Ausstellung entdeckt werden können. Neben den Kunstwerken zeigen wir eine Vielzahl an Dokumenten: Kataloge, Etiketten, Fotografien, Briefe und Rechnungen sind in dieser Präsentation genauso wichtig wie die Kunstwerke selber. Sie sind Teil der Geschichten, die die Werke erzählen. Die ausgewählten Beispiele in der Ausstellung sollen dazu anregen, über den Umgang mit den Werken in früheren Zeiten, in der Gegenwart und in der Zukunft nachzudenken.

Introduction to the Exhibition Tour and Focus Rooms

From the many stories that our works of art tell, we have selected twenty-two (A-V). We are showing them in the rooms of the collection, where they enter into a dialogue with the works of art from the permanent exhibition. The selection of these stories makes no claim to completeness. Rather, it is intended to offer a picture of how diverse the biographies of the objects can be and what stories are hidden in the collections.

The exhibition is organized as a tour through the entire building. Four overarching thematic fields articulate the exhibition and are distinguished by color: Collecting, Displaying, Dealing, and Knowing. These themes are related to central moments in the life stories of the works of art. They point to encounters and relationships between objects and people. Four "Focus Rooms" serve as the switching points of the exhibition. They introduce the overarching questions and propose interactive opportunities to delve more deeply.

The exhibits here in the foyer are representative of the stories that can be discovered in the exhibition. In addition to works of art we are displaying a large number of documents: catalogues, labels, photographs, letters, and invoices are just as important to this presentation as the artworks themselves. They are part of the stories that the works tell. The selected examples in the exhibition are intended to stimulate thinking about approaches to the works in the past, in the present, and in the future.

Aufteilen, Verschenken und Ausführen

Alice Boners Sammlungen in Indien und der Schweiz

Ein bedeutender Teil der Indiensammlungen des Museums ist der Schenkung von Alice Boner zu verdanken. Als Teil der Familie von Charles E. L. Brown, dem Mitgründer der Brown Boveri & Cie in Baden, konnte sie sich frei von finanziellen Zwängen ihrem künstlerischen und wissenschaftlichen Interesse hingeben. 1935 liess sie sich in Indien nieder und mietete in Varanasi ein Haus am Ganges, in dem sie für beinahe vierzig Jahre mit ihren Sammlungen lebte. Heute ist dort das Alice Boner Institut beheimatet.

Alice Boner setzte ihre Karriere als Künstlerin in Indien fort und entdeckte die indische Kunstgeschichte für sich. Insbesondere die Architektur, Reliefs und Skulpturen der hinduistischen Tempel hatten es ihr angetan. In dieser Zeit begann sie Kunstwerke zu erwerben und trug eine beachtliche Sammlung zusammen: Malereien, Handschriften, Textilien, Skulpturen und Bronzen. Sie kaufte die Objekte in etablierten Galerien, bei fliegenden Händlern in Varanasi oder auch bei Strassenhändlern auf ihren zahlreichen Reisen durch Indien.

Bereits in den 1940er Jahren machte Alice Boner sich Gedanken über die Zukunft ihrer Sammlungen und äusserte später Schenkungsabsichten zugunsten des Museums Rietberg. Nach langen Verhandlungen erhielt sie 1970 die Genehmigung der indischen Regierung, den Grossteil ihrer Sammlung auszuführen. Im August 1971 trafen 125 Skulpturen, Figuren und Masken in Zürich ein. Weitere Teile ihrer Sammlung verschenkte sie an mehrere Museen in Indien, unter anderem an das Bharat Kala Museum in Varanasi. Einige wenige Kunstwerke befinden sich heute im Alice Boner Institut.

Dividing Up, Donating, and Exporting Alice Boner's Collections in India and Switzerland

A significant part of the museum's India collections was donated by Alice Boner. As a member of the family of Charles E. L. Brown, the cofounder of Brown Boveri & Cie in Baden, she was able to dedicate herself to her artistic and scholarly interests free of financial constraints. In 1935, she settled in India and rented a house on the Ganges in Varanasi where she lived with her collections for nearly forty years. Today it houses the Alice Boner Institute.

Alice Boner continued her career as an artist in India and discovered the history of Indian art. She was particularly taken with the architecture, reliefs, and sculptures of Hindu temples. During this period, she began to acquire works of art and assembled a considerable collection: paintings, manuscripts, textiles, sculptures, and bronzes. She purchased the objects in established galleries, from hawkers in Varanasi, and even from street traders on her numerous trips through India.

Alice Boner was already thinking about the future of her collection in the 1940s. She later expressed her intention to donate them to the Museum Rietberg. In 1970, after lengthy negotiations, she received permission from the Indian government to export the majority of her collection; in August 1971, 125 sculptures, figures, and masks arrived in Zurich. She donated other parts of her collection to several museums in India, including the Bharat Kala Museum in Varanasi. A few artworks are now in the Alice Boner Institute.

Vielfältige Verschiebungen

Die nationalsozialistische Kulturpolitik und die Sammlung von Nell Walden

Der ab 1933 gleichgeschaltete Kunstbetrieb und die nationalsozialistische Kulturpolitik in Deutschland liess die von der Avantgarde geschätzten afrikanischen, ozeanischen und amerikanischen Artefakte in die Hinterzimmer der Galerien und in die Depots der Museen wandern.

Europäische Kunschtchaffende, die selbst einen grossen Anteil an der Ästhetisierung und dem Sammeln aussereuropäischer Objekte und damit an der Begründung einer globalen Kunstgeschichte hatten, zogen sich in die innere Emigration zurück oder sahen sich gezwungen, Deutschland zu verlassen. So kamen viele Kunstsammlungen in die Schweiz, darunter die Sammlung von Nell Walden.

Die in Berlin lebende Journalistin und Künstlerin Nell Walden sammelte Werke von *Sturm*-Künstlerinnen und -Künstlern sowie Kunst aus Ozeanien, Afrika und den Amerikas. Nach ihrer Flucht verteilte Nell Walden ihre Sammlungen auf verschiedene Institutionen in der Schweiz: Die europäischen Kunstwerke gingen an die Kunsthalle Basel und später ans Kunstmuseum Bern, die ausser-europäischen zuerst an das Musée d'ethnographie in Genf, ans Völkerkundemuseum Basel und dann an das Bernische Historische Museum. Vereinzelt wurden die Objekte von den Museen für Ausstellungszwecke verwendet.

Nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg verkaufte Walden einen Teil ihrer Werke, ein grösseres Konvolut ist heute im Museum Rietberg zu sehen.

Diverse Shifts National Socialist Cultural Policy and the Collection of Nell Walden

From 1933, the art world was brought in line politically with German National Socialist cultural policy, and the African, Oceanic, and American artifacts so appreciated by the avant-garde were moved to galleries' back rooms and museum storage.

European artists, who had played a large part in the aestheticizing and collection of non-European objects and thus in the founding of a global art history, retreated into internal emigration or felt compelled to leave Germany with its restrictive cultural policy. It was in this way that many art collections came to Switzerland, including that of the collection of Nell Walden.

The journalist and artist Nell Walden, who lived in Berlin, collected works by the *Der Sturm* artists, as well as art from Oceania, Africa, and the Americas. After fleeing Germany, Nell Walden distributed her collections to various institutions in Switzerland: The European works of art went to the Kunsthalle Basel and later to the Kunstmuseum Bern and the non-European ones first to the Musée d'Ethnographie in Geneva and the Völkerkundemuseum in Basel and then to the Bernisches Historisches Museum. Few of the objects were exhibited by the museums.

After World War II, Walden sold some of her works; a large number can now be seen today in the Museum Rietberg.

Macht durch Kunst

Kaiserliches Sammeln in China

Das Sammeln von Kunst- und Kulturschätzen gehörte im alten China zu den wichtigsten Aufgaben des Herrschers. Durch die Pflege der Palastsammlung präsentierte er sich als Bewahrer des kulturellen Erbes und untermauerte damit seinen Machtanspruch.

In vorchristlicher Zeit waren die Schatzsammlungen der Regenten vor allem mit magisch-politischen Vorstellungen verbunden. Sie enthielten hauptsächlich Objekte mit rituellen Funktionen. Diese galten als Zeichen der Macht und des vom Himmel erteilten Herrschaftsmandates. Ab dem 4. Jahrhundert n. Chr. wurden immer mehr Objekte in den Kaiserpalast aufgenommen, die wegen ihres ästhetischen Wertes geschätzt wurden. Schriftkunst und Malerei gehörten nun zu den Kernstücken der höfischen Sammlung. Im 10. Jahrhundert erhielten auch antike Bronze- und Jadeobjekte als Zeugen eines idealisierten Altertums einen hohen Stellenwert.

Einen letzten Höhepunkt erreichte das kaiserliche Sammeln mit dem Qianlong-Kaiser (reg. 1736–1795). Er trug an seinem Hof eine gewaltige Anzahl an Artefakten zusammen: von den berühmtesten Bild- und Schriftkunstwerken über Antiquitäten aus Jade, Bronze und Keramik bis hin zu Kuriosa aus Europa sowie zeitgenössischen Auftragsarbeiten.

Die Palastsammlungen waren nie stabil. Bei Dynastiewechseln und in politisch chaotischen Zeiten wurden immer wieder Teile der Bestände verstreut. In der Periode vor und nach dem Zusammenbruch des Kaiserreichs im Jahr 1911 verliess eine beträchtliche Anzahl von Artefakten die Paläste in Beijing durch Schenkungen, Diebstahl und Verkäufe durch Hofbeamte und Mitglieder der kaiserlichen Familie sowie Plünderungen durch die europäischen Mächte. Ein Teil der Objekte befindet sich heute in westlichen Sammlungen.

Power through Art Imperial Collecting in China

Collecting artistic and cultural treasures was one of the most important tasks of the ruler in ancient China. By attending to the palace collection, he presented himself as the preserver of the cultural heritage and thus shored up his claim to power.

In the pre-Christian era, the ruler's collections of treasures were mainly associated with magical and political ideas and consisted largely of objects with ritual functions. These were regarded as signs of power and of the mandate to rule conferred by Heaven. From the fourth century CE, objects appreciated for their aesthetic value increasingly became part of the palace collection, with calligraphy and painting as core pieces. By the tenth century, archaic bronze and jade objects had gained high esteem as documents of an idealized antiquity.

The imperial collection reached its final apex with the Qianlong Emperor (r. 1736–95). He assembled an enormous number of artifacts at his court: from the most famous works of painting and calligraphy to antiquities of jade, bronze, and ceramics, and curiosities from Europe and contemporary commissioned works.

The palace collections were never stable. On a number of occasions, when dynasties changed and in politically chaotic times, some of the holdings were dispersed. In the period before and after the fall of the empire in 1911, a considerable number of artifacts left the Beijing palaces as a result of gifts, theft, and sale by court officials and members of the imperial family as well as looting by European powers. Some of these objects are today in Western collections.

Sammeln zwischen Paris und Teheran

Die Luristan-Bronzen von Rudolf Schmidt

Die Luristan-Bronzen im Museum Rietberg kamen 1971, nach dem Tod des Sammlers Rudolf Schmidt, über dessen Schwester Erica Peters-Schmidt als Geschenk ans Museum. Rudolf Schmidt war seit 1958 Mitglied des Vorstandes der Rietberg-Gesellschaft.

Erste Luristan-Bronzen tauchten ab Mitte des 19. Jahrhunderts in Europa auf. In den 1920er Jahren setzte ein regelrechter Boom ein. Die unbekannt Objekte einer bronzezeitlichen Kultur aus dem ersten Jahrtausend v. Chr. im Westen des Iran begeisterten die Sammlerinnen und Sammler. Um die Nachfrage zu decken, wurden in der iranischen Provinz Luristan immer mehr Gräber geplündert. Dabei ging wichtiges Wissen verloren.

Die erste Publikation zu Luristan-Bronzen veröffentlichte André Godard 1931. Der französische Archäologe war Direktor des iranischen Antikendienstes. Allerdings basierten seine Erkenntnisse noch nicht auf wissenschaftlichen Ausgrabungen. Diese erfolgten erst wenig später durch deutsche und amerikanische Archäologen wie Ernst Herzfeld und Erich F. Schmidt.

Rudolf Schmidt erwarb seine Stücke in den 1930er Jahren in Paris sowie in Teheran. Geleitet von seinem Interesse reiste Schmidt während mehrerer Monate in den Iran, tauschte sich mit Archäologen aus und kaufte zahlreiche Objekte vor Ort. Die Faszination für diese Bronzearbeiten begleitete ihn bis in die 1950er Jahre. Als die Marktpreise stiegen, sah er von weiteren Erwerbungen ab und wandte sich einem anderen Sammelgebiet zu.

Schmidts Sammlung eröffnet Einblicke in die Geschichte der Archäologie und des Kunstmarkts, zeigt aber auch, wie sich der Sammler persönlich und wissenschaftlich mit den Artefakten auseinandersetzte.

Collecting between Paris and Tehran The Luristan Bronzes of Rudolf Schmidt

The Luristan bronzes in the Museum Rietberg came to the museum in 1971 after the death of the collector Rudolf Schmidt as a gift from his sister Erica Peters-Schmidt. Rudolf Schmidt had been a member of the board of the Rietberg Society since 1958.

The first Luristan bronzes appeared in the mid of the nineteenth century. A real boom began in Europe in the 1920s. The previously unknown objects – from a Bronze Age culture of the first millennium BCE in western Iran – thrilled collectors. In order to meet the demand, more and more tombs were plundered in the Iranian province of Luristan. Important knowledge was lost in the process.

The first publication on Luristan bronzes was that of André Godard in 1931. The French archaeologist was director of the Iranian Archeological Services, however, his findings were not yet based on scientific excavations. Those were conducted only slightly later by German and American archaeologists, such as Ernst Herzfeld and Erich F. Schmidt.

Rudolf Schmidt acquired his pieces in the 1930s in Paris and Tehran. Driven by his interest, Schmidt traveled for several months in Iran, had exchanges with archaeologists, and purchased numerous objects locally. His fascination for these bronze works continued into the 1950s. When market prices rose, he ceased his purchases and turned to another collecting area.

Schmidt's collection offers insights into the history of archaeology and of the art market but also shows how the collector engaged with the artifacts as a person and as a scholar.

Vom tibetischen Ritualobjekt zum Kunstwerk in Europa

Die Sammlung Berti Aschmann

Mit der Sammlung von Berti Aschmann beherbergt das Museum Rietberg seit 1995 eine umfangreiche und hochkarätige Sammlung von buddhistischen Figuren aus dem Himalaya. Die Sammlerin hatte ein beeindruckendes Gespür für die Qualität dieser damals wenig bekannten Kunstwerke entwickelt. Bei dem ästhetischen Genuss der Figuren vergisst man leicht, dass sie ursprünglich rein religiösen Zwecken dienten. Als Weihgaben und Ritualobjekte waren sie selten für die Öffentlichkeit sichtbar. Erst mit ihrer Rezeption in Europa wurden sie zu Kunstwerken erhoben.

Anfang des 20. Jahrhunderts brachten Forschende wie Sven Hedin, Laurence Waddell oder Giuseppe Tucci die ersten Tibetica von ihren Erkundungsreisen in Zentralasien und dem Himalaya mit nach Europa. Durch den Verkauf der Objekte an Museen und Privatpersonen finanzierten sie ihre Unternehmungen mit. Wie sie in deren Besitz kamen – ob durch Ankauf, Tausch oder Plünderung – ist weitgehend unbekannt. Ein Markt für Tibetica entstand erst in den 1960er Jahren. Nach dem Einmarsch der Chinesischen Armee und der Flucht des Dalai Lama und vieler seiner Landsleute 1959 sowie den Zerstörungen durch die Kulturrevolution 1966 bis 1976 gelangten massenhaft Objekte ins Ausland. Internationale Händler kauften die Figuren und Rollbilder oft direkt von den Flüchtlingen, die sie ausser Landes gerettet hatten. In dieser Zeit wuchs auch das Interesse an der tibetischen Kultur in Europa und den USA.

In der Schweiz organisierte die Kunsthalle Bern 1962 eine erste grosse Ausstellung zur Kunst Tibets. Wenig später folgten Ausstellungen in Winterthur und Zürich. Der 14. Dalai Lama schrieb bereits 1969 in einem Ausstellungskatalog, dass er die im Ausland gesammelten und öffentlich gezeigten tibetischen Objekte als wichtige Botschafter der tibetischen Kultur ansähe.

From the Ritual Object in Tibet to the Artwork in Europe

The Berti Aschmann Collection

Since 1995, with the Berti Aschmann Collection, the Museum Rietberg has housed an extensive and high-quality collection of Buddhist sculptures from the Himalayas. The collector developed an impressive sense for the quality of these works of art which were little known at the time. The aesthetic pleasure of these figures makes it easy to forget that they originally served purely religious ends. As votive offerings and ritual objects, they were seldom in public view. Only with their reception in Europe, were they elevated to works of art.

In the early twentieth century, explorers such as Sven Hedin, Laurence Waddell, and Giuseppe Tucci brought the first Tibetica back with them to Europe from the explorations in Central Asia and the Himalayas. By selling objects to museums and private parties, they partly financed their undertakings. How they came into their possession – whether by purchase, trade, or plunder – is largely unknown. A market for Tibetica first emerged in the 1960s. After the invasion of the Chinese Army and the flight of the Dalai Lama and many of his compatriots in 1959 as well as the destruction wrought by the Cultural Revolution from 1966 to 1976, massive numbers of objects went abroad. International dealers often bought the statues and scrolls directly from refugees, who had rescued them from the country.

During this period, interest in Tibetan culture was growing in Europe and the United States. In Switzerland, the Kunsthalle Bern organized a first large exhibition on the art of Tibet in 1962. Exhibitions in Winterthur and Zurich followed a little later. As early as 1969, the Fourteenth Dalai Lama wrote in an exhibition catalogue that he regarded Tibetan objects collected and shown publicly abroad as important ambassadors of Tibetan culture.

Von der Bühne ins Museum

Präsentationsformen der Nō-Masken

Während Nō-Masken – zusammen mit Gewändern, Perücken, Musikinstrumenten und Bühnenrequisiten – vom Mittelalter bis heute zum festen Bestandteil einer Theateraufführung gehören und auf der Bühne verwendet werden, sind die Nō-Masken in Museumsammlungen Artefakte für ständige und wechselnde Ausstellungen. Der Wandel in der Funktion und damit Bedeutung dieser Objekte ist eine Konsequenz der historischen Entwicklungen der japanischen Gesellschaft und Kultur im späten 19. Jahrhundert. Zahlreiche Masken aus Sammlungen von Feudalfürsten und Schauspielerfamilien wurden damals veräussert. Sie gelangten in Japan wie im Westen in öffentliche und private Sammlungen, wo sie bis heute wissenschaftlichen Studien und ästhetischem Genuss dienen.

Das Museum Rietberg erhielt 1991 als Geschenk 34 Nō-Masken aus der Sammlung von Georg Reinhart in Winterthur. Dieser hatte sie 1928 aus dem Nachlass des deutschen Wissenschaftlers, Ethnologen und Philosophen Ernst Grosse erworben. Während dessen Sammlung grösstenteils nach Berlin ging, gehörten die Nō-Masken zu seinem streng gehüteten Schatz, den er in Japan zwischen 1907 und 1913 erworben hatte.

Georg Reinhart gehörte in der ersten Hälfte des 20. Jahrhunderts zu den frühen Sammlern ostasiatischer Kunst in der Schweiz. Er war ein grosszügiger Förderer von Ernst Grosse und erwarb seine Asienkenntnisse durch vielfältige Kontakte mit Wissenschaftlern. Kunst kaufte er sowohl auf dem europäischen Markt wie auch während seiner Aufenthalte in Asien als Teilhaber der Handelsfirma der Gebrüder Volkart.

From the Stage to the Museum

Ways of Presenting Nō Masks

While Nō masks – as well as garments, wigs, musical instruments, and stage props – have been an integral part of theatrical performances and used on the stage from the Middle Ages to the present, the Nō masks in museum collections are artifacts for permanent and temporary exhibitions. The shift in function, and hence meaning, of these objects results from the historical developments of Japanese society and culture in the late nineteenth century. Numerous masks from former collections of feudal lords and actors' families came onto the art market at that time. In Japan and in the West, they ended up in public and private collections, where they continue to serve both scholarly study and aesthetic pleasure.

In 1991, the Museum Rietberg received a gift of thirty-four Nō masks from the collection of Georg Reinhart in Winterthur. He had acquired them in 1928 from the estate of the German scientist, ethnologist, and philosopher Ernst Grosse. Whereas most of Grosse's collection went to Berlin, the Nō masks were among the closely guarded treasures he had acquired in Japan between 1907 and 1913.

In the first half of the twentieth century, Georg Reinhart was one of the early collectors of East Asian art in Switzerland. He was a generous supporter of Ernst Grosse and acquired his knowledge of Asia through diverse contacts with scholars. He purchased art both on the European market and during his trips to Asia as a partner in the Volkart Brothers trading company.

Zeigen und Betrachten

Werner Reinhart und seine Sammlung indischer Miniaturen

Indische Miniaturmalereien wurden an den Fürstenhöfen in Form von Serien und Alben aufbewahrt und bei geselligen oder repräsentativen Gelegenheiten oder einfach zum stillen Vergnügen im Sitzen betrachtet. Diese Kunstwerke erfuhren innerhalb der indischen Sammlungsbestände Besitzwechsel und Neusortierungen; im Laufe der Jahrhunderte gelangten sie auch in westliche Sammlungen.

Für die europäischen Sammlerinnen und Sammler waren die vollständigen Bildserien oder Alben zu umfangreich, zu teuer und in dieser Form eher uninteressant. Es reichten einzelne Blätter – diese konnte man rahmen, zeigen und tagtäglich bewundern. Dies führte dazu, dass die Kunsthändler, die zwischen den fürstlichen Familien und den möglichen Erwerbern vermittelten, die Alben auseinandernahmen, um sie als Einzelstücke zu verkaufen, was letztlich auch lukrativer war.

Werner Reinhart war als Teilhaber der Handelsfirma der Gebrüder Volkart Anfang des 20. Jahrhunderts mehrere Jahre in Indien und Ostasien unterwegs. Während dieser Zeit, nachweislich vor allem zwischen 1908 und 1910, sammelte er unter anderem über Kuriositätenhändler Textilien, Miniaturmalereien und Manuskripte sowie vereinzelt Kleinskulpturen. Ausstellungen aus seiner Sammlung wurden 1915 im Kunstgewerbemuseum der Stadt Zürich, 1923 und 1936 im Kunstverein Winterthur gezeigt. Seine Sammlung an Miniaturmalerei wurde 1949 vollständig publiziert, nachdem sie in Zürich und Basel ausgestellt worden war. Reinhart gehört damit zu den frühen Sammlerinnen und Sammlern indischer Malerei in der Schweiz, dessen Bilder heute in der Sammlung des Museums auch von der Verflechtungsgeschichte Schweizer Handelsfirmen im britischen Kolonialreich auf dem indischen Subkontinent erzählen.

Showing and Observing Werner Reinhart and his Collection of Indian Miniatures

Indian miniature paintings were preserved at the royal courts in the form of series and albums and studied on social or prestigious occasions, or simply when sitting for quiet pleasure. When in Indian collections, these works of art were altered by hand or rearranged and over the course of centuries also ended up in Western collections.

For European collectors, complete series or albums were too extensive, too expensive, and in that form rather uninteresting. Single sheets were enough: they could be framed, displayed, and admired daily. The art dealers who mediated between royal families and possible buyers therefore broke up albums in order to sell the sheets as single works, which was ultimately more lucrative as well.

Werner Reinhart, a partner at the trading company Volkart Brothers in the early twentieth century, traveled in India and East Asia over several years. During this time, according to the documents between 1908 and 1910 in particular, he collected from curiosity dealers, among other things, textiles, miniature paintings, and manuscripts, as well as a few small sculptures. Exhibitions from his collection were held at the Kunstgewerbemuseum der Stadt Zürich in 1915 and later also at the Kunstverein Winterthur in 1923 and 1936. His collection of miniature paintings was published in full in 1949, after it had been exhibited in Zurich and Basel. Reinhart was thus one of the early collectors of Indian painting in Switzerland, and his paintings in the museum also tell the story of the of Swiss business involvements in the British colonial empire on the Indian subcontinent.

Heiligsprechung und Reliquienkult

Teppiche und deren Fragmente

Seit 1955 besitzt das Museum Rietberg ein Fragment eines weltberühmten iranischen Teppichs. Es stammt aus der Bordüre eines grossen Teppichs, der sich heute im Los Angeles County Museum of Art befindet. Dieser Teppich wurde benutzt, um seinen Zwillings, den sogenannten Ardabil-Teppich, zu reparieren, heute ein Prunkstück der Sammlungen des Victoria und Albert Museums.

Beide Teppiche wurden 1888 durch die englisch-schweizerische Handelsfirma Ziegler & Co. über einen britischen Teppichhändler in Tabriz von den Autoritäten des Sufi-Schreins erworben und an die Londoner Firma Vincent Robinson & Co. weiterverkauft. Man vermutet, dass die Teppiche veräussert wurden, weil die Verwalter des Schreinkomplexes in Ardabil Geld zur Instandsetzung der Moschee benötigten.

Der restaurierte Teppich wurde in London für den Verkauf ausgestellt. Edward Stebbing begleitete die Präsentation mit einer aufwendigen Publikation und einem geschickten Marketing: Er stilisierte ihn zum «heiligen Teppich» und erklärte ihn zum einmaligen Kunstwerk. Dabei war es nicht unwichtig, dass der Teppich signiert und datiert (1539/40) ist. All dies hatte eine bedeutende Wertsteigerung zur Folge. 1892 gelangte er in die Sammlung des South Kensington Museum, dem heutigen Victoria und Albert Museum.

Robert Akeret, ein Schweizer Kaufmann und leidenschaftlicher Teppich-Sammler, erwarb sein Ardabil-Fragment direkt von Vincent Robinson & Co. Das Fragment ist für die Teppich-Sammlung Akerets nicht repräsentativ, jedoch zeigt es symptomatisch sein Interesse für Herkunftsfragen. Ihn dürfte gerade die «heilige Provenienz» gereizt haben, die aus dem unscheinbaren Fragment eine eigentliche Reliquie machte.

Canonization and the Cult of Relics Carpets and Their Fragments

Since 1955, the Museum Rietberg has owned a fragment of a world-famous Iranian carpet. It comes from the border of a large carpet now in the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. This carpet was used to repair its twin, the so-called Ardabil Carpet, which is now a prized piece in the collections of the Victoria and Albert Museum.

Both carpets were acquired in 1888 by the English-Swiss trading company Ziegler & Co. through a British carpet dealer in Tabriz from the authorities of the Sufi shrine and then resold to the London firm Vincent Robinson & Co. It is thought that the carpets were sold because the administrators of the shrine ensemble in Ardabil needed money to renovate the mosque.

The restored carpet was exhibited in London for sale. Edward Stebbing accompanied its presentation with a lavish publication and clever marketing: he stylized it as a "holy carpet" and declared it to be a unique work of art. It was not unimportant that the carpet was signed and dated (1539–40). All of this resulted in a significant increase in its value. In 1892, it entered the collection of the South Kensington Museum, now the Victoria and Albert Museum.

Robert Akeret, a Swiss businessman and a passionate collector of carpets, acquired his Ardabil fragment directly from Vincent Robinson & Co. The fragment is not representative of Akeret's carpet collection, but it is a sign of his interest in questions of origin. It's "holy provenance" surely appealed to him, as it turned the unprepossessing fragment into a true relic.

Das Wissen um die Objekte

Der Ankauf von präkolumbischen Artefakten

Als das Museum Rietberg in den 1950er und 1960er Jahren seine Sammlung an Weltkunst durch gezielte Ankäufe präkolumbischer Werke erweiterte, bildeten die Textilien und Keramiken aus Peru schon seit Jahrhunderten Sammelgut, sowohl in Peru selber wie auch in Amerika und Europa.

Die von Johannes Itten und Elsy Leuzinger für das Museum Rietberg getätigten Erwerbungen gaben Anlass zu Debatten wissenschaftlicher und rechtlicher Natur. Die erste Sonderausstellung im Museum Rietberg 1954 wurde mit der umfangreichen präkolumbischen Sammlung des Archäologen, Kunsthändlers und Sammlers Baron Walram von Schoeler und seiner Frau Gabriela Passamonti bestückt. Vereinzelt Objekte wurden auch erworben – im Wissen um deren illegal erfolgte Ausfuhr.

Am Beispiel des peruanischen Antiquitätenhändlers Guillermo Schmidt-Pizarro kann wiederum aufgezeigt werden, wie ein maximal optimierter Markt für Textilien funktionierte: durch Fragmentierung der grossen Textilien, die in europäischen Privatsammlungen in dieser Form keinen Absatz gefunden hätten. Handliche, dekorative Stücke waren hingegen gefragt.

Der Wissensverlust durch Fragmentierung, der Mangel an Dokumentation und die unrechtmässige Ausfuhr kann durch die spätere Erforschung nur in Teilen aufgefangen werden. Der Wissenserwerb ist heute entsprechend aufwendig, schlägt aber auch Brücken zu neuen Beziehungen in die Herkunftsländer der Objekte.

Knowledge about Objects The Acquisition of Pre-Columbian Artifacts

When the Museum Rietberg expanded its collection of world art in the 1950s and 1960s with targeted acquisitions of pre-Columbian works, textiles and ceramics from Peru had been collected for centuries, both in Peru itself and elsewhere in the Americas and Europe.

The acquisitions made by Johannes Itten and Elsy Leuzinger for the Museum Rietberg resulted in debates of both a scholarly and a legal nature. The first special exhibition at the Museum Rietberg in 1954 included the extensive pre-Columbian collection of the archaeologist, art dealer, and collector Baron Walram von Schoeler and his wife, Gabriela Passamonti. Single objects were also acquired – in the knowledge that they had been exported illegally.

The example of the Peruvian antiquities dealer Guillermo Schmidt-Pizarro shows how a maximally optimized market for textiles functioned: by breaking down larger textiles that would not have found a market in European private collections in their original form. Handy, decorative pieces, by contrast, were in demand.

The loss of knowledge caused by fragmentation, the lack of documentation, and unlawful exporting can only be partially recovered by later research. The acquisition of knowledge is accordingly difficult today but has also established new connections with the objects' countries of origin.

«Wilde Dinge» in der Villa

Die Ozeaniensammlung von Sidney W. Brown

Ende 1965 erhielt das Museum Rietberg elf melanesische Artefakte von der Familie des Schweizer Ingenieurs Sidney W. Brown. Brown kam über eine gut einjährige Reise in den Südpazifik zu ihnen, die er 1888 mit dem russisch-deutschen Ingenieur Eugen von Petersen von Neapel aus unternommen hatte.

Die Reise war geschäftlich motiviert: Brown und Petersen suchten Land für eine Goldmine. Nach Aufhalten in Ceylon (heute Sri Lanka) und Australien erreichten sie Batavia (heute Jakarta). Während Brown dort blieb, begab sich Petersen nach Celebes (heute Sulawesi), um mit den örtlichen Rajas ins Geschäft zu kommen.

Schwierigkeiten bei der Kapitalbeschaffung liessen Brown am Erfolg des Unternehmens zweifeln. Er kehrte nach Europa zurück. Mit im Gepäck hatte er ozeanische Artefakte, die er im Auftrag von Petersen nach Neapel überführen sollte. Petersen hatte sie vom Australian Museum in Sydney über bestehende Kontakte zum Kurator Edward Pierson Ramsay geschenkt bekommen. Das Museum hatte seinerseits tausende von Artefakten insbesondere von der samoanisch-amerikanischen Plantagenbesitzerin Emma Forsyth und ihrer Familie erworben.

Entgegen der Abmachung nahm Brown die Objekte in die Schweiz mit. Dort gelangten sie in die Villa Langmatt in Baden, den letzten Wohnsitz Sidney W. Browns und seiner Familie. Die Ozeanien-sammlung wurde später aufgeteilt: Ein Teil kam ins Museum Rietberg, dank dem Interesse der damaligen Direktorin, Elsy Leuzinger, die die Artefakte als «wilde Dinge» begrüßte. Einen anderen Teil vermachten die Browns ihrer Gärtnerfamilie. Der Rest blieb in der Villa Langmatt, heute das Museum der Brown'schen Sammlung für französischen Impressionismus und Ostasiatica.

“Wild Things” in the Villa The Oceania Collection of Sidney W. Brown

In late 1965, the Museum Rietberg received eleven Melanesian artifacts from the family of the Swiss engineer Sidney W. Brown. Brown obtained them on a trip of just over a year to the South Pacific that he had undertaken in 1888 with the Russian-German engineer Eugen von Petersen from Naples.

The trip was motivated by business: Brown and Petersen were searching for land for a gold mine. After stays in Ceylon (today Sri Lanka) and Australia, they reached Batavia (today Jakarta). While Brown remained there, Petersen went on to Celebes (today Sulawesi) to do business with the local rajas.

Difficulties raising capital caused Brown to doubt that the undertaking would be successful. He returned to Europe. In his luggage he had Oceanic artifacts Petersen had commissioned him to deliver to Naples. Petersen had received them as gifts from the Australian Museum in Sydney thanks to existing contacts to the curator Edward Pierson Ramsay. The museum had for its part acquired thousands of artifacts, in particular from the Samoan-American plantation owner Emma Forsyth and her family.

Contrary to their agreement, Brown took the objects with him to Switzerland. There they ended up in the Villa Langmatt in Baden, the final residence of Sidney W. Brown and his family. His Oceanic collection was later divided up: part of it came to the Museum Rietberg, thanks to the interest of its director at the time, Elsy Leuzinger, who welcomed the artifacts as “wild things.” The Browns bequeathed another part to their gardeners’ family. The rest remained in the Villa Langmatt, which is now a museum for the Browns’ collection of French Impressionism and East Asiatica.

Ritualgefäß, Machtsymbol, Sammelobjekt

Der Bedeutungswandel archaischer Bronzen in China

Die Lebensgeschichte der archaischen chinesischen Bronzegefäße ist ein gutes Beispiel dafür, wie sich Bedeutung und Funktion von Objekten über die Zeiten hinweg verändern können. Dieser Wandel in der Wahrnehmung der Objekte geschieht nicht nur durch den Transfer in einen fremden Kulturbereich, sondern auch durch gesellschaftliche und geisteswissenschaftliche Entwicklungen im eigenen Kulturkreis.

Die Bronzegefäße wurden ursprünglich in der Shang-Zeit (ca. 1500–1045 v. Chr.) als Ritualobjekte für die Opferzeremonien an die vergöttlichten Ahnen gegossen. In der nachfolgenden Zhou-Dynastie (ca. 1045–256 v. Chr.) dienten sie als Machtsymbole und Legitimation des Herrschaftsanspruches. Im ersten Jahrtausend n. Chr. tauchten die Bronzegefäße als archäologische Zufallsfunde auf. Sie galten als magische Objekte und spielten eine Rolle im daoistischen Unsterblichkeitskult. In der Song-Dynastie (960–1279) fand eine Rückbesinnung auf das Altertum statt und man begann die archaischen Bronzen systematisch zu erforschen und zu sammeln. Als Zeugen einer idealisierten Vorzeit genossen die alten Ritualgefäße bald ein hohes Ansehen und sie wurden in verschiedenen Materialien wie Keramik oder Jade nachgeahmt.

In China schätzte man die archaischen Bronzen vor allem als historische Objekte. Erst mit ihrer Rezeption in Europa und den USA erhielten sie den Status von Kunstwerken. Auch die Sammlerinnen und Sammler der Bronzeobjekte im Museum Rietberg wie Ernst und Marie Louise Winkler, Gret Hasler und Mary Mantel-Hess betrachteten die Bronzen hauptsächlich unter ästhetischen Gesichtspunkten.

Ritual Vessel, Symbol of Power, Collector's Object The Shift in the Meaning of Ancient Bronzes in China

The history of ancient Chinese bronze vessels is a good example of how the meaning and function of objects can change over time. This transformation in the perception of objects happens not only via transfer to a foreign cultural sphere but also via developments in the society and humanities of one's own culture.

These bronze vessels were probably originally cast in the Shang Dynasty (ca. 1500–1045 BCE) as ritual objects for ceremonies of sacrifices to deified ancestors. In the subsequent Zhou Dynasty (ca. 1045–256 BCE), they served as symbols of power and legitimation of the claim to rule. In the first millennium CE, bronze vessels appeared as random archaeological finds. They were considered magic objects and played a role in the Taoist cult of immortality. In the Song Dynasty (960–1279 CE), people began to reflect on antiquity, studying and collecting ancient bronzes systematically. As documents of an idealized past, these old ritual vessels were soon highly esteemed, and they were imitated in various materials such as ceramics and jade.

In China, ancient bronzes were appreciated above all as historical objects. Only with their reception in Europe and the United States did they acquire the status of works of art. The collectors of the bronze objects in the Museum Rietberg, such as Ernst and Marie Louise Winkler, Gret Hasler, and Mary Mantel-Hess, also regarded bronzes primarily from aesthetic perspectives.

Das Geschäft mit der Kunst Afrikas

Die Quellen des Zürcher Kunsthändlers Emil Storrer

Ein Kunsthändler verrät seine Quellen nicht, so Charles Ratton, einer der bedeutendsten Pariser Kunsthändler der Kunst Amerikas, Afrikas und Ozeaniens. Mit Quellen sind sowohl Bezugsorte als auch Informationen zu Vorbesitzerinnen und Vorbesitzern gemeint. Der Grund dafür liegt in der Wahrung eines exklusiven Zugangs, möglicherweise aber auch in der Verschleierung einer nicht ganz unproblematischen Herkunft der Objekte. Die Sammlungen des Museums Rietberg sind in sehr vielen Fällen durch die Hände von Galerien gegangen. Bei der Erforschung der «Wege der Kunst» stehen wir somit vor Herausforderungen im Umgang mit sensiblen Daten wie auch Forderungen nach einer grösstmöglichen Transparenz zu den Provenienzen.

Eine Ausnahme bildet der Zürcher Kunsthändler Emil Storrer. Anhand der Überlieferung können wir in bestimmten Fällen die Ankaufssituation bei seinen Erwerbungen in Westafrika während der Kolonialzeit und nach der Unabhängigkeit nachvollziehen. Storrer kaufte Sammlungen vielfach bei den katholischen Missionaren in der Côte d'Ivoire, die wiederum in den Dörfern Artefakte vor der Zerstörung sicherten. Ein Beispiel hierfür ist die Massa-Bewegung in den 1950er Jahren in der nördlichen Côte d'Ivoire und den angrenzenden Gebieten. Diese Heilsbewegung löste einen Bildersturm aus, mit Auswirkungen auf den Kunstmarkt und auf private und museale Sammlungen. Der religiöse und gesellschaftliche Wandel ist auch als Folge des Kolonialismus zu interpretieren.

Storrer war ein wichtiger Händler für die Sammlungserweiterung des Museums: Seine Reise im Jahr 1951 mit Elsy Leuzinger, spätere Museumsdirektorin, ein gemeinsames Filmprojekt 1953 und seine drei Jahrzehnte dauernde Tätigkeit für die Ankaufskommission des Museums Rietberg spiegeln sich in rund 130 vermittelten Objekten wider – viele davon sind zentrale Werke in der Afrika-Sammlung des Museums.

Doing Business with Africa's Art

The Sources of the Zurich Art Dealer Emil Storrer

An art dealer does not betray his sources, said Charles Ratton, one of the most important Parisian dealers of the art of the Americas, Africa, and Oceania. By sources he meant both places of origin and information about previous owners. The reason for this was preserving exclusive access, but perhaps also to veil the not entirely unproblematic origin of the objects. In very many cases the collections of the Museum Rietberg passed through the hands of gallerists. When researching the "pathways of art," we face challenges both in dealing with sensitive data and that of making provenances as transparent as possible.

The Zurich art dealer Emil Storrer represents an exception. Based on documentation we are able to determine in certain cases the sales terms of his acquisitions in West Africa during the colonial era and after independence. Storrer often purchased collections from Catholic missionaries in Côte d'Ivoire, who in turn wanted to prevent the artifacts from being destroyed in the villages. One example of this is the Massa movement in the 1950s in northern Côte d'Ivoire and adjacent regions. This salvation movement triggered an iconoclasm with effects on the art market as well as private and museum collections. This religious and social transformation can also be interpreted as a consequence of colonialism.

Storrer was an important dealer when the museum was expanding its collection. His trip in 1951 with Elsy Leuzinger, the future director of the museum, a joint film project in 1953, and his three decades on the museum's acquisitions committee are reflected in around 130 objects, many of which are key works in the museum's Africa collection.

Geschichte vom Rand

Die Rekonstruktion von indo-persischen Malerei- und Kalligrafiealben mit Hilfe von Bordüren

Ein Grossteil der persischen und indischen Miniaturen, die sich in westlichen Museumssammlungen befinden, sind einzelne lose Blätter. Dabei macht das Museum Rietberg keine Ausnahme. Ursprünglich waren diese Blätter jedoch Teil von Alben. Ihre wechselvolle Geschichte lässt sich anhand der Bordüren rekonstruieren.

Das Album entstand im 15. Jahrhundert und war die bevorzugte Form, um Bilder und Kalligrafien aufzubewahren und zu betrachten. Die Zusammenstellung der Werke erfolgte dabei nicht zufällig, sondern gehorchte einem bestimmten Schema. So gehörte es vom 17. Jahrhundert an im indo-persischen Raum zum Standard, dass sich Doppelseiten mit Kalligrafien und Doppelseiten mit Malerei abwechseln. Alben sind eine Art tragbare Kunstgalerie. Sie sind thematisch zusammengestellt; sie können eine Geschichte erzählen oder dem Werk eines Künstlers oder einer Künstlergruppe gewidmet sein.

Wie Kunstsammlungen blieben auch Alben nicht davor bewahrt, von nachfolgenden Besitzern manipuliert zu werden. Teile des Albums wurden separiert, mit neuen Bordüren versehen und in neue Alben überführt. Die stärksten Eingriffe fanden im 20. Jahrhundert statt: Für den westlichen Kunsthandel wurden die Alben vollständig aufgetrennt und die Blätter einzeln verkauft. Solche Einzelwerke entsprachen dem westlichen Geschmack, in Holz gerahmt liessen sie sich wie westliche Bilder an der Wand aufhängen.

Der genaue Blick auf die Bordüren der Malereien und Kalligrafien, ihre Masse, die Motive, den Stil und die Art der Montage ermöglichen die Rekonstruktion ehemaliger Alben. Die zumindest virtuell wiederhergestellten Alben liefern wichtige Erkenntnisse zu künstlerischen Entwicklungen und geben Auskunft über Sammelgewohnheiten und ästhetische Vorlieben.

History from the Margins The Reconstruction of Indo-Persian Albums of Painting and Calligraphy with the Aid of Borders

A majority of the Persian, and Indian miniatures found in collections in Western museums are single, loose sheets. The Museum Rietberg represents no exception. Originally, however, these sheets were part of an album. Their eventful history can be reconstructed from their borders.

The album emerged in the fifteenth century and was the preferred form for preserving and viewing paintings and calligraphy. The works were not compiled by chance but followed a specific schema. For example, in the Indo-Persian realm from the seventeenth century onward it was standard to have double-page spreads of calligraphy alternating with double-page spreads of painting. Albums are a kind of "portable art gallery." They are compiled thematically; they can narrate a history of art or be dedicated to the work of an artist or group of artists.

Like art collections, however, albums are not spared manipulation by subsequent owners. Parts of the album were separated, given new borders, and transferred to new albums. The most substantial interventions occurred in the twentieth century: albums were completely broken up for the Western art trade and the sheets sold singly. Such "individual works" were in keeping with Western taste; framed in wood, they could be hung on the wall like Western paintings.

Looking closely at the borders of paintings and calligraphies – their dimensions, motifs, style, and mounting – makes it possible to reconstruct former albums. The albums, which can at least be recreated digitally, provide important insights into artistic developments and offer information about collecting habits and aesthetic preferences.

Abgeschlagene Köpfe als Kunstwerke

Die Rezeption der chinesischen buddhistischen Skulptur

Heute gehören Buddhaköpfe in westlichen Ländern zum Lifestyle. Sie werden aus den verschiedensten Materialien gefertigt und stehen für Attribute wie Ruhe, Achtsamkeit und inneren Frieden. Die wenigsten Käuferinnen und Käufer sind sich wohl bewusst, dass es sich dabei um die Nachbildung des abgeschlagenen Kopfes einer Statue handelt. Wie kommt es, dass solch ein Bruchstück zum Symbol des buddhistischen Gedankenguts geworden ist?

Das Interesse an der buddhistischen Lehre erwachte in Europa im 19. Jahrhundert. Allerdings blieben die Kunstwerke des chinesischen Buddhismus im Westen weitgehend unbekannt. Erst Anfang des 20. Jahrhunderts reisten japanische und europäische Forscher durchs Land und dokumentierten die monumentalen Höhlentempel mit ihren Tausenden von Skulpturen. Ihre Fotos weckten den Wunsch, solche Figuren zu besitzen. In nur wenigen Jahren wurden viele der buddhistischen Stätten – die meisten davon waren verfallen und nicht mehr rituell genutzt – Stück für Stück geplündert. Oft wurden zuerst die Köpfe abgeschlagen und auf den Kunstmarkt gebracht, später folgten die Torsi.

In China hatten religiöse Figuren eine rein rituelle Funktion. Sie gehörten nicht zu den Sammelobjekten und im traditionellen Kunstkanon gab es keine Kategorie für Skulptur. Im Westen dagegen wurden sie in das bestehende System der Bildenden Künste eingeordnet und – ähnlich wie die antike Skulptur – aufgrund ihrer ästhetischen Qualitäten geschätzt. Dass die Köpfe dabei als unabhängige Kunstwerke verstanden wurden, entspricht einer europäischen Sehgewohnheit. Reine Kopfskulpturen gab es schon in der Antike, die Mode wurde in der Renaissance wiederbelebt und im 19. Jahrhundert in Form von Gipsbüsten popularisiert.

Severed Heads as Works of Art

The Reception of Chinese Buddhist Sculpture

Buddha heads are part of the lifestyle in Western countries today. They are made from a wide variety of materials and stand for attributes such as calm, attentiveness, and inner peace. Very few of their buyers are aware that they are imitations of the severed head of a statue. How has a fragment come to be the symbol of Buddhist thought?

Interest in Buddhist teachings was awakened in Europe in the nineteenth century. The Buddhist artworks of China nevertheless remained largely unknown in the West. Not until the early twentieth century did Japanese and European scholars travel through the country and document the monumental cave temples with thousands of sculptures. Their photographs stimulated the desire to possess such figures. Within only a few years, many of the Buddhist sites – most of which were dilapidated and no longer used for rituals – were looted piece by piece. Often the heads were cut off first and placed on the art market. Torsos followed later.

In China, religious figures had a ritual function. They were not collector's objects, and there was no category for them in the traditional canon of art. In the West, by contrast, they were categorized in the existing system of the visual arts and – much like classical sculpture – appreciated for their aesthetic qualities. It is in keeping with European visual habits that the heads were regarded as independent works of art. Portrait busts had existed in antiquity, and the fashion was revived in the Renaissance and popularized in the nineteenth century in the form of plaster casts of busts.

Die Spuren der Sammler als Teil des Kunstwerks

Siegel und Aufschriften auf chinesischen Malereien

Neben der kaiserlichen Sammeltradition gab es in China zu allen Zeiten beachtliche private Kunstbestände. Eine Sammlung mit Malerei und Schriftkunst von alten Meistern und renommierten Zeitgenossen galt als besonders prestigeträchtig. Bei privaten Zusammenkünften betrachteten und diskutierten die gleichgesinnten Kunstkenner ihre Sammlungen. Dabei war es üblich, dass sie ihre Kommentare und Siegel auf dem Bild hinterliessen. Die künstlerisch gestalteten Siegel und die kalligrafischen Auf- oder Nachschriften empfand man als ästhetische und dokumentarische Bereicherung des Bildes. Sie wurden zu einem sich im Laufe der Zeit kontinuierlich erweiternden Bestandteil des Kunstwerks.

Anhand der Sammlersiegel lassen sich nicht nur die Besitzerketten und Überlieferungswege der Bildrollen nachverfolgen, sie entschlüsseln auch die Wirkungs- und Bedeutungsgeschichte der Kunstwerke und geben Einblick in menschliche Beziehungen, soziale Netzwerke und kulturhistorische Schauplätze.

Die Spuren vieler Kunstwerke, die sich heute in westlichen Museen befinden, führten Anfang des 20. Jahrhunderts nach Shanghai. Die moderne Metropole hatte sich nach dem Sturz der Qing-Dynastie im Jahr 1911 zum wirtschaftlichen und kulturellen Zentrum Chinas entwickelt. Nach der Gründung der VR China 1949 wurde die britische Kronkolonie Hongkong zum wichtigsten Schauplatz für den Handel mit Kunst und Antiquitäten aus China. Von hier wiederum führen Spuren zu Sammlern in die Schweiz. Einer davon war Charles A. Drenowatz, der seine bedeutende Sammlung mit Malerei des 15.–19. Jahrhunderts sowie eine Gruppe von Werken aus dem frühen 20. Jahrhundert 1979 dem Museum Rietberg schenkte.

The Traces of Collectors as Part of the Work of art Seals and Inscriptions on Chinese Paintings

Alongside the tradition of imperial collecting in China, there were always considerable private art collections. A collection with the painting and calligraphy of old masters and renowned contemporaries was regarded as especially prestigious. Likeminded connoisseurs of art gathered in private to view and discuss their collections. It was common for them to leave their comments and seals on the work. These artistically designed seals and calligraphic inscriptions and postscripts were perceived as aesthetic and documentary enriching of the work. Over the course of time, they have become a continuously expanding component of the work of art.

Examining collector's seals makes it possible not only to trace the chain of owners and the paths of transmission of scrolls but also to decode the history of the influence and importance of works of art and to provide insight into human relationships, social networks, and venues of cultural history.

The trails of many of the works of art now in Western museums lead to Shanghai in the early twentieth century. That modern metropolis had evolved into the economic and cultural center of China after the collapse of the Qing Dynasty in 1911. Following the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949, the British Crown Colony Hong Kong became the most important venue for the trade of art and antiquities from China. Their trails in turn lead to collectors in Switzerland. One of these was Charles A. Drenowatz, who donated his important collection of paintings from the fifteenth to the nineteenth century, as well as a group of works from the early twentieth century, to the Museum Rietberg in 1979.

Der Markt für japanische Kunst im Westen

Die Rolle von Hayashi Tadamasa

Die politische Wende, die mit dem Ende der aristokratischen Herrschaft 1868 und der beginnenden Meiji-Epoche einsetzte, hatte weitreichende Konsequenzen für die japanische Gesellschaft. Mit der Öffnung und Modernisierung Japans begann ein intensiver Handel mit japanischem Kunsthandwerk im Westen. Umfangreicher Export von traditionellen Kunstwerken sowie die Förderung von neuer Kunstproduktion für den westlichen Markt waren die Folge.

Die Weltausstellungen waren, schon seit der ersten Schau in London 1851, ein Ort der Begegnung, des Austausches und des Wettstreits. 1873 betrat in Wien erstmals Japan diese neue Bühne. Der dortige Erfolg führte zur Gründung einer staatlichen Handelsgesellschaft, Kiryū Koshō Kaisha, für die in Paris auch der spätere Kunsthändler Hayashi Tadamasa arbeitete. Als Vermittler der traditionellen japanischen Kunst im Westen versuchte er stets, den Blick seiner westlichen Kundschaft für die Schönheit der buddhistischen Kunst und des Kunsthandwerks wie Arbeiten in Lack, Keramik und Metall zu schärfen. Doch im Zuge des Japonismus waren vor allem Farbholzschnitte und Holzschnittbücher gefragt, die er in grossen Mengen absetzte.

Im eigenen Land lange Zeit missverstanden und kritisiert – unter anderem wurde er beschuldigt, die Kulturschätze an Ausländerinnen und Ausländer verscherbelt zu haben – wird Hayashi im Westen als einer der frühesten und einflussreichsten Vermittler der japanischen Kunst geschätzt. Seine vermittelnde Rolle im Japonismus ist von grosser Bedeutung, und sie verdeutlicht zugleich die Ambivalenz der Geschichte: Es gilt stets, die unterschiedlichen Perspektiven auf die Wege der Kunst zu betrachten.

The Market for Japanese Art in the West

The Role of Hayashi Tadamasa

The political turn that began with the end of the feudal rule in 1868 and the start of the Meiji era, had far-reaching consequences for Japanese society. With the opening and modernizing of Japan, intense trade in Japanese applied arts began in the West. This resulted in both the extensive export of traditional art objects and the promotion of new art production for the Western market.

After the first event in London in 1851, world's fairs had become a site of encounter, exchange, and competition. Japan joined this new forum for the first time in Vienna in 1873. The success reaped there led to the founding of a state owned trading company, Kiryū Koshō Kaisha, for whose Paris branch the later art dealer Hayashi Tadamasa was employed. As a procurer of traditional Japanese art in the West, Hayashi was at pains to hone his Western clientele's awareness for the beauty of Buddhist art and of crafts objects such as lacquer, ceramics, and metal. However in the wake of Japonisme, the demand was above all for polychrome woodblock prints and books, which he sold in large quantities.

Long misunderstood and criticized in his own country – among other things, he was accused of having sold out cultural assets to foreigners – Hayashi is appreciated in the West as one of the earliest and most influential promoters of Japanese art. His mediating role in Japonisme is of great importance. History's ambivalence becomes evident: it is always necessary to consider the different perspectives of art's trajectory.

Fotografie und Kunst

Eine aufschlussreiche Beziehung

Sehen wir in den gezeigten Bildern eine Fotografie oder sehen wir die Maske, die Figur oder den Webrollenhalter? In welcher Beziehung stehen die Kunstwerke zu den Fotografien, die sie abbilden, und wie beeinflussen sie sich gegenseitig?

Seit der ersten Hälfte des 20. Jahrhunderts hat die Fotografie entscheidend zu einer überwiegend ästhetischen Wahrnehmung und damit Kanonisierung von Kunst aus Afrika beigetragen. Durch das Medium der Fotografie konnten Kunstwerke reproduziert und unendlich oft vervielfältigt werden. Dabei ist die Karriere der Fotografie wie auch diejenige von einzelnen Kunstwerken oder Kunstgattungen eng an Ausstellungen geknüpft.

Am Beispiel der Ausstellung *African N**** Art* aus dem Jahr 1935 im Museum of Modern Art in New York lässt sich aufzeigen, wie mit der reduzierten Inszenierung in einem *white cube* und den dort gemachten Aufnahmen ein wichtiger Meilenstein bei der Rezeption der Kunst Afrikas gesetzt wurde: Zahlreiche Kunstwerke waren dort ausgestellt und wurden von Walker Evans fotografiert. Zehn davon befinden sich heute in den Sammlungen des Museums Rietberg; drei davon werden hier zum ersten Mal gemeinsam mit den dazugehörigen Fotografien präsentiert. Die Kunstwerke gelten heute als sogenannte Meisterwerke. Gleichzeitig gewannen auch die Abbildungen an Bedeutung und die Objektfotografie etablierte sich als eigenes Genre.

Die Wechselbeziehungen zwischen Objekt und Fotografie sind im Zusammenhang mit der «Kunstwerdung» beider Objektgattungen zentral. Objekt und Fotografie werden zu beinahe austauschbaren Medien.

Photography and Art A Reveal Relationship

Do we see a photograph in the illustrations shown here, or do we see the mask, the figure, or the heddle pulley? How do the works of art relate to the photographs that reproduce them, and how do they influence each other?

Since the first half of the twentieth century, photography has contributed crucially to an overwhelmingly aesthetic perception and hence canonization of art from Africa. The medium of photography made it possible to reproduce and copy infinitely often. The career of the photograph, like that of individual works and genres of art, is often closely connected to exhibitions.

Using the example of the *African N**** Art* exhibition of 1935 at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, it can be shown how the reduced presentation in a *white cube* and the photographs taken there can establish an important milestone in the reception of Africa's art: numerous works of art, ten of which are now in the collections of the Museum Rietberg, were exhibited there and photographed. Three of them and the corresponding photographs by the American photographer Walker Evans are presented together here for the first time. The works of art are now considered "masterpieces." At the same time, the illustrations themselves also became important, and object photography was established as a genre of its own.

The interrelationships between object and photograph are central to both genres "becoming art." The object and the photograph become almost interchangeable media.

Die Kunst der Diplomatie

Der Austausch von Geschenken im Königtum Bamum

Objekte wechselten in der Kolonialzeit in Afrika auf ganz unterschiedliche Weise den Besitzer: Sie konnten gekauft, getauscht, geraubt oder – wie in diesem Beispiel – geschenkt sein. Zu Beginn des 20. Jahrhunderts entschied sich der Kameruner König Njoya für einen diplomatischen Umgang mit der Kolonialmacht und Mission: Er hiess die Fremden als Alliierte willkommen und arbeitete mit ihnen zusammen. Eine weitere Strategie stellte der Austausch von Geschenken dar. Diese im gesamten Kameruner Grasland verbreitete Tradition zielte darauf ab, Bündnisse zwischen Herrschern zu festigen.

In diesem Sinne machte König Njoya im Jahre 1908 Kaiser Wilhelm II. den Thron seines Vaters zum Geschenk, der heute im Humboldt Forum in Berlin steht. Auch mit Angehörigen der Basler Mission trat König Njoya in einen Austausch von Gaben und Gegengaben ein. Mit dem Leiter der Missionsstation, Martin Göhring, pflegte Njoya eine enge Beziehung und schenkte ihm einen mit Perlen verzierten Hocker sowie eine Büffelmaske, heute in den Sammlungen des Museums Rietberg. Heute wird kontrovers diskutiert, was den kamerunischen Herrscher zu diesem Schritt bewog. War es der Druck der deutschen Kolonialmacht? Oder verfolgte der Bamum-König damit seine eigene politische Strategie im Umgang mit den Fremden?

Das Museum Rietberg ist seit 2009 in einem Kooperationsprojekt mit dem Palastmuseum in Fumban verbunden. Auch heute noch werden unter den Projektpartnern Geschenke gemacht, viel wichtiger ist aber der Austausch von Wissen und Kompetenzen.

The Art of Diplomacy The Exchange of Gifts in the Kingdom of Bamum

Objects changed owners in the colonial era in Africa in very different ways: they could be sold, exchanged, looted, or, as in this example, donated. In the early twentieth century, the Cameroonian King Njoya decided to take a diplomatic approach to the colonial power and the missionaries: he welcomed the foreigners as allies and worked with them. Another strategy was exchanging gifts. This tradition, which was widespread in the whole Cameroon Grasslands, was intended to solidify alliances between rulers.

In that spirit, King Njoya gave his father's throne as a gift to Emperor William II, and it now stands in the Humboldt Forum in Berlin. King Njoya also exchanged gifts with members of the Basel Mission. Njoya had a close relationship with the head of the mission station, Martin Göhring, and gave him a stool adorned with beads as well as a buffalo mask. The Cameroonian ruler's motivation for taking this step is still debated today. Was it pressure from the German colonial power? Or was the Bamum king pursuing his own political strategy for dealing with foreigners?

The Museum Rietberg has been involved in a cooperative project with the Palace Museum in Fumban since 2009. The project partners still exchange gifts, but the exchange of knowledge and competencies is much more important.

Vom kolonialen Unrecht zur kollaborativen Provenienz- forschung

Kunstwerke aus dem Königtum Benin

In der neu aufgeflamnten Restitutionsdebatte zu kolonialen Sammlungen aus Afrika spielt das Königtum Benin im heutigen Nigeria eine zentrale Rolle. Vor 125 Jahren zerstörte die britische Armee den Palast in der Hauptstadt Benin City. Im Februar 1897 steckten bewaffnete Truppen weite Teile der Stadt in Brand und entmachteten den damaligen König, Oba Ovonramwen. Tausende von Objekten aus Messing und Elfenbein wurden geplündert und in Europa in Teilen zur Finanzierung der Kriegskosten verkauft.

Auf dem Kunstmarkt gab es eine regelrechte Jagd auf diese bis dahin wenig bekannten Werke aus Benin. Schon früh wurde die Ästhetik und Meisterschaft der Gelbgussarbeiten gerühmt und die Werke wurden zu Ikonen des westlich geprägten Kanons der Kunst Afrikas. Auch in Schweizer Museen befinden sich rund hundert Stücke aus Benin, achtzehn davon im Museum Rietberg. Erstmals werden hier alle Benin-Objekte des Museums zusammen ausgestellt. Doch nicht alle Provenienzen sind lückenlos aufgeklärt.

Um die Frage zu klären, welche Objekte 1897 gewaltsam angeeignet wurden und welche Objekte später nach Europa gelangten, wurde auf Vorschlag des Museums Rietberg die Benin Initiative Schweiz gegründet. In dem vom Bundesamt für Kultur finanzierten Verbundprojekt haben sich acht Museen mit Benin-Sammlungen zusammengeschlossen. Der Fokus liegt auf einem kollaborativen Ansatz, das heisst der gemeinsamen Erforschung der Provenienzen und der Geschichte der Objekte mit nigerianischen Partnerinnen und Partnern. Auf der Grundlage der Forschungsergebnisse und ethisch-politischer Überlegungen entscheiden wir gemeinsam über die Zukunft der Objekte.

From Colonial Injustice to Collaborative Provenance Research

Artworks from the King- dom of Benin

In the debate over the restitution of colonial collections from Africa, which has come to public attention again recently, the Kingdom of Benin in today's Nigeria plays a central role. More than 125 years ago, the British Armed Forces destroyed the palace in its capital, Benin City. In February 1897, armed troops set fire to large parts of the city and dethroned the king at the time: Oba Ovonramwen. Thousands of brass and ivory objects were looted and sold in Europe to partly finance the war.

On the art market, there was a huge appetite for these works from Benin, which had previously been little known. From the outset, the aesthetics and craftsmanship of the yellow-cast works were praised, and the works became icons of the Western-influenced canon of African art. Around one hundred pieces from Benin can be found in Swiss museums, including eighteen in the Museum Rietberg. All of the museum's objects from Benin are being exhibited together here for the first time. Their provenance has not been completely determined in all cases.

To answer the question of which objects were acquired by force in 1897 and which arrived in Europe later, the Museum Rietberg instigated the foundation of the Swiss Benin Initiative. This joint project funded by the Federal Office of Culture brings together eight museums with Benin collections. It focuses on a collaborative approach, that is to say, research into the provenance and history of the objects conducted with Nigerian partners. On the basis of the results of this research and ethical and political considerations, we will decide together about the future of the objects.

Forschen und Sammeln als transkulturelle Kooperation

Die Terrakotta-Sammlung von Eberhard Fischer

Wenige Bestände im Museum sind so gut dokumentiert wie die Terrakotta-Figuren aus dem indischen Bundesstaat Gujarat. Zu verdanken ist dies dem kunstethnologischen Forschen und Sammeln, das der spätere Direktor des Museums Rietberg, Eberhard Fischer, gemeinsam mit einem ortsansässigen Wissenschaftler, Kurator und Künstler, Haku Shah, Ende der 1960er Jahre betrieb. Nach über 50 Jahren im Privatbesitz kamen 2020 die rund 250 Objekte als Geschenk ans Museum Rietberg.

«Haku Shah hat mir Indien erschlossen», schreibt Eberhard Fischer im Vorwort seines ersten Ausstellungskataloges 1972. Es ist ein Bekenntnis zur Bedeutung der transkulturellen Teamarbeit: Eberhard Fischer dokumentierte mit der Kamera, sein Kollege Haku Shah notierte das im Feld erhobene Wissen, ersterer tippte am Abend die Ergebnisse in die Maschine, letzterer wurde zum Ko-Kurator seiner ersten Ausstellung in Zürich. Urheberschaft, Herstellungsprozess und Verwendung fanden Eingang in Notizen und Etiketten. Interessanterweise erwarben sie die Terrakotta-Figuren in mehrfacher Ausführung. Dabei ging es um das vielfältige Bewahren und Erinnern, das heute in den Museen überliefert ist.

Lange galten die durch ländliche Kunsthandwerkerinnen und Kunsthandwerker in Indien erschaffenen Artefakte in Europa nicht als Kunst, sondern wurden vielmehr als Ethnographica ausgestellt. Dies könnte einer der Gründe sein, warum kunsthandwerkliche Objekte aus Indien jahrzehntelang nicht durch das Museum Rietberg erworben wurden. Erst seit den 2010er Jahren gelangten Bronzen, Lauten und anderes Kunsthandwerk wie Textilien, Töpfereien oder Schnitzereien in die Sammlungen des Museums Rietberg und geben heute ein umfassenderes Bild des vielfältigen Kunstschaffens in Indien.

Research and Collecting as Transcultural Cooperation The Terracotta Collection by Eberhard Fischer

Few of the holdings in the museum are as well documented as the terracotta figures from the Indian state of Gujarat. This is due to the ethnological research and collection that Eberhard Fischer, who would later be the director of the Museum Rietberg, conducted with the local scholar, curator, and artist Haku Shah in the late 1960s. After more than fifty years in a private collection, around 250 objects were donated to the Museum Rietberg in 2020.

“Haku Shah opened up India for me,” Eberhard Fischer wrote in the foreword of his first exhibition catalogue in 1972. It was a declaration of the importance of teamwork: Eberhard Fischer documented with a camera, and his colleague Haku Shah took notes on the knowledge acquired in the field; the former typed up the results in the evening; the latter became co-curator of that first exhibition in Zurich. Authorship, manufacturing process, and use were recorded in the notes and labels. Interestingly, they acquired the same collections several times. It was about the multiple preservation and memory that is passed down in museums today.

For a long time, artifacts made by rural artists in India were not considered art by Europeans but were exhibited as ethnographica. That may be one of the reasons why for decades craft objects from India were not acquired by the Museum Rietberg. Only since the 2010s have bronzes, sitars, and other craft pieces such as textiles, ceramics, and carvings entered the collections of the Museum Rietberg and now provide a more comprehensive picture of the diverse production of art in India.

Forschung unter der Haut

Der Beitrag der Restaurierung und Konservierung bei der Entschlüsselung der Objektgeschichte

Nicht nur die Rück-, Innen- und Unterseiten eines Werkes, seine Aufschriften und Etiketten oder sein fragmentarischer Zustand liefern Auskünfte über sein Leben. Auch naturwissenschaftliche Analysen sind aufschlussreich, um die verschiedenen Stationen von der Herstellung bis zur Musealisierung aufzudecken.

2010 kaufte das Museum Rietberg zwei persische Türpaneele an. Stil und Motive des Dekors waren typisch für die erste Hälfte des 17. Jahrhunderts. Bei einer genauen Prüfung durch einen Restaurator stellte sich allerdings heraus, dass die beiden Tafeln mehrfach bearbeitet waren: Ende des 19. Jahrhunderts hatten «Modernisten» sie grün übermalt, Mitte des 20. Jahrhunderts ergänzte ein Restaurator Teile des Originals.

Ob es sich nun um ein Original oder nur ein teilweises Original handelt: Das vormuseale Leben der Kunstwerke war oft einem stetigen Wandel unterworfen. Die Kunstwerke wurden transformiert, bearbeitet und umgedeutet. Bei der Restaurierung wird offensichtlich, wie dynamisch mit ihnen umgegangen wurde.

Ergänzend ist anzumerken, dass Restaurierungen sowohl am Museum als auch von externen Fachleuten oder mit Institutionen in den Herkunftsländern ausgeführt werden.

Research Under the Skin The Contribution of Restoration and Conservation to Decoding the History of Objects

Not only the backs, insides, and undersides of a work but also its inscriptions, labels, or its fragmentary state provide information about its "life." Scientific analyses can also be informative when uncovering its various stages en route from its first creation to its entering a museum.

In 2010, the Museum Rietberg purchased two Persian door panels. The style and motifs of their decoration were typical of the first half of the seventeenth century. On closer inspection by a restorer, however, it turned out that the two panels had been reworked several times: at the end of the nineteenth century "Modernists" had painted it over in green; in the mid-twentieth century a restorer replenished parts of the original.

Whether it is an original or only partially original, the pre-museum life of artworks was often subject to constant change. Works of art were transformed, reworked, and reinterpreted. It becomes obvious how dynamic the approach to them was.

It should be added that artworks are restored both in the museum and by external experts, sometimes also working with institutions in their country of origin.

Das Verknüpfen von Daten und Fragmenten

Das Beispiel eines Maya-Reliefs

Wissenschaftlerinnen und Wissenschaftler forschen heute mittels neuester Technologien an einer Textdatenbank und einem Wörterbuch zur Maya-Kultur, indem sie alle bekannten und weltweit verstreuten Kunstwerke und Architekturbestandteile digital erfassen, katalogisieren und beschlagworten. Dabei liefern auch die Herkunftsgeschichten der Objekte wichtige Informationen.

Als die Spanier im 15. Jahrhundert mesoamerikanischen Boden betraten, war die Maya-Kultur bereits seit einem halben Jahrtausend verschwunden und die Palastbauten von Vegetation überwuchert. Karl III. von Spanien, der zuvor als König von Neapel und Sizilien die ersten Ausgrabungen in Pompeji initiiert hatte, beauftragte seine Beamten in Übersee mit der Erkundung der Ruinen im Regenwald. Nicht nur gelangten so erste Illustrationen und Berichte nach Europa, man verschiffte auch Kunstwerke. In der ersten Hälfte des 19. Jahrhunderts lösten Forschungsreisende ein regelrechtes Maya-Fieber aus. Ein globaler Kunstmarkt entstand.

Die Herkunft des 1963 durch das Museum Rietberg angekauften Maya-Reliefs war lange Zeit unbekannt. Nach heutiger Einschätzung gehörte das Relief ursprünglich zu einem Triptychon mit einer Gesamtlänge von gut zwei Metern, das einst die Wand eines Bauwerks schmückte. Zwei Bruchstücke, die als Teile des Zürcher Reliefs identifiziert wurden, sowie die beiden dazugehörigen Tafeln wurden im Tempelkomplex von Pomoná gefunden. Anhand ihrer Abmessungen, der Ikonografie und der Inschriften liess sich die Provenienz aus Pomoná im mexikanischen Bundesstaat Tabasco belegen.

Eine kritische Sammlungsgeschichte, die wie in diesem Fall auch Plünderungen und die illegale Ausfuhr von Objekten aufdeckt, setzt Offenheit bei der Zusammenarbeit mit den Ursprungsländern und gegenüber deren Ansprüchen voraus.

Linking data and fragments

The Example of a Mayan relief

Scholars today are using the latest technologies to create a text database and a dictionary on Mayan culture in which they digitally record, catalogue, and assign keywords to all of the known artworks and architectural components that are scattered around the world. The stories of the objects' origins also provide important information.

When the Spanish first set foot on Mesoamerican soil in the fifteenth century, Mayan culture had already disappeared half a millennium before, and the palace buildings were overgrown with vegetation. Charles III of Spain, who as King of Naples and Sicily had initiated the first excavations in Pompeii, charged his officials abroad with exploring the ruins in the rainforest. This led not only to the first illustrations and reports reaching Europe but also to the first shipments of works of art. During the first half of the nineteenth century, explorers triggered a genuine Mayan fever. A global art market formed.

The origin of the Mayan relief purchased by the Museum Rietberg in 1963 was unknown for a long time. According to the current assessment, the relief originally belonged to triptych with a total length of over two meters that once decorated the wall of a building. Two fragments that were identified as parts of this Zurich relief and the associated panels were found in the complex of the temple of Pomoná. Based on measurements of it, its iconography, and its inscriptions, a provenance in Pomoná in the Mexican state of Tabasco could be demonstrated.

A critical history of the collection, which also exposes looting and illegal export of objects as in this case, demands openness when working with the countries of origin, also with regard to their goals.

English

1 Bust of Eduard von der Heydt, the Founding Donor of the Museum Rietberg

Charles Otto Bänninger
1897–1973, 1933
Museum Rietberg, REU 803

With a donation to the City of Zurich, the banker Eduard von der Heydt founded the Museum Rietberg, which opened its doors in 1952. Von der Heydt's collection includes important works of art that the collector acquired at renowned galleries in Europe and the United States, mostly in the period between the two world wars. His collecting concept of "ars una" (one art) was based on a universalist concept of art: there is only one art and it is found in all regions, cultures, and religions of the world.

2 Head of a Bodhisattva

China, Tang Dynasty, 7th century, stone
Museum Rietberg, RCH 131,
gift of Eduard von der Heydt

Provenance: [...], ca. 1920,
Raphael Perucci, Brussels; 1920,
Aron Veicht, Amsterdam; 1920–52,
Eduard von der Heydt

3 Several Volumes from the Library of Eduard von der Heydt

Friedrich Sarre, *Kunst des alten Persien*, Berlin: Bruno Cassirer Verlag, 1923

Leigh Ashton, *An introduction to the study of Chinese sculpture*, London: Ernest Benn Ltd., 1924
Helmuth Giesepp, *Der Buddhaismus in Indien und im fernem Osten: Schicksale und Lebensformen*, Berlin: Atlantis Verlag, 1936
Edakty Sidor, *Kunst der Nomadenvölker, Sammlung Boron Eduard von der Heydt*, Berlin: Verlag Bruno Cassirer, 1932

4 Ragini Bhairavi

Folio from a *Ragamala*-Series, India, Deccan, Hyderabad, ca. 1775, pigment on paper
Museum Rietberg, RVI 879,
bequest of Jürg Stockar

Provenienz: [...], Jürg Stockar, Zurich

This exhibition is the first to focus on the ornately decorated borders of Indian and Persian miniature painting, and studies them as a topic of provenance research. The "frames" of the paintings that were arranged in albums provide information about their owners. A kind of mobile gallery, albums could be rearranged again and again, until, in recent times, they were taken apart. From that point on – in particular as a result of trading in the Western art market – one concentrated on single sheets.

5 Female Figure, Tugubele

Workshop of the Senuto Region, Côte d'Ivoire, 19th/early 20th century, wood
Museum Rietberg, RAF 310,
acquired with funds from the City of Zurich

Provenance: [...], 1952(?)–1954,
Emil Storrer

The art dealer Emil Storrer shaped the museum's Africa collection like no other. He sat on its acquisitions committee for three decades and arranged for more than 120 artworks, including now iconic pieces, to come to the museum. His annual buying trips to the Côte d'Ivoire were the source for his collection and the holdings of his gallery. From Zurich, he sold to inter-

6 Four Old Index Cards (in use from ca. 1960s to 2004)

Museum Rietberg, archive

national clients, including other galleries such as the renowned gallery of Charles Ratton as well as to private art collectors in the United States such as Nelson A. Rockefeller.

Index cards and the inventory book were the heart of the documentation of the collection until 2004. Over the course of time, various pieces of information about the objects were noted and continuously updated. In addition to details about the artist, the work itself, its dating, and its precise origin, "Previous Ownership" was also noted. Today, we work with a digital database and from the outset ask for more information about the history of the work.

7 Gong Mallet with Prophetic Bird

Workshop of the Court of Benin, Nigeria, Kingdom of Benin, Edo, 2nd half of the 17th – 19th century, bronze, brass alloy
Museum Rietberg, RAF 609, gift of Catharina Dohrn, Hans-Ulrich Früh, and Stephanie Zuelzig

Provenance: 17th – 19th century – probably 1897, Benin City Royal Palace, probably looted by the British Army in 1897; [...], prior to 1928 – 74 at the latest, Hans Coray; 1974 – 85 at the latest, Hans Coray; 1985 – 2001, Hans W. Kopp

The sequence of owner – that is, the provenance – is seldom complete for objects in the collections. Their winding paths have to be explained with as few gaps as possible. It is reasonable to assume that this gong mallet from the court workshop of Benin City came to Europe after the British overthrew the kingdom in 1897. In which

8 Youth and Geisha in Dancing Costumes

From the Series *The Nikow Festival in the Pleasure District*, Kitagawa Ujamaro (ca. 1754–1806), Japan, Edo period, 1808, polychrome woodblock, prints on paper, reproduction
Museum Rietberg, RJP 2717,
gift of Willy Bolter

Provenance: [...], until 1902 or 1906, Hayashi Tadamasai; [...], ca. 1920–56, Willy Bolter, Baden

case, it is a looted work of art, and we are negotiating with Nigerian representatives about its future.

9 Ex Libris of Georg Reinhart

In *Exposition de sculptures et bronzes anciens de l'Inde*, C. T. Loo, Paris, June 14–July 31, 1935, Paris: C. T. Loo, 1935,
Museum Rietberg, library

The tradition of the artistically designed ex libris bookplate, which was usually placed on the front endpaper of a book, points to the long history of identifying book collections. An ex libris is therefore also a mark of provenance. Part of Georg Reinhart's library came to the Museum Rietberg as early as 1957; its holdings permit inferences about his employment and his engagement with the art of Asia. In addition to the works of art collected, the library also sheds light on the diverse history of Georg Reinhart's interactions with the Asian world.

10 Ritual Bowl-Shaped Food Vessel the *Gui* Typ

China, early Western Zhou Dynasty, ca. late 11th/early 10th century BCE, bronze
Museum Rietberg, RCH 26,
gift of Eduard von der Heydt

11 Head Beaker

Peru, Nasca, 2nd century BCE – 6th century CE, terracotta
Museum Rietberg, PRB 137,
acquired with funds from the Dr. Adolf Streuli Foundation

Provenance: [...], until 1988, Carmen Oeschle

12 Bag and Cushion for *Rôjô*, *Nô Mask of an Old Woman*

Edo period, late 18th/early 19th century,
Museum Rietberg, RJP 4008,
gift of Baltheasar and Nanni Reinhart

One rarely sees containers or storage systems for art in museum displays. Bags and cushions for *Nô* masks are closely connected to the work of art and also provide information about the owners of the *Nô* masks. That is why they are shown here. The cushion and bag were labeled with the mask type, which indicates a rigorous system for storage. We know quite precisely the path of the *Nô* mask to which this bag and this cushion belong, although the change in ownership in Japan has not been deciphered down to the last detail.

English

13

**Bodhisattva
Avalokitesvara**

China, Ming Dynasty; Yongle mark and period (1403-1424), fire-gilded copper alloy
Museum Rietberg, BA 52, permanent loan from the Bertl Aschmann Foundation
Provenance: [..]; ca. 1960s/1980s – 1995, Bertl Aschmann; from 1995, Bertl Aschmann Foundation

14

**Verso of Ritual at the
Ghot of Pilgrimage Site**

Master of the First Generation after Manaku and Nainsukh of Guler, India, Pahar region, Guler, ca. 1775, pigment with gold on paper, reproduction
Museum Rietberg, RV1 2207, gift of the heirs of Werner Reinhart
Provenance: [..]; – 1908/1910, S. Bahadur Shah, Lahore, ca. 1908/1910 – 1951, Werner Reinhart, Winterthur; 1951 – 2002, heirs of Werner Reinhart

15

**Final in the Form of a
Naked Female Creature**

Iran, Luristan, beginning of the 1st millennium BCE, bronze
Museum Rietberg, RA 2116, gift of Rudolf Schmidt
Provenance: [..]; 1933–70, Rudolf Schmidt

16

**Invoice from Emil
Storrer for a carved
wooden female figure,
January 5, 1955**

Museum Rietberg, archive, K.0003-0002, reproduction

17

**Afrikanische Kunst aus
Schweizer Sammlungen
(African Art from Swiss
Collections)**

Exhibition at the Kunstgewebemuseum der Stadt Zürich, June 24 to September 2, 1945
Museum Rietberg, library

Before the Museum Rietberg opened its doors in 1952 as an art museum for non-European cultures, the Kunstgewebemuseum der Stadt Zürich presented exhibitions of non-Western art; for example, in 1931 objects from the Africa collection of Han Coray, and from 1932, parts of the collection of Eduard von der Heydt. After a major exhibition of Asian art from Swiss collections was presented in 1941, African art came into focus a little later.

18

Fragment of a Fabric

Peru, Wari, Middle Horizon, 7th–11th century, candied hair, cotton; warp vertical in the image
Museum Rietberg, RPB 1303b, acquired with municipal funds
Provenance: [..]; bis 1953, Guillermo Schmidt-Pizarro, Geneva; 1953–55, Kunstgewerbemuseum Zürich

Pre-Columbian textiles were often cut up for the art market and Western collectors. As a result, here at the museum we have to deal with fragments, pieces of a once more extensive composition. We can only present parts in the museum, since very few textiles have been preserved complete. What does this say about our collecting practice? What do we recognize in these pieces?

19

**The Weltkunst-Bücherei
(World Art Library)
Series, edited by
Paul Westheim**

Carl Einstein, *Afrikanische Plastik*, Berlin: Verlag Ernst Wasnuth A.G., 1920

Indische Miniaturen der islamischen Zeit, with an introduction by Prof. Satter Kehri, Orbis Pictus 6, Berlin: Verlag Ernst Wasnuth A.G. Berlin 1921
Otto Burchard, *Chinesische Kleinplastik*, Orbis Pictus 12, Berlin: Verlag Ernst Wasnuth A.G., 1921, library of Josef Gier, M. Gladbach 1920
Leonhard Adam, *Nordwest-amerikanische Indianerkunst*, Orbis Pictus 17, Berlin: Verlag Ernst Wasnuth A.G., ca. 1929, library of Eduard von der Heydt
Museum Rietberg, library

The *Weltkunst-Bücherei* series of twenty volumes was an attempt to write a universal history of art. This series was edited in the 1920s by the art critic, collector, and author Paul Westheim. The various genres of art were subsumed under one concept of art. European scholars and those from the regions in question wrote these fundamental works.

20

**Female Polo Player
on a Galloping Horse**

China, Tang Dynasty (618–907) with modern additions, earthenware with white engobe and traces of cold painting
Museum Rietberg, RCH 532, acquired with funds from the City of Zürich
Provenance: [..]; September 1927, Léon Wainiacq, Paris; September 1927–1952, J.F.H. Menten

21

**Labels by
Eberhard Fischer/
Haku Shah**

Museum Rietberg, archive

22

Hanging Hook

Workshop of the Sepik Region, Papua New Guinea, Middle Sepik, 19th/early 20th century, wood
Museum Rietberg, RME 118, gift of Eduard von der Heydt
Provenance: [..]; until 1945, Nell Walden; from 1945, Eduard von der Heydt

The inventory numbers of both the Museum Rietberg (RME 118) and Nell Walden (Pap. 1032) can be seen on the back of this hanging hook. Further down there is a customs sticker (right) and another undentifiable sticker. Looking at the back of artworks, one discovers fascinating details such as the face on this hanging hook, which is also seen on the front. Wouldn't it be interesting to know who originally acquired the hook in the Sepik region and why?

23

Horse with Rider

India, Gujarat, 1968–69, terracotta
Museum Rietberg, 2020.15, gift of Eberhard Fischer
Provenance: 1968/69–2020, Eberhard Fischer; collected together with Haku Shah

For decades, the Department of Indian Art at the Museum Rietberg collected courtly art genres such as miniature painting and old Hindu temple sculptures. Only in the last decade have creations by social minorities and folk art been included in the art repertoire. For example, the museum now has “tribal” bronze figures, extensive holdings of textiles, and other figures such as this terracotta horse.

24

**Seal of the Collector
Yan Gai (1824 – after
1893) and of a Visitor
Hu Zhen (1817 – 62),
Carved by Qian Song**

On The Song of the Great Land of Wu, Lu Zhi (1496–1576)
China, Ming Dynasty, dated 1534, ink and light on paper
Museum Rietberg, RCH 1134, gift of Charles A. Drenowatz

25

**A Female Potter from
Mandvi Attaching
the Neck to the Body of
a Terracotta Horse**

India, Gujarat, Mandvi, cellulose nitrate, 1969, photograph:
Eberhard Fischer
Museum Rietberg, FEF 104-30, permanent loan from Eberhard Fischer

English

Dividing Up, Donating, and Exporting Alice Boner's Collections in India and Switzerland

A

1 Ingresi Raja (English King), Kolam Mask

Sri Lanka, West Coast,
19th century
Museum Rietberg, RV 2306SL,
gift of Alice Boner
Provenance [..]: 1934–71,
Alice Boner

Alice Boner acquired this theatrical mask in 1934 on her arrival in Colombo, Sri Lanka. She was on her way to India, where she wanted to settle in Varanasi. Enthusiastic about her purchase, she wrote in her diary: "I purchased three masks and sent them to Calcutta. One is magnificent: the head of a hero with tensed face, wide-open eyes, and delightful sideburns. Above that a fabulous, meter-tall headdress."

2 Design for a Poster for Uday Shankar's Dance Troupe

Alice Boner (1889–1981), Paris,
1934, watercolor on paper,
reproduction
Museum Rietberg, AB 604, gift of
the heirs of Alice Boner
Provenance: 1934–81, Alice Boner;
community of heirs of Alice Boner

Alice Boner worked closely with the Indian dancer Uday Shankar. An important and recurring element of his choreographies was Shiva dancing. The symbolism of this god, who created and destroyed the world by dancing, fascinated both Uday Shankar and Alice Boner. She designed this poster for a performance by Shankar and his troupe at the Salle Pleyel in Paris on June 6 and 12, 1934.

3 View into the Interior Courtyard of the House on Assi Ghat

Alice Boner (1889–1981),
Watercolor on paper, undated,
1970s (?), reproduction
Museum Rietberg, AB 1592,
gift of the heirs of Alice Boner
Provenance: ca. 1970–81, Alice
Boner, 1981–2009, community of
heirs of Alice Boner

This watercolor painted by Alice Boner shows the interior courtyard of her beloved home in Varanasi, which was her workplace, residence, and retreat for nearly forty years. She carefully decorated and displayed her collection of artworks there: bronzes, textiles, paintings, and sculptures. The sculpture in the niche is now in the Alice Boner Institute.

4 Alice Boner on the Terrace of the Assi Sanganam House with Sculptures from Her Collection

India, Varanasi, 1965–78,
cellulose acetate/polyester
Museum Rietberg, AB 624-4, gift
of the Zentrum Guggenbach Davos
Provenance: 1965/1978–81, Alice
Boner, Boner Family, 1998–2014,
Ambros Boner, 2014–16, heirs
of Ambros Boner, 2016, Zentrum
Guggenbach Davos

This photograph shows Alice Boner on the roof terrace of her home in Varanasi. She is sitting next to a group of sculptures that she positioned on the steps to the water tank (see 5). The terrace is no longer in its original form. It was covered in the 1990s and is now the second floor of the Alice Boner Institute.

5 Pillar Capital with Four Ganas (Divine Companions of Shiva)

India, Uttar Pradesh, 11th century,
sandstone
Museum Rietberg, RV 234,
gift of Alice Boner
Provenance [..]: until 1971,
Alice Boner

Alice Boner placed this capital on her roof terrace in Varanasi (see 4). It is not known why, when, or how she acquired this object. Was it the fact that she was particularly interested in capitals as architectural fragments in her research on Indian temples? Or was she interested in the figures depicted?

6 Indrani and Chamunda

India, Khajuraho region,
11th century, gray sandstone
Museum Rietberg, RV 235,
gift of Alice Boner
Provenance [..]: until 1971,
Alice Boner

7 Letter from P. C. Dasgupta to Alice Boner, May 6, 1957

Museum Rietberg, archive,
AB-01-03, reproduction

Alice Boner donated a group of terracotta figures to the Asutosh Museum of Indian Art in Calcutta, India's first university museum. The figures were originally from Varanasi, where they were uncovered in excavations quite close to Alice Boner's home. They are small terracotta figures that have been dated as far back as the third century BCE and hence are among the oldest evidence of Indian art. Alice Boner did not want to keep these archaeological finds for herself but instead hand them over to an Indian museum for conservation and scholarly research. In this

letter, the museum's director, P. C. Dasgupta, confirms the arrival of the objects and thanks Alice Boner for her donation.

8 Letter from Alice Boner to Elsy Leuzinger, November 29, 1958

Museum Rietberg, archive,
AB-02-04, reproduction

From the 1940s, Alice Boner asked herself what would happen with her collection after her death. She decided to give her collection to a Swiss museum as a loan or donation. With the founding of the Museum Rietberg in 1952, a new cultural institution arose in Zurich that attracted Alice Boner's interest. She maintained increasingly friendly contact with Elsy Leuzinger, who from 1956 was director of the museum. In this letter she informs Elsy Leuzinger about her efforts and also proposes acquiring additional works of art in India for the Museum Rietberg.

9 Letter from Alice Boner to Ambassador Dr. August R. Lindt, August 25, 1971

Museum Rietberg, archive,
AB-01-04, reproduction

In this letter from Davos, Alice Boner informs the Swiss ambassador Dr. August R. Lindt (1905–2000) about the arrival of her collection in Zurich. She is pleased that her collection has now finally arrived in her new home after three years of intense and difficult negotiations with various ministers of the Indian government. At the end of the letter Alice Boner thanks the ambassador because he had contributed crucially to the success of the negotiations.

English

Dividing Up, Donating, and Exporting Alice Boner's Collections in India and Switzerland

A

10 Pair of Lovers

India (Central India), Chandella Dynasty, 11th century, sandstone
Museum Rietberg, RV1 256,
gift of Alice Boner
Provenance: [..]; until 1971,
Alice Boner

This sculpture is one of the highlights in Alice Boner's collection. It has been shown repeatedly in exhibitions and published on postcards and in catalogues. She probably acquired this object because of her interest in the famous temple complexes of Khajuraho, which she visited and studied many times.

11 Hovering Vidyadhara with Musical Instrument

India, Uttar Pradesh, 12th century,
beige sandstone
Museum Rietberg, RV1 240,
gift of Alice Boner
Provenance: [..]; until 1971,
Alice Boner

12 List of Sculptures in Alice Boner's House on the Assi Ghat, dated 1948

Museum Rietberg, archive,
A.B.01-03, reproduction

13 Inventory Book with Alice Boner's Donation

Museum Rietberg, archive,
S.0001-0001, Inventarbuch IV,
reproduction

14 Books from Alice Boner's Library

Hippolyte Fauche, *Le Maho-Bhadrata*, Paris: A. Durand Benjamm Duprat, 1863 – 1870
Auguste, *Linde pittoresque*, Paris: Dauvin et Fontaine, 1840
Alice Boner and Sadasiva Rath Sarma with Rajendra Rasa Das, *New Light on the Sun Temple of Konarka*, The Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series Office, Varanasi 1972
Ali Tcheliabi-ben-Saleh, *Contes et fables indiennes*, Paris 1778
Museum Rietberg, library

Over the years, Alice Boner published a series of important books on Indian art, especially medieval Hindu sculptures and Indian temple architecture. She was particularly interested in translating and publishing source texts, which she translated from Sanskrit into English in collaboration with experts. For her research, she assembled a large library, parts of which are now accessible in the library of the Museum Rietberg and that of the Alice Boner Institute in Varanasi. These books include important standard works on the history of the twentieth century on the history of Indian art, literature, and culture.

15 Chamba Rumal with Krishna's Wedding

India, Himachal Pradesh, 18th – 19th century, Cotton, silk threads
Museum Rietberg, RV1 643,
gift of Georgette Boner
Provenance: [..]; 1934–81, Alice Boner; 1981–89, Georgette Boner

So-called *chamba rumals* are silk textiles embroidered on both sides, which were used in the Pahari region of India to cover precious objects and given as gifts. Alice Boner acquired a whole group of these textiles because she found similar motifs and ornaments in the paintings and textiles of the Pahari region. This textile

All her life she felt a particularly close connection to this Hindu god.

16 Radha and Krishna in a Storm

Master of the Second Generation after Nainsukh and Manaku of Guler, India, Pahari region, Kangra, 1800–25, pigment painting with gold on paper
Museum Rietberg, RV1 1377,
bequest of Alice Boner
Provenance: [..]; until 1981,
Alice Boner

17 Radha and Krishna on a Throne

India, Pahari region, Kangra, 1850–75, pigment painting with gold on paper
Museum Rietberg, RV1 1706,
gift of Georgette Boner
Provenance: [..]; until 1981, Alice Boner; 1981–83, Georgette Boner

The art collector Alice Boner compiled a unique portfolio of more than 650 miniatures from the time she settled in India in 1935. After her death in 1981, the majority of her collection went to the Museum Rietberg.

Alice Boner was particularly interested in the theme of depicting the divine in painting. The world of Indian gods offered her rich material, and not only pictures of single gods and goddesses but also numerous series of important Hindu stories entered her collection. Images of the Hindu god Krishna or Vishnu were by far the most common in her collection.

18 Lavanayavati and Chandrabhanu

Palm leaf manuscript (fragment) by Ragunath Prusti, India, Orissa, Ganjam district, Mundamarai, ca. 1880
Museum Rietberg, RV1 1195,
bequest of Alice Boner
Provenance: [..]; until 1981,
Alice Boner

Alice Boner's collection includes numerous palm-leaf manuscripts from Orissa. The art of palm leaf painting, which is actually an engraving using lamplack, was cultivated into the twentieth century. Most of the palm leaves in her collection are incomplete and include local literary works: that is also true of the eleven leaves of this Lavanayavati manuscript. It preserves the work of the Orya poet Upendra Bhanja (eighteenth century), telling the love story of Princess Lavanayavati (Lavanayavati) and Prince Chandrabhanu (Chitrabhanu) in words and images. The scenes depicted are episodes related to the wedding of the two main characters.

English

Diverse Shifts National Socialist Cultural Policy and the Collection of Nell Walden

B

1 Herwarth and Nell Walden in 1916 in the dining room of their Berlin apartment

bpk/Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, reproduction

Nell Walden was a trained musician and translator who later worked as a journalist and artist. As a result of her marriage to Herwarth Walden (1878–1941), the founder of the journal *Der Sturm*, and her subsequent collaboration in the eponymous gallery and publishing house in the 1910s and 1920s, she was at the center of the avant-garde. *Der Sturm* was one of the leading avant-garde journals, and the gallery represented artists such as Franz Marc, Wassily Kandinsky, and Marc Chagall (in the background). The gallery also repeatedly showed non-European art.

2 Nell Walden in her Berlin apartment with her own paintings, ca. 1925

bpk/Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, reproduction

3 Nell Walden in her Berlin apartment with her collections of non-European art, ca. 1925

bpk/Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, reproduction

Nell Walden posed for an unknown photographer in front of her own works, and again in front of objects from her collection acquired in the 1910s and 1920s. Her "collecting mania" is impressively displayed to the viewer in an overloaded juxtaposition and superposition. The four objects shown in the display case and

other works are now in the collection of the Museum Rietberg. Collected in the first third of the twentieth century in the context of the avant-garde, the photographs show the separate private staging of herself as an artist and as a collector.

4 Dance Staff

Workshop of the Total Region, Papua New Guinea, New Britain, Gazelle Peninsula, 19th century, wood, painted
Museum Rietberg, RME 487, gift of Eduard von der Heydt
Provenance: [...], until 1945, Nell Walden; from 1945, Eduard von der Heydt

5 Dance Staff

Papua New Guinea, New Britain, 19th–early 20th century, wood, painted
Museum Rietberg, RME 486, gift of Eduard von der Heydt
Provenance: [...], until 1945, Nell Walden; from 1945, Eduard von der Heydt

6 *Der Sturm*, special issue "Afrika- und Südsee-Kunst"

May 1926, with an exhibition at the Galerie Der Sturm, reproduction

Der Sturm Gallery showed non-European artifacts on several occasions from 1921. In 1926, they mounted the exhibition *Afrika- und Südsee-Kunst* (African and South Seas Art). With her growing collection, Nell Walden was one of several lenders. The geographical origin of the works was indicated, but at the Der Sturm Gallery the crucial criterion was artistic quality. In the catalogue Herwarth Walden wrote: "No spear, no comb, no plate, no loincloth that is not a work of art."

7 N****-Plastik/Götze/Lago

Picture postcard with figure from the Walden Collection, 1917
Museum Rietberg

8 Nell Walden-Heimann und ihre Sammlungen

Exhibition at the Galerie Alfred Flechtheim, September 6–26, 1927, Berlin
Kunsthaus Zürich, library, reproduction

9 Nell Walden Heimann, *Unter Sternen: Gedichte, Berlin: Felix Stössinger Verlag, 1933*

Museum Rietberg, library

Nell Walden's connection to the founding collector of the Museum Rietberg, Eduard von der Heydt, comes up in the poem "Monte Verità, 1928." While she was still living in Berlin in the late 1920s, she visited von der Heydt at his estate several times. This is documented by photographs and entries in the guestbook, as well as by the two poems you can read here.

In 1933, Nell Walden donated this book of poems to the Monte Verità library. This copy has the ex libris of the Monte Verità library and is stamped "Kunhotel Monte Verità Ascona."

10-11 Correspondence

Nell Walden to Rudolf Zeller, February 20, 1938
Historisches Museum Bern, A.001-008.010, reproduction
Johannes Itten to Eduard von der Heydt, April 15, 1946,
Stadtbibliothek Zürich, VB.c.33, reproduction

Nell Walden was in close contact with Rudolf Zeller, the director of the Bern Historical Museum and temporary custodian of her non-Western collection. She told him about her money troubles. While the future of her extensive collection depressed her, Eduard von der Heydt was mentioned as a potential buyer. She already knew him from her Berlin days and was on friendly terms with him. A few years later, von der Heydt did indeed acquire numerous works, with Johannes Itten acting as an intermediary here. The purchase in 1946 was already made in view of Itten and von der Heydt's museum project, the later Museum Rietberg.

12 Elephant Mask of the Kuosi Society (Tukum)

Workshop of the Bamileke Region, Cameroon, 1880, cotton, beads
Museum Rietberg, RAF 725, gift of Eduard von der Heydt
Provenance: [...], until 1946, Nell Walden; from 1946, Eduard von der Heydt

English

13

Large Winged Mask

Papua New Guinea, New Ireland, 19th century, Holz, Bast, Frucht- kapseln, Textilien
 Museum Rietberg, RWE 405, gift of Eduard von der Heydt
 Provenance: [...] — prior to 1932, Albert and Toni Neisser at the latest 1932—1945/46, Nell Walden; from 1945—46, Eduard von der Heydt

with just over 200 items, was written by J. F. Glück of the Linden-Museum in Stuttgart. The uniqueness of the Walden Collection was emphasized along with the disappearance of "primitive" art—a common narrative when traditional, non-Western art objects were being promote—but it overlooked the contemporaneous production of non-European art.

Diverse Shifts National Socialist Cultural Policy and the Collection of Nell Walden

B

14

Aussereuropäische Kunst: China, Persien, Peru, Naturvölker (Non-European Art: China, Persia, Peru, Primitive Peoples), 35th auction of the Stuttgarter Kunst-kabinett, April 11, 1956

Museum Rietberg, library

Three private collections were auctioned at the Stuttgarter Kunstkabinett in 1956: Hans Levy, Berlin; the Marcus Collection, San Francisco; and Nell Walden, Bad Schinznach. The copy of the auction catalogue in the library of the Museum Rietberg has handwritten notes by the art ethnologist, collector, and dealer Hans Himmelheber. The introduction to the Nell Walden Collection,

English

1 Yongzheng Emperor Reading in His Library

From the album *Yinzhens Anusements*, Unknown court painter, China, Qing Dynasty, ca. 1723–35, ink and color on silk, 37.5 x 30.5 cm, reproduction Palace Museum, Beijing

2 The Twelve Beauties of Prince Yong

Unknown court painter, China, Qing Dynasty, first half of the 18th century, ink and color on silk, 184 x 98 cm, reproduction Palace Museum, Beijing

The imperial art collection was not only stored in special rooms, the private chambers at court were also decorated with objects. Various pieces from the collection were displayed in cases and on ornate shelves, such as ancient bronze vessels, jade carvings, ceramics, and old books.

3 Bell of the Niuzhong Type

China, Eastern Zhou Dynasty, Warring States period (circa 475–221 BCE), bronze
Museum Rietberg, RCH 72, gift of Ernst Winkler
Provenance: [..]; T. Y. King, Hong Kong, 1950s–1985; Ernst and Marie Louise Winkler, Hong Kong

Archaic bells were especially favored as collector's items. Because they played a central role in ritual music, they became a symbol of social harmony and a perfect political order. To revive these ideals, the rulers of later dynasties had bells cast in imitation of the ancient style.

4 Archaistic Ceremonial Vessel of the Hu Type

China, Qing Dynasty, Qianlong mark and period (1736–95), cloisonné
Museum Rietberg, U 270, permanent loan from the Alice and Pierre Uldry Collection
Provenance: [..]; prior to 1985, Alice and Pierre Uldry

The imperial collection included not only archaic bronzes and jades but also contemporary applied arts. Pieces that adopted the form and decoration of revered objects from idealized antiquity and adapted them to modern taste were particularly popular. This ceremonial vessel features the typical abstract monster mask of the Shang Dynasty (13th–11th century BCE) translated into a decorative design.

5-8 Bird and Peach Marten among Fruits

Three Monkeys with a Peach Mulberry leaves with silkworms and pupae

China, Qing Dynasty (1644–1911), 18th–19th century, neipinte
Museum Rietberg, H 115, H 108, H 125, H 526, collection Reinhard J. C. Hoeppli, deposited on permanent loan by the Swiss Confederation, Federal Office of Culture, Bern
Provenance: [..]; Reinhard J. C. Hoeppli, acquired on the antiquities market in Beijing between 1929 and 1960; from 1951, property of the Swiss Confederation; from 1960, permanent loan in the Museum Rietberg

9-11 Delicately worked jade carvings were popular collector's items from the tenth century onwards. The material retains its fascination until today. For centuries, artists made countless jade sculptures in all sizes and forms.

The Swiss physician Reinhard J. C. Hoeppli (1893–1973) shared this enthusiasm for jade. From 1929 to 1952, he taught and conducted research at the Union Medical College in Beijing. During this period, he acquired an impressive collection of jade miniatures on the city's lively antiquities market. He bequeathed his collection to the Swiss Confederation and decreed that it should find a place in the recently opened Museum Rietberg.

9 Collection of Calligraphy and Painting from the Ten Bamboo Hall

Hu Zhengyan (ca. 1584–1674), China, first ed. 1693, woodblock print, reprint of 1879
Museum Rietberg, library

10 Box and Cover

China, Qing Dynasty, Qianlong mark and period (1736–95), neipinte
Museum Rietberg, RCH 824 und 825, gift of Emma Streicher
Provenance: [..]; Miss Joni das Collection; 1969, Emma Streicher, Zurich

11 Melon-Shaped Miniature Ewer and Cover

China, Jiangxi province, Jingdezhen kilns, Northern Song Dynasty, 11th–12th century, porcelain stoneware, Qingbai
Museum Rietberg, MWT 1594, permanent loan from the Meiyintang Foundation
Provenance: [..]; from 2003, Meiyintang Foundation

12 Lotus Bowl

China, Zhejiang province, Longquan kilns, Southern Song Dynasty, 12th–13th century, stoneware with bright-green glaze
Museum Rietberg, MWT 940, permanent loan from the Meiyintang Foundation
Provenance: [..]; until 1947, Mrs. Alfred Clark; from 1947, Edward T. Chow; prior to 1996, Meiyintang Collection; from 2003, Meiyintang Foundation

13 Water Pot with Guan Inscription (Official Ware)

China, Hebei region, Tang, Five Dynasties or Liao Dynasty, 10th century, stoneware with transparent glaze
Museum Rietberg, MWT 341, permanent loan from the Meiyintang Foundation
Provenance: [..]; prior to 1996, Meiyintang Collection; from 2003, Meiyintang Foundation

In the tenth century, the various pottery centers in China specialized in specific goods and developed them to perfection. The best pieces were acquired for the imperial household. Although the ceramics had originally been intended for use, many objects were transferred to the palace collection or served as decoration in imperial chambers.

English

C

**Power through Art
Imperial Collecting in China**

14

Handled Cup

China, Zhejiang province, Southern Song Dynasty, 13th century, stoneware with bluish-gray glaze and craquelé, Guan ware, Museum Rietberg, MT 375, permanent loan from the Meiyintang Foundation
Provenance: [..]; prior to 1996, Meiyintang Collection; from 2003, Meiyintang Foundation

15-20

Snuffbottles

China, Qing Dynasty, Qianlong period (1736–95), Enamel painting, porcelain, glass, Museum Rietberg, HS 4, HS 7, HS 16, HS 20, HS 23, HS 34, collection Reinhard J. C. Hoepfli, deposited on permanent loan by the Swiss Confederation, Federal Office of Culture, Bern
Provenance: [..]; Reinhard J. C. Hoepfli Collection; acquired on the antiquities market in Beijing between 1929 and 1950; from 1951, property of the Swiss Confederation; from 1960, permanent loan in the Museum Rietberg

The custom of snuff tobacco was widespread in the milieu of the imperial court in Beijing in the eighteenth century, and became a social ritual of the upper class. The containers for it were made of a wide variety of materials and were lavishly decorated. Soon they became collector's items in their own right. The most exquisite examples are from the imperial workshops. Many of them were owned by members of the imperial family.

21

Archaistic Libation Vessel of Jue Type with Painted Enamel Cartouches

China, Qing Dynasty, Qianlong mark and period (1736–95), cloisonné on gold base, Museum Rietberg, U 289, permanent loan from the Alice and Pierre Uldry Collection
Provenance: [..]; prior to 1985, Alice and Pierre Uldry

This exquisite piece represents the taste of the Qianlong Emperor (r. 1736–95) in a fascinating way. It is true globalized art. The form of the tripod vessel can be traced back to ancient models from the second millennia BCE. It was made using the European technique of cloisonné, which was, however, perfected at the Chinese imperial court. The cartouches have paintings in the European style in the manner of pastoral painting. The protagonists are, however, Chinese ladies.

They collected exclusively ancient bronze vessels and ceramics. Their main supplier was the renowned dealer T. Y. King, who had emigrated from Shanghai to Hong Kong in 1949.

22

Ritual Vine Vessel of the Jue Type

China, Early Western Zhou Dynasty, late 11th–early 10th century BCE, bronze, Museum Rietberg, RCH 48, gift of Ernst Winkler
Provenance: [..]; T. Y. King, Hong Kong; 1950s–1985, Ernst and Marie Louise Winkler, Hong Kong

Ancient bronze vessels were among the most prestigious collector's objects in China from the tenth century onward. In Europe, however, art lovers were for a long time more enthusiastic about Chinese porcelain, silk embroidery, and delicate carvings.
The husband-and-wife collectors Ernst and Marie Louise Winkler, who lived in Hong Kong from 1939 to 1985, were inspired by the Chinese tradition in their taste for art.

English

D

**Collecting between Paris and Tehran
The Luristan Bronzes of Rudolf Schmidt**

1
**Funial of the Type of a
Tamer of Wild Animals**

Iran, Luristan, 1st quarter of 1st millennium BCE, bronze
Museum Rietberg, RVA 2.113,
gift of Rudolf Schmidt
Provenance: [..]: 1933, Parisian art trade, 1933–70, Rudolf Schmidt, Solothurn

The arrival of Luristan bronzes in Paris immediately fascinated a wealthy clientele. They admired their unfamiliar, imaginative human and animal figures, their stylized forms, their age, and their material. They included decorative weapons, implements, and jewelry. The collecting of Luristan bronzes had various consequences: it caused further plundering and stimulated the production of fakes.

2
**Alborz Mountains, Iran,
November 2, 1937**

Photo: Rudolf Schmidt,
reproduction, Peters'family archive

Rudolf Schmidt traveled through Iran from October 1937 to January 1938. While he was motivated by a very general fascination for Iran, he also hoped he would be able to find and acquire special bronzes locally – whether in Tehran or elsewhere. He took a total of 180 photographs on his trip, twenty of which can be seen in a separate projection (see 26).

3-4
**André Godard, Les
bronzes du Luristan,
Paris: van Oest, 1931**

Erich Friedrich
Schmidt, *The Holmes
Expeditions to Luristan*,
Chicago: Oriental
Institute of the University
of Chicago, 1939
Museum Rietberg, library

What did people know about Luristan bronzes in the early 1930s? What reliable information was available to Rudolf Schmidt when he began with his first purchases in 1933?

The seminal work *Les bronzes du Luristan* is by André Godard. The French architect was director of the Iranian Archeological Services in Iran. After visiting a number of plundered tombs in Luristan, he described in 1933 the bronzes that were appearing on the art market and classified them. Erich F. Schmidt's essential study was published only posthumously. As their letters show, Rudolf Schmidt was in close contact with him.

5-7
**Three Letters
to Rudolf Schmidt**

Ernest Ascher to Rudolf Schmidt,
September 19, 1935
Ernst F. Schmidt to Rudolf
Schmidt, November 6, 1937
Ayoub Rabenou to Rudolf
Schmidt, May 10, 1950
Bibel + Orient Museum, Fribourg,
reproductions

In correspondence between scholars, collectors, and art dealers, provenance is a frequent topic. These documents are an important source for the history of the art market. Whereas the dealer Ernest Ascher refers

to a wide range of offerings, and describes Schmidt as "very gourmand," the archaeologist Erich F. Schmidt provides information from the latest publications and findings. Ayoub Rabenou, who was Rudolf Schmidt's most important dealer of Luristan bronzes, wanted to diversify in the postwar era and establish a branch in Switzerland in addition to Paris and Tehran.

8
**Nipple Beaker with
Banquet Scene**

Iran, Luristan, mid-10th – mid-9th century BCE, bronze
Museum Rietberg, RVA 2800,
gift of Rudolf Schmidt
Provenance: [..]: found in Alishhtar according to Rabenou, 1935,
Ayoub Rabenou, Paris, 1935–70,
Rudolf Schmidt, Solothurn

9
**Pin with Openwork
Head**

Iran, Luristan, 1st quarter of 1st millennium BCE, bronze, iron
Museum Rietberg, RVA 2208,
gift of Rudolf Schmidt
Provenance: [..]: 1933, Parisian art trade, 1933–70, Rudolf Schmidt, Solothurn

10
**Drawer with Luristan
Bronzes, Arranged by
Object Type**

(Museum Rietberg, RVA
2018–2021, 2023, 2025,
2040–2043, 2045 and 2046),
reconstruction of drawer

Schmidt tastefully arranged some of the Luristan bronzes he had acquired in Tehran and Paris in the large salon of his home in Solothurn. The majority of the collection, however, was stored in drawers organized by group. This was not only space efficient but was also ideal for study purposes. It testifies to Schmidt's interest

not only in aesthetics but also in series and scholarship. The way Schmidt displayed his bronzes and other art objects in his home can ultimately be traced back to Renaissance cabinets of curiosities.

11
**Photography of
drawer**

Photo: Edwin Peters,
Peters' family archive

12
**Luristan Bronzes,
Egyptian Stone
Vessels, and Books
in the Salon in the
Home of Rudolf
Schmidt, Cartierhof
Solothurn, 1970**

Photo: Edwin Peters,
Peters' family archive

13
**Whetstone with Handle
in the Form of a
Reclining Bezoar Goat**

Iran, Luristan, end of 2nd – beginning of 1st millennium BCE, bronze, stone
Museum Rietberg, RVA 2032a+b,
gift of Rudolf Schmidt
Provenance: [..]: 1933, Ernest Ascher, Paris, 1933–1970, Rudolf Schmidt, Solothurn

14
**Index Cards of
Rudolf Schmidt**

Museum Rietberg, archive,
reproduction

Rudolf Schmidt kept index cards that meticulously recorded the art dealer, prices, and a description of the object. He also created overview cards on which he listed various dealers' addresses and systematically recorded the types of objects he collected. His card file offers a good over-

English

D

Collecting between Paris and Tehran The Luristan Bronzes of Rudolf Schmidt

view of the broad spectrum of galleries from which he acquired Luristan bronzes in the 1930s. Not all of these cards have survived, so that the names of the dealers are not known for all of the objects.

15
Meticulously
Maintained Journal
of Purchases

16
Guest Book of
Rudolf Schmidt

17
Portrait
Rudolf Schmidt

Peters' family archive

Rudolf Schmidt dedicated his life to collecting, studying the specialist literature, and exchanging with scholars, galleries, and collectors. He himself was from an art-loving industrial family and lived without financial worries. His uncle, Josef Müller, the son of the co-founder of Sphinx-Werke in Solothurn, collected European modern art and non-Western art; his sister, Gertrud Dübli-Müller, was enthusiastic about Swiss and European modern artists. Schmidt, by contrast, took a new path: he was fascinated by European antiquity, Egypt, and Iran.

18-20
View of the *Iranische Kunst*, (Iranian Art) Exhibition in 1936 at the Kunstgewerbemuseum der Stadt Zürich

Taken by the photography class, vintage print, b/w, baryte print, high gloss, mounted on cardboard
Zürcher Hochschule der Kunst, Medien- und Informationszentrum, Archiv, XCB-00280, 1381

Iranische Kunst, exhibition catalogue, Zürich: Kunstgewerbemuseum, 1936

Museum Rietberg, library, reproduction

Poster of *Iranische Kunst* Exhibition at the Kunstgewerbemuseum der Stadt Zürich

1936, design: Walter Kaeh
Zürcher Hochschule der Kunst, Museum für Gestaltung, Plakatsammlung, K-0183

As early as 1936, Schmidt was approached as a lender for the first comprehensive exhibition in Switzerland of art from Iran. Numerous private and public collections from all over Europe participated with loans. It showed ceramics, glasses, bronzes, carpets and fabrics, miniatures, manuscripts, bound books, lacquer works, and weapons. The catalogue was written by no less than the German art historian, archaeologist, and museum director Friedrich Sarre, regarded as the founder of Islamic art history and archaeology in Germany.

21-22
Poster and View of the *Kunstschätze aus Iran* (Art Treasures from Iran) Exhibition, 1962, Kunsthaus Zürich

Kunsthaus Zürich, reproductions

In the postwar period, Schmidt lent eleven works selected from his Luristan collection to the large exhibition *Kunstschätze aus Iran* at the Kunsthaus Zürich. This important show was a collaboration with the Iranian government and was conceived as a travelling exhibition. In the foreword the premiere of this extensive exhibition was praised: "the West has not yet seen it in this way. Recent decades have, after all, brought things to light that open up the perspective of millennia of artistic practice on Iranian soil."

23
Harness Ring with
Mouflon Head and
Grotesque Creatures

Iran, Luristan, early 1st century
BCE, bronze
Museum Rietberg, RMA 2514,
gift of Rudolf Schmidt

Provenance: [..]: 1935, Parisian art trade; 1935–70, Rudolf Schmidt, Solothurn

24
Fiala in the Form
of a Man

Iran, Luristan, 8th century BCE,
bronze
Museum Rietberg, 2020.530,
gift of Janie and Matie Peters
Provenance: [..]: 1933, Stora art
dealers, Paris; 1933–70, Rudolf
Schmidt, Solothurn, Erica
Peters-Schmidt, Kitchberg; until
2019, Janie and Matie Peters,
Schindellegi

25
Cheek of a Snaffle
Bit in the Form of a
Winged Bull-Man

Iran, Luristan, 8th–7th century
BCE, bronze
Museum Rietberg, RMA 2508,
gift of Rudolf Schmidt

Provenance: [..]: 1937, Parisian art
trade; 1937–70, Rudolf Schmidt,
Solothurn

26
Fiala in the form of
two lions with two
heads

Iran, Luristan, 8th century BC,
bronze with green patina,
mounted on a reddish wooden
base by Kichizo Inagaki
Museum Rietberg, 2020.531, gift
of Janie and Matie Peters

Provenance: until 1933, Ayub
Rabenu, Paris; 1933–1970, Rudolf
Schmidt, Solothurn; after 1970,
Erica Peters-Schmidt; until 2019,
Janie und Matie Peters, Schindel-
legi

27
Projection of 20
photographs from
Rudolf Schmidt's
trip to Iran

English

From the Ritual Object in Tibet to the Artwork in Europe The Berti Aschmann Collection

E

- 1** **Gazelle**
Tibet, 18th century, fire-gilded copper alloy
Museum Rietberg, RTI 1, gift of Eduard von der Heydt
Provenance: [..]; from at least 1932, Eduard von der Heydt
- In the extensive and wide-ranging collection of non-European art of Eduard von der Heydt, the founding donor of the Museum Rietberg, there are only nine pieces from the Tibetan cultural sphere. He may have acquired them out of interest in Buddhism in general.
He must, however, have particularly prized this figure of a gazelle with one horn: it was published prominently several times between 1933 and 1945.
- 2** **Index Card for the Eduard von der Heydt Collection, ca. 1937/38**
Museum Rietberg, archive, reproduction
- 3** **Tsongkapa**
Tibet, 16th–17th century, pigment painting on fabric
Museum Rietberg, RTI 103, gift of Eduard von der Heydt
Provenance: [..]; 1911–1920s, Victor Goloubew, Paris; ca. 1920s–1952, Eduard von der Heydt
- This Tibetan painting is from the collection of the Russian philologist, archaeologist, and art historian, Victor Goloubew (1878–1945). After completing his studies, Goloubew lived in Heidelberg and Paris, where he taught at the École nationale des langues orientales vivantes. From 1910 to 1911, he went on a research expedition to India with the writer Charles Müller (1877–1914). On the markets in Delhi, he acquired several Chinese and Tibetan paintings. This *thangka* may have been one of them. After he lost his fortune as a result of the Russian Revolution, he was forced to sell large parts of his collection.
- 4** **Vajrabhairava Yab-Yum**
Tibet, 19th century, gilded brass alloy
Museum Rietberg, RTI 3, gift of Eduard von der Heydt
Provenance: [..]; from 1920s, Eduard von der Heydt
- 5** **Dagger with God of the Dead**
Tibet, 19th century, Brass and fabric
Museum Rietberg, RTI 201, gift of Eduard von der Heydt
Provenance: [..]; ab. 1920s, Eduard von der Heydt
- 6** **Giuseppe Tucci and Captain Eugenio Gherisi, *Secrets of Tibet: Being the Chronicle of the Tucci Scientific Expedition to Western Tibet* (1933), translated from the Italian Edition by Mary A. Johnstone, London and Glasgow: Blackie & Son Limited, 1935**
Museum Rietberg, library, formerly in the library of E. von der Heydt, Ascona
- This diary records the impressions of the Italian Orientalist Giuseppe Tucci (1894–1984) and of the physician of the Italian Royal Navy, Eugenio Gherisi, during their joint trip to Tibet from June 13 to November 2, 1933. It supplements their scientific reports. The numerous photographs were taken by Gherisi. Tucci, who had learned Hebrew, Chinese, and Sanskrit, lived in India for years, where he studied Buddhism, Tibetan, and Bengali. In 1933, he was co-founder of the Istituto Italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente in Rome. In Fascist Italy, he was appointed to the first chair of Chinese Language and Literature at the University of Naples.
- 7** **Berti Aschmann, ca. 1996**
Photo: Maya Burkhard, reproduction
- Berti Aschmann (1917–2005) was one of the early and great collectors of Tibetan art in Switzerland. As the thirteenth child of a rural, middle-class family, she was not born to patronage of the arts. After commercial school, she began to work at the art auction house Koller in Zurich in 1960. She was soon in charge of the Asia department. There she came into contact with Tibetan art for the first time. It became her passion. Under her, Tibetica became a focus at Koller from the early 1970s onward. At the same time, she was able to buy pieces for her own collection directly from suppliers. By acquiring the most beautiful figures, and auctioning off other objects to finance them, she built up a comprehensive and high-quality collection of metal sculptures from the Himalayas.
- 8** **Standing Tara**
Western Himalayas, 13th–14th century, brass alloy with silver, copper, and turquoise inlays
Museum Rietberg, BA 82, permanent loan from the Berti Aschmann Foundation
Provenance: [..]; 1960s–1990, Berti Aschmann
- When Berti Aschmann began collecting in the 1960s, there was already some literature on Buddhism in Tibet but almost no scholarship on the history of its art and styles. She had to develop her knowledge on her own by studying objects. She developed an impressive sense of quality. When collecting, she focused on the aesthetic qualities of the figures. She was less interested in iconographic completeness. She placed great emphasis on facial expression. This Tara with her sensuous charisma was one of Berti Aschmann's favorite pieces.
- 9** **Thangka of the 21 or 23 Taras**
India, Ladakh, 15th–16th century, pigment painting on fabric
Museum Rietberg, BA 147, permanent loan from the Berti Aschmann Foundation
Provenance: [..]; 1960s–1990, Berti Aschmann
- 10** **Thangka of Sitatara (White Tara)**
Eastern Tibet, 17th–18th century, pigment painting on fabric
Museum Rietberg, BA 150, permanent loan from the Berti Aschmann Foundation
Provenance: [..]; 1960s–1990, Berti Aschmann
- 11** **Shyamatarā (Green Tara)**
Tibet, Pala period, 13th century, brass alloy
Museum Rietberg, BA 81, permanent loan from the Berti Aschmann Foundation
Provenance: [..]; 1960s–1990, Berti Aschmann
- 12** **Standing Tara**
Nepal, 13th century, fire-gilded copper alloy with precious-stone inlays
Museum Rietberg, BA 84, permanent loan from the Berti Aschmann Foundation
Provenance: [..]; 1960s–1990, Berti Aschmann
- 13** **Letter from Berti Aschmann to the press on the occasion of transferring her collection to the Museum Rietberg, October 4, 1995**
Museum Rietberg, archive, S.0005-0002, reproduction
- When her collection was presented in the Museum Rietberg, Berti Aschmann preferred to remain in the background so that the artworks would be in the limelight. Like all collections, however, hers had been shaped by her personal preferences and interests. Berti Aschmann acquired above all metal sculptures and paid little attention to Tibetan painting. As a woman, she loved the female deities especially. Nearly a quarter of her objects depict Tara, the embodiment of absolute compassion in the form of a woman of ideal beauty, or other female deities, some of whom appear in terrifying forms and symbolize wisdom, energy, or protection.

English

From the Ritual Object in Tibet to the Artwork in Europe The Berti Aschmann Collection

E

14 Shyamatarā, (Green Tara)

China, Ming Dynasty, Yongle mark and period (1403–24), fire-gilded copper alloy
Museum Rietberg, BA 92
permanent loan from the Berti Aschmann Foundation
Provenance: [..]; 1960s – 1990,
Berti Aschmann

In its naturalism, rich detail, and perfectionism, this figure is one of the finest pieces in the Berti Aschmann Collection. It was made in the 15th century in the palace workshops at the Chinese imperial court in Beijing. The Emperors Yongle (1403–1424) and Xuande (1425–1435) were enthusiastic adherents of Tibetan Buddhism. They recruited the best artisans from Nepal, Tibet, and China and had them produce cultic figures for their personal temples, and above all as gifts to high-ranking Tibetan dignitaries. The Berti Aschmann Collection includes fourteen such so-called "Tibeto-Chinese" figures, making it one of the largest groups of these artworks outside China.

15 Dakini Vasya- Vajravahni

Tibet, Densati Monastery, 15th century, fire-gilded copper alloy with precious-stone inlays
Museum Rietberg, BA 109,
permanent loan from the Berti Aschmann Foundation
Provenance: 15th century – 1966/1976; Densati Monastery; [..]; from 1966 – 76 to 1990,
Berti Aschmann

The place of origin is unknown for the vast majority of figures in the Berti Aschmann Collection. There are no notes on their acquisition, perhaps the suppliers could not or did not want to provide details about how they had obtained the objects. This figure represents an exception. Thanks

to scholarly research in the 2010s and surviving photographs from 1948, it could be clearly identified with the Densati Monastery in Central Tibet. It was originally from one of the monuments decorated with metal sculptures in the main hall of the temple. During the Cultural Revolution (1966–76), the monastery was completely destroyed. A short time later several of the figures appeared on the international art market.

16 Kunst aus Tibet, Kunsthalle Bern, 20. Oktober bis 25. November 1962

Museum Rietberg, library

The first large exhibition of Tibetan art in Switzerland was held at the Kunsthalle Bern in 1962. It showed 395 works lent by various museums in Europe and private collections in Switzerland. The main lender was the Linden-Museum in Stuttgart. The exhibition was under the patronage of Schweizer Tibethilfe (Swiss Tibet Aid), which was decisively involved in its preparations. Among those responsible for its content was the ethnologist Kar Henking, who was the director of the Volkerkunde-museum in Zurich from 1963 onward. The director of the Kunsthalle Bern at the time was Harald Szeemann, and he linked *Kunst aus Tibet* to a series of exhibitions on non-European art that had begun in the 1950s.

17 U-Buddha Vajrasattva

China, Ming Dynasty, Yongle mark and period (1403–24), fire-gilded copper alloy
Museum Rietberg, BA 22,
permanent loan from the Berti Aschmann Foundation
Provenance: [..]; 1960s – 1990,
Berti Aschmann

Berti Aschmann had an eye for the tiny details of figures. She paid particular attention to the backs of the objects. Although the figures were placed in front of a wall in the temple, and were intended to have an effect primarily frontally, the backs of the finest pieces are worked out in astonishing detail. Here even the decorative elements of the crown and the earrings are lavishly decorated.

18 *Tibetische Kunst, Ausstellung im Gewer- bemuseum Winterthur, 9. März – 7. April 1968*

Gewerbemuseum Winterthur,
reproduction

In 1965 a group of students in Bern got together with the goal of organizing an exhibition of Tibetan artworks in Zurich. Hence, they called themselves "Zütbetä." After arduous preparations and difficult negotiations, they were finally able to open an exhibition in Winterthur in 1968. One year later, the successful exhibition was shown at the Helnhaus in Zurich as well.

19 Eisy Leuzinger to Dionys Gurmy, secretary of Mayor Sigmund Widmer, April 2, 1968

Museum Rietberg, archive,
K.0001-00172, reproduction

Eisy Leuzinger, director of the Museum Rietberg from 1956 to 1972, was critical of

Zütbetä's exhibition proposal. In her view, the artistic quality of the objects was not on the level of the Helnhaus. Her letter makes it clear that she considered the material less interesting: "mostly serial casts and again at the again the same schema of painted temple images." Her attitude is typical of a time in which only a few works from the Buddhist Himalayas were known in Europe, and they were not yet categorized as art.

20 *Tibetische Kunst, 8. – 30. März 1969, Helnhaus, Zürich sowie 17. April bis 11. Mai 1969, Gesellschaftshaus zu Schützen, Luzern*

Museum Rietberg, library

The exhibition catalogue includes a brief foreword by the Fourteenth Dalai Lama: "Until recently, the artistic heritage of Tibet and its proper interpretation were practically unknown in the world. Little or nothing was known about the existence of a rich and brilliant Tibetan art. It is therefore all the more pleasing that in the past ten years a strong interest in Tibetan art and culture has awakened in East and West. The art exhibitions that have taken place are particularly well suited to increasing understanding of Tibetan art. They make an important contribution to preserving and continuing our valuable cultural and artistic heritage. Switzerland was the first country that steadfastly supported the Tibetans. The exhibitions of Tibetan art planned in Switzerland promise to increase and spread the understanding of Tibetan culture in all of Europe. I wish this exhibition complete success."

English

F

**From the Stage to the Museum
Ways of Presenting Nō Masks**

1 Storage Chest with Drawers for Nō Masks

Japan, Edo period, 19th century, lacquer, sprinkled gold and copper flakes on lacquer (mak-e), metal fittings
Museum Rietberg, RJP 5007A, gift of Balthaasar and Nanni Reinhart
Provenance: 19th century – ca. 1907/13, Nanokachi-Maeda noble family; ca. 1907/13 – 28, Ernst Grosse, Freiburg im Breisgau, via Hayashi Tadamasu and Kano Tessai; 1928 – 55, Georg Reinhart, Winterthur; 1955 – 89, Balthaasar Reinhart, Winterthur

2 Kurohige (Black Beard), Nō Mask of the Dragon King

Japan, Momoyama to early Edo period, late 16th – early 17th century, polychromed Japanese cypress (*hinoki*)
Museum Rietberg, RJP 4018, gift of Balthaasar and Nanni Reinhart
Provenance: 17th – 18th century – ca. 1907/13, Nanokachi-Maeda noble family; ca. 1907/13 – 28, Ernst Grosse, Freiburg im Breisgau, via Hayashi Tadamasu and Kano Tessai; 1928 – 55, Georg Reinhart, Winterthur; 1955 – 89, Balthaasar Reinhart, Winterthur

3 Yase Onna, Nō Mask of an Emaciated Woman

Japan, Edo period, 17th – 18th century, polychromed Japanese cypress (*hinoki*)
Museum Rietberg, RJP 4034, gift of Balthaasar and Nanni Reinhart
Provenance: 17th – 18th century – ca. 1907/13, Nanokachi-Maeda noble family; ca. 1907/13 – 28, Ernst Grosse, Freiburg im Breisgau, via Hayashi Tadamasu and Kano Tessai; 1928 – 55, Georg Reinhart, Winterthur; 1955 – 89, Balthaasar Reinhart, Winterthur

4 Ō-Akujō, Nō Mask of a Demon

Japan, Edo-Zeit, 18th – 19th century, polychromed Japanese cypress (*hinoki*)
Museum Rietberg, RJP 4032, gift of Balthaasar and Nanni Reinhart
Provenance: 18th – 19th century – ca. 1907/13, Nanokachi-Maeda noble family; ca. 1907/13 – 28, Ernst Grosse, Freiburg im Breisgau; 1928 – 55, Georg Reinhart, Winterthur; 1955 – 89, Balthaasar Reinhart, Winterthur

5 Dōji, Nō Mask of a Boy

Japan, Momoyama to early Edo period, 16th – 17th century, polychromed Japanese cypress (*hinoki*)
Museum Rietberg, RJP 4035, gift of Balthaasar and Nanni Reinhart
Provenance: 16 – 17th century – ca. 1907/13, Nanokachi-Maeda noble family; ca. 1907/13 – 28, Ernst Grosse, Freiburg im Breisgau, via Hayashi Tadamasu and Kano Tessai; 1928 – 55, Georg Reinhart, Winterthur; 1955 – 89, Balthaasar

6 Manbi, Nō Mask of a Young Beauty with Storage Pouch and Cushion

Japan, Middle Edo period, 18th century, polychromed Japanese cypress (*hinoki*)
Museum Rietberg, RJP 4019, gift of Balthaasar and Nanni Reinhart
Provenance: 18th century – ca. 1907/13, Nanokachi-Maeda noble family; ca. 1907/13 – 28, Ernst Grosse, Freiburg im Breisgau, via Hayashi Tadamasu and Kano Tessai; 1928 – 55, Georg Reinhart, Winterthur; 1955 – 89, Balthaasar Reinhart, Winterthur

From the correspondence between Yasu Grosse – Ernst Grosse's widow – and Georg Reinhart, it is clear that this Manbi mask was one of Ernst Grosse's favorite pieces. Manbi, meaning "Ten Thousand Beauties," represents the type of a fully blossomed young woman. Her full cheeks, the dimple on her chin, and her open smile suggest erotic sensuality and youthful innocence, suitable for roles of romantic heroines. The characters on both the bag and the cushion identifies the mask as Manbi.

7 Ernst Grosse, *Die Anfänge der Kunst, Freiburg i. Br.: Akademische Verlagsbuchhandlung von J. C. B. Mohr, Paul Siebeck, 1894*

8 Georg Reinhart, *Aus meinem Leben, Winterthur, 1931*

The autobiography that Georg Reinhart (1877–1955) published at the age of fifty-four is a significant document. From 1902 to 1952 Reinhart was a partner in the Volkart Brothers trading company and

traveled to India and East Asia many times, sometimes for extended stays, during which he learned Urdu and took part in extended cultural travels. He reports on art acquisitions, visits to temples, and in detail on a performance of Nō theater in Kyoto that profoundly impressed him: "Although I did not understand a word, I greatly enjoyed the unified, highly artistic performance."

9 Georg Reinhart's *Asiatica Catalogue with Inventory Sheets*
Private Archive

Georg Reinhart meticulously recorded his collection both on inventory sheets and in what he called his "Zeddokatalog" (card catalogue). The collection included Indian and Tibetan bronzes, East Asian paintings, ceramics, and books.

10 First Page of the *Notebook on the Noh Masks of Georg Reinhart*
Museum Rietberg, archive, S. 0005-0016, reproduction

11 Images of Nō Plays
Tsukokōka Kōgyō (1889 – 1927), Japan, Meiji period, 1897 – 98, concertina album, woodblock print, pigments on paper
Museum Rietberg, RJP 1808.1-53, acquired with funds from the City of Zurich
Provenance: [...]; 1991, Sotheby's, London, Japanese Prints and Illustrated Books, lot 286

Traditionally, Nō masks are stored on cotton cushion in a protective pouch of silk or brocade. Inscriptions on the cushion and on the labels of the pouch indicate the type of mask and assist identification when the masks are in the chests made for them. How the pouches and chests are made can provide important information on provenance. The five-petal plum blossom on the drawer handles is the coat of arms of the Maeda family – feudal lords from Nanokachi (now Toyama Prefecture). Pouches of purple silk are also typical of this noble family.

F

From the Stage to the Museum Ways of Presenting Nō Masks

English

12

Letter from Yasu
Grosse to Georg
Reinhardt, April 4, 1928

Stadtbibliothek Winterthur,
Sammlung Winterthur,
MS GR 10/56

Yasu Grosse thanks Reinhardt for acquiring the Nō masks and reveals to him something about their life with them. Ernst Grosse and she enjoyed the masks when she put on a kimono, held a mask before her face, and walked up and down. "The masks only really come to life when in motion. I have to tell you, again and again, that I am so pleased that this collection is going to you and so will be treated with love."

13

Letter from Ernst
Grosse to Georg
Reinhardt, May 21, 1926

Stadtbibliothek Winterthur,
Sammlung Winterthur,
MS GR 10/55

An extensive correspondence between Ernst Grosse and Georg Reinhardt from 1923 until Grosse's death in 1927 reveals the deep connection between the two men and their shared passion for the arts of Asia. In this letter, Ernst Grosse reported in detail on his visit to the Berlin museums and described museums as "mortuaries of art." Grosse was an advocate of a private and quite elitist passion for collecting, "as far as East Asian art was concerned, it should be available only to the elect – the 'happy few.'"

14

Letter from
Otto Fischer
to Georg Reinhardt,
February 4, 1928

Winterthurer Stadtbibliothek,
Sammlungen Winterthur,
MS GR 10/14

Precisely because the relationship between Georg Reinhardt and the Grosses was very friendly, Otto Fischer, who had been engaged with East Asian art since 1909 and from 1927 to 1938 was the director for the Kunstmuseum Basel, mediated the purchase of the Nō masks after Ernst Grosse's death in 1927. He advised Georg Reinhardt: "Buy the entire collection immediately," because he believed that its only proper place was with Reinhardt. Yasu Grosse did not want to give the collection to a museum so that it would have "a sad existence in display cases like a stamp collection" and thus "left to wither away."

English

1 Krishna Asks Radha for Forgiveness

Master of the second generation after Nainsukh and Manaku of Guler (attributed), India, Pahari region, Guler, ca. 1825, pigment on paper
Museum Rietberg, 2019. 549, gift of Nanni Reinhart-Schinz
Provenance: [...]; ca. 1908/10–51, Werner Reinhart, 1951–55, Georg Reinhart, 1955–2005, Baltnasar and Nanni Reinhart, 2005–19, Nanni Reinhart

2 Meditative Krishna in Chamber

Workshop of Manaku of Guler (attributed). Presumably from a *Gitagovind* series, India, Pahari region, Guler, ca. 1750, pigment on paper
Museum Rietberg, RWI 2206, gift of the heirs of Werner Reinhart
Provenance: [...]; ca. 1908/10–51, Werner Reinhart, 1951–2003, gift of the heirs of Werner Reinhart

4 a suitable place for the prized volumes to be made available to future scholars.

4 Indische Miniaturen (Indian Miniatures), collection catalogue of Werner Reinhart (Bern: Hallwag, 1949)

Museum Rietberg, library

The catalogue of Werner Reinhart's collection was published in German in 1949, and French and English editions followed a little later. The author of the foreword, Erwin Gradmann, was not a specialist in Indian painting but the head of the prints and drawings at the Eidgenössische Technische Hochschule in Zürich, whose knowledge was based on studies by specialists such as Erwin Diez and Ananda K. Coomaraswamy.

5 Illustrated medical compendium Ikhtiyār-i Badīʿī

Haji Zayn al-ʿAtar, ca. 1593–94, ink and paints on paper
Museum Rietberg, RWI 2255, gift of the firm Volkart Brothers

Provenance: ca. 1593–94, Bahadur Khan; [...]; ca. 1612–13, Golkonda Sultanate Library; 1687–at least July 1741: Mughal Library, of the conquest of Golkonda by the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb; [...] until 1924, Mullah Mohamed; 1924–51, Werner Reinhart; Collection, Winterthur; 1951–2003: Volkart Brothers, Winterthur

the late sixteenth century, before making its way to Werner Reinhart. The manuscript is part of a small collection of illuminated manuscripts at the Museum Rietberg.

9 Werner Reinhart, ca. 1926

Winterthurer Bibliotheken, Sammlung Winterthur, Gampier-Reinhart 2

6 Poster for the exhibition Asiatisches Kunstgewerbe (Asian Crafts), Kunstgewerbemuseum Zürich, 1915

Zürcher Hochschule der Künste, Medien- und Informationszentrum, M-0019, reproduction

10 Letter from Alibaksh Noorshah to Werner Reinhart, October 25, 1908

Werner Reinhart papers, Dep MK 393/66, Winterthurer Bibliotheken, Sammlung Winterthur, reproduction

7 Asiatische Kunst aus den Sammlungen Georg und Werner Reinhart (Asian Art from the Collections of Georg and Werner Reinhart), Winterthur, exhibition of the Kunstverein Winterthur, Winterthur 1936.

Museum Rietberg, library

Basic knowledge of Urdu was necessary to conduct the company's everyday business. Like many civil servants in the British colonial administration, Werner Reinhart had Urdu lessons with a "munshi" – literally meaning "scribe, secretary" and later becoming the title of a language teacher. Several letters from the munshi Alibaksh Noorshah to Reinhart have been preserved and document Reinhart's intense study of the language during his first stay. In this letter Alibaksh Noorshah tells Werner Reinhart of a visit to the library that had to be postponed.

8

Indische und persische Miniaturen und Manuskripte (Indian and Persian Miniatures and Manuscripts), exhibition at the Kunstverein Winterthur, Winterthur 1923.

Museum Rietberg, library

11

Maharaja Sansar Chand of Kangra Views Paintings in the Company of Couriers

Purkhu von Kangra, India, Pahari region, Kangra, 1785–90, pigment and gold on paper
Museum Rietberg, 2005. 9, bequest of Baltnasar Reinhart
Provenance: 1785/90–1824, Sansar Chand of Kangra; Ram Singh of Bhawarna, by inheritance; Raja Dhruv Dev Chand of Lambagraon, Kangra; [...]; private collection, London; [...]; 2005, Prahlad Bubbai, London

Showing and Observing Werner Reinhart and His Collection of Indian Miniatures

Werner Reinhart's collection of Indian miniatures date back to the period in which he was working in southern Asia as a young man. Little is known about his collecting criteria or his sources for the works. Correspondence suggests that he maintained contacts to Indian collectors and dealers. The high quality of many paintings suggests that he moved in art-loving circles.

3 Books from Werner Reinhart's Library

Museum Rietberg, library

The 600-volume library of Werner Reinhart, who died in 1951, entered the collection of the Museum Rietberg by way of his nephew Baltnasar Reinhart in 1961. The founding of the Museum Rietberg created

A digital kiosk provides information on the eventful history of this illustrated medical compendium (see 13). On the basis of the first sheet, which has numerous stamps and inscriptions, you will learn whose hands and which libraries this valuable manuscript has passed through since

English

Showing and Observing Werner Reinhart and His Collection of Indian Miniatures

11 Maharaja Sansar Chand of Kangra Views Paintings in the Company of Courtiers

Purkhu von Kangra, India, Pahari region, Kangra, 1785–90, pigment and gold on paper
Museum Rietberg, 2005; 9, bequest of Baltnasar Reinhart
Provenance: 1785/90–1824, Sansar Chand of Kangra; Ram Singh of Bhawarna, by inheritance; Raja, Dhruv Dev Chand of Lambagraon, Kangra; [..]; private collection, London; [..]; 2005, Pralhad Bhubar, London

This painting offers rare insight into how Indian miniatures were viewed at Hindu royal courts. A group of men (several of whom can be identified by name) has gathered to view a painting together. Raised hands suggest they are also discussing what they have seen. In the center sits the young maharaja, Sansar Chand of Kangra, while holding a miniature painting in his right hand, with his left he is holding the mouthpiece of a shisha. The scene is evidence of the esteem in which Sansar Chand held the art of painting. The people depicted are all men, but viewing paintings was also appreciated as a way to spend time in the rooms occupied by women.

12 Wrapping cloth for storage of miniature paintings

India, Chandigarh, ca. 2015, cotton, private collection
Provenance: ca. 2015–2018, Chandigarh Museum and Art Gallery; 2018, private property

Miniature paintings, made with precious pigments and on exclusive papers, were important teaching materials, sources of aesthetic experience, historical documents as well as status symbols of Indian

princely families and nobility. In some houses or palaces, the paintings were stored in separate rooms. For example, at the court of Mewar there was the *jordam* ("light-giving"), at the Mughal court the *tasveerkhana* ("house of paintings"), or in Jaipur the *suratkhana* ("house of paintings"). The works were often arranged by subject or importance, inventoried, numbered, and not infrequently bound as albums (*murraqat*). As smaller bundles, they were wrapped in custom-made, extremely soft muslin cloths. These were then packed in embroidered folders or small chests—depending on the occasion and the event.

13 Interactive Station

The interactive station provides information about the history of the illustrated medical compendium (see 5).

English

1 Ardabil Carpet Fragment

Iran, Ardabil, 1539–40, Wool
Museum Rietberg, RVA 843,
gift of Robert Akeret
Provenance: 1539/40–1889,
Ardabil Shrine Ensemble, Iran,
1888, Hildebrand Stevens, Tabriz;
1888–ca. 1892, Ziegler & Co;
ca. 1892–prior to 1914, Vincent
Robinson & Co, London (Mfr.
Brown); 1914–65, Robert Akeret

2 View of the interior of the reception hall in the shrine complex of Ardabil

Photographed and drawn by Bruno
Schulz, from Friedrich Sarre, ed.,
*Denkmal der persischer Baukunst:
geschichtliche Untersuchung und
Aufnahme muhammedanischer
Bauarbeiten in Vorderasien
und Persien* (plate volume),
Berlin, 1901

3 View of the Ardabil Carpet

From Edward Stebbing, *The Holy
Carpet of the Mosque of Ardabil*,
London, 1893

4 Detail of one corner of the Ardabil Carpet

From Edward Stebbing, *The Holy
Carpet of the Mosque of Ardabil*,
London, 1893

This unrepessessing fragment (no. 1) is from the border of a Persian carpet nearly five hundred years old. This carpet and its twin once decorated the floor of the large reception hall of the Ardabil Shrine Ensemble (no. 2) which houses the tomb of Sheikh Safi, the forebear of the Safavids (1501 – 1736).

One such carpet, known as the "Ardabil Carpet," is exhibited at the Victoria and

5 Albert Museum in London (no. 3). This carpet was for sale in 1892 at Robinson & Co. in London. It had been acquired by an English carpet dealer in Iran in the late 1880s. Then it was restored with the help of a second, identical carpet. Several smaller pieces like our fragment (from the outermost border) were not reused. The second carpet is now in the Los Angeles County Museum of Art.

The Ardabil carpet was marketed as a "holy carpet" with the aid of a lawishly designed brochure. It included several color lithographs with details (no. 4).

6 Detail of one corner of the Ardabil Carpet

From *Les anciens tapis de Perse: Etude sur leur valeur esthétique-que par Carl Hopf*, 2nd exp. ed., Munich: F. Brückmann, 1913
Museum Rietberg, library

Carl Hopf's study *Les anciens tapis de Perse* of 1913, which was also published in German and English, was in Robert Akeret's library. Right at the beginning of this slender publication, Hopf presents the "famous" Ardabil Carpet in a color plate and assesses it art historically in the text.

Unfortunately, we don't know when Akeret bought this book, or how its purchase relates to his Ardabil fragment. All we know is that Akeret was working in London prior to World War I. He probably acquired the carpet fragment at that time as well, perhaps shortly before or after the publication of *Les anciens Tapis de Perse*.

7 Portrait of Robert Akeret

Family archive Akeret,
reproduction

Robert Akeret (1886 – 1972) grew up in St. Gallen, where he was educated at the

8 Handelshochschule (Business College). He then spent seven years working for banks and industrial companies in Paris and London. Later he worked for the Swiss shoe company Bally. After World War I he was active for twelve years in Romania, followed by several years as a representative in southern and central Africa. He took advantage of his extended stays abroad to build his collection of several dozen carpets of which the museum now owns fifty-six.

The years between the wars were particularly fruitful for Akeret's collecting activity. From cosmopolitan Bucharest he regularly visited Istanbul but also such places as Budapest, Kolozsvár (Cluj) and Nagyvárad (Oradea). They were all connected by the international railway network.

Until 1980, the carpets of the Akeret Collection were exhibited in the Muraltengut, a stately building of the City of Zurich, the former estate of Martin Bodmer.

9 Lotto Carpet

Turkey, western Anatolia, Ushak,
17th century, wool
Museum Rietberg, RVA 809,
gift of Robert Akeret
Provenance: [..] until 1920/30s,
Count Moritz Esterházy, Budapest, 1920/30s–65, Robert Akeret,
Kaltenbach

"Lotto" carpets are named after the Italian Renaissance painter Lorenzo Lotto (1480–1557), who depicted this type of carpet in several of his paintings. Lotto carpets are distinguished by a red central field with yellow decoration of geometricized split leaf tendrils. The carpets were mainly produced in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and enjoyed great popularity in Europe. This carpet with its small central field and its cartouche border is typical of seventeenth-century production.

10 Niche Carpet

Turkey, Hereke, ca. 1900, silk
Museum Rietberg, RVA 818,
gift of Robert Akeret
Provenance: ca. 1900–20/30er
Jahre, Countess Csáky, Kolozsvár;
1920/30s–65, Robert Akeret,
Kaltenbach

As Akeret's files, newspaper articles, and poems (see no. 10) document, he was interested not least in the individual fates and hence the provenance of his carpets. The many resonant names of some of their previous owners of the high aristocracy testify to that as well: in addition to Prince Esterházy they include Odeschakly, Széchenyi, and Csáky.

He acquired two similar niche carpets at the same time from Countess Csáky of Kolozsvár (now Cluj). They are from the workshop in Hereke, which was founded in 1841. Initially, it produced goods exclusively for the Ottoman court. Later, at the end of the nineteenth century and beginning of the twentieth, its customers included the aristocracy of the cosmopolitan Ottoman Empire, statespersons, and foreign dignitaries.

11 Photography from Robert Akeret's living room

This photograph is probably from the 1920s and offers a view into Akeret's living room. Hanging on the wall is the Hereke silk carpet of Countess Csáky (no. 8). The seating is a divan with a wool carpet spread on it.



Canonization and the Cult of Relics Carpets and Their Fragments



10

Multimedia Kiosk

Two poems from Robert Akeret's volume of poetry *Erflehes und Erlausches in freien Rhythmen und Reimen. Erinnerungen eines Auslandschweizers* (What is Experienced and Listened to in Free Rhythms and Rhymes; Memories of a Swiss Abroad) (1964), published by the author and printed by Huber & Co. in Frauenfeld. The first poem is titled "Das Teppichfest" (The Carpet Festival) (1946) and the second "Der gute Kamerad (Ein Kaschmirteppich)" (The Good Comrade: A Kashmir Carpet) (1955).

English

Knowledge about Objects
The Acquisition of Pre-Columbian Artifacts

1
The Archaeological Site of Cajamarquilla in Lima

Illus. in Ephraim George Squier, *Peru: Incidents and Explorations in the Land of the Incas* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1877), p. 92, reproduction

Professional archaeology evolved in Peru at the beginning of the twentieth century with the German Max Uhle and the Peruvian Julio Tello. Both are considered founders of modern archaeology in Peru. In scholarly archaeology, the context of the find and hence the possibility of dating, determining, and contextualizing is not lost. This contrasts with uncontrolled excavations, which focuses on capitalizing on the objects and regards the artworks as commodities. Illegal exports were common practice prior to the UNESCO Convention of 1970 and strict regulation by the countries of origin.

2
Coca Bag

Peru, probably southern coast, Late Horizon, 15th–16th century, cotton, cameld hair
Museum Rietberg, RPB 1201, acquired with funds from the City of Zurich

Provenance: [..]; until 1953, Walram von Schoeler and Gabriela Passamonti-von Schoeler; 1953–61, Kunstgewerbe-museum Zurich (now Museum für Gestaltung), exhibited from 1954 onward at the Museum Rietberg, since 1961 in the collection of the Museum Rietberg

This very well-preserved bag held coca leaves for an important person. Walram von Schoeler, a baron, diplomat, archaeologist, and art dealer between Lima, New York, Rome, and Switzerland, and his wife, Gabriela Passamonti, brought back a large collection of pre-Columbian artworks to Zurich in 1952, including this

beautifully made bag. The first special exhibition at the Museum Rietberg in 1954 included these works. Johannes then acquired several objects both for the Museum Rietberg and for the Kunstgewerbe-museum, of which he was also the director.

3
Request from Johannes Itten to the City Councilor Sappaur, December 3, 1954

Museum Rietberg, archive, S.0002-0005, reproduction

In its early days, the Museum Rietberg was closely bound to the city council and the mayor's office. All acquisitions had to be approved by the city council. Not until 1957 was an acquisitions committee with several members formed to make acquisition decisions.

When in 1955 Johannes Itten wanted to purchase objects from the collection of Walram von Schoeler and his wife, Gabriela Passamonti, he explained to the city that the collection had been "illegally exported from Peru." That fact proved no hindrance to an acquisition.

4
List of Gabriela Passamonti's Textiles, Basel

Museum Rietberg, archive, K.0005-005, reproduction

In the archive of the Museum Rietberg is an extensive list of the Schoeler and Passamonti Collection. Five ceramics were acquired by Johannes Itten, including one of the major works in the present collection of the Museum Rietberg. Johannes Itten had sought advice from renowned experts in Paris and Amsterdam to ensure their uniqueness and authenticity. The scholar of the ancient Americas, Paul Rivet, director of the Musée d'Ethnographie in Paris and head of the French archaeological mission in Peru, had seen the collection in Lima in 1952. He recommended acquisition. Given the quality of the objects, the question of the legality of their export was apparently scarcely worth considering.

7
Invoice from Gabriela Passamonti, Hotel Baur au Lac, February 10, 1955

Museum Rietberg, archive, K.0005-0050, reproduction

5
Dignitary

Peru, Mantaro Valley, Anja, Wari Culture, 7th–10th century, terracotta
Museum Rietberg, RPB 320, acquired with funds from the City of Zurich

Provenance: May 18, 1924; Galvez Durand, excavated with Trinidad Mesa, 1924–49; heirs of Galvez Durand; 1949–54, Gabriela Passamonti; 1954–61, Kunstgewerbemuseum Zurich, as intracally transfer to the Museum Rietberg

6
List of the Walram von Schoeler Collection with Precise Information on Provenance

Museum Rietberg, archive, K.0005-0049, reproduction

In the archive of the Museum Rietberg is an extensive list of the Schoeler and Passamonti Collection. Five ceramics were acquired by Johannes Itten, including one of the major works in the present collection of the Museum Rietberg. Johannes Itten had sought advice from renowned experts in Paris and Amsterdam to ensure their uniqueness and authenticity. The scholar of the ancient Americas, Paul Rivet, director of the Musée d'Ethnographie in Paris and head of the French archaeological mission in Peru, had seen the collection in Lima in 1952. He recommended acquisition. Given the quality of the objects, the question of the legality of their export was apparently scarcely worth considering.

8
Letter from Guillermo Schmidt-Pizarro to Eisy Leuzinger, February 29, 1963

Museum Rietberg, archive, S.0002-0007, reproduction

The son of a Peruvian mother and a German father, Schmidt-Pizarro dealt in pre-Columbian art, and was active especially from the end of the 1920s into the 1940s, during which time he sold thousands of objects to some of the most important institutions in North America and Europe. Around twenty of the textile fragments sold by him are among the holdings of the Museum Rietberg today. Eisy Leuzinger's business relationship with the dealer lasted from the 1950s to the 1960s. He wrote to Leuzinger in February 1963 that it was impossible to get permission to export ceramics. The Museum Rietberg has no terracotta objects from Schmidt-Pizarro.

9
Stirrup Shoe in Form of a Condor Head (Kero)

Peru, Chavin region, Hacienda near Huacras, Early Colonial Period, 2nd half of the 16th century, wood, colour incrustation
Museum Rietberg, RPB 1805, acquired with funds from the City of Zurich

Provenance: [..]; until 1963, Guillermo Schmidt-Pizarro, Lima

10
Embroidery

Peru, Early Intermediate Period, beginning of the first millennium BCE, cotton, cameld hair, warp vertical
Museum Rietberg, RPB 1002, acquired with funds from the City of Zurich

Provenance: [..]; until 1953, Guillermo Schmidt-Pizarro, Geneva; 1953–56, Kunstgewerbemuseum Zurich, by intracally transfer to the Museum Rietberg

11
Sammlung Alt-Peru, Nachlass Pedro José Velasco, Lima, und Antiken-Sammlung Assyrische, mesopotamische, ägyptische, etruskische, griechische, iberische und römische Altertümer (Ancient Peru Collection, Estate of Pedro José Velasco, Lima, and Antiquities Collection Assyrian, Mesopotamian, Egyptian, Etruscan, Greek, Iberian, and Roman Antiquities), auction in Lucerne, Galerie Fischer, June 12, 1956

The collection of Pedro Velasco was sold in a series of auctions at the Galerie Fischer. It is not clear why it was auctioned in Lucerne. The foreword to the auction catalogue was written by the Swiss archaeologist Henry Reichlen, an expert in Peruvian archaeology and employee of the Musée de l'Homme in Paris (now musée du quai Branly). He was responsible for properly classifying the works. Eisy Leuzinger as well as Earl Stendahl, one of the most important dealers of pre-Columbian art, were present at the auction as buyers.

English

Knowledge about Objects The Acquisition of Pre-Columbian Artifacts

12

Beaker

Peru, 2nd century BCE – 6th century CE, terracotta
Museum Rietberg, RPB 103,
bequest of Maria Nägeli
Provenance: [...]; until November 17, 1956, Pedro José Velasco, Lima;
November 17, 1956, Sammlung Alt-Peru, Nachlass Pedro José Velasco, Lima, II, Teil und Antiken-Sammlung, auction in Lucerne, Galerie Fischer, lot no. 37;
November 17, 1956 – 80, Maria Nägeli, Zurich

13

Alt-Peru aus Schweizer Sammlungen
(Ancient Peru from Swiss Collections),
April 18 – June 2, 1957,
Zurich, Conzett & Huber 1957

Historical exhibition catalogues are fascinating documents for provenance research. This catalogue, for example, lists various private collections that later went to museums. They include the collection of Christoph Bernoulli, then partially anonymized as "CB," an art dealer and interior designer in Basel. He had acquired much of the Passamont-Schoeler Collection when parts of it were sold in Switzerland in the mid-1950s. The unsold parts went back to North America. The collection of Carmen Oechsle, large parts of which are now exhibited in the collection of the Museum Rietberg but also in Basel, was also included. You can find out more about her in the next display case.

14

Photograph of Carmen Oechsle

From: Inka und Vorläuferkulturen: Sammlung Carmen Oechsle, Ausstellung in der Galerie Le Point, Zurich 1990, reproduction

Carmen Dolores Oechsle (1909–87) was born in the Barranco district of Lima, the daughter of a Swiss family residing there. During World War I, the family moved to Switzerland. There Oechsle studied theater, singing, and painting, at the Kunstgewerbeschule Zurich, among other places. Her family had been involved in trading since the late nineteenth century. Oechsle returned to Lima on a number of occasions. She settled at Trittigasse 4 in Zurich and ran a studio and a store there. She organized exhibitions and sold her own works and others acquired in Lima.

15

Embroidery

Peru, Early Intermediate Period, beginning of the first millennium CE, Cotton, camelid hair
Museum Rietberg, RPB 1013,
acquired with funds from the City of Zurich
Provenance: [...]; Carmen Oechsle

Carmen Oechsle's collection came to the Museum Rietberg as a loan as early as the 1950s. The collector and dealer was a member of the Museum Rietberg acquisitions committee. After her death, her collection was sold to the Museum Rietberg and what's now the Museum der Kulturen in Basel.

16

Letter from Hans-Dietrich Disselhoff to Carmen Oechsle

Museum der Kulturen, Basel, archive, IV/0827 Disselhoff, reproduction

The archaeologist and future museum director Hans-Dietrich Disselhoff (1899–1975) was one of the important mediators helping Oechsle to acquire art. The scholar Disselhoff financed his travels by trading on the side. Just how closely scholarship, the art market, and museums interplayed is clear from Disselhoff explanations to

17

Post with Figure

Peru, 1st–15th century CE, wood
Museum Rietberg, RPB 1806,
acquired with funds from the City of Zurich
Provenance: [...]; until 23.11.1964, Carmen Oechsle; 23.11.1964, Sammlung Alt-Peru, Ausseruropäische Kunst, Koller Auktionen AG, Galerie Koller, Zurich, lot 105 (?)

Such posts may have been grave markers. This undecorated wooden figure shows the breadth of the Oechsle Collection, which is famous above all for important textiles and ceramics but also includes other objects.

18

Spoon

Peru, Recay, 1st century BCE – 6th century CE, terracotta
Museum Rietberg, RPB 503,
acquired with funds from the Schweizerische Kreditanstalt
Provenance: [...]; until 1988, Carmen Oechsle

19

Pendant

Peru, Wari, 7th–10th century CE, bone, shells, gold, turquoise, coral, etc.
Museum Rietberg, RPB 1910,
acquired with funds from the City of Zurich
Provenance: [...]; – 1988, Carmen Oechsle

20

Beaker with Face

Peru, Chimú Inca, 12th – 15th century CE, silver
Museum Rietberg, RPB 1715,
acquired with funds from the Schweizerische Kreditanstalt
Provenance: [...]; until 1988, Carmen Oechsle

21

Bail-Handled Vessel in Form of a Jaguar Head

Peru, Mochea, 1st–7th century, terracotta
Museum Rietberg, 2005: 58, bequest of Annemarie Strauss-Bas
Provenance: [...]; until November 23, 1964, Carmen Oechsle; November 23, 1964, Sammlung Alt-Peru, Ausseruropäische Kunst, Koller Auktionen AG, Galerie Koller, Zurich, lot no. 89 (with illustration); November 23, 1964 – 2005, Annemarie Strauss-Bas, Zurich

English

“Wild Things” in the Villa The Oceania Collection of Sidney W. Brown

1 Charles Sr. and Eugénie Brown-Pfau with their children in Naples (far left; Sidney W. Brown), in Pozzuoli near Naples, ca. 1885

Museum Langmatt, Stiftung Langmatt Sidney und Jenny Brown, Baden, B.01.1.35.01, reproduction

Sidney W. Brown's father, the engineer Charles Brown, moved with his family to Naples in 1885 and built a state armaments and navy workshop in nearby Pozzuoli for the British firm Armstrong, Mitchell & Co. Sidney also worked for the company before embarking for Colombo, in what was then British Ceylon, with Eugen von Petersen in February 1888.

2 Eugen von Petersen

Photograph from an album of the East Asia trip belonging to Sidney W. Brown dated 1888–89
Museum Langmatt, Stiftung Langmatt Sidney und Jenny Brown, Baden, B.01.02.13, reproduction

The Russian-German engineer Eugen von Petersen (1834–1893) worked from 1877 to early 1888 for the Zoological Station in Naples. He supervised the building of, among other things, the Casa Dohrn, the private residence of the station's founder, Anton Dohrn. He was also responsible for technical acquisitions for the station's aquarium and ships. After he and Sidney W. Brown had parted ways in Australia in 1889, he traveled on alone. In 1892 he returned to Naples, having married a Japanese woman.

3 Sidney W. Brown in Batavia [?]

Photograph from an album of the East Asia trip belonging to Sidney W. Brown dated 1888–89
Museum Langmatt, Stiftung Langmatt Sidney und Jenny Brown, Baden, B.01.02.13, reproduction

Around a dozen photographs from Brown and Petersen's trip have been preserved in an album; they show landscapes but also document the local people and buildings. There are also several photographs with Brown and Petersen, presumably primarily from their six-month stay in Batavia, today Jakarta.

4 Sidney W. Brown to his mother, from Batavia, July 30, 1888 (excerpt)

Museum Langmatt, Stiftung Langmatt Sidney und Jenny Brown, Baden, W.03.08, reproduction

In numerous letters to his mother, Eugénie Brown-Pfau, Sidney W. Brown reported on the various stops of his trip, told of encounters with the local population and Europeans who were themselves traveling like him or were part of the colonial society. In his correspondence, Brown manifests his ambivalent stance: on the one hand, he expresses criticism of the colonial occupation and the associated exploitation, but ultimately he and Petersen wanted to appropriate land in the South Pacific themselves and make their fortunes with their planned business activities.

5 Ship's Passenger Ticket

Museum Langmatt, Stiftung Langmatt Sidney und Jenny Brown, Baden, B.01.02.13, reproduction

Recto of the passenger ticket, dated March 23, 1889, with which Sidney W. Brown

boarded the Iberia for his return to Europe. In his luggage he was carrying Oceanic artifacts that he was supposed to bring to Naples for Petersen.

6 Two Daggers

Admiralty Islands, prior to 1886, obsidian blade, painted wood
Museum Rietberg, RME 506 and RME 507, gift of John A. Brown
Provenance: [..]; ca. 1886, Thomas Farrell; ca. 1886–1888/89, Australian Museum (?); 1889–1965, Brown Family

7 Two Spears

Admiralty Islands, prior to 1886, obsidian blade, wood, Job's tears, bast, red and white pigments
Museum Rietberg, RME 505a and b, gift of John A. Brown
Provenance: [..]; ca. 1886, Thomas Farrell; ca. 1886–88/89, Australian Museum (?); 1893–1965, Brown Family

8 Belt

New Guinea, prior to 1886, woven orchid stems
Museum Rietberg, RME 1223, gift of John A. Brown
Provenance: [..]; ca. 1886–88/89, Australian Museum; 1889–1965, Brown Family

9 Trochus shell bracelet

Melanesia, prior to 1886, carved Trochus snail shell
Museum Rietberg, RME 1228, gift of John A. Brown
Provenance: [..]; ca. 1886–88/89, Australian Museum; 1889–1965, Brown Family

10 Pendant or forehead decoration (*kappkap*)

Melanesia, prior to 1886, Tridacna snail, tortoiseshell, string
Museum Rietberg, RME 1227, gift of John A. Brown
Provenance: [..]; ca. 1886–88/89, Australian Museum; 1889–1965, Brown Family

11 Langmatt Postcard

The Villa Langmatt on Römerstrasse in Baden, Aargau, postcard published by the Verlag Theodor Zingg, Baden, ca. 1910
Museum Langmatt, Stiftung Langmatt Sidney und Jenny Brown, Baden, B.01.08.01.01.01, reproduction

The Villa Langmatt in Baden, designed and built by Karl Moser around 1900, was the final residence of Sidney W. Brown and Jenny Brown-Sulzer and their three sons, Sidney H., John A., and Harry F. Brown. The Oceania was kept in this house until part of it was donated to the Museum Rietberg. The Brown industrialists are best known for their collection of Impressionist paintings, which they began to assemble in the early nineteenth century. The villa has been open to the public as a museum since 1990.

12 Correspondence between John A. Brown and Elsy Leuzinger

John A. Brown to Elsy Leuzinger, Baden, October 25, 1965, with attached typed list of objects, Elsy Leuzinger to John A. Brown, Zurich, October 27, 1965
Museum Rietberg, archive, S.0003-0003, reproduction

The Oceania artifacts were donated to the Museum Rietberg in 1965 by John A. Brown, the middle son of Sidney W. Brown and Jenny Brown-Sulzer. As is clear from

English

“Wild Things” in the Villa The Oceania Collection of Sidney W. Brown

J

his correspondence with Elsy Leuzinger, then director of the Museum Rietberg, she had previously visited the Villa Langmatt and selected the objects herself.

Leuzinger's letter is interesting for her description of the Oceania artifacts as “wild things” and contrasting them with “East Asian works of art.” Clearly, she regarded the Oceania as art but also as inferior to Chinese porcelain. John A. Brown's summary information about the acquisition of the objects has been revised and supplemented by the travel correspondence of his father, Sidney W. Brown.

13 E. P. Ramsay in the early 1880s

Australian Museum, Sydney, AMS160/058, (Reproduction: L. W. Appleby, Sydney, ca. 1895–1917)

14 The Australian Museum in Sydney, ca. 1870 – 89

Charles Kerry & Co. in Sydney, Australian Museum, Sydney, AMS391/M897, reproduction

The Australian zoologist Edward Pierson Ramsay (1842 – 1916) was the curator and secretary of the Australian Museum in Sydney from 1874 to 1894. Under his aegis the museum's ethnological collection was expanded considerably. From 1882 to 1888 he acquired around 7500 artifacts for the museum. Sidney W. Brown reported in his letters about meeting Ramsay personally.

15 Emma Forsayth and her Sister Phebe Parkinson-Coe, ca. 1894 – 88

Private archive Max Uechnitz, Sydney, reproduction

The central sources for artifacts from Melanesia were Emma Forsayth-Coe (1850 – 1913), her life and business partner, Thomas Farrell, as well as the German Richard Parkinson and his wife, Phebe, Emma's sister. The Samoan-American businesswoman and her family collected thousands of objects from the islands of the South Pacific region and traded them from around 1881 to 1909. The Australian Museum purchased more than 4600 artifacts from Forsayth, Farrell, and the Parkinsons between 1884 and 1886. The objects of the Brown Collection may well have come from this trading as well.

16 Malanggan figure

New Ireland, prior to 1887, wood, painted
Museum Rietberg, RME 458,
gift of John A. Brown
Provenance: !, !, !, ca. 1887, Thomas Farrell (?), ca. 1887 – 1888/89,
Australian Museum, 1889 – 1965,
Brown Family

“Malanggan” is a collective term for objects, rituals, and complex religious and philosophical ideas connected to the people of New Ireland, Papua New Guinea. Malanggan figures were usually created for a single ritual event and then destroyed.

17 Parkinson, South Seas Richard Parkinson, *Dreissig Jahre in der Südsee. Land und Leute, Sitten und Gebräuche im Bismarckarchipel und auf den deutschen Salomoinseln*, ed Dr. B. Ankermann, Stuttgart: Strecker & Schröder, 1907

Museum Rietberg, library, formerly in the library of the priest and anthropologist Martin Gusinde

Richard Parkinson (1844 – 1909) went to Samoa in 1875 as the representative for a trading company in Hamburg, where he met Phebe, Emma Forsayth-Coe's sister. After they married, he took over the running of his sister-in-law's plantations in 1891 and was later active as a scholar, collector, and dealer. As part of his scholarship, Parkinson wrote extensively, including his magnum opus *Dreissig Jahre in der Südsee (Thirty Years in the South Seas)*, published in 1907. His wife, who had mastered the languages of the aboriginal peoples, contributed crucially to his research.

18 Interior with arrangement of the ceremonial paddle of Sidney W. Brown, 1890

Photograph on card, Museum Langmatt, Stiftung Langmatt Sidney und Jenny Brown, Baden, W.01.02.03.02, reproduction

This photograph shows that the ceremonial paddle and the Malanggan figure of the Brown family were once hanging on a wall in an attractive arrangement.

19 Three ceremonial paddle

Buka, prior to 1886, wood,
carved and painted
Museum Rietberg, RME 617
and RME 618 and RME 619,
gift of John A. Brown
Provenance: !, !, !, ca. 1886,
Thomas Farrell (?), ca. 1886 –
88/89, Australian Museum,
1889 – 65, Brown Family

Ceremonial paddles from Buka and Bougainville Islands, Papua New Guinea, often have a motif of a bird or a kokorro – the silhouette of a standing or squatting human figure.

K

Ritual Vessel, Symbol of Power, Collector's Object
The Shift in the Meaning of Ancient Bronzes in China

English

1-3

Ritual Wine Vessel of the You Type
Ritual Wine Vessel of the Jue Type
Ritual Food Vessel of the Ding Type

China, late Shang Dynasty, Anyang Period, 12th–11th century BCE, Bronze
Museum Rietberg, 2010.32, 2010.31, 2010.34, bequest of Charlotte Holliger-Hasler
Provenance: [..], until 1971, Gret Hasler, Winterthur, 1971–2010, Charlotte Holliger-Hasler, Winterthur

4

Ritual Wine Vessel of the Zun Type

China, late Shang Dynasty, 12th–11th century BCE, Bronze
Museum Rietberg, RCH 39, acquired with funds from the City of Zurich and the Ernst Müller-Stiftung
Provenance: [..], until 1971 Vera Gross, Zurich

5

Ritual Wine Vessel of the Lihue Type

China, Shang Dynasty, 12th–11th century BCE, bronze
Museum Rietberg, RCH 45, acquired with funds from Alice and Pierre Uldry
Provenance: [..], Ernst Gross-Spühler, until 1979, Elsa Krayenbühl-Gross, Zollikon

6-7

Ritual Wine Vessel of the Gu Type
Ritual Wine Vessel of the Zhi Type

China, late Shang Dynasty, Anyang Period, 12th–11th century BCE, bronze
Museum Rietberg, 2010.30, 2010.33, bequest of Charlotte Holliger-Hasler
Provenance: [..], 1950's, Gret Hasler, Winterthur, 1971–2010, Charlotte Holliger-Hasler, Winterthur

8

Reconstruction of the Tomb Chamber of Fu Hao, Anyang, Henan Province

Photo: November 28, 2014, Beibaoke (Shutterstock)

In 1975, Chinese archaeologists discovered the undisturbed tomb of Fu Hao, a consort of the Shang King, Wu Ding (r. ca. 1250–1192 BCE). The richly decorated tomb contained around 2000 objects, including 468 bronzes. Several of the vessels were commissioned by her descendants to commemorate her; others were used in rituals during her lifetime and then buried with her.

9

Ritual Food Vessel of the Ding Type

China, early Western Zhou Dynasty, 11th–10th century BCE, bronze
Museum Rietberg, RCH 10A, acquired with funds from Alice and Pierre Uldry
Provenance: [..], 1997 T. T. Tsui (1941–2010), Jüנגgüangtang Collection, Hong Kong, 1997
Christie's New York

After the rise to power of the Zhou Dynasty in 1046 BCE, bronze vessels took on a new function. They became a symbol of power. Possession of tripod cauldrons of the *ding* type followed a standardized schema for ranking. Only the king was allowed to use the nine tripod cauldrons in rituals.

10

The first emperor of the Qin Dynasty (r. 221–210 BCE) had the magic tripod cauldrons hidden

Ink rubbing of a stone relief on the shrine of the Wu family, China, Jiangxi, Shandong Province, Late Eastern Han Dynasty, 25–220 CE, reproduction from: *Mirroring China's Past: Emperors, Scholars, and Their Bronzes*, Chicago: The Art Institute of Chicago, 2018, S. 25, pl. 8.

Legend has it that after the collapses of the Zhou empire, the various lords tried to take possession of the king's nine bronze vessels. But the symbol of power over which they were fighting disappeared in a river. When the first emperor of the Qin Dynasty reunited the country in 221 BCE, the legendary vessels reappeared in the torrents of the river. The emperor sent his troops to retrieve them. A dragon appeared and bit the rope in two. The royal tripod cauldrons vanished forever.

11

Bronze Tripod Cauldron of the Ding Type, placed in Antarctica by the Government of the People's Republic of China in Memory of the Twenty-fifth Chinese Expedition and the Establishment of a Research Station

Photographed by Xia Limin, February 2, 2009.

In recent years the Chinese state has revived the symbolic importance of bronze vessels. From 1997 to 2009, it erected monumental reconstructions of the tripod cauldrons in regions, including Lhasa, Urumchi, and Hong Kong, as well as in Antarctica. Once a sign of the old kings and of political power, these bronzes now represent the claim to power and the achievements of the present government.

12

Incense Burner of the Boshanlu Type

China, Western Han Dynasty (206 BCE–9 CE), bronze
Museum Rietberg, RCH 63, gift of Ernst Winkler
Provenance: [..], T. Y. King, Hong Kong, 1950s–1985, Ernst and Marie-Louise Winkler Collection, Hong Kong

In the Han Dynasty (206 BCE–220 CE), bronze vessels lost their ritual and political significance. Bronze nevertheless continued to be cast into daily life objects, such as mirrors and incense burners. Such incense burners in the form of a mountain are closely related to this period's immortality cult. They symbolize the islands of the immortals, which are said to be located far out in the Eastern Sea – out of reach of mortal beings.

13

Ten Views of a Straw-Roofed Hut

After Lu Hong (active 7th–8th century CE), copy from the 13th century, hand scroll, ink on paper, 29.4 × 500 cm, reproduction National Palace Museum, Taipei

The scholar Lu Hong of the Tang Dynasty (618–907 CE) became the ideal of the Taoist hermit. Several times he refused a high ministerial office and retreated to a simple life in harmony with nature. According to Taoist belief, a person can achieve immortality by mental cultivation. Displaying in front of him is likely a depiction of bronze cauldron.

14

Ritual Wine Vessel of the Zun Type

China, late Shang or early Western Zhou Dynasty, 12th–10th century BCE, bronze
Museum Rietberg, RCH 12, acquired with funds from the City of Zurich
Provenance: [..], H. F. E. Vassier (1890–1965), acquired in Japan; from 1925/30–56, J. F. H. Wenten Collection

15

Vase in Form of a Zun

China, Zhejiang Province, Longquan or neighboring kilns, Yuan Dynasty, 13th century, Stoneware with bright-green glaze, Longquan ware
Museum Rietberg, MYT 1573, permanent loan from the Meiyintang Foundation
Provenance: [..], until 1996, Meiyintang Collection; since 2003, Meiyintang Stiftung

During the Song Dynasty (960–1279 CE), the cultural traditions of antiquity became the model of political and social life. In order to reorganize their society, the rulers revived the rituals of the idealized Zhou

English

Dynasty (1046 – 256 BCE). That included the use of bronze vessels. With this interest in antiquity, the members of the educated elite began to collect and study ancient bronzes. It also became fashionable to imitate the forms of such vessels in other materials, such as glazed ceramics or jade.

illustrated and described in detail 214 bronzes. This catalogue also served as the model for new castings of old vessel types. This *Zhenghe* tripod cauldron corresponds to originals from the Shang period in terms of its decoration and its long inscription in ancient characters, but it is dated 1116 CE.

16 Bogutu (Examining Antiquities)

Attributed to Liu Songnian (active 1174–1224 CE), probably a copy from the 17th century, China, hand scroll, ink and colors on silk, 128.3 x 56.6 cm, reproduction National Palace Museum, Taipei

In the Song period, meeting and studying antiquities together became a fashionable pastime for the elites. Connoisseurship of antiquity had become an indispensable part of a cultivated and elegant lifestyle.

17 Page from the *Kaogutu* (Illustrated Investigations of Antiquity)

Lü Dalin (ca. 1042 – ca. 1090 CE), published 1092, reprint from the 1950s
Museum Rietberg, library

18 The *Zhenghe* Tripod Cauldron

China, Northern Song Dynasty, cast 1116, bronze, reproduction National Palace Museum, Taipei

The pursuit of antiquities led to a new scholarly discipline in the Song period (960 – 1279 CE): the “study of bronze and stone objects.” Archaeological objects and antiquities were studied, categorized and catalogued. The most influential catalogue was the *Kaogutu* (illustrated investigations of antiquity). In which the scholar Lü Dalin

19-21 Ritual Wine Vessel of the *Gu* Type

China, late Shang Dynasty, Anyang Period (ca. 1300 – 1046 BCE), Bronze
Museum Rietberg, RCH 5, gift of Eduard von der Heydt
Provenance: [..], 1952, Eduard von der Heydt

Goblet of the *Gu* Type

China, Qing Dynasty, 18th century
Dark-green jade
Museum Rietberg, RCH 819, gift of Emma Streicher

Cloisonné Goblet of the *Gu* Type

Qing Dynasty, Kangxi Period (1662–1722 CE), Cloisonné
Museum Rietberg, U 224, permanent loan from the Alice and Pierre Udry Collection
Provenance: [..], 1985 at the latest, Alice and Pierre Udry

In the Qing period (1644 – 1911), ancient bronzes inspired artisans to imitate them in a wide variety of materials. The old forms and decorative patterns were adapted to modern taste.

22 Viewing Antiques in the Bamboo Garden

Qiu Ying (ca. 1494–1552), China, Ming Dynasty (1368–1644), album leaf, ink and colors on silk, 41.1 x 33.8 cm, reproduction, The Palace Museum, Beijing

In the Ming (1368 – 1644 CE) and Qing Dynasty (1644 – 1911 CE), ancient bronzes once again enjoyed great popularity. They now became part of the upper class's large collections of art and curiosities.

23 One or Two?

Yangxindian version, Qing Dynasty, Qianlong Period (r. 1735 – 65), ink and colors on silk, reproduction, Palace Museum, Beijing

This famous painting by an unknown artist shows the Qianlong Emperor (r. 1735 – 65) surrounded by objects from his private art collection. They include ancient jade objects and bronzes as well as ceramics and carvings. Like the Emperor, collectors of this time used bronzes as flower vases or incense burners to decorate gardens or study rooms. They also converted other smaller bronzes into water-droppers and brush sets.

24 *Xiqing gu jian* (Antique Mirror of Western Truth)

Liang Shizheng (1897 – 1763 CE), published 1749, (Reprint, Shanghai: Guji, 1991)

The Qianlong Emperor (r. 1735 – 65) loved art and assembled probably the greatest collection in China's history. He had comprehensive catalogues published of his thousands of paintings, calligraphy, and ceramics as well as ancient jade carvings and bronzes. The four volumes on bronzes list more than 4,000 objects. Many of these pieces were subsequently revealed to be later imitations.

English

Doing Business with Africa's Art The Sources of the Zurich Art Dealer Emil Storrer

1

Massa Temple

Hans Himmelheber, Côte d'Ivoire, 1953, reproduction
Museum Rietberg, FHH 445-5,
gift of the community of heirs of
Hans Himmelheber
Provenance: 1953 – 2003, Hans
Himmelheber; 2003 – 13,
Eberhard and Barbara Fischer

2

Massa

Hans Himmelheber, Côte d'Ivoire,
1953, reproduction
Museum Rietberg, FHH 446-213,
gift of the community of heirs of
Hans Himmelheber
Provenance: 1953 – 2003, Hans
Himmelheber; 2003 – 13,
Eberhard and Barbara Fischer

3

Stand for a Ritual Object

Tybara Workshop, Côte d'Ivoire,
Korhogo, Senfu, prior to 1952,
wood
Museum Rietberg, 2020.422,
gift of Lorenz Homberger
Provenance: [...], 1952, Chief of
Korhogo; 1952 – 54, Catholic Mis-
sion of Ferkessedougou; 1954 – 88,
Emil Storrer; 1988 – 2019,
Lorenz Homberger

4

Index Card, Recto and Verso

Museum Rietberg, archive

In the wake of the Massa movement, the adherents of this new faith in northern Côte d'Ivoire destroyed thousands of ritual objects such as figures, masks, and ceramics. Gabriel Clamens and Michel Convars of the Catholic Mission in Ferkessedougou collected many of these objects and prevented their destruction. They also compiled their own index cards and noted a great deal of information. They built their own collections and gave some items to the museum in Abidjan but they also sold numerous objects – to Emil Storrer, among others.

5

Emil Storrer with Missionaries of the Station in Ferkessedougou, ca. 1950s

Private archive of Michael Storrer,
reproduction

Emil Storrer in Côte d'Ivoire, ca. 1950s

Private archive of Michael Storrer,
reproduction

Emil Storrer first trained as a hair stylist but, unsatisfied with it, ended his training and moved to France in the mid-1930s. There he applied to the Foreign Legion, went to North Africa, and developed an interest in arts and crafts. In the 1950s, he turned his passion into a career and founded his own business that evolved from "direct importation" into a gallery.

7

Female Figure (Deble or Doogele)

Master of Lataha, Côte d'Ivoire,
Korhogo, Lataha, Senfu, 19th
century, wood
Museum Rietberg, RAF 301,
acquired with funds from
the City of Zurich
Provenance: [...], 1951(?) – 1952,
Catholic Mission of Ferkessedou-
gou; 1952 – 55, Emil Storrer

This *deble* figure from the sacred grove in Lataha was used at the funeral of the member of the Poro secret alliance in order to mark the transition from the world of the living to the world of the ancestors. In the wake of the Massa movement, this figure too was given away. The Catholic Mission took this sculpture of a woman and sold it to the art dealer Emil Storrer. He proposed that the Museum Rietberg should purchase it in 1954.

8-9

Letter from Charles Ratton to Emil Storrer, November 9, 1954

Letter from Emil
Storrer to Johannes
Itten, December 23,
1954
Museum Rietberg, archive,
S.0004-0024, reproductions

Charles Ratton, probably the most important dealer of African art in the mid-twentieth century, and Emil Storrer had business ties. Emil Storrer appears to have been a not unimportant supplier for Ratton. For example, the latter was interested in this Senfu female figure for an American client. Ratton believed there was nothing comparable or more beautiful. It has been in the museum as a loan since early 1954. The price was high: the city decided to pay the imposing price of 10,400 SFR in two installments in 1955 and 1956.

10

Storrer in His Showroom on Scheuchzerstrasse in Zurich, 1960s

Private archive of Michael Storrer

11-12 Exhibition at Wohnbedarf, 1951

Private archive of Michael Storrer

The Wohnbedarf furniture store has been synonymous modern interior furnishing and artworks since 1931. Emil Storrer found in it a buyer for his Berber carpets and a supporter in Rudolf Graber – one of its three founders, along with Max Moser and Siegfried Gledion. The Berber carpets became the foundation, as well as a best-seller, of his own business later. In his early days as a dealer, Storrer profited from the regular customer base of Wohnbedarf and was also given an exquisite exhibition area. Modern interior furnishing and the collecting of African art were combined here in exemplary fashion.

13

Headdress in Form of an Antelope (*Chiwara*)

Workshop of the Bamana Region,
Mali, Region Sikasso, 1st half of
the 20th century, wood, iron,
basket weaving, textiles, feathers
Museum Rietberg, RAF 215,
gift of Eisy Leuzinger
Provenance: [...], acquired in 1951
on a trip together with Eisy
Leuzinger and Emil Storrer; 1951-
2002, Eisy Leuzinger

The *chiwara* mask depicts a female antelope and refers to the mythical creature *chiwara*, who in legend taught the Bamana agriculture. Eisy Leuzinger purchased this mask in Mali in 1951 on her trip with the dealer Emil Storrer. After their return, the piece was shown in the sales exhibition *Kunstschaffen in Französisch Westafrika*

English

(Making Art in French West Africa) at the Wohnbedarf furniture store. Scholarship, the art market, and design were interwoven.

14
Elsy Leuzinger and
Emil Storrer Examining
the Chivara Mask

Museum Rietberg, archive

15-16
Helmet Mask with a
Male and a Female
Figure (*Degele*)

Tyebara Workshop, Côte d'Ivoire, Kothogo, Senfro, late 19th – early 20th century, wood
Museum Rietberg, RAF 302a and 302b, acquired with funds from the City of Zurich

Provenance: [..]: 1952, Village of Kothogo; 1952, Catholic Mission of Ferkessedougou; 1952–53, Emil Storrer

17-19
Three Finger Rings
with Buffalo Motif
(*Nokariga*)

Workshop of the Senfro Region, Côte d'Ivoire, Kothogo Region, early 20th century, cast metal
Museum Rietberg, RAF 325, RAF 326, and RAF 327, gift of Ruth Rahm
Provenance: [..]: 1953/54, Pater Gabriel Clamens; 1953/54 – 1989, Emil Storrer; 1989 – 99, Michael Storrer

20-21
N***** *im Niger*
(N***** in Niger), by
Emil and Jörg Storrer
with Elsy Leuzinger,
1953

*Les statues meurent
aussi* (Statues Also
Die), by Alain Resnais
and Chris Marker, 1953

In 1953, Emil Storrer released the film N***** *im Niger* (N***** in Niger), which he had produced to a commission from the Völkerkundemuseum and which was shown in various cinemas. The film was based on shots taken during his collecting trips. The scenes show performances with masks and idyllic villages and emphasize a traditional image of Africa. These views are arranged regionally and contrasted and preceded by aesthetically appealing studio shots of masks, figures, and other objects in front of colorful backgrounds, including many pieces now in the collection of the Museum Rietberg.

The second film was shot on behalf of by Aloune Diop, a Senegalese writer and founder of the journal *Présence Africaine*, and produced by Alain Resnais and Chris Marker. Here too, the two levels of African and museum reality are contrasted. With its anti-colonialist and anti-racist text, however, this film goes further and criticizes putting the objects in museums and removing them from their context. France put the film on its index of banned films, and it was not shown until 1964.

22
Interview by Eberhard
Fischer with
Emil Storrer, 1988

Private archive of Eberhard Fischer

On the occasion of the Senfro exhibition at the Museum Rietberg in 1988, the director of the Museum Rietberg, Eberhard

Fischer, interviewed Emil Storrer. You can hear excerpts from the interview and gain insights into the practice of trading.

**Doing Business with Africa's Art
The Sources of the Zurich Art Dealer Emil Storrer**

L

English



1
St. Christopher Carrying the Christ Child

Miskin (ca. 1560 – after 1604)
India, Mughal period, ca. 1600
Pigments and gold on paper

Border

Iran, Afshar period, 1739 – ca. 1765
Pigments and gold on paper

An Archer

Mukund, India, Mughal period, ca. 1585, Pigments and gold on paper
Museum Rietberg, 2014, 261a+b, gift of Catharina Dohrn

Provenance: ca. 1750 – 1800, Iran; [...]; prior to 1979 – 2002, Shahram Pahlavi (b. 1940), until 1979 Iran, then London/Paris; [...]; 2002 – 2013, Mevdi Meighalchi, London; 2013, Galerie Francesca Galloway, London; 2013 – 2014, Catharina Dohrn



**History from the Margins
The Reconstruction of Indo-Persian Albums of Painting and Calligraphy with the Aid of Borders**

This folio from a Persian album (1) has an Indian miniature glued on the recto and one on the verso. Only one side has a border painting; the verso is blank. That is atypical. The border was probably originally conceived for a different use. Similar borders are indeed found in an album auctioned at Drouot on June 23, 1982. Because all the pages in the auction catalogue (2) are illustrated in the correct order, this “portable picture gallery” can be studied as a whole. The folios have the same dimensions as the one exhibited here.

Additional sheets from the album can be identified based on size and decoration. They are now in various collections worldwide. The album presumably originally had fifty or fifty-two folios. The touchscreen shows what the album might originally have looked like.

Work on the album probably began in 1739 and lasted, with interruptions, around twenty years. It was produced in the circle

of the Persian ruler Nadir Shah Afshar (r. 1736 – 47), who in 1739 had captured Delhi and plundered the Mughal treasures. Scholars therefore suspected that the Indian miniatures in this album were “looted art.” This suspicion can be refuted in part: Persian artists were already initiating specific Indian works in this album a century earlier.

2
Arts Islamique: Inde, Perse, Turquie Catalogue of the auction at the Hôtel Drouot (“Nouveau Drouot”) in Paris, June 23, 1982

Museum Rietberg, library

In Paris, auctions are held centrally at the Hôtel Drouot. The objects are auctioned by public, sworn commissaires-priseurs (auctioneers). The entries in the catalogue are written by independent experts. In the case of the so-called Drouot Album (see 1 and the multimedia station), it was Jean Soustiel (1938 – 99), one of the leading experts and dealers of art from the Middle East in Paris. The Galerie Soustiel was founded in Turkey in 1983 by Moïse Soustiel (1836 – 1916) and has been located in Paris since 1926. Marie-Christine David (1946 – 2021) was Jean Soustiel's assistant from 1972.

3
A Mughal Prince at the Window

India, Mughal period, 1655 – 60
Pigments and gold on paper

Border

India, Mughal period, 1630 – 50, mounting probably 19th century, Pigments and gold on paper
Museum Rietberg, RCD 17, permanent loan from Catharina Dohrn

Provenance: [...]; until 1972, Hans Peter Kraus, New York; 1972 – 2002, Shahram Pahlavi (b. 1940), until 1979, Iran, then London/Paris; 2002 – 13, Mevdi Meighalchi, Collection, London; 2013, Galerie Francesca Galloway, London; since 2013, Catharina Dohrn

This Indian sheet tells a very different story. Its border with a series of flowering plants is striking. This motif and the way it is made are typical of borders in Mughal albums from the second quarter of the seventeenth century.

It is notable, however, that the borders are composed from several pieces. Moreover, the portrait of a Mughal prince is from a later period.

It is clearly a pastiche of historical elements. We can only speculate about its origin. It may have been assembled in the later nineteenth or early twentieth century.

4
Lion Hunt

Manuscript folio, perhaps from a biography of Emperor Shahjahan, India, Delhi, ca. 1830, Pigments on paper

Border

India, Delhi (?), ca. 1850 – 1900, Pigments and gold on paper
Museum Rietberg, RV1 1825, anonymous gift

For years scholars have been interested in the history of Indian albums of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. That is, however, not true of the nineteenth century. We still know almost nothing about the album folios from this period.

This folio was originally part of an Indian album, probably from the second half of the nineteenth century. This scene of a lion hunt imitates the style and motifs of the seventeenth century; it is from an unknown manuscript from the period around 1830. The collection of the Museum Rietberg has two more folios from the same album.

Provenance: [...]; Otto Wengler; [...]; 1996, Galerie Koller, Zurich

5
Pair of Lovers Observed by a Wet Nurse

Mu'in Musawwir (ca. 1617 – 97[?]), Iran, Isfahan, December 3, 1678 (19 Shawwal AH 1089), ink on paper

Border

Iran, 17th – 18th century, pigments and gold on paper
Museum Rietberg, 2006, 182, acquired with funds from Catharina Dohrn, Ulrich Albers, Dominik Keller, Alex Vannod
Provenance: [...]; H. Kevorjian (1872 – 1978); Sotheby's, April 3, 1978, lot 43; [...]; 2006, Francesca Galloway, London

This border consists of two halves joined at the center. It was probably originally larger and framed another work. In order to get the miniature to fit, parts of text pages were used above and below and cut to size. They are purely decorative.

In contrast to Persian albums from royal workshops, albums of non-courty provenance have not been studied. That is because over the past 140 years art deal-

M

History from the Margins The Reconstruction of Indo-Persian Albums of Painting and Calligraphy with the Aid of Borders

English

ers took albums apart in order to sell the folios singly; in the process they also destroyed much important information.

6

Calligraphic Practice Sheet (*siyah mashq*)

Various single letters and combinations of letters in nasta'liq, Iran, 6th century; ink and gold on paper

Border

Iran, 16th or 17th century; later mounting, gold on paper
Museum Rietberg, RVA 1014,
acquired with funds from
the City of Zurich

Provenance: [..]; Mirza Samad
Khan Mumtaz al-Saltana (1869 –
1954); [..] until February 1, 1980,
Joseph Soustiel (1904 – 90), Paris

Indian and Persian albums in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries usually follow a specific makeup: the consist of a series of double-page spreads with painting and calligraphy. Albums with only painting are extremely rare in this period. Purely calligraphy albums, on the other hand, are common.

They compiled, first, completely written, short poems of four or six lines, usually by famous calligraphers. However, exercise sheets like this one were also appreciated. It belonged to Samad Khan (1869 – 1954), an Iranian diplomat, who served under the Qajar shahs (1779 – 1925) as well as the Pahlavi shahs (1925 – 79). From 1905 to 1926 he was accredited to Paris as ambassador, where he remained thereafter and where he also died.

English

Severed Heads as Works of Art The Reception of Chinese Buddhist Sculpture

N

1 Head of a Buddha

China, Hebei province, from the cave temples of Northern Xiangtangshan, Northern Qi dynasty, 560–570, limestone. Museum Rietberg, RCH 136, gift of Eduard von der Heydt

Provenance: [..]; ca. 1909–1910s, Paul Mallon, Paris, acquired in Beijing, 1910s, Victor Goloubeu, Paris, from ca. 1920, Eduard von der Heydt Collection

This monumental head is one of the first objects of non-European art acquired by the collector Eduard von der Heydt, the future founding donor of the Museum Rietberg. He purchased it in around 1920 from the collection of the Paris-based Russian Orientalist, Victor Goloubeu. The head was said to have been purchased by the Parisian art dealer Paul Mallon in China in 1909 and brought to Europe. The precise origin of the head was not discussed during the sale. Not until a joint research project of the University of Chicago and Beijing University at the cave temples at Xiangtangshan (Mountain of Echoing Halls) could it be clearly assigned to a figure in the southern cave (see 2).

2 South Wall of the Northern Temple of Xiangtangshan

with a replica of the head from the early twentieth century
China, Hebei Province, photo: courtesy of Xiangtangshan project, University of Chicago, 2004

The cave temples of Northern Xiangtangshan were built in the sixth century and lasted nearly a millennium and a half. With the burgeoning demand from Western art collectors for Buddhist figures, their wholesale destruction began. As early as 1909, the first pieces from the temple

caves appeared on the art market. The prominent art dealer C. T. Loo, who had branches in Paris and New York, was offered eight life-size figures in 1910, but at that time he had difficulties finding buyers for them. Today around one hundred fragments that were broken off the walls of the caves are held in museums worldwide. A research project under the direction of the University of Chicago has documented all of these fragments and the caves themselves using the most modern on-site methods to reconstruct the original state of these religious spaces.

3 Head of a Buddha

Palistan, Gandhara region, 3rd–4th century, stone
Museum Rietberg, CNX 83, permanent loan from Werner Coninx Stiftung

Provenance: [..]; until 1971 Galerie von Schroeder, Zurich, 1971–1973 Werner Coninx Collection, Zurich, from 1973, Werner Coninx Stiftung, Zurich

4 Head of a Buddha

India, Uttar Pradesh, Gupta period, 4th century, red Chunar sandstone
Museum Rietberg, 2007 S3, bequest of Martha and Ursula Wirz

Provenance: [..]; from ca. 1980s–2007, Martha and Ursula Wirz

5 Head of a Buddha

China, Tang dynasty, 8th century, limestone
Museum Rietberg, RCH 165, gift of Eduard von der Heydt

Provenance: [..]; until 1917 Raphael Perucci, Brussels; from 1917 Aaron Veicht, Amsterdam; from ca. 1920, Eduard von der Heydt Collection

In a later essay, the collector Eduard von der Heydt recalled his first encounter with Chinese sculpture in 1920 in the store window of the Dutch art dealer Aaron Veicht. He was especially fascinated by the “great calm, energy and harmony” of a Buddha head. As was the case with many intellectualists of his time, his interest in Asian religions had been awakened by the works of the philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer. The latter’s interpretation of Buddhism as an atheistic, ethical teaching based on rational principles and self-responsibility substantially influenced the reception of this religion in the West.

6 Head of a Buddha

China, Hebei or Henan province, probably from the cave temples of Southern Xiangtangshan, Northern Qi (550–577) or Sui dynasty (589–618), limestone
Museum Rietberg, RCH 137, gift of Eduard von der Heydt

Provenance: [..]; ca. 1920s, Eduard von der Heydt

7 Head of a Buddha

China, Hebei or Henan province, probably from the cave temples of Southern Xiangtangshan, Northern Qi dynasty (550–577), limestone
Museum Rietberg, RCH 138, gift of Eduard von der Heydt

Provenance: [..]; ca. 1920s, Eduard von der Heydt

8 Head of a Bodhisattva or Pratyeka Buddha

China, Hebei or Henan province, from the area around the cave temples of Xiangtangshan, Northern Qi dynasty, ca. 560, limestone
Museum Rietberg, RCH 127, gift of Eduard von der Heydt

Provenance: [..]; Ton-Ying, London; 1924, at the latest, Eduard von der Heydt Collection

The collector Eduard von der Heydt acquired the majority of his Chinese Buddhist stone sculptures in the early 1920s. Among around fifty objects there are approximately a dozen heads and several torsos. As was common in Europe at the time, he was primarily interested in the artistic quality and the impression of the works. The figures were – analogously to the reception of ancient Greek and Roman sculpture – perceived and aestheticized as works of art. Their place of origin and function played a subordinate role.

9 Head of a Bodhisattva

China, Shanxi province, from the cave temples of Tianlongshan, Northern Qi dynasty, ca. 570, Sandstone
Museum Rietberg, RCH 132, gift of Eduard von der Heydt

Provenance: [..]; ca. 1920s, Eduard von der Heydt

10 Northern Wall of Cave 17 in the Grotto Temple of Tianlongshan,

China, Shanxi Province, Photo: courtesy of Tianlongshan project, University of Chicago

From the fifth to the eighth century, wealthy donors had more than twenty caves carved in the cliffs of Tianlong Mountain in the Shanxi Province and had them decorated with hundreds of figures.

N

English

Severed Heads as Works of Art The Reception of Chinese Buddhist Sculpture

When Western collectors began to become interested in Buddhist figures from China in the early twentieth century, the sculptures were broken off the walls of the run-down, disused religious spaces and put on the art market. Photographs from the 1920s show that the heads were often chopped off first and then later the bodies, which were more difficult to remove, chiseled from the wall.

11 Plaster Casts in the Rooms of the Antiquities Collection of the Friedrich-Schiller-Universität Jena

Chair for Classical Archaeology,
photo: Jan-Peter Kasper,
reproduction

Museums, glyptothèques, and archaeological collections in Europe often have a large number of "heads," whether busts—sculptures showing only the head and top of the shoulders of a person—or fragments of destroyed sculptures.

This concentration on the head has a long tradition. Busts originated in the ruler portrait of Ancient Rome and experienced a new boom in the fifteenth century when the elites had themselves portrayed. At the same time, ancient busts and fragments of sculptures began to be studied and collected in the Renaissance.

12 Head of Euripides (Rieti Type)

Roman copy from the 1st century CE after a Greek original from the 4th century BCE; marble
Archaeological Collection of the Universität Zürich, Inv. no. 4821

13 Bust of Euripides (Farnese Type)

Plaster cast (19th century) of a Roman copy (ca. 1st century) of a Greek original (ca. 4th century BCE); Archaeological Collection of the Universität Zürich, Inv. no. 6715

With the Enlightenment in Europe, the individual human being became the focus. Portrait busts of poets and philosophers were exhibited in public buildings as intellectual and moral role models. From the second half of the nineteenth century onward, plaster busts of famous models were mass produced and thus became affordable for every proper bourgeois household.

This plaster cast is a copy of a Roman marble bust that was excavated in Rome in the fifteenth century and ended up in the collection of Cardinal Alessandro Farnese. It can be traced back to a Greek bronze statue in the Theater of Dionysus in Athens.

14 Bust of Oswald Siren

Aaltonen Wäinö Valdemar (1894–1966); Finland, ca. 1961, bronze
Museum Rietberg, REU 802

With the beginning of the modern era, a new style of portrait sculpture gained acceptance. It no longer aimed at outward similarity but rather at expressing the interior. The face was regarded as the mirror of the soul. All ornament was left out, and the head was usually represented without the chest and with only a rudimentary neck. Such works were modeled on ancient busts and fragments of heads. This portrait shows the Finnish-Swedish art historian Oswald Siren (1879–1966), whose works were formative for the early research and reception of Chinese art. His extensive library came to the Museum Rietberg in 1961.

English

The Traces of Collectors as Part of the Work of art Seals and Inscriptions on Chinese Paintings

1 The Song of the Great Land of Wu

Lu Zhi (1496–1576), China, Ming dynasty, dated 1534, hand scroll, Museum Rietberg, RCH 1134, gift of Charles A. Drenowatz

Provenance: Aisin Goro Yongling (1712–1787); Hu Zhen (1817–1867); Yan Gai (1824–n., 1893); Lin Erzhun (1895–1986); He Guanwu (gest. n. 1963); Tan Jing (1911–1991); Chen Rentao (1906–1968); ca. 1950s, Walter Höchstätter; ca. 1950s, Charles A. Drenowatz

The highly educated painter, calligrapher, and poet Lu Zhi was one of the most highly regarded artists of his native city of Suzhou. This view of the beautiful landscape of Shi Hu (Stone Lake) is one of his early masterpieces. In the autumn of 1533, Lu Zhi had composed a long poem and written it down using calligraphy. One year later he produced this painting for it. His friend the scholar-artist Chen Shun (1483–1544) added the calligraphy of the title. The title, painting, and calligraphy were dedicated to a certain "Jingquan" and were mounted together on a scroll. In the early 1950s, the painting and the calligraphy were detached and sold separately. The scroll with the painting was acquired by the Swiss collector Charles A. Drenowatz. It is highly probably that he purchased it through the renowned German art dealer Walter Höchstätter (1914–2007), who was active from 1934 in Beijing and Shanghai and then later mainly in Hong Kong.

2 The Song of the Great Land of Wu

Lu Zhi (1496–1576), China, Ming dynasty, dated 1534, hand scroll, reproduction, Museum Rietberg, RCH 1134, gift of Charles A. Drenowatz

In its original form, the work as a whole consisted of title calligraphy, painting,

postscripts, and poem. When the painting and calligraphy were separated in the early 1950s, one of the postscripts was apparently lost.

In its present form the parts have forty-three seals in all that were applied by artists, collectors, and admirers of the work. It was common that one person would have different seals and use them at the same time.

Six of the seals are from the two artists; the others can be assigned to at least seven different collectors. They provide information about the eventful journey of this work of art from the seventeenth to the twentieth century.

2.1

The calligraphy of the title for this scroll with both painting and calligraphy was written by the famous scholar-artist Chen Shun (1483–1544). He was a close friend of the painter Lu Zhi and like him belonged to the circle of literati in Suzhou. He titled the work *Jingquan* (Contemplative Viewing). At the same time he was alluding to the recipient of the work of art by Lu Zhi to a man named Jingquan. We do not know to whom this nickname refers, but he must have been an important personage in the local cultural community.

2.2

The landscape painted in 1534 is inspired by the scenery at Shi Hu (Stone Lake), near Suzhou. That delightful lake landscape was a popular destination for the urban elite of the period. At the beginning of the scroll, one sees the gate to the famous Zhiping Monastery at the foot of the mountain. This place was the site of the literary and social activities of a group of artists and intellectuals from Suzhou to which Lu Zhi and Chen Shun also belonged.

2.3.1

On another folio mounted on the scroll are two postscripts. The two lines on the right are by the painter, calligrapher, poet, and connoisseur Qian Du (1763–1844). He records that he admired the painting in the early summer of 1816 together with his friend the famous painter Gai Qi (1774–1829). At the time the two of them were residing in the Pavilion of the Old Rain in the residence of their patron, the government official and unconventional artist Chen Hongshou (1768–1822).

2.3.2

The long colophon was written by the Shanghai scholar Jiang Dunfu (1808–67) in 1863 for the work's owner at the time, Yan Gai (1824–after 1893). The art collector, antiquarian, and publisher Yan Gai, who was from the Guangdong Province in southern China, acquired the painting in Shanghai in 1856. The text describes Yan Gai presenting his treasure in a circle of kindred spirits. They included the artists Qian Song (1818–60) and Hu Zhen (1817–62). When Yan Gai returned to Shanghai five years later, the two artists had died under tragic circumstances, so he asked Jiang Dunfu to write an inscription in memory of their mutual acquaintances.

2.4

The Song of the Great Land of Wu in Cursive Script

Lu Zhi (1496–1576), China, Ming dynasty, dated 1533, hand scroll, ink on paper, 31 x 114 cm, reproduction, Xubaizhi Collection, Hong Kong Museum of Art, reproduction

In his long, eloquent poem, Lu Zhi celebrates the glorious past of his native

region. He employs countless learned allusions to its myths, legends, and historical people and events. He could count on his circle of highly educated friends understanding and appreciating his richly metaphorical language.

This exquisite calligraphy in fluid cursive script (*caoshu*) is now in the Hong Kong Museum of Art. Many things suggest that the art dealer Walter Höchstätter purchased the scroll around 1950 from the Shanghai collector Chen Rentao (1906–68) and cut it into two parts for commercial reasons. He put the painted part on the European art market. For the calligraphy, which attracted less attention from Western collectors, he turned to a Chinese collector: It found its way into the Xubaizhi Collection of the Banker Low Chuck-tiew (1911–93), who donated his outstanding collection to the Hong Kong Museum of Art in 1989.

3.1-3.3 Artist's Seal of Lu Zhi (1496–1576)

As a rule, artists had several seals in different forms and sizes. They were engraved with their actual name, their artist's or studio name, or biographical details; poetic phrases, or philosophical mottoes.

Such seals were considered an art form in their own right in China. The seal engravers usually employed the ancient seal script, which was still only used for artworks. They either engraved the characters or cut away the background. When the seal was pressed into the red seal paste and then applied to the work of art, the characters appeared either in white or red.

4.1-4.2 Artist's Seal of Chen Shun (1483–1544)

English

The Traces of Collectors as Part of the Work of art Seals and Inscriptions on Chinese Paintings

5-1-5-3
Collector's Seal of Aisin Gioro Yongjin (1712 – 87)

Yongjing was a member of the ruling family of the Qing Dynasty and was raised at the court of Emperor Yongzheng (r. 1722 – 35) in Beijing. He made a name for himself as an artist and frequently visited the Luliuchang art and antiquities market in Beijing, a popular meeting place for lovers of art and curios. His seal on this scroll indicates that the work was in his collection in Beijing in the eighteenth century.

6-1-6-2
Collector's Seal of Yan Gai (1824 – after 1893)

The art and antiquities collector Yan Gai was also active as an epigraphist and publisher. He was from a wealthy family in Sihui in the southern Chinese province of Guangdong. The traveled regularly to the art metropolises of Shanghai and had lively contacts to the art lovers there. He acquired the present scroll in Shanghai as well.

7
Seal of Hu Zhen (1817 – 62)

Hu Zhen was a famous calligrapher and seal cutter. In the winter of 1858, he was a guest in the home of the collector Yan Gai in Shanghai, along with other art connoisseurs. Together they admired the artistic treasures in Yan Gai's collection. He must have put his seal on the scroll on that occasion.

8-1-8-4
Collector's Seal of the He Family and He Guanwu (ca. 1900 – ca. 1973)

The scroll has four seals from the He family of dealers and collectors from Guangdong. They indicate that the scroll

was sold by Yan Gai in Guangdong and remained in that southern trading center for some time.

9-1-9-6
Collector's Seal of Tan Jing (1911 – 1991)

Tan Jing was one of the extremely rich super collectors in Shanghai in the 1940s. The modern metropolis had evolved into the economic and cultural center of China after the end of the empire in 1911. At the same time, he became the focal point for the production of art for domestic and international markets.

Tan Jing was one of the modern social climbers of his day. His family had become rich through overseas trade. He studied in New York and was successful in finance and real estate. Within a few years he assembled a collection of the highest quality. In doing so he benefited from social upheavals that were forcing many ancient families of government officials to sell their art collections. Seven of his collector's seals on the scroll indicate that it was in his possession in the early 1940s.

10
Collector's Seal of Chen Rentao (1906 – 1968)

During the civil war between the Nationalists and Communists (1945 – 49), numerous prominent collectors and dealers from Shanghai and Guangzhou sought refuge in Hong Kong. Chen Rentao was one of these migrants. He was from a wealthy family of merchants and had begun to collect in the 1930s, primarily jade and bronze objects. After moving to Hong Kong in 1946, he concentrated on painting and calligraphy. He succeeded in acquiring many important works from old collections and brought them to Hong Kong. He may have acquired the scroll from Tan Jing, who went bankrupt after moving to Hong Kong in 1948 as the result of a scandal.

11-1-2
Collector's Seal of Low Chuck-tiew (1911 – 93)

The banker from Singapore moved to Hong Kong in 1949. There he witnessed countless works of art and other cultural assets from the mainland arriving in Hong Kong and being placed on the international art market. His concern about the dispersion of cultural assets was probably an important motivation for his passionate collecting activity. After the scroll was divided, he acquired the calligraphy by Lu Zhi. In 1989, he transferred his collection of more than 600 works to the Hong Kong Museum of Art.

12
View of the Zhiping Monastery on Shi Hu (Stone Lake)

Photo: Kim Karlsson, 2019

13
Map of the Routes of Transmission of the Scroll

Kim Karlsson and Valeria Bonin

P

The Market for Japanese Art in the West The Role of Hayashi Tadamasu

English

1 Mask of Hayashi Tadamasu

Albert Bartholomé (1848 – 1928), France, 1892, bronze, gift of the Société des Amis du Musée d'Orsay, 1990, Musée d'Orsay, Paris

The painter and sculptor Albert Bartholomé probably met Hayashi through the circle around Edgar Degas. Fascinated by the Japanese art dealer's 'exotic' face, he started to work on a mask of the latter from 1892 onward, taking Nô mask as his inspiration. A version in bronze was exhibited in 1894 at the Salon de la Société nationale des beaux-arts. Degas is said to have owned a plaster cast of that mask. It manifests the importance of art dealers in the introduction of new genres of art, their canonization and their promotion to museum's pieces.

2 Books from the Library of Willy Boller

Museum Rietberg, library

Willy Boller was self-taught with regard to Japanese prints. He gained his knowledge by studying woodblock prints that he saw or owned as well as from the specialist literature. His library included the most important reference works of the time and auction catalogues in Western languages. In the first half of the twentieth century, however, research into Japanese woodblock prints was still very limited. Boller enjoyed the reputation of being one of the first in Switzerland to study the subject seriously and to publish extensively. Nevertheless, today many of his publications and attributions are outdated and need careful revision.

3 Portrait Bust of Willy Boller (1883 – 1959)

Alphons Friedrich Mager (1891 – 1967) attributed, Switzerland, ca. mid-20th century, Museum Rietberg, 2020, 318, gift of Peter Boller

The main profession of Wilhelm Ludwig Boller of Zurich was mechanical engineer and he had a managerial position working for Brown, Boveri & Cie AG in Baden. Interested in art since his youth, during his studies from the 1920s onward Boller began to collect Japanese woodblock prints. In 1928, part of his collection was shown for the first time at the Kunsthaus Zurich, and he wrote the exhibition catalogue himself. Further exhibitions followed in 1943, 1945, 1954, and 1957, each time with a catalogue written by him. In 1956, Boller decided to donate his 660 prints and 110 books of woodblock prints to the City of Zurich for the Museum Rietberg.

4 Willy Boller: *Japanische Holzschritte: Harunobu bis Hiroshige*, exhibition at the Kunsthaus Zurich, organized by the Vereinigung für Zeichnende Kunst in Zurich, 1928, catalogue with an introduction by Dr. Julius Kurth (Zurich: Kunsthaus Zurich, 1928)

Museum Rietberg, library

Even though there are numerous woodblock prints now in the Museum Rietberg that were formerly part of the collection of the prominent dealer Hayashi Tadamasu, there seem to have been no direct connections between the Swiss collectors (Franz Waldmeier, Willy Boller, Julius Mueller and Gisela Müller/ Erich Gross) and Hayashi. Only years after the Hayashi collection was auctioned at the Hôtel Drouot auction house in Paris in 1902 – 3 and 1906 did

5 Willy Boller und Wilhelm Wartmann: *Hiroshige, 1797 – 1858*, exhibition catalogue (Zurich: Kunsthaus Zurich, 1943)

Museum Rietberg, library

6 Fishing Boats with Nets under the Ryogoku Bridge on the Sumida River

Kitagawa Utamaro (ca. 1754 – 1806), Japan, Edo period, 1790s, polychrome woodblock print, colors on paper, Museum Rietberg, RP 2706a-c, gift of Willy Boller

Provenance: [..] – 1902 or 1906, Hayashi Tadamasu, l.; [..] ca. 1920 – 66, Willy Boller, Baden

7 Sea Bass, Sea Bream, and Shiso

Utagawa Hiroshige (1797 – 1858), Japan, Edo period, ca. 1840 – 42, woodblock print, colors on paper, Museum Rietberg, Aa 169, permanent loan from the Ortsbürgergemeinde Aarau

Provenance: l.; [..] until 1902 or 1906, Hayashi Tadamasu, l.; [..] until 1987, Franz Waldmeier, 1987 – 99, Ortsbürgergemeinde Aarau

Even though there are numerous woodblock prints now in the Museum Rietberg that were formerly part of the collection of the prominent dealer Hayashi Tadamasu, there seem to have been no direct connections between the Swiss collectors (Franz Waldmeier, Willy Boller, Julius Mueller and Gisela Müller/ Erich Gross) and Hayashi. Only years after the Hayashi collection was auctioned at the Hôtel Drouot auction house in Paris in 1902 – 3 and 1906 did

these sheets make it to Switzerland via detours, usually auction houses or the art trade.

8 *Koshohei*

From the Series *The Joy of Spring* of Various Taoist Hermits, Teisai Hokuba (1771 – 1844), Japan, Edo period, 1799 or 1811, woodblock print (surimono), colors on paper, Museum Rietberg, 201971, gift of Gisela Müller und Erich Gross

Provenance: [..] – 1902 or 1906, Hayashi Tadamasu, [..] – 1980, Herbert Egenolf, Düsseldorf, 1980 – 2019, Gisela Müller und Erich Gross, Zurich

9 Letter from Charles Haviland to Hayashi Tadamasu, July 8, 1891

The National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo

Even before Hayashi opened his own business at rue de la Victoire 65 in Paris, he was known and popular among Japanese, including Charles Haviland (1839 – 1921), who was head of one of the most important porcelain manufacturers in Europe in the late nineteenth century. Hayashi confidently turned to his customer and friend Haviland to ask for advice on how to succeed against his strong competitors in Paris. He suggested, "that you need lots of room, a room for books and paintings, another for metalworks, another for lacquerware, etc. This permits you both to separate your protégés [i.e., customers] and to cause each of them to believe he is your favorite."

English

P

The Market for Japanese Art in the West The Role of Hayashi Tadamasa

10

Letter from Ernst Grosse to Hayashi Tadamasa, May 21, 1898

The National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo

The German scientist, ethnologist, and philosopher Ernst Grosse (1862 – 1927) was a close friend of the dealer Hayashi Tadamasa from 1896 – 97 onward, having met him by chance in Paris. The two maintained a lively correspondence until Hayashi's death in 1906. Hayashi made works of art available to his friend to instruct him, and in return Grosse arranged important sales to German collectors, especially to his matronly friend Marie Meyer and Berlin museums.

11

The Seven-Year-Old Sumo Talent Daidōzan Bungorō

Kitagawa Uemaro (ca. 1754 – 1806), Japan, Edo period, late 18th – early 19th century, woodblock print, colors on paper
Museum Rietberg, RJP 2730, gift of Willy Bolter

Provenance: [...] – 1902 or 1906, Hayashi Tadamasa; [...] ca. 1920 – 56, Willy Bolter, Baden

12

Lion Dance

From the Series *Skits from the Miyoko Festival of the Pleasure Quarters*, Isoda Koryūsa (1735 – 90), Japan, Edo period, 1771 – 86, polychrome woodblock print, colors on paper
Museum Rietberg, RJP 2014, gift of Willy Bolter

Provenance: [...] – 1902 or 1906, Hayashi Tadamasa; [...] ca. 1920 – 56, Willy Bolter, Baden

13

The Courtesan Hinatsuru Watches Two Young Female Servants (Kamuro) Building a Dog of Snow

Japan, Edo period, 1767 – 68 (original, here as a copy from the late 19th – early 20th century, polychrome woodblock print, colors on paper
Museum Rietberg, RJP 1911, gift of Willy Bolter

Provenance: [...] – 1902 or 1906, Hayashi Tadamasa; [...] – 1947 Charles Vignier, Paris; 1947 – 56 Willy Bolter, Baden

Hayashi is said to have imported to Europe hundreds of thousands of prints and books between 1890 and 1900, which found a rapacious market. Each of the sheets had his seal. This indicator of provenance points to the era of Japan fever and of the world's fairs. Sheets with the Hayashi seal were considered prestigious and many collectors believed that it amounted to authentication. The most recent research has shown, however, that the Hayashi seal cannot be considered uncritically as a guarantee of quality, as this copy proves.

English

Photography and Art
A Reveal Relationship

Q

1 Tsesch Mask

Bamileke Master of Bamendjo, Bamiam region, Cameroon, Bamileke, Bamendjo, 19th century, wood
 Museum Rietberg, RA-F 721, gift of Eduard von der Heydt
 Provenance: 19th century until 1912–13; royal treasury of the Batocham Kingdom, 1912–13, German colonial officers, handover near Bamendjo; [...]; 1914 at the latest; J. F. G. Umlauff, Hamburg; [...]; 1920 – ca. 1923, Sally Falk, Mannheim; 1923 – 24, Karl Nieren-dorf, Berlin; from 1924, Eduard von der Heydt Collection

Since its arrival in Europe in the early twentieth century, photographers have used light and shadow, the positioning and manipulation of the object, and the choice of backgrounds and details to make the *Tsesch* Mask look like a masterpiece of Cubist (and hence Western) character. The mask appears as a singular object against a blank background – isolated from relationships of time, place, and scale. The photographic depictions of it shown here offer us no information at all about its original meaning as a mask from the Cameroon Grasslands.

2 Photograph of the
Tsesch Mask for the
African N**** Art
Exhibition Catalogue

Walker Evans, New York, Museum of Modern Art, 1935, reproduction

3 Two Views of the Tsesch
Mask for the Book
Afrikanische Plastik by
Carl Einstein

Berlin, Wasmuth Verlag, 1921, reproduction

4 Contact Prints of
Various Photographs
of the Tsesch Mask,
prior to 1985

Isabelle Wettstein and
Brigitte Kauf, Museum Rietberg,
photo archive

5 Photograph of the
Tsesch Mask, 2003

Rainer Wolfberger

6 "Nord Cameroon –
Masques et Boucliers"

George Goethe, colotype print,
ca. 1831, published by Catala
Frères, Paris
Museum Rietberg, 2020.617, Chris-
traud M. Geary Collection,
acquired with funds from the
Rietberg-Kreis

In the Cameroon Grasslands, from which two of the carved artworks exhibited here come, local photographers such as George Goethe also photographed objects. Those of the royal treasury were especially important. This picture postcard shows Mosé Yéyab amid painted shields, mask wearers, and wood masks. Yéyab – the most important ally of the French colonial administration – was trying to present himself in front of the camera as a legitimate and influential ruler.

7 James Johnson
Sweeney, African N****
Art, Exhibition cata-
logue, New York:
Museum of Modern Art,
1935

Museum Rietberg, library

8 Heddle Pulley

Workshop of the Guro Region, Côte d'Ivoire, ca. 1900, wood
 Museum Rietberg, RA-F 483, gift of Jeanine and Ruedi Wassmer
 Provenance: [...]; 1939/35 – 1977, Louis Carré, Paris; Olga Carré née Burel (1910–2002), Dec. 11, 2002, Artcurial, Paris, Art tribal, lot 61

9 Photograph of the
Heddle Pulley for the
African N**** Art
Exhibition Catalogue

Walker Evans, New York, Museum of Modern Art, 1935

10 Contact Prints of
Various Photographs of
the Heddle Pulley

Isabelle Wettstein and Brigitte Kauf, prior to 1985
 Museum Rietberg, Fotoarchiv,
 Photo: Rainer Wolfberger

11 Figure of a Courtier

Bannum Master at the Court of Fumani, Cameroon, Bannum, 18th/19th century, wood, iron nails
 Museum Rietberg, RA-F 726, gift of Eduard von der Heydt
 Provenance: [...]; until ca. end of the 1920s; Charles Rattou, Paris; [...]; Paul Eluard, Paris; July 2–3, 1931, auction Hôtel Drouot, Collec-tion André Breton et Paul Eluard, Sculptures d'Afriques, d'Amérique, d'Océanie, no. 15, pl. III; July 2–3, 1931–1932, Eduard von der Heydt

12 Photograph for the
Portfolio of the African
N**** Art Exhibition

Walker Evans, New York, USA, 1935, gelatin silver print, reproduction
 Museum Rietberg, FA-F 0-1, acquired with funds from the City of Zurich
 Provenance: [...]; Jun. 5, 1998, Villa Grisebach Auktionen, Berlin, Photographie, no. 62, lot 1149

Photography made it possible to reproduce works of art and copy them thousands of times. The organizers of the *African N**** Art* exhibition at Museum of Modern Art in New York in 1935 made systematic use of this. They hired the photographer Walker Evans to produce a photographic portfolio of the pieces exhibited. It was sent to selected universities, collections, and museums such as the Musée du Trocadéro in Paris and the Victoria and Albert Museum in London. It was a deliberate effort to canonize the works shown.

13 Photograph of the
Courtier for the Cata-
logue of the African
N**** Art Exhibition

Walker Evans, New York, Museum of Modern Art, 1935, reproduction

14 Contact Prints of
Various Photographs
of the Courtier

Isabelle Wettstein and Brigitte Kauf, prior to 1985
 Museum Rietberg, photo archive



Photography and Art A Reveal Relationship

**15**

Photograph of a
Hedde Pulley for the
Book *Centres de
Style de la Sculpture
N**** Africaine* by
Carl Kiersmeier

Vagn Guldbrandsen, Paris,
Morance, 1935

16

Photograph of an
Akan Gold Weight from
Ghana in the Hand of
the Collector Carl Kier-
smeier

Man Ray, *Linien*, October 1934

The Danish collector Carl Kiersmeier invited the fashion photographer Vagn Guldbrandsen and the photographer and artist Man Ray to present his collection of African art in as artistic a way as possible. These photographs quite clearly abolish the boundaries between documentary and art photography: the two examples shown here captivate us with their dramatic shadows and playing with scale.

English

The Art of Diplomacy The Exchange of Gifts in the Kingdom of Bamum

R

1

Throne (Rü Mfo)

Court Workshop, Cameroon, Bamum, 2nd half of 19th – early 20th century, wood, beads, copper sheet, kauri, snails.
Museum Rietberg, 2016, 207, acquired with funds from the Rietberg-Kreis
Provenance: 2nd half of 19th – early 20th century until ca. 1906 – 10, King Ibrahim Njoya, 1906/10 – 2016, Martin Göhring and his heirs; 2016, Loed van Bussel

From the time the Basel Mission arrived in Bamum in 1906, King Njoya (ca. 1885 – 1933) supported it. He made land available and initially sent his wives and children to be educated by the mission. He had an especially close relationship to Martin Göhring (1871 – 1959), who was head of the station from 1906 to 1911. Njoya gave Göhring several gifts, including this throne stool decorated with pearls. Several years ago, the Museum Rietberg was able to acquire the stool and the buffalo mask from the estate of Martin Göhring's family via a Dutch art dealer.

2

Buffalo Mask

Court Workshop, Cameroon, Bamum, end of 19th century, wood, raffia fabric, cotton weave, beads, kauri snails
Museum Rietberg, 2014, 250a, acquired with funds from the Rietberg-Kreis
Provenance: 19th century – ca. 1906, King Ibrahim Njoya, 1906 – 2014, Martin Göhring and his heirs; 2014, Loed van Bussel

Both the throne stool decorated with beads and the buffalo mask are in the classic palace style of the nineteenth century. King Njoya used gifts to missionaries, colonial civil servants, and collections as a diplomatic strategy. He hoped to gain a better position in the colonial power structure

3

King Njoya next to Martin Göhring, head of the Basel Mission in Founban

Cameroon, Bamum, 1907, Archiv der Basler Mission, E-30; 28.032, reproduction

from the outset. At the same time, Njoya controlled the transfer and sale of objects. Many treasures remained in the palace and are still there today.

The relationship between King Njoya and Martin Göhring was very close at first. In numerous photographs the monarch and his mother, Njapundunké, are seen with Göhring's family. The missionary admired the Bamum ruler and was particularly interested in the writing system he had invented. He even named his son (in the rear) after him. Later the relationship to the Basel Mission worsened. King Njoya invented his own religion in 1915 as a mixture of Christianity, Islam, and local principles of faith.

4

Four postcards with photographs of King Njoya on his throne decorated with beads and surrounded by his royal household

Cameroon, Bamum, Museum Rietberg, 2020, 617, acquired with funds from the Rietberg-Kreis
Provenance: [..] – 2020, Christraud M. Geary

In 1905, when a photograph of Njoya sitting on his father's imposing throne was published, the "hunt for the original" was begun by museums and colonial officers. On the occasion of the German emperor's birthday in 1908, Njoya had a second

5

Letter from King Njoya to Emperor William II in the new Bamum script, along with a German translation

Cameroon, Bamum, February 2, 1908, Bundesarchiv Berlin, R 1007/4102, reproduction

King Njoya had several gifts presented to the German Emperor in 1908 in addition to his father's throne. His letter to William II was written in the Bamum script he had developed. Victoria, on the 2nd day of the 2nd month of 1908.

"I, Njoya, Chief of Bamum, have written this letter to you, Emperor of Germany. I revere this stool very much; it is from my father. I revere the emperor very much. I, Njoya, therefore give you this stool, and a tobacco pipe, a Bamum knife, and a cap. I, Njoya, Chief of Bamum."

6

Sword with Scabbard

Cameroon, Bamum, 20th century, metal alloy, beads, textiles, plant fibers
Museum Rietberg, 2015, 75a, b, gift of Sultan Ibrahim Mbombo Njoya on the occasion of the Cameroon exhibition
Provenance: 20th century until 2008, Sultan Ibrahim Mbombo Njoya

In 2008, the exhibition *Komerun: Kunst der Könige* (Cameroon: Art of the Kings) was held at the Museum Rietberg. Its curator,

Lorenz Homberger, worked closely with the Palace Museum. Loans from Bamum were thus included in the show, and the sultan was invited to Zurich. The exhibition was the starting signal for a cooperation project between the two museums. In recognition of his commitment, Lorenz Homberger was awarded an honorary title and valuable objects such as this sword and double gong.

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7

Double Bell with Mallet

Cameroon, Bamum, 20th century, metal, wood, plant fibers
Museum Rietberg, 2015, 79, gift of Sultan Ibrahim Mbombo Njoya
Provenance: until 2008, Sultan Ibrahim Mbombo Njoya

8 Neck Ring with Buffalo Heads

Cameroon, Bamum, prior to 2017, metal alloy
Museum Rietberg, 2017, 666, gift of the Palace Museum in Founban
Provenance: until 2017, Sultan Ibrahim Mbombo Njoya

The ongoing cooperation between the Palace Museum and the Museum Rietberg has existed for ten years. Regular workshops and conferences on conservation and restoration are held locally. Museum staff from Cameroon and Switzerland discuss how the preservation of the valuable collection of the Palace Museum can be approved with measures adapted to the location. The emphasis is on transfer and exchange. At the conclusion of the workshop in 2017, the Swiss delegation was

R

**The Art of Diplomacy
The Exchange of Gifts in the Kingdom
of Bamum**

English

9

Group portrait in front of the Palace in Founbarn after a joint workshop on conservation and restoration

Cameron, Bamum, Founbarn, 2017

10

Die Weisheit der Spinne
(The Wisdom of the Spider)

Melanie Gärtner, Film, 2021 Museum Rietberg, 15 min.

This film documents the long-standing cooperative project between the Palace Museum and the Museum Rietberg, Cameroonian and Swiss experts and students work together to see how the preservation of the collection of the Palace Museum, which is threatened by insects, climate, and dust, can be improved. One challenge is that it is a "living museum": important objects are removed from the museum for festivities and rituals and then returned to the museum context.

English

1

Two Manillas

Nigeria, 19th – early 20th century, brass
 Museum Rietberg, 2006, 140 and 2006.14.1, gift of Ulfrike and Rolf Schenk in memory of Paul and Maria Wyss
 Provenance: [...] prior to 1970, Paul and Maria Wyss; unittl 2006, Ulfrike and Rolf Schenk

Through trade with the Portuguese and later with the Dutch and British, Benin had been part of the triangle of trade between Europe, Africa, and America since the fifteenth century. Important export goods from Benin included pepper, ivory, fabrics, and later rubber and palm oil. The slave trade also played a role. In exchange, in addition to luxury goods and firearms, copper and brass in the form of manillas were imported from Europe to Benin. The introduction of this raw material resulted in a unique flourishing of the production of art in Benin.

2

Sketch of the Burying Place of a King of Benin

Giovanni Battista Belzoni, attributed, 1822–23, paper
 Museum Rietberg, 2020.106, acquired with funds from the Rietberg-Kreis
 Provenance: 1822/23 – [...]; July 13, 1977, Christie's London, lot 176; July 13, 1977, John Hewett, art dealer, London (1919–94); [...]; January 29, 2020, Lemperetz, Bruseel; Art of Africa, the Pacific and the Americas, January 29, 2020, auction no. 1147, lot 103

This drawing shows a royal ancestor shrine in Benin City. It has been attributed to the Italian engineer, inventor, traveler, and archaeologist Giovanni Battista Belzoni, who died near Benin City in 1823. The sketch has great historical value: it is the oldest depiction of an altar ensemble. To commemorate a deceased king, his successor

built a shrine; the inventory of such a shrine included cast commemorative heads and ivory tusks with fine relief carvings.

3

Relief Plaque with Warrior

Workshop of the Court, Nigeria, Kingdom of Benin, Edo, 16th–17th century, brass
 Museum Rietberg, RAF 602, gift of Eduard von der Heydt
 Provenance: 16th–17th century – presumably until 1897, Royal Palace, Benin City; presumably looted in 1897 by British Armed Forces; [...] prior to 1928–40, Han Coray; 1940–52, Eduard von der Heydt

This relief plaque belongs, along with number 4, to the museum's founding collection, that of Eduard von der Heydt. Even though it is not clear which pathways these pieces took to the art market in Europe, it is reasonable to assume that they belonged to the court art looted in 1897. Cast-brass plaques were attached to the columns of the palace complex. They depict the world view then dominant in Benin of a unity of religious, political, and natural order. The warrior with lance and shield depicted here alludes to the military power of the Kingdom of Benin in the sixteenth century.

4

Relief Plaque with Crown Prince Odogbo

Workshop of the Court, Nigeria, Kingdom of Benin, Edo, 16th–17th century, brass
 Museum Rietberg, RAF 603, gift of Eduard von der Heydt
 Provenance: 16th–17th century – presumably until 1897, Royal Palace, Benin City; presumably looted in 1897 by the British Armed Forces; [...] prior to 1925–1931, Paul Euard; 1931, Hôtel Drouot, auction; 1931, Charles Raton; 1931–52, Eduard von der Heydt; 1952–68, Museum Rietberg; 1968, object was stolen; [...] prior to 1993, Frank Paulig, Wiesbaden

In the case of this piece, too, we do not know in whose hands it traveled from Nigeria to Europe. This relief plaque depicts a naked boy; his rich coral and brass jewelry points to his high rank. The figure has been interpreted as Crown Prince Odogbo, the only child of the last warrior-king Oba Erenghua (ca. 1578–1608). After he was born, there was a rumor that the prince was actually a girl. To convince people otherwise, Oba Erenghua instructed his son to walk naked through Benin City.

5

Three British Soldiers in the Palace of Benin with Looted Goods, Benin City, February 1897

Pitt Rivers Museum (acc. no. 1998.208.15.11), reproduction

In 1897, during the colonial era, the capital Benin City was conquered by British troops. The military action, which was declared a "punitive expedition," was part of the colonial conquest and was intended to guarantee access to raw materials and control of trading routes in Nigeria. Sol-

diers looted the royal palace and burned it to the ground. The art treasures found there were seized and brought to London as spoils of war. Thousands of them were sold on the art market to museums and private collectors to cover the expenses of the war.

6

Oba Ovonoramen on Board the Yacht Ivy on His Way into Exile

Jonathan Adagogo Green, Nigeria, Benin City, after February 1897, Picture postcard, reproduction
 Museum Rietberg, 2020.617, acquired with funds from the Rietberg-Kreis
 Provenance: [...] 2005–20, Christraud M. Geary

In the early 1890s, the colonial government increasingly restricted the sovereignty of the king, Oba Ovonoramen. During the military action against Benin City in February 1897, British troops dethroned the oba. He was put on trial and ultimately exiled to the port city of Calabar, where he died in 1914. On the journey aboard the British ship Ivy, the African photographer Jonathan A. Green took this iconic photograph of Oba Ovonoramen with a proud gaze. This image circulated internationally on postcards. This decisive event still plays a role in the collective memory of the Edo.

English

7 Carved Ivory Tusk from an Ancestor Shrine

Workshop of the Court, Nigeria, Kingdom of Benin, Edo, 17th – 18th century, ivory
Museum Rietberg, RAF 607, acquired with funds from Lucy Ruddleph

Provenance: 17th/18th century – 1897, Royal Palace, Benin City; 1897, looted by the British Armed Forces; [...] – ca. 1900, Arnold Ridyand (?); until 1908, William John Davey (?); until 1928, Lydia Davey (?); until 1946, Harold Davey (?); until 1962, Florence E. Davey; 1962, Sotheby's London; from 1962, Kenneth John Hewett; until 1993, Ernst Winizki

This carved ivory tusk offers several clues that it was part of the art looted in 1897. The most recent research suggests that this ivory tusk was transported to Europe by chief engineer Arnold Ridyand and manager William John Davey of the British-African shipping company Elder, Dempster & Co. shortly after the military action. Burn marks on the broken tip of the ivory tusk are another indication, as they presumably result from the fire set by British soldiers in the palace of Benin City.

8 Invoice from Ernst Winizki to the Museum Rietberg, April 14, 1993

Museum Rietberg, archive, S.0002-0005, reproduction

When the museum purchased the ivory tusk from the Zurich art dealer Ernst Winizki in 1993, there was a reference on the invoice to "from the period, 1897". Then, the reference to its violent appropriation was still a sign of quality of the old age and authenticity of the works. Today this provenance is considered problematic. The ivory tusk was looted by the British Armed Forces and hence is one of the objects that play a role in the current debate over the restitution of colonial collections.

9 Studio Portrait of William D. Webster, end of the 1890s

Courtesy, the Trustees of the British Museum, London

William Downing Webster (1868 – 1913) was one of the most important dealers of objects from Benin around the turn of the century. He acquired them at auctions but he also traveled through the United Kingdom to acquire objects from soldiers and officers who had been directly involved in looting Benin City in 1897. Many of these objects can be found in his illustrated catalogues, which list more than 500 objects from Benin. His customers were respected collectors and museums in Basel, Leipzig, Stuttgart, and Vienna, among others.

10 Belt Mask

Workshop of the Court, Nigeria, Kingdom of Benin, Edo, 17th – 18th century, brass, iron
Museum Rietberg, 2011, 9, acquired with funds from Regula Brunner-Vontobel

Provenance: 17/18th century – 1897, Royal Palace, Benin City; 1897, looted by the British Armed Forces; prior to 1900 – 01, William D. Webster (1868 – 1913); 1901 – ca. 1920s, Hans Mayer Collection, Leipzig (1858 – 1929); ca. 1930 – 55, Ernst Heinrich, Stuttgart; 1960s – 2009, daughter of Ernst Heinrich, USA; 2009, Loed and Mila van Bussel, Amsterdam; 2010 – 11, Jacques Germain, Montreal

In the case of this belt mask, there are clear traces of the conquest of Benin City by the British. There is a white number on the back that can be traced to the inventory list of the art dealer William D. Webster. Hundreds of objects from Benin passed through his hands and are now found in museums and private collections in Europe and the United States.

11 Bracelet

Workshop of the Court, Nigeria, Kingdom of Benin, Edo, 18th – 1st half of the 19th century, ivory
Museum Rietberg, RAF 608, acquired with funds from the Rietberg-Kreis

Provenance: 18th/19th century – 1897, Royal Palace, Benin City; 1897, looted by the British Armed Forces; [...] at least 1910/1919, Admiral Harry Rawson/ heirs; prior to 1928 – 79, Hans Coray; 1979 – 85, Hans Coray; 1985 – 2011, Hans W. Kopp

This ivory bracelet has been documented as deriving from the looting of the palace in 1897. A photograph of it was published in Felix von Luschan's extensive *Die Altertümer von Benin* (The Antiquities of Benin) in 1919. Its owner is identified as Admiral Harry Rawson, who was chiefly responsible for the destruction of Benin City. The dispersal of the collections of British colonial civil servants and officers – in addition to state sales of war spoils – brought numerous works from private collections on to the market.

12 Commemorative Head of King Osemwende

Workshop of the Court, Nigeria, Kingdom of Benin, Edo, 1st half of the 19th century, brass
Museum Rietberg, inv. no. RAF 601, gift of Eduard von der Heydt

Provenance: 19th century – presumably until 1897, Royal Palace, Benin City; presumably looted in 1897 by the British Armed Forces; [...] 1928 – 52, Eduard von der Heydt Collection

This commemorative head was one of the first Benin pieces in the Museum Rietberg. Until now, however, it has not been possible to reconstruct from whom Eduard von der Heydt purchased it. Such heads were produced by the guild of casters for the

royal court. This suggests that the piece was looted during the destruction of the palace by the British Armed Forces in 1897. This commemorative head honored Oba Osemwende, who ruled during the first half of the nineteenth century.

13 Fragment of an Elephant Tusk

Workshop of the Court, Nigeria, Kingdom of Benin, Edo, mid-18th century, ivory
Museum Rietberg, RAF 621, transfer from the Kunstgewerbemuseum Zürich

Provenance: 18th century – presumably until 1897, Royal Palace, Benin City; presumably looted in 1897 by the British Armed Forces; [...] prior to 1928 – 29, Hans Coray; 1940 – 52, Kunstgewerbemuseum Zürich

This fragment of an elephant tusk raises several questions: Why was the tusk cut off? What purpose did the holes and the traces of glue inside serve? The issue of provenance has not been completely clarified either: Where did the Swiss collector of African art, Hans Coray, acquire the piece? The slight burn traces could be an indication that the tusk was part of the British war spoils from 1897.

14 Belt Mask

Workshop of the Court, Nigeria, Kingdom of Benin, Edo, 19th century, brass
Museum Rietberg, RAF 604, transfer from the Kunstgewerbemuseum Zürich

Provenance: 19th century – presumably until 1897, Royal Palace, Benin City; presumably looted in 1897 by the British Armed Forces; [...] 1928 – 39, Hans Coray; from 1940, Kunstgewerbemuseum Zürich

English

S

From Colonial Injustice to Collaborative Provenance Research Artworks from the Kingdom of Benin

15

Belt Mask

Workshop of the Court, Nigeria, Kingdom of Benin, Edo, 19th century, brass
Museum Rietberg, RAF 605, transfer from the Kunstgewerbe-museum Zürich
Provenance: 19th century – presumably until 1897, Royal Palace, Benin City; presumably looted in 1897 by the British Armed Forces; [..]; prior to 1928, Paul Guillaume; from ca. 1928, Han Coray; 1940–1982, Kunst-gewerbemuseum Zürich

16

Photo Album of the Distraigned Collection of Han Coray, 1930s

Museum Rietberg, archive, S.0005-0006, reproduction

17

The living room of Han Coray's Villa Haldengut in Erlenbach on Lake Zurich, ca. 1920s

Private archive

These two belt masks are from the former collection of the reformist pedagogue and patron of the arts Han Coray. He had assembled an extensive collection of African art in the 1920s, including around thirty works from the Kingdom of Benin. His collection was distraigned in 1931 when he went bankrupt and sold in 1940. The Volksbank produced a photo album for the sale. The base for the belt masks points to the Parisian art market, where the famous cabinetmaker Kichizo Inagaki was active. Parts of the Han Coray Collection ended up in such Swiss museums as the Historisches und Völkerkundemuseum St. Gallen, the Völkerkundemuseum of the Universität Zürich, and the Museum Rietberg. There are, however, still large gaps in our knowledge about the provenance of many of his pieces.

18

Album with Photographs of Eckart von Sydow's Journey to Benin City

Eckart von Sydow, 1936, Museum Rietberg

The art historian Eckart von Sydow (1885–1942) published groundbreaking works on African art in the 1920s and 1930s and also worked for collectors such as Eduard von der Heydt. Benin occupied a special place in von Sydow's studies: he spoke of his "enchantment by Benin's world of art." In 1936, he traveled to Nigeria himself. In thanks for supporting his trip, he gave Eduard von der Heydt an album with photographs of Oba Akenzua, ancestor shrines, and street scenes in Benin City (see the digital presentation no. 30).

19

Leopard's Head

Workshop of the Court, Nigeria, Kingdom of Benin, Edo, 17th–19th century (?), terracotta
Museum Rietberg, RAF 623, gift of Eduard von der Heydt
Provenance: [..]; prior to 1936, Eckart von Sydow, 1937–52, Eduard von der Heydt

On his two journeys to Nigeria, Eckart von Sydow studied the production of art and later published important articles on Benin's art. In Benin City in 1936, still during the British colonial period, he acquired numerous objects, including this small leopard's head, which he gave to his patron, Eduard von der Heydt, in thanks for his support. Although we do not know from whom Eckart von Sydow purchased this leopard's head, the piece was not part of the war spoils of 1897.

20

Commemorative Head

Workshop of the Court, Nigeria, Kingdom of Benin, Edo, 16th century, terracotta
Museum Rietberg, RAF 624, acquired with funds from the City of Zurich
Provenance: [..]; prior to 1961, Emil Storrer

This terracotta commemorative head was part of an ancestor altar and was sold to the Museum Rietberg in 1961, a year after Nigeria's independence, by the Zurich art dealer Emil Storrer. Both iconography and material analysis confirm the old age of this commemorative head. It cannot be ruled out therefore that this work too belonged to the art looted in 1897.

21

Pendant: King flanked by dignitaries

Workshop of the Court, Nigeria, Kingdom of Benin, Edo, 16th–17th century, ivory
Museum Rietberg, RAF 606, gift of Elisabeth Zink-Nlehus
Provenance: [..]; until 1965, unknown Nigerian art dealer; 1965, Africa exhibition at Globus Zürich, 1965–91, Elisabeth Zink-Nlehus

Not all of the pieces went to the European art trade as a result of the conquest of Benin City. For example, Africans were involved in trading Benin art in the colonial and postcolonial era. This is true of this pendant in the form of a trio with a king in the center and two dignitaries at his side. A Nigerian dealer participated in a sales exhibition at the Globus department store in Zurich in 1965 and sold this small ivory carving to a Swiss collector.

22

Figure of an Oba

Nigeria, Benin City, Edo, 20th century, metal alloy
Museum Rietberg, 2022.3, Follow-up inventory
Provenance: [..]; until ca. 2000, August R. Lindt

23

Commemorative Head of a Queen Mother (iyoba)

Nigeria, Kingdom of Benin, Edo, 20th century?, Metal alloy
Museum Rietberg, 2021.423, gift of Anna-Maria Züllig in the name of Fritz Real by agreement with the community of heirs of Fritz Real
Provenance: [..]; 1966/70–[..], Fritz Real; [..] –2017, Anna-Maria Züllig

By the early twentieth century, guilds such as that of the casters began to produce directly for a Western clientele. As a result, new and old pieces circulated in parallel on the art market. This figure of an oba was a gift to the museum from the ambassador August R. Lindt, who from 1968–69 was a special emissary of the International Committee of the Red Cross during the Biafra War in Nigeria. It is unclear whether Lindt purchased the piece himself. In the case of this commemorative head for a Queen Mother (*iyoba*), the efforts to determine its age and origin are still ongoing. This fine specific of yellow casting was in the collection of Fritz Real, who was the Swiss ambassador to Nigeria from 1966 to 1970. This elaborate form of lost-wax casting is still practiced in Benin City to produce metal sculptures.

S

From Colonial Injustice to Collaborative Provenance Research Artworks from the Kingdom of Benin

English

24-25

Forearm Bracelets

Nigeria, Kingdom of Benin, Edo, early 20th century; metal alloy, Museum Rietberg, 2006, 12.6 and 2006, 12.7; gift of Ulrike and Rolf Schenk, in memory of Paul and Maria Wyss

Provenance: [..]; prior to 1970, Paul and Maria Wyss; until 2006, Ulrike and Rolf Schenk

26

Bangle or Anklet

Nigeria, Kingdom of Benin, Edo, 19th–early 20th century; metal alloy, Museum Rietberg, 2006, 13.2; gift of Ulrike and Rolf Schenk in memory of Paul and Maria Wyss

Provenance: [..]; prior to 1970, Paul and Maria Wyss; until 2006, Ulrike and Rolf Schenk

In 2006, a collection with just under a hundred pieces came to the Museum Rietberg. It was donated in memory of the husband-and-wife dealers and collectors Paul and Maria Wyss. Maria Wyss owned a gallery in Basel. Additional information about her sources is still lacking. The two bracelets are late cast works, so very probably should be dated to the period after 1897; the bracelet or anklet, on the other hand, should very possibly be dated earlier.

27-29

Kunst der N*****, (Art of the N*****), exhibition at the Kunsthalle Bern, 1953

Kunst aus Schwarz-

africa, (Art from Black

Africa), exhibition at
the Kunsthaus Zürich,
1970

Benin, exhibition of
the collection of the
Völkerkundemuseum
Wien in the Museum
Rietberg, 1989

Art from Benin has adorned many an exhibition poster and book covers, like this one for an exhibition at the Kunsthalle Bern in 1953 (27). In the large exhibition at the Kunsthaus Zürich in 1970, several rooms were dedicated to the court art of Benin and important international loans came to Zurich (28). When the Nigerian ambassador spoke at the opening of the 1989 exhibition *Benin* at the Museum Rietberg, he emphasized the Swiss alliance with Nigeria resulting from economic, social, and cultural connections. He also addressed the history of the kingdom, mentioning the centuries of peaceful relations with Portugal, the Dutch, and the French which lasted until the Africa conference in Berlin in 1885 restricted the kingdom's independence, and it ultimately became a British colony (29).

30

Digitized Photoalbum of Eckart von Sydow, 1936

Benin Initiative Schweiz
(Benin Initiative
Switzerland)

Melanie Gärtner, film, 2022,
Museum Rietberg, ca. 18 Min.

31

The Museum Rietberg instigated the foundation of the Swiss Benin Initiative in 2020. This joint project funded by the Federal Office of Culture brings together eight museums with Benin collections. The goal is to determine which objects came from the colonial conquest of Benin City in 1897 and which left the country or were produced only later. The history of the objects is being studied in collaboration with Nigerian scientists. This collaborative provenance research is an important step in the decolonialization of museums. The question of restitution will also be addressed together with Nigeria.

T

Research and Collecting as Transcultural Cooperation The Terracotta Collection by Eberhard Fischer

English

1 Horse (Moto Ghodo)

Manchhaben, India, Gujarat, Baljuna 1968–69, terracotta
Museum Rietberg, 2020.12, gift of Eberhard Fischer
Provenance: 1969–2020, Eberhard Fischer, Wintertthur, acquired with Haku Shah

2 Elephant with Rider

Museum Rietberg, 2020.13, gift of Eberhard Fischer
Provenance: 1969–2020, Eberhard Fischer, Wintertthur, acquired with Haku Shah

This elephant with rider was produced jointly by the potter Goma and his wife, Amba. Whereas Goma made the various parts of the elephant (body, legs, head) on the potter's wheel, Amba was responsible for the delicate work. The practice of a man and a woman being jointly involved in the work process is extraordinary in the Indian context. Terracotta figures such as this elephant were made as votive figures for non-Hindu, marginalized communities (Adivasi). They were used in ritual sacrifices to various Adivasi divinities. Together with other sacrificial gifts, they formed an outdoor shrine that was frequently visited by the faithful.

3 Horse without Head

India, Gujarat, 1968–69, clay, dried
Museum Rietberg, 2020.16, gift of Eberhard Fischer
Provenance: 1969–2020, Eberhard Fischer, Wintertthur, acquired with Haku Shah

4 Horse (Ghodo)

Vayabden G., India, Gujarat, Kos, 1968–69, terracotta
Museum Rietberg, 2020.2.17, gift of Eberhard Fischer
Provenance: 1969–2020, Eberhard Fischer, Wintertthur, acquired with Haku Shah

5 Woman (Astri)

Ratamben G., India, Gujarat, Vyara, 1968–69, terracotta
Museum Rietberg, 2020.20, gift of Eberhard Fischer
Provenance: 1969–2020, Eberhard Fischer, Wintertthur, acquired with Haku Shah

6 Woman (Astri)

Jiviben Dayaram, India, Gujarat, Vyara, 1968–69, terracotta
Museum Rietberg, 2020.84, gift of Eberhard Fischer
Provenance: 1969–2020, Eberhard Fischer, Wintertthur, acquired with Haku Shah

This terracotta figure was made by the female potter Jiviben Dayaram. Such figures were used as votive offerings. They could be, for example, part of a healing ceremony or were offered to a divinity to ask for a better harvest. Along with other terracotta figures, they formed a shrine under the open sky until they decayed naturally.

7 Man with Stick

India, Gujarat, 1968–69, terracotta
Museum Rietberg, 2020.82, gift of Eberhard Fischer
Provenance: 1969–2020, Eberhard Fischer, Wintertthur, acquired with Haku Shah

8 Man (Purus)

Jamnaben R., India, Gujarat, Vyara, 1968–69, terracotta
Museum Rietberg, 2020.96, gift of Eberhard Fischer
Provenance: 1969–2020, Eberhard Fischer, Wintertthur, acquired with Haku Shah

9 Three Labels of Exhibited Terracotta Figures

Museum Rietberg

For this task of researching and collecting, Eberhard Fischer had labels printed according to his own ideas and universally valid criteria. Each object was very neatly labeled. The field marked "Museum" shows that the collection was from the outset intended for an institution. The maker of the work was listed under "Producer." This art can therefore be assigned to a named artist: The indication "Collection: Ritual Art from Gujarat Haku/Fischer 1968/69" is especially interesting because it makes it explicit that a Western scholar and a local one were collecting together.

10 Cow

Ratamben G., India, Gujarat, Vyara, 1968–69, terracotta
Museum Rietberg, 2020.51, gift of Eberhard Fischer
Provenance: 1969–2020, Eberhard Fischer, Wintertthur, acquired with Haku Shah

11 Sacred site of Bharmia Durgar up on the hill

Museum Rietberg, FEF 60-20, permanent loan from Eberhard Fischer

12 Three letters from Haku Shah to Eberhard Fischer with drawings

Private archive of Eberhard Fischer

From the mid-1960s until his death in 2019, Haku Shah maintained a personal and professional connection with Eberhard Fischer. The painter, anthropologist, and Gandhi's follower co-curated with Stella Kramrisch, an art historian specializing in India, an exhibition on Indian art in Philadelphia. Haku Shah and Fischer published jointly on many occasions and used their research material for other exhibitions. Their focus was generally on the rural production of art. It was long neglected by scholars but also by the world of collectors and even museum institutions in favor of the art of the court.


13 Three Drawings of Terracotta Figures by Haku Shah, 1968–69

Private archive of Eberhard Fischer



Research permit for Eberhard Fischer from Triguna Sen, Minister of Education of India, December 13, 1968


Private archive of Eberhard Fischer, reproduction

From 1968 to 1971, Eberhard Fischer did research as an art ethnologist for the University of Heidelberg's Sudasiem-Institut (South Asia Institute) in India. As head of its New Delhi office, he frequently conducted field research in the State of Gujarat but also traveled to other regions of the country. A ten-page report provides information on his various contacts, his research tasks, and the large team involved in numerous research projects.





**Research and Collecting as
Transcultural Cooperation**
The Terracotta Collection by Eberhard Fischer








Head (*Dokka*)
 Vasant M., India, Gujarat, Bihar,
 1968–69, terracotta
 Museum Rietberg, 2020, 159,
 gift of Eberhard Fischer
 Provenance: 1969–2020, Eberhard
 Fischer, Wirtenthur, acquired with
 Haku Shah



**Casting Form
for a Face**
 India, Gujarat, 1968–69, terracotta
 Museum Rietberg, 2020, 260, gift of
 Eberhard Fischer
 Provenance: 1969–2020, Eberhard
 Fischer, Wirtenthur, collected with
 Haku Shah in situ



**Horse's Head
(*Godhamu Metlu*)**
 Dalhben, India, Gujarat, Bihar,
 1968–69, terracotta
 Museum Rietberg, 2020, 172,
 gift of Eberhard Fischer
 Provenance: 1969–2020, Eberhard
 Fischer, Wirtenthur, acquired with
 Haku Shah



**Blanks (limbs and
other of human and
animal figures)**
 India, Gujarat, 1968–69, terracotta
 Museum Rietberg, 2020, 105a-p,
 gift of Eberhard Fischer
 Provenance: 1969–2020, Eberhard
 Fischer, Wirtenthur, acquired with
 Haku Shah



**Research Under the Skin
The Contribution of Restoration and Conservation to
Decoding the History of Objects**

English



1-2

**A Pair of Painted and
Lacquered Door Panels
with Figurative Painting**

Iran, probably Isfahan, 1630–50,
opaque paints and lacquer on
wood
Museum Rietberg, 2010.108,
purchase with funds from the
Rietberg-Kreis
Provenance: [..], 1950s–2010,
Private collection, 5.10.2010,
Christie's London, Art of the
Islamic and Indian Worlds, sale
7871, lot 214

Double Door

Iran, Isfahan, ca. 1650, Wood, paint,
and gold: 193.7 x 83.8 cm, Detroit
Institute of Arts, 26.7
Provenance: [..], 1926, Hagop
Kevorkian (Anderson Galleries,
New York), since 1926; Detroit
Institute of Arts

These two door panels (1) date from the mid-seventeenth century. In consultation with the curator, the restorer-conservator analyzed the panels carefully, cleaned their surfaces, and made minimal additions. The panels were once the central pieces of a double door (2). The comparison gives a sense of what they door panels must once have looked like. In terms of their style, the figurative scenes of panel 1 correspond to those of door 2, which has been preserved in its original state.

3-4

**Detail "a1" of Panel
2010.108.1**

Origin: top left corner.
The numbers from 0 to 1c indicate different layers of the paint:
0 untreated surface of the wood,
1c first paint layer in red,
1b over that, brown
1a and bright green (1a).
This green is older than the darker green that now dominates.

Another area

- 0 untreated wood,
- 1 a layer of transparent lacquer over it;
- 1a the original gliding over the layer of transparent lacquer (1);
- 2 bright-green overpainting on layers (0) and (1a).

Photo: Thomas Zirlewagen

The restorer's technical analysis brought two other, unexpected details to light: The present appearance of the panels conforms only in part to the original painting. The figurative medallions and cartouches were painted directly on the exposed wood. At a later they were overpainted in green. The present green is from a second overpainting, which also covered the figurative scenes.
The panels were restored for the first time in the 1950s. At that point the figurative scenes were uncovered again.

5-6

Additions

The hatching indicates the places overpainted and/or added in an earlier intervention (presumably in the mid-twentieth century). The painting to the right of the dividing line is thus a modern reconstruction.
Photo: Thomas Zirlewagen

The second finding was that the panels must have been badly damaged: the right half of each panel is new; the restorer completed the painting based on the old model, imitating craquelure and surface patina.

Interestingly, these findings are in keeping with details that the Armenian-American art dealer Hagop Kevorkian published about a similar door in a sales brochure in 1926.

That helps decode this object's biography: the panels are from a palace of Isfahan rulers from the mid-seventeenth century. They were overpainted shortly before 1900, then in the mid-twentieth century they were "restored."

7

"Palais de Tchehel-Soutoun à Isfahan"

From Eugène Randin and Pascal Coste, *Voyage en Perse pendant les années 1840 et 1841* (Paris: Gide et Jule Baudry, 1851), plate vol. 5 (*Perse moderne*)

Two double doors are clearly visible on the side walls in the lowest third.

English

Linking data and fragments

The Example of a Mayan relief

V

1

Relief

Mexico, Tabasco, Pomoná, Mayan culture, Late Classic period, ca. 780, Limestone
 Museum Rietberg, RMA 308, acquired with funds from the City of Zurich
 Provenance: ca. 780 – ca. 1961 – 62, Pomoná temple complex; [..]; 1963, Robert Stolper, New York

The origin of this relief panel was unclear for a long time. When the Museum Rietberg acquired the panel from the American art dealer Robert Stolper in 1963, its origin was listed as unknown. *Esteleros* (looters) had sawn off the long sides of the Zurich panel to reduce its size and weight for transportation. That made it more difficult to precisely determine the site of its discovery. For Elsy Leuzinger, the focus of the clarifications when the museum was purchasing was whether the relief was genuine, especially because a high price was being asked (see 6). The sum, which was negotiated from 58,000 down to 50,000 SFR, represented about two-thirds of the acquisition budget at the time.

2

Drawing of the triptych

Christian Prager, 2021

3

Kunst der Mexikaner
 (Art of the Mexicans),
 exhibition at the
 Kunsthaus Zürich,
 January 24 –
 March 15, 1959

Robert L. Stolper's invoice for the relief panel, 74, 1963.
 Museum Rietberg, archive,
 K.0005-0024, reproduction

This exhibition brought more than 800 works of art to the Kunsthaus Zürich. It was the second venue of a large-scale

sales offensive by an art dealer, Earl Stendahl, in the form of an exhibition tour through all of Europe (1958 – 60). The art market was booming in Europe in the postwar era. More than a third of the exhibits came from the dealer himself. Already during preparations for the show, Stendahl contacted Elsy Leuzinger. She acquired nearly a dozen works from the exhibition that are now central objects in the Mesamerican collection. At the same time, it was the beginning of a long-lasting business relationship. Stendahl and Stolper were the most important dealers when it came to building the pre-Hispanic ceramics collection of the Museum Rietberg.

4

Expert opinion from
 G. H. S. Bushnell,
 curator at the museum
 of Cambridge University,
 to Elsy Leuzinger,
 March 9, 1962

Museum Rietberg, archive,
 K.0005-0024

Two things are clear from this confidential letter. First, how difficult it is to verify authenticity given the considerable number of copies of pre-Columbian reliefs and second, that the price being asked by Stolper seemed too high to the expert. Bushnell explained it by reference to the considerable effort Stolper must invest in exporting the object. Bushnell was originally an oil geologist who worked in Ecuador for many years and had specialized in ancient American archaeology. From 1948 to 1970, he was a curator at the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology of the Cambridge University in the United Kingdom.

5

Robert Stolper
 to Elsy Leuzinger,
 April 7, 1963

Museum Rietberg, archive,
 K.0005-0024.

The correspondence between the art dealer and the museum director covers the period from 1958 until Stolper's death in 1971. Stolper made an essential contribution to building the Museum Rietberg's collection of pre-Columbian art. Because Eduard von der Heydt, the founding collector of the museum, was scarcely interested in objects from ancient America at all, the collection was modest when the museum was founded. The museum's collection has just under twenty works with Stolper as provenance. Stolper's business practices are regarded critically today, because he also dealt in fakes, was involved in illegal exports, and often tried to put pressure on museums through loans, expert reports, and gifts.

6

Robert L. Stolper's
 invoice for the relief
 panel, April 7, 1963

Museum Rietberg, Schriftarchiv,
 K.0005-0024, reproduction

7

A view of the museum
 in Pomoná, 2010

Foto: Harry Alberto Moreno Torres

A view of the Museo de Sitio de Pomoná reveals the finds that remain there. They include two relief panels that formed a triptych with the one in the Museum Rietberg.