

At Night – Awake or Dreaming

When darkness engulfs the world around us, life doesn't simply come to a standstill. What happens in these nocturnal hours, which remain brightly lit in many places? Those who stay awake make use of the time – to do routine things or to engage in adventures. And even when asleep, we remain on the move and visit strange worlds in our dreams.

The night has many facets: the time between dusk and dawn can either be restful, mystical, exciting, at times even threatening. Everyone has his or her own experiences and encounters: Some turn night into day, others are lost in deep sleep, yet others encounter nocturnal creatures such as bats or monsters under the bed.

When someone says 'good night', we expect that they are saying goodbye and assume that they are off to bed and the land of dreams. Not so in the case of this exhibition: we invite all – night owls as well as sleepyheads – to roam through the night with us and explore all its fascinating features.

Bright colourful neon signs are visible all around; they are ideal for conveying ads or other messages out into the night. This neon sign was handmade specially for the exhibition. In public spaces, LED signs are increasingly replacing the old gas-filled tubes.

- 1 Neon sign 'Nacht träumen oder wachen' | Neonglasbläserei Bärtschi | Steffisburg, Bern, Switzerland | 2022 | glass, plastic, neon | MKB purchase in 2022

Ambiguous Flittermice

Bats enjoy a mixed reputation. While some people are spooked by their unusual appearance, others are fascinated by their ability to navigate the dark. Bats are viewed either as harbingers of misfortune and illness, or else as a symbol of good fortune and prosperity. With this in mind, the bat takes us out into the night.

Chiropters, which include flying foxes and bats, are primarily active at dusk and at night; during the day they are usually found hanging upside down in their shelters. There are roughly 1,000 species across the world, in Switzerland we have something around 30 species. Bats are the only mammals capable of active flight. Many bats have conspicuously large ears – quite often as long as their bodies. They rely on sound waves for orientation, which are not audible to the human ear.

- 2 Enlarged plaster cast of a bat's head | casting Natural History Museum Basel | Basel, Switzerland | 2023 | plaster, paint | private loan

In Indonesia, bats are associated with positive powers which is why in many places souvenir stores not only sell bat kites but also jewellery bearing lucky bat motifs. In Bali, bat-like objects are often red as, in Balinese Hinduism, this colour stands for Brahma, the god of creation. Despite this veneration, bats are hunted and, meanwhile, the Malayan flying fox (*Pteropus vampyrus*) ranks among the endangered species in Indonesia.

- 3 Bat kite | Bali, Indonesia | late 20th c. | paper, wood, string, paint | collection Robert and Cécile Hiltbrand-Grimmeisen, gifted in 2014 | RH 16224

In comics and movies, Batman is the alter ego of the billionaire Bruce Wayne. The superhero personally takes revenge on those who killed his family, an event he witnessed as a child. At

night he dons his bat suit and sets out to fight crime in Gotham City. His bat-like appearance with mask and cape is supposed to instil fear in his enemies.

- 4 3D print batman mask “The Dark Knight Rises Cowl” | 2022 | Basel, Switzerland | PLA, paint | model CC BY 4.0 Peter Snyder (Killonius) | MKB 2023 | VI 72376

Bats in the shape of anthropomorphic creatures are a prominent motif in Moche ceramics. Most representations feature a standing bat holding a sacrificial knife and a skull trophy or, as in this case, ceramic bowls. Among the Moche, these bowls were particularly prestigious and were used in connection with burial rituals. Archaeologists believe that the association with death and sacrifice has to do with the locally prevalent vampire bats, which feed on the blood of mammals.

- 5 Stirrup spout vessel | Moche | Peru | 1st–7th c. | clay, paint | collection Strickler, gifted in 1981 | IVc 22723

Figurate representations in pre-Hispanic metalwork are known from Colombia to Costa Rica. The significance of bat deities stands in connection with sacrificial ceremonies and death. However, in this case the composition of the copper alloy suggests that we could be dealing with a replica.

- 6 Bat deity | Costa Rica | no date | copper alloy, cire perdue casting, gilded | Leopoldo Gomez, purchased in 1970 | IVb 4168

Representations of jaguar and bat deities feature frequently in Zapotec iconography, but they are easy to confuse. Both nocturnal deities are shown with bared teeth and often with a protruding tongue, large ears, and a human body.

- 7 Burial urn | Zapotec | Oaxaca, Mexico | 3rd–7th c. (replica around 1900) | clay | collection René M. Falquier, purchased in 1972 | IVb 4482

The wooden animal masks of the Bwa people represent different creatures of the wild. Although bats are quite common in the area, they are rarely featured in masks – unlike hawks and butterflies. The masks are owned by extended families and assume ritual functions in initiations, renewal ceremonies, and funerals. They enable people to contact and communicate with spiritual beings.

- 8 Bat mask | Bwa | Burkina Faso | before 1973 | wood | L. Doumbia, purchased in 1973 | III 19733

In north-western Cameroon, throne stools decorated with animal representations are a prerogative of the elite and represent symbols of status and prestige. The different motifs make reference to the rank of the owner.

- 9 Stool | Patrick Nshom | Big Babanki, Cameroon | before 1962 | wood | Hans Knöpfli, gifted in 1988 | III 25084

The syllables of the words for luck and bat – *fú* – sound exactly the same in Chinese. Because of this phonetic likeness, the bat became a symbol of good fortune and prosperity in China. The connection between the two meanings carried over into Japan. The bat features on clothing as well as on everyday items. In more recent years, a shift in meaning has become noticeable, in the sense that in Japan, as in Europe, the nocturnal aerial artists are now considered somewhat scary.

- 10 Cloth *tenugui* / bat before the moon | Japan | undated | cotton, pigments | collection Basil Hall Chamberlain | Charles Bolard-Talbère, purchased in 1944 | IId 2656
11 Cotton kimono *yukata* | Japan | undated | cotton | Alice Keller, gifted in 1962 | IId 5589

On this bed decor, the bats, auspicious creatures in China, are believed to protect the sleepers from harm and bring them good fortune from the heavens.

- 12 Bed decor | China | undated | cotton, silk, metal | collection Basel Mission, on loan since 1981, gifted in 2015 | IId 7768

During his stay in East Timor in 1935, the anthropologist Alfred Bühler collected 691 items for the Museum der Kulturen. With his Leica camera, he also documented the objects' ethnographic background, bringing home something around 300 photographs. In the series on fruit bats, we may assume that he was out to capture the spectacle of the bats in flight because, on the island of Timor it is regarded as a bad omen if a warrior comes into contact with one of these fluttering creatures.

- 13 Three photographs of fruit bats | take by Alfred Bühler | Baguia, East Timor | 1935 | digital repro photograph from an Eastman Kodak nitrate negative, 35mm, retouched | expedition of Alfred Bühler and Willy Louis Meyer 1935 | (F)IIc 19791, (F)IIc 19797+98

In Nigeria, straw-coloured fruit bats (*Eidolon helvum*) are frequently encountered in rural as well as urban environments. At dusk they leave the trees where they rest during the day in large numbers and go in search of ripe fruit on which they feed. In turn, they themselves are hunted and eaten by humans.

- 14 Photograph of fruit bats in flight | take by Bernhard Gardi | Jos, Nigeria | 24.04.1974 | digital repro photograph from a black-and-white negative, 6x6 cm | expedition of Renée Boser-Sarivaxévanis and Bernhard Gardi 1973-75 | (F)III 8255

This object was described as a wind charm by the collector. Its purpose and meaning remain unknown to this day.

- 15 Wind charm with bats | Awar, Hansa Bay, Papua New Guinea | before 1930 | wood | Felix Speiser, purchased in 1930 | Vb 9304

When night falls, the flying foxes get moving. They leave their resting place and fly off into the dark. Australia is home to ninety different species of bats and flying foxes. According to traditional belief, they too were originally made by a creative force. The representations are reminiscent of a time when humans, animals, and plants once formed a unity, thus pointing to a mythical kinship.

- 16 Bark painting | artist Bininyiwui | Milingimbi, Australia | 1960 | bark, pigments | Karel Kupka, purchased in 1962 | Va 1159

Experience and Encounter

Turning night into day – The night is not only for sleeping ... While in our society, things like work, school, or shopping are typical daytime activities, the evening and night hours are the times of pleasure. In our urban context, we have a term for this: nightlife! The attractiveness of a city's nightlife has, meanwhile, also become a kind of life quality indicator and a tourist selling point.

Eery Fascination – In many places, nights are regarded as the time of the supernatural. Some people feel the presence of the gods, others are afraid of scary demons and spirits, yet others believe to recognize mysterious figures in shadows. In the eyes of many, it is precisely the encounter with the mysterious that makes the night so attractive: it is the time when existing orders can be turned upside down, new relationships are forged, or alternative personas taken on.

Atmospheric Backdrop – Playing with light in the dark can be an inspiring experience: In many places we find nocturnal traditions that build on light and fire, and the night often serves as an atmospheric backdrop to many celebrations and festivals.

Fancied Fright

The main character in this comic from over 100 years ago experiences a night of fright (of sorts). For his homeward journey, he borrows a lantern – only to encounter several frightening beasts en route. It turns out he has picked up a *laterna magica* that projects the animals' images onto the trees! 'Abbé' Joye himself probably copied this series of journal images onto glass slides that he then showed to his Basel audience around the turn of last century.

17 'Schreckensnacht' [A Night of Fright] glass slide images | illustration by Johannes Bahr, Zeitschrift Illustrierte Welt | Basel, Switzerland | ca 1880, reproduced in 2023 | glass, paint | formerly owned by Joseph Alexis 'Abbé' Joye | Borromäum Basel, on permanent loan since 1979 | VI 50479-89

Menacing Mythical Beasts

As the year draws to a close, some Swiss districts hold rituals in which mythical horned and snouted beasts appear. In the Bernese Haslital, for instance, the *Schnabelgeiss* drives out evil spirits overnight in the last week of the year. The appearance of similar figures in the canton of Zurich, in contrast, was moralizing in nature: at the end of the 18th century, its eerie-looking mask served to admonish youngsters in cotton-spinning families to work that bit harder, particularly during the "all-nighter" around mid December when an effort was made to get through the work that would not be done over the Christmas break.

18 *Schnabelgeiss* | Ottenbach, Zurich, Switzerland | ca 1920 | wood, paint, horn, leather, vegetable fibres, metal | Völkerkundemuseum der Universität Zürich, on permanent loan since 1970 | SVZ 9299

19 Donkey's head glove puppet | Schindellegi, Schwyz, Switzerland | before 1953 | wood, paint, fabric | Georg Staffelbach, purchased in 1953 | VI 20550

20 *Schnabelgeiss* | Haslital, Bern, Switzerland | before 1941 | wood, metal, vegetable fibres, cloth, ceramic | Melchior Sooder, purchased in 1941 | VI 16043

Evil Witches

The eternal struggle between opposing forces such as Good and Evil, and Light and Dark has formed the Balinese cosmology. Its most tangible embodiment of Evil is the mythical figure of Rangda, the chief witch. Like all *leyak* (malignant spirits), she is active during the night when she seeks out pregnant women to drink their blood or devour the internal organs of

their unborn child. *leyak* used to be humans who by means of black magic chose to be transformed into witches.

- 21 *wayang kulit* shadow play figure of Rangda | I Gusti Gedé Raka | Bali, Indonesia | before 1973 | leather, wood, paint | Urs Ramseyer, purchased in 1974 | IIC 17356
- 22 Figure of Rangda | Bali, Indonesia | around 1900 | palm leaf, rice straw, bast fibre, volcanic stone | Werner Gamper, gifted in 2017 | IIC 22617

Flickering Shadows

In Indonesian *wayang kulit* shadow plays, the use of oil lamps helped to turn a night-time performance into an almost mystical experience: the flickering light lent the battles scenes between deities and sinister demons an even more frightening touch. Today, the oil lamps have mostly been replaced by electric light. But some old-school puppeteers occasionally still prefer the traditional oil lamp fueled by coconut oil.

- 23 Three oil lamps *blencong* | Java, Indonesia | 1816 / around 1900 / 20th c. | wood, copper, bronze, | Werner Gamper, gifted in 2017 | IIC 23935-37

Tricky Transitions

Balinese slit gongs called *kukul* hang either in the temple precincts or in the village square. In the past, they were sounded three times a day to alert villagers to the cosmically tricky transitions between daybreak and nightfall, and at midday when the sun was at its height. These instruments were also played at night-time temple festivals and processions to indicate the presence of the gods. Nowadays they are mainly used for more mundane purposes: a night watchman sounding a signal or calling people out to guard the fields, to sound an alarm in the case of accidents, or to call people to their day's work.

- 24-25 Two *kukul* slit gongs | Bali, Indonesia | presumably 19th c. / before 1950 | wood, paint, vegetable fibres | Günter Gempp, purchased in 2001 | IIC 21687+88

A Word in Your Ear, Ghost

The fearless lady courtier Iga no Tsubone is depicted here in conversation with the ghost of Sasaki no Kiyotaka. The emperor had accused him of treason and commanded him to take his own life. His demonic ghost then began to appear nightly in the imperial palace to spread fear and terror among the courtiers. Brave Iga no Tsubone was the only one among them who dared to have a word with him, and persuaded him to put an end to his nocturnal activities. Since then she has been regarded as one of the great heroines of the Heian period (794–1185).

- 26 *tenugui* cloth showing the conversation between the lady courtier Iga no Tsubone and the ghost of Sasaki no Kiyotaka | Japan | before 1944 | dyed cotton | collection Basil Hall Chamberlain | Charles Bolard-Talbère, purchased in 1944 | IId 1831

Nocturnal Transformation

After dark, a supernatural cat transforms into a beautiful woman. Only the light of the moon betrays her true nature by revealing her shadow to be that of the feline predator. The painter Utagawa Fusatane became famous for his landscapes, stage scenery, and illustrations of literary texts.

- 27 Woman/cat and spirits | Utagawa Fusatane | Kanto, Japan | 1867 | paper, colour woodblock print | Alice Keller, gifted in 1979 | IId 7433

Demons

A group of young people wearing masks and costumes races through the streets of Basel at night. They dash past pedestrians and revellers as if possessed, filling the familiar city-space with their irritating presence. The recording was part of Theater Basel's live film production '*Dämonen*' (Demons).

28 Excerpt from the production 'Dämonen' by Theater Basel (premiere 26.05.2022) | concept and production Boris Nikitin and Sebastian Nübling, live camera: Robin Elias Nidecker und Jelīn Nichele | 28:32 min. | © Theater Basel

Basel Nightlife

A night out, dancing, partying – for many, nightlife offers an opportunity to experience things that go far beyond everyday life and social conventions. Photographs of and love letters to Basel's nightlife reveal the full range of such experiences: ecstatic moments with friends, being in sync with the music and one's own body – but also conflicts, dramas, and controversies. All-nighters often stick in one's memory, although rather hazy at times.

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Vendors in Palermo offered fresh lemon juice or anise extract mixed with fizzy water at mobile counters in the city's streets. Similar to food trucks today, they were able to position themselves at the best spots in town and thus cater to special events as well as spontaneous gatherings, providing the city's flaneurs and night owls with the chance of refreshment well into the night.

34 Counter | Palermo, Sicily, Italy | around 1900 | wood, paint, glass, copper-nickel-zinc alloy, brass, iron, resin, glue | Leopold Rüttimeyer, gifted in 1906 | VI 1009.01-10

Bright Lanterns

During carnival, the city of Basel lives in a world turned upside-down. Well before dawn, while many are still asleep, thousands flock to the centre of town where the street lights are turned off at 4 o'clock sharp for the *Morgestraich*. Now the old part of town is illuminated by nothing else but countless large lanterns, accompanied by head and stick lanterns.

35 One stick lantern und two head lanterns of the Basler Mittwoch-Gesellschaft 1907 | artists Domo Löw / Fredy Prack | Basel, Switzerland | 2007 / 2017 | private loans

36 Two stick lanterns und two head lanterns of the Fasnachtsgesellschaft Gundeli | artists Matthias Weber / members of the clique | 1967 / ca 2005 / 2020 | textile, pigments, metal, wood | private loans

This shining figure of a nightwatchman was part of the procession at the Velvet Carnival in Prague in 2021. The figure watches over the city but, at the same time, holds a mirror up to it. As a tribute to the Basel Carnival – on which the Prague Velvet Carnival was modelled – photos from Basel and Prague adorn the figure's coat.

37 Lantern 'The Nightwatch' | created by Josef Koblíček | 2021 | paper, rattan, textile, plastic, wood, metal, LED | Prague, Czech Republic | Josef Koblíček, purchased in 2023 | VI 72382.01-05

Night Watch

From the Middle Ages on, nightwatchmen were responsible for upholding peace and security in the towns and cities during the night. To show that they were doing their job, they called out the time every full hour. The establishment of an official police force spelled the end for the nightwatchmen. Today one occasionally still encounters them on historical guided tours through the city, equipped with lantern, bugle, and halberd.

38 Nightwatchman's lantern | ca 1900 | Tecknau, Basel-Landschaft, Switzerland | wood, glass, metal | Ms. Karrer, purchased in 1926 | VI 10317

39 Nightwatchman's signalling instrument | Qingdao, Shandong province, China | undated | wood, vegetable fibre | Samuel Preiswerk-Sarasin, gifted in 1909 | IId 785

40 Reverse glass painting 'Nightwatchman' | Upper Austria, Austria | ca 1900 | glass, paint, wood, metal | Vincenz Biro, gifted in 2001 | VI 69646

41 Smoking nightwatchman figure | VEB VERO Olbernhau | Olbernhau, Saxony, Germany | ca 1980 | wood, paint, metal, fibre | S. & W. Roth Kunstgewerbe, gifted in 1997 | VI 68843

42 Smoking nightwatchman figure | Christian Ulbricht | Lauingen, Bavaria, Germany | ca 1980 | wood, paint, metal | S. & W. Roth Kunstgewerbe, purchased in 1997 | VI 68866

43 Smoking nightwatchman figure | Dregeno | Seiffen, Saxony, Germany | ca 1980 | wood, synthetic leather, metal, paint, lacquer | S. & W. Roth Kunstgewerbe, purchased in 1997 | VI 68943

In order not to give away their location by blowing on their bugle, nightwatchmen, instead, began using special control clocks in the course of the 19th century. This punch clock with a mechanical movement was used by nightwatchmen at the Museum der Kulturen until the mid-1990s. On their given routes through the museum's premises, they had to operate a permanently installed key at certain checkpoints which then punched a hole in a paper disc. Today, there are digital reporting systems for this purpose.

44 Punch clock with leather case used on nightly rounds with paper template and badge 'Securitas' | Basel, Switzerland | ca 1960 | metal, leather, paper | Theo Gantner, gifted in 1993 | VI 66455.05-07

Please Don't Come In

For a very long time, people in Europe believed that the night harboured dangerous forces that posed a serious threat to the human body. Consequently, many of them relied on protective devices such as nightcaps and heavy curtains to keep the forces at bay. All doors and windows had to be locked. This lock secured the door at Augustinergasse 19 in Basel in the hope of keeping out the night, along with any uninvited intruders.

45 Door lock from Augustinergasse 19 | Basel, Switzerland | 17th c. | iron | Mr Haller, gifted in 1921 | VI 9591.01-03

Lamplighter

In 1829, the city of Basel first introduced public lighting in its streets, using oil lamps. Twenty-three years later, they were replaced by gaslights, which the lamplighters turned on each evening and off again the next morning. Most of these lamplighters worked as cobblers during the day or in some similar profession usually performed in a sitting position.

46 Slide for a magic lantern showing a lamplighter | Basel, Switzerland | ca 1900, replica 2023 | glass, wood, paint | previous owner Joseph Alexis 'Abbé' Joye | Borromäum Basel, on permanent loan since 1979 | VI 50458

Festivals That Light Up Winter

During the winter months in central Europe, the sun rises late and sets early, meaning the nights are much longer than in summer. During this gloomy period, many people long for light and warmth. In many traditions during the Christmas and carnival seasons, light plays a prominent part.

In different communities in Switzerland, masked figures called '*Kläuse*' (derived from Nikolaus) make their appearance in the weeks before Christmas. In some places, the maskers carry illuminated headgears in the form of mitres through the streets, accompanied by the sound of cowbells or cracking whips. The cut-out patterns underlaid with coloured tissue paper on the so-called *iffele* (headgear) are lit from within and occasionally resemble church windows.

- 47 Two *Klaus* masks *Inful* | Kaltbrunn, St. Gallen, Switzerland | ca 1900 | leather, paper | Schweizerische Gesellschaft für Volkskunde, on permanent loan since 1939 | VI 11390, VI 11489
- 48 Headgear *Iffele* for a *Klaus* figure | Küssnacht, Schwyz, Switzerland | ca 1900 | cardboard, paint, paper, Holz, vegetable fibre, metal, plastic | Schweizerische Gesellschaft für Volkskunde, on permanent loan since 1939 | VI 15596

In Bad Eisenkappel in Austria, an event called *Kirchleintragen* is staged on the night before Candlemas (1 February). Illuminated lanterns in the shape of churches are floated down the river in remembrance of the catastrophic flood that destroyed the entire village – with the exception of the village church Maria Dom.

- 49 Lantern 'Little Church of Light' | produced by pupils of the primary school Eisenkappel | Eisenkappel, Carinthia, Austria | 1963 | wood, paper | Oskar Moser, purchased in 1963 | VI 30057

People in the Slovenian region of Gorenjska celebrate the spring equinox. From this time on, the days get longer as do the hours of sunshine, allowing the people to do more work again. Illuminated lanterns in the shape of buildings are floated down the river, symbolically carrying away the man-made light required during winter.

- 50 Floating lantern in the shape of a house | Kamna Gorica, Gorenjska, Slovenia | before 1964 | cardboard, wood, paper | Robert Wildhaber, purchased in 1964 | VI 31124
- 51 Two floating lanterns in the shape of a house and a church | Trzic, Gorenjska, Slovenia | before 1964 | cardboard, wood, paper | Robert Wildhaber, purchased in 1964 | VI 31126, VI 31128

'From afar, such a torchlight procession with its thousands of flickering lights in the fog of the dark February night looked quite mystical.' This is how Walter Strub described the effect of a torchlight procession he had witnessed in Riehen in 1932. In Switzerland, on so-called 'Let-the-sparks-fly-Sunday', huge bonfires are lit on mountaintops; during the ascent the climbers carry and wave burning torches.

- 52 Torch *flaggala* | Matthias Gabathuler | Oberschan, St. Gallen, Switzerland | around 1967 | wood, iron | Emanuel Grossmann, purchased in 1967 | VI 35923b
- 53 Fatwood torch | Emil Herzog | Riehen, canton of Basel-Stadt, Switzerland | 1923 | pinewood | Walter Strub, gifted in 1923 | VI 9850
- 54 Carnival torch *faggele* | Biel-Benken, Basel-Landschaft, Switzerland | 1951 | wood, metal | Fritz Bader, purchased in 1951 | VI 19385

Momentous Nights

The display of fireworks often marks the climax or official conclusion of New Year's Eve celebrations, national holidays or festivities in honour of saints. It is a way for participants to show their passion and devotion. In Peru and Mexico, the production of fireworks is a

significant branch of traditional arts and crafts. There are basically two types of fireworks: small, portable structures made of bamboo that are set alight and go off with loud bangs and hisses during dances or processions. The *castillo* installations, high as a building, are designed, erected, and ignited by the makers themselves. A certain risk of injury is ever present.

- 55 Two plans for *castillo* firework installations | Juan S. Hernández | Ocotlán de Morelos, Oaxaca, Mexico | 1960 | pencil, ink, watercolour, paper, plastic | collection Valentin Jaquet | ME 94-95
- 56 Firework frame | Manuel Pillco | Cuzco, Peru | before 1961 | bamboo, paper | collection Valentin Jaquet | PE 127B
- 57 Firework frame *toro* | Santa Ana Hueytlan, Hidalgo, Mexico | undated | papier mâché, bamboo, vegetable fibres | collection Valentin Jaquet | ME 9998

Sleeping and Dreaming

Bedtime – For a great majority, night is the preferred time for sleep. Often, work, childcare, and personal preferences determine the time when we go to bed. In Europe, a single, uninterrupted phase of sleep of roughly eight hours is said to be ideal, supplemented, if necessary, by a quick power nap or rest after lunch. But this is not the case across the board. In some cultures, people sleep several times a day, but only for a short few hours.

A Bodily Need – While asleep, vital processes are going on in our body: the brain processes information gathered during waking time, the body secretes different hormones, while our metabolism works at full speed. If we sleep badly or too little over a longer period of time, it can damage our health.

Sleeping Aids – Humans tend to furnish their sleeping quarters in different ways. They either sit or lie on mats, mattresses, or beds; some cover their bodies with sheets and blankets, wrap themselves in a sleeping bag, or use a headrest. The items differ, depending on whether the sleeping quarters is a permanent place or whether the things have to be tucked away during the day.

Dense Fabric

In Fulfulde, the term *arkilla* means as much as ‘mosquito net’ and refers to various woollen and cotton blankets. In the area of the Niger River in Mali, backwaters form in the cool season (November to January) which then become the breeding ground for mosquitoes. The blankets not only provide welcome warmth, but also protection against mosquitoes. This handwoven blanket makes up part of the precious dowry a woman in Mali receives at her wedding. When suspended around the bed as a mosquito screen, the geometric patterns come into their own. The blanket’s centrepiece is made up of a wide block in red. The central motif, a rectangle encircled by eight lozenges, represents the moon and the stars.

- 58 Blanket *arkilla kerka* | Mopti, Mali | around 1985 | wool, cotton | Kolado Cissé, purchased in 1985 | III 23626

Unwelcome Visitors

Mosquitoes go in search of their victims at dusk, often at night, too, and tend to keep people from sleep. As a protection against itchy bites and illness, people resort to a range of means: while mosquito traps kill the irksome creatures, mosquito nets, strong-smelling sprays, smoke or incense, and fly whisks help to keep the insects at bay.

- 59 Mosquito spray ‘Antibrumm’ | Switzerland | 2022 | plastic, fluid on alcohol basis | private ownership

- 60 Box with incense | China | undated | cardboard, paper, wire | collection Basler Mission, on permanent loan since 1981, gifted in 2015 | IId 9521.01-04
- 61 Container and top of a mosquito lamp | China | 20th c. | metal | Missionary Karl Schoch, collection before 1910, collection Basler Mission, on permanent loan since 1981, gifted in 2015 | IId 9941.01+02

The scroll painting illustrates a popular episode from the 13th-century Confucian work *The Twenty-four Paragons of Filial Piety* by Guo Jujing. It tells the story of the exemplary behaviour of eight-year-old Wu Meng. Since his parents were too poor to buy a mosquito net, the young boy let himself be bitten by myriads of mosquitoes during the summer nights, in the hope that the insects would then leave his parents alone.

- 62 Scroll painting | China | 19th. c. | paper, textile | collection Basler Mission, on permanent loan since 1981, gifted in 2015 | IId 9186.03

The mosquito net is fastened to the bed with the aid of ring-shaped hooks decorated with tassels. The device also allows the user to open and close the net when going to bed.

- 63 Mosquito net holder | China | before 1981 | metal, cotton | collection Basler Mission, on permanent loan since 1981, gifted in 2015 | IId 10198.01+02
- 64 Mosquito fan | Timbunke, Middle Sepik, Papua New Guinea | before 1959 | vegetable fibre | Alfred Bühler, purchased in 1963 | Vb 18853
- 65 Mosquito whisk | Magendo, Lower Sepik, Papua New Guinea | before 1930 | cassowary feather, rattan, string, cloth | Felix Speiser, purchased in 1930 | Vb 8518
- 66 Mosquito whisk | Ayoreo | El Faro Moro, Chaco, Paraguay | 1970 | Caraguata fibre, wood | collection Verena and Walter Regehr-Gerber, purchased in 1972 | IVc 16899

Gently Swaying to Sleep

In many places people sleep in hammocks. They are space-saving and can be hung where they are needed – around a fire, for example, or even over one another. The knotted, woven, or plaited fabric is designed to fit the body.

Suitable raw material for hammocks includes cotton and various vegetable fibres (e.g., palm leaf, agave, or pineapple). In the Amazon lowlands, production is largely in the hands of women. Preparing the palm fibre and the yarn is particularly time consuming, taking about fifty hours for an average-size hammock. The actual production takes an additional twenty-four hours. In addition, the men have to pound the palm pith, and the fibres have to be washed, dried, and dyed to create the hammock's patterning; this is done by women.

- 67 Hammock | Huni-Kuin | Rio Curanja, Peru | ca 1980 | cotton | collection Barbara Keifenheim, purchased in 1983 | IVc 23052
- 68 Hammock | Kuikuro | Upper Xingú, Mato Grosso, Brazil | ca 1980 | Buriti fibre, cotton | Mireille and Werner A. Sutter, gifted in 2010 | IVc 26103.01
- 69 Hammock *chinchorro* | Guajiro | La Guajira, Colombia | ca 1955 | cotton | Otto Renz, gifted in 1985 | IVc 23461
- 70 Hammock | Makuta | Yacu, Rio Loreto, Colombian-Brazilian borderland | 1965 | *Astrocaryum* palm fibre | collection Borys Malkin, purchased in 1965 | IVc 11882a
- 71 Hammock | Guajiro | Ipapure Colombia | 1968 | cotton | Borys Malkin, purchased in 1969 | IVc 12878
- 72 Hammock | Lara, Venezuela | ca 1960 | cotton | Bramine Cornelia Marguerite Caudri, gifted in 1972 | IVc 15606

The size of a hammock depends on its use. Children's hammocks measure about one square metre. They serve as ideal cradles, gently rocking the child to sleep. Adult hammocks have an average sleeping surface of 1.5 to 2.5 square metres. Depending on material and manufacture,

such as mesh fabrics or a looping technique, they are stretchable in width and even large enough to accommodate an entire family.

- 73 Children's hammock | Ishir | Paraguay | 1885–1893 | Caraguata fibre | collection Emil Hassler, gifted in 1919 | IVc 900
- 74 Hammock | Ishir | Bolivia | 1885–1893 | Caraguata fibre | collection Emil Hassler, gifted in Geschenk 1919 | IVc 907
- 75 Hammock | Waurá | Upper Xingu, Matto Grosso, Brazil | 1964 | Buriti fibre, cotton | collection Harald Schultz | Vilma Chiara, purchased in 1967 | IVc 11414

Woven Mat

When placed on the floor, mats are used for sitting or sleeping, when suspended they offer protection against the sun, dust, rain, and mosquitoes. Thanks to the flexible material you can easily stack them or roll them up, allowing a house's inhabitants to change a sleeping room into a living or dining room in no time. The mats on display here are made of vegetable fibre material such as pandanus, rattan, palm leaf or, nowadays, plastic.

- 76 Mat *pome / au-puu* | made by Maria Napoarea | 1996 | Coné, New Caledonia | pandanus | Dorothea Deterts, purchased in 1997 | Vb 30916a
- 77 Sleeping mat | Dayak (Ngaju)-groups | Central Kalimantan, Indonesia | before 1934 | rattan, aniline dye | Mattheus Vischer-Mylius, gifted in 1934 | IIc 3043
- 78 Sleeping mat *lubu biti* | Timor-Leste | before 1935 | probably toddy palm leaves | Alfred Bühler, purchased in 1935 | IIc 6638

Hitting the Sack

In Europe, most people sleep in a bed. This is not necessarily the case in other parts of the world. Depending on context and preferences, other forms of sleeping and resting are preferred. People who own a bed, spend a large part of their life in it. Or as Guy de Maupassant once said: "the bed, my friend, is our whole life. People are born in it, they make love in it, and they die in it."

- 79 Cot *charpai* | Sindh, Pakistan | before 1939 | wood, paint, vegetable fibres | Paul Wirz, purchased in 1939 | IIa 946

Woodcarving was commonly practised in all kingdoms of western and north-western Cameroon and held in high esteem. Elaborate sculptures were created above all for the respective royal families and high dignitaries. The motifs followed a complex hierarchical scheme in which the human figure and its animal equivalent, the leopard, ranked highest. The powerful symbols were reserved for the royal family.

- 80 Bed | Babungo, Cameroon | before 1955 | wood | Paul Scheibler collection | Elsa Eckert-Voegelin, bequest in 2001 | III 27331

Beds are not only for sleeping. In the Admiralty Islands, beds play a prominent role at weddings and funerals. Whether this bed was used for sleeping or whether it had a ceremonial function is not known. It's from the island of Bibi, one of the last places where such beds were made in the Admiralty Islands.

- 81 Bed *kiau* | Bipi, Admiralty Islands, Papua New Guinea | before 1930 | wood, pigments | Alfred Bühler, purchased in 1932 | Vb 10506a-d

The bed is made out of midribs of the sago palm, tied together with strips of rattan. Beds like this were to be found in the traditional dwelling houses among the Gawanga people. In

addition to beds made of midribs, the people also used simpler ones made from large leaves (e.g. banana) placed on the floor.

82 Bed *kauteye* | Gawanga | Bongos, Torricelli Mountains, Papua New Guinea | before 1981 | sago midribs, rattan | Markus Schindlbeck, purchased in 1981 | Vb 29114

A sack filled with dry leaves was the common place for the night for large parts of the population in Europe into the 20th century. For this, people went out to the forest once or twice a year to gather dry leaves. In Salenstein, in the canton of Thurgau, they used leaf tags to determine how many leaves each household was allowed to collect per year. In 1902, the Swiss Federal Forestry Act outlawed the harvesting of leaves but, in many places, this didn't stop people using a bed made of leaves. The excessive usage of leaves changed the face of the forests lastingly.

83 Cover for leaf sack | Catalonia, Spain | before 1967 | linen | Kristin Bühler-Oppenheim, purchased in 1967 | VI 35619

84 Leaf tag | Salenstein, Thurgau, Switzerland | ca 1900 | metal | Schweizerisches Institut für Volkskunde, gifted in 1942 | VI 1667

How do you prevent sleeping occupants tumbling out of bed, and bedcovers and sheets from slipping off the bed? Sandwiched between the bed frame and the mattress, bed pegs keep everything in place.

85 Bed peg 'LAF 1849' | Pays-d'Enhaut, Vaud, Switzerland | around 1849 | wood | Benj. Morier-Genoud, purchased in 1958 | VI 24642

Multifunctional Prop

In many cultures, head or neck rests are cherished everyday objects and used for resting or sleeping. When doing so, people often choose to lie on the side, not least because it helps protect their often elaborate hairdos.

86 Neck rest | Wodole, Liberia | around 1950 | wood, metal | collection Hans Himmelheber, purchased in 1950 | III 10792.01+02

87 Neck rest | Yambi Yambi, Middle Sepik, Papua New Guinea | before 1959 | wood | Alfred Bühler, purchased in 1962 | Vb 17483

This neck rest was made by nomadic Turkana people from hardwood and adorned with pyrographs showing different animals. On their long wanderings, attached cords are used for carrying the neck rest.

88 Neck rest | Marsabit, Kenya | before 1980 | wood, vegetable fibre | Marianne Fiechter, gifted in 1981 | III 22128

Lacquered neck rests have been in use in Japan since the 10th century. They include a drawer that serves as an incense burner. The aromatic smoke passes out through the openings and perfumes the sleeper's hair. The neck rest decorated with cherry blossom motifs also includes spaces to store smaller items such as hair accessories.

89 Neck rest *makura koro* | Japan | 1st half of 19th c. | wood, *urushi* lacquer, mother-of-pearl, gold powder, metal | Hans Spörry, gifted in 1903 | IId 392

90 Neck rest *ulukung* | M'bunai, Manus, Admiralty Islands, Papua New Guinea | before 1930 | wood, vegetable fibre | Alfred Bühler, purchased in 1932 | Vb 10328

91 Neck rest | M'bunai, Manus, Admiralty Islands, Papua New Guinea | before 1930 | wood, pigments | Alfred Bühler, purchased in 1932 | Vb 10332

92 Head rest | Western Papua Gulf, Papua New Guinea | before 1931 | wood | Paul Wirz, purchased in 1931 | Vb 7803

To spare their hairdos, men often used neck rests. On the island of Tanna in Vanuatu, the people traditionally did not use beds, but neck rests were very common. A neck rest also came in handy if a man was wearing an elaborate ear adornment.

93 Head rest | Tanna, Vanuatu | before 1912 | wood | Felix Speiser, gifted in 1912 | Vb 3674

94 Neck rest | Aosta Valley, Italy | before 1932 | wood, metal | Jules Brocherel, purchased in 1932 | VI 11327

95 Neck rest | North coast Papua, Indonesia | before 1913 | wood | J. M. and A. Kampmeinert, gifted in 1913 | Vb 2813

Dressed for the Night

In Europe, the use of special nightwear was long the prerogative of the upper class while the large majority of the population slept either naked or kept on their day clothes. The habit of wearing nightshirts, night caps, and night jackets began after the French Revolution. These nightshirts are cut like normal day shirts but were given a decorative and individual touch by adding various trimmings such as lace or embroidery.

96 Domestic proverb 'Schlaf fröhlich ohne Sorgen Begrüsse froh den Morgen' | Haut-Rhin, France | around 1900 | linen | R. Stutz, purchased in 1971 | VI 39565a

97 Bag for keeping nightdress 'Gute Nacht' | Burgenland, Austria | around 1910 | linen | Wolfgang Ried, purchased in 1992 | VI 65811

98 Bag for keeping nightdress 'Schlummre süß' | Burgenland, Austria | around 1910 | linen | Wolfgang Riedl, purchased in 1992 | VI 65810

99 Night cap | Basel, Switzerland | around 1890 | cotton | Alice Keller, gifted in 1958 | VI 24758

100 Nightshirt | Beromünster, Lucerne | around 1900 | cotton, linen | Suter-Brun family, gifted in 1997 | VI 68751

101 Nightshirt | Oberwil, Basel-Landschaft, Switzerland | around 1900 | linen, ribbon, mother-of-pearl button | previous owner Rosina Gürtler-Vogt | H. Witschi, gifted in 1996 | VI 68242

The moon, stars, and eyes shut – many people associate the motifs on this two-piece pyjama with night and sleep. The emerging textile designers who created the pyjamas found inspiration in the world of surreal dreams. For them it was also important to design a 'unisex' pyjama – that is, one for all genders.

102 Pyjama of the collection 'CALIDA X HSLU' | Design Lynn Balli, Irina Nobs, Renée Zeller | Switzerland | 2022 | cotton | Calida AG, gifted in 2023 | VI 72380.01+02

Providing Warmth

Since the 1970s, most people in Switzerland have switched to Nordic sleeping, using a duvet filled with down or some other insulating material. In earlier days, it was common to rely on several layers, usually including a sheet and woollen blanket. This blue-dye-print blanket probably served as the uppermost layer or as a bedspread during the day.

103 Bedspread | Ticino, Switzerland | before 1961 | linen, resist dye | Peter Kohler, purchased in 1961 | VI 27805

When bedrooms in colder regions could not be heated, people used special devices to preheat the bed: bed warmers, hot-water bottles and heat pads were preheated with hot stones, glowing coal or hot water. Wrapped in cloth or placed on a wooden frame called a 'bed monk', they helped to warm the bedsheets or the sleeper's cold feet without the danger of scorching. Today most hot-water bottles are made of plastic.

- 104 Bed warmer | Spain | copper, wood | before 1934 | Paul Wirz, gifted in 1934 | VI 11837
- 105 Bed warmer | Basel, Switzerland | before 1998 | metal, wood, textile | Madeleine Billeter, gifted in 1998 | VI 69056
- 106 Bed stone | Basel, Switzerland | before 1942 | clay, glaze | Helene Rauch, gifted in 1942 | VI 16345
- 107 Bed stone *chauffeuse* | Soufflenheim, Bas-Rhin, France | before 1972 | clay, glaze | E. Siegfried-Burger, purchased in 1972 | VI 40234
- 108 Bed stone | Soufflenheim, Bas-Rhin, France | before 1972 | clay, lead glaze, engobe | Pottery studio Ch. Messner, purchased in 1972 | VI 40665
- 109 Heating pad | Bern, Switzerland | before 1975 | textile, metal | Margrit Schwitter, gifted in 1975 | VI 45033
- 110 Bed warmer 'bed monk' or *prevoste* | probably Ticino, Switzerland | before 1909 | wood, metal | Brockenhaus Basel, purchased in 1909 | VI 2700.01+02

'Sleep, My Baby, Sleep'

Young parents often face the challenging situation that a child has difficulties in falling asleep or does not sleep through the night, especially in the first years. Gentle cradle movements often help them to go to sleep more easily. Depending on the model, cradles are equipped with a suspension device or have rounded runners. In Switzerland today, there is quite some controversy whether it's right or wrong to allow young children and babies sleep in their parents' bed.

- 111 Cradle | Duboševica, Osijek-Baranja, Croatia | ca 1900 | wood, paint | Etelka Liptak, purchased in 1985 | VI 59749a
- 112 Carry cot | Sapporo, Hokkaido, Japan | undated | wood, bamboo, bark cloth, textile, reed, pigment | W. Koller, purchased in 1910 | IId 618
- 113 Cradle | Sierra de Puebla, Mexico | 1963 | bamboo, vegetable fibre, pitch | collection Heidi and Kay C. Hansen, purchased in 1965 | IVb 3442

The fear of nocturnal demons and supernatural powers that bring harm or death is widespread. Especially children need to be protected from the dangers of the night. In many places, parents hang amulets over their child's cradle – or ask God for protection in nightly prayers.

- 114 Wall decoration 'Notre père' | Vézénobres, Gard, France | before 1981 | wood, paint | Rosemarie Stutz, purchased in 1981 | VI 53073
- 115 Amulet *Chindsvogel* | St. Gallen, Switzerland | around 1990 | paper, cloth, wool | Walter Escher-Buxtorf, gifted in 1993 | VI 66323

In Bali, parents suspend a mobile altar above the cradle of a new-born child as soon as the umbilical cord has dropped off. From Sanghyang Rare Kumara, the god of infants, they ask protection for their baby. For 210 days (according to the traditional Balinese calendar a year) they make daily offerings to the god. The altar is designed as a heavenly nymph *widyadhari* with the body of a bird. Instead of a nymph, people also mount an altar-shaped offering table above the cradle.

- 116 Altar *widyadhari* | Bali, Indonesia | before 1950 | wood, paint, vegetable fibre cord, iron | Alfred Bühler and Ernst Sutter, purchased in 1950 | IIc 13358
- 117 Small offering table *palangkiran* | Bali, Indonesia | 2000 | wood, textile, metal, palm leaf | Werner Gamper, gifted in 2017 | IIc 22615.01-05

Sleep well?

When it's time to go to bed we wish each other a good night, or 'sleep tight'. For us, a good sleep means falling asleep easily, several hours of uninterrupted sleep, and waking up refreshed. If we can't sleep, herbal or chemical remedies can help. On the other hand,

substances with a stimulating effect, such as caffeine, not only help us to get the day off to a good start, but also to postpone sleep until later.

- 118 Coffee roaster | Basel, Switzerland | before 1939 | metal, wood | Ms. and Mr Von der Mühl, gifted in 1939 | VI 15507
119 Package for valerian herb | Basel, Switzerland | around 1950 | paper | Pharmacy Frei Vaterlaus Basel, gifted in 1991 | VI 65021.06
120 Aids for falling asleep and staying awake | 2023 | private ownership

A lack of sleep can be the source of health issues. People in search of better sleep may try following suggestions such as regular bedtimes, avoiding bright light, and abstaining from heavy food, coffee, and alcohol after 6pm. In some cases, a personal sleep ritual might also help. In order to find the ideal place to sleep, some people rely on unconventional methods: so-called ‘water-smellers’ use divining rods to locate supposedly disturbing sources of energy. Whether this works is disputed.

- 121 Divining rod | Kerns, Obwalden, Switzerland | before 1906 | wood | John Meier, gifted in 1906 | VI 1398

Lost in Dreams

No break for our brain: while we’re sleeping, our brain processes the events over the past day or goes on to create new stories in dreams. In the process we sometimes experience surreal scenes, occasionally beautiful, at times scary. Usually, we only remember the dream from which we just woke up. Many people try to read into and interpret their dreams. It is often assumed that dreams harbour visionary insights.

This yogi kimono features a *baku*, a ‘dream devourer’. *baku* are benevolent monsters that you can summon to ‘devour’ a nightmare you’re having. They are hybrid creatures with the head of an elephant and the body and mane of a lion. Depicted on a nightdress or a blanket they promise the sleeper a peaceful night. The upper part of this kimono contains a family crest featuring three oak leaves, *kashiwa*.

- 122 Yogi-Kimono | Honshu, Japan | undated | cotton, pigments | Jaap Langewis, purchased in 1963 | IId 6055

The motifs on this scroll painting refer to the significance that people in Japan ascribe to the first dream of the year, *hatsuyume*. It is considered auspicious if you dream of Mount Fuji, of a falcon, here depicted in the shape of a stylised feather, and of an aubergine. Together, the three motifs stand for a long and happy life.

- 123 Scroll painting *kakemono* | Japan | undated | cotton, wood | H. and E. Müller, bequest in 1964 | IId 6603

Finding One's Way and Atmosphere

A Beginning and an End – as night and day alternate, people gain a sense of rhythm. Yet when does night-time start and end? For most people, night-time starts the minute it gets dark. In Switzerland, noise control regulations are the responsibility of the cantons. In Basel-Stadt, residents are obliged to keep the peace between 11pm and 7am.

Transition – dusk refers to the transition between day and night. As the sun sets, levels of daylight fall until very little light remains. The duration of dusk varies depending on the season and the geographical location of a place. Many people think the play of colours in the setting sun is especially atmospheric and try to capture it in paintings.

Moon and Stars – the heavenly bodies visible in the night sky are central to many cultures, whether in calendar systems, as spatial and celestial reference points, or as powerful symbols.

Nocturnal Motifs

This type of wrap cloth is found widely among central and northern Naga people. Interpretations of its circles of cowry-shell vary; they are possibly a reference to feasts of merit that have been celebrated. A different interpretation sees nocturnal motifs in them, their circles symbolizing the stars visible during night-time raids, or representing the moon and, in turn, female fertility.

124 Wrap cloth *mou nei* | Nagaland, India | early 20th c. | cotton, wool, cowry shells (*Cypraea moneta*) | Galerie Lemaire Amsterdam, purchased in 1986 | IIa 10115

Cosmic Elements

This assemblage is a stylized representation of the Balinese cosmology. The top section depicts a mountain and cosmic elements: *bulan* (the Moon), *chandra* (the Moon god), *mata hari* (the Sun), *surya* (the Sun god) as well as various constellations. The Milky Way and the story of the rainbow are seen in the centre. The bottom section shows human figures, the volcano on the island of Lombok, and a place to sleep.

125 Assemblage representing the Balinese cosmology | Ni Nyoman Tanjung | Bali, Indonesia | 2011–2018 | paper, wood, plastic, wax dye | Georges Breguet, gifted in 2019 | IIc 25467

Lunar Eclipse

In the mythical past, the demon Kala Rahu came into possession of the nectar of immortality. Thanks to the vigilance of the moon goddess Ratih, Visnu was able to behead the demon before the drink reached his stomach, although his severed head continued to live because the magic potion had touched his lips. Ever since, he has sought revenge on Ratih by attempting to devour the moon. Occasionally he succeeds in doing so: when there is a lunar eclipse.

126 Ink painting titled 'Lunar eclipse. The demon king Kala Rahu attempts to devour the moon' | Ida Bagus Ketut Togog | Bali, Indonesia | around 1940 | paper, ink | estate of Ernst Schlager | Aino Schlager-Neovius and Georg André Schlager, gifted in 1971 | IIc 16412

Lighting the Way Home

A memorable childhood experience inspired the artist to paint this picture. As a 12-year-old, he was out walking with a group that was surprised by the onset of night. The rising moon showed them the way home. In the menacing dark of the night, the moon and stars offer a sense of direction and hope.

- 127 Painting 'Moon Crossing' | John Shu 'Calakuta' Neba | 2010 | Bamenda, Cameroon | canvas, paint | Till Förster, purchased in 2010 | III 27657

Earth's Intriguing Satellite

In Japan, a night with a full moon has positive associations. As early as the Heian period (794–1185), its appearance provided the nobility with a reason to meet, celebrate, and recite poetry. The harvest moon was particularly important: given its celestial position, the new moon nearest to the time of the autumn equinox shines especially brightly.

- 128 Woodblock print of fishermen working beneath a full moon | Hiroshige IV (active 1920–40) | Kanto, Japan | ca 1930 | paper, colour woodblock print | Alice Keller, gifted in 1962 | IId 5793

When this screen was placed in front of a bright light, it served to eliminate glare and revealed a landscape in the light of a full moon. The moon and its influence on life on Earth are a source of fascination for humans: it rules the tides and stabilizes Earth's axis. Farmers working to biodynamic principles are guided by the phases of the moon; many people are convinced that at the time of the full moon, their sleep is poorer and less restful.

- 129 Screen illustrated with the moon | Basel, Switzerland | ca 1900 | paper, wood, paint | anonymous estate, gifted in 1951 | VI 19310

Everlasting Hours?

While many people are woken by the ringing of an alarm clock, the cockerel's cry of cock-a-doodle-doo offers an alternative method with which to announce the start of the end of the night.

- 130 Oil lamp with inbuilt hourglass | Thuringia, Germany | ca 1900 | pewter, glass | Hermann Wilhelm Bröckelmann Antiques, purchased in 1919 | VI 8741
- 131 Pocket sundial showing the hours of the night | Basel, Switzerland | 19th c. | wood, cardboard, glass, copper alloy | Theodora Von der Mühl-Burckhardt, gifted in 1972 | VI 41131
- 132 'Junghans' alarm clock with luminous hands and numbers | 1st half of 20th c. | Germany | metal, glass, paper | old stock | VI 68104.01
- 133 Cockerel stand-up figure | Zumikon, Zurich, Switzerland | ca 1960 | wood, paint | Hans Peter Weber, gifted in 1988 | VI 62275
- 134 Papercut of a cock crowing in front of the rising sun | China | around 2000 | paper, paint | Myriam Michel-LeGallo, gifted in 2010 | IId 15373

Counting the Phases of the Moon

The Batak people of Sumatra know various types of calendar. A solar and lunar calendar was once crucial in fixing the dates of their rituals. The task of maintaining and consulting the calendar was the responsibility of a dedicated keeper. To ensure the lunar calendar was maintained accurately, the calendar keeper used a water buffalo rib bone like this with four rows of holes. Each time the crescent of the new moon appeared, he pulled the string through one of the holes.

- 135 Lunar calendar *porhalaan* | Batak | Northern Sumatra, Indonesia | before 1927 | Water buffalo rib bone, string | Paul Wirz, purchased in 1927 | IIc 2687

New Moon Festivals

Durga is the most important and formidable goddess in the Hindu pantheon. She is venerated as a mother goddess and also embodies the primal force of the cosmos. Durga-Puja, the greatest festival in honour of the goddess, is held annually over ten days in the autumn to celebrate Durga's victory over the buffalo demon Mahisasura and his army of demons. Many Hindu festivals are held around the time of the new moon when the nights are

darkest. The new moon is considered a good time to deepen one's spiritual practice or to embark on a new venture.

- 136 Figure of Durga slaying the buffalo demon / Durga Mahisasuramardini | India | undated | stone | estate of August Meyer-Gass, gifted in 1977 | IIa 6904

Regulating Night and Day

For the indigenous inhabitants of the borderlands of Brazil and Colombia, boxes for the storage of headdresses are among the most prized possessions. In line with strict protocol, they are opened ritually at nightfall and closed again at daybreak. According to origin myths, the creator beings provided humans with all of life's essentials in such boxes. The lord of the night had given instructions to open these containers only inside a dwelling at night-time; instead, men opened their boxes outside during the day, thus allowing the forces contained within them to escape. Since then, those forces have had to be controlled in rituals that also regulate the course of night and day.

- 137 Box | Rio Vaupés region, Colombia | around 1938 | Bast and vegetable fibres, wood | collection Ernst A. Ritter, gifted in 1938 | IVc 3682

Setting Sun

A *gitenga* mask was used in the initiation rites of the Pende people. At a camp, boys had to complete various tasks to be accepted into the community of men. Representing the setting sun, the mask appeared at dusk. Caution was needed because its wide, round eyes were considered dangerous. The mask was a frightening sight and deterred non-initiates from approaching the initiation camp.

- 138 Mask *gitenga* | Pende | West Kasai, Democratic Republic of the Congo | before 1939 | rattan, feathers, raffia | Hans Himmelheber, purchased in 1942 | III 9178

Ready for Night-Time

In the Amazonian borderlands of Brazil and Colombia, the transition from day to night is a critical and atmospheric time, one that the Swiss artist Anita Guidi captured during a research trip: the night-time fire burns in the communal house in the clearing; places to sleep have been readied.

After her trip, the artist exhibited her paintings in Rio de Janeiro in 1946. She received special praise from the director of the Office of Indigenous Affairs for her ability to combine accurate ethnographic detail with atmospheric renderings of the landscape.

- 139 Painting 'Sehnsucht' (Longing) | Anita Guidi | Upper Rio Tiquié, Brazil | 1945 | oil on canvas, wood, adhesive tape | collection Armin Caspar | Marianne and Celia Caspar, purchased in 2018 | IVc 26861

Mountain Peaks at Dusk

This depiction of the Lake of Lucerne captures the atmospheric play of colours as the sun sets and illumines the area's snowy mountain peaks. Alpenglow like this was a big factor in people's fascination with the mountains, and it even figures in Switzerland's national anthem with the words 'wenn der Alpenfirn sich rötet' - when Alpine snows tinge crimson.

- 140 Mural 'Lake of Lucerne' | Johann Jakob Wyss (1876–1936) | Switzerland | ca 1900 | paper, paint | collection Theo Gantner, gifted in 1992 | VI 65330

Dusk

In Japan, the first sunrise of the New Year is associated with renewal and hope. It signifies all the wishes and goals that people have. Many Japanese people experience this first sunrise of the New Year in a special place such as a mountaintop, temple, or shrine.

141 Cloth *tenugui* showing the sun rising over the sea (1 January 1903) | Japan | around 1903 | dyed cotton | collection Basil Hall Chamberlain | Charles Bolard-Talbère, purchased in 1944 | IId 2201

This atmospheric print captures dusk over the river Tone. In the Shinto religion, dusk is associated with the goddess Ame-no-Uzume, who is regarded as the pioneer of ritual dance. By dancing, she was able to coax the sun goddess Amaterasu out of her cave, and the world could once again sparkle in the sun.

142 Dusk over the river Tone | Takahashi Shotai (Hiroaki) (1871–1945) | Kanto, Japan | ca 1930 | paper, colour woodblock print | Alice Keller, gifted in 1962 | IId 5788

Capturing the Night

These woodblock prints by Shiro Kasamatsu and Uehara Konen capture the mood of an evening in urban Japan.

143 Urban street after dark | Shiro Kasamatsu (1898–1991) | Kanto, Japan | 1935 | paper, colour woodblock print | Alice Keller, gifted in 1962 | IId 5791

144 Night-time in Osaka's Dotonbori district | Uehara Konen (1877–1940) | Kanto, Japan | 1928 | paper, colour woodblock print | Alice Keller, gifted in 1962 | IId 5823

From the 15th century onwards, lookouts kept watch over Basel. They were stationed in the towers of Basel Minster, the Church of St. Martin, and the chapel of St. Nicholas (now demolished). They were on fire-watch duty and had to sound the alarm in case of danger. The camera we installed on the Minster's George Tower detected no fires, certainly, but it did capture some spectacular views of Basel over a number of nights.

145 Videos | 2022-2023 | © MKB

Surprising Changes in the Light

Peep shows entertained the population at large well into the 20th century. Views of distant landscapes and cities, or of society events, were among the subjects shown. Lantern slides offered a special element of surprise: by switching from front to back light, daytime scenes turned into magical night-time ones – including street lighting.

146 Peep box 'Polyorama Panoptique' and reproductions of lantern slides | France | ca 1850, reproduced in 2023 | lithograph, paper, wood, cloth, paint | previously owned by Sophie Sarasin-Warnery | Sophie Zahn-Sarasin, gifted in 1950 | VI 19090.00, 01-03, 05-07, 09-11

'Cour de la fontaine (Fontainebleau)' | VI 19090.01

'Le Havre Incendie en mer' | VI 19090.02

'Windsor: Le palais de Buckingham anciennement' | VI 19090.03

'La Tamise. Le Tunnel (Londres)' | VI 19090.05

'37. Galerie des Colonnes (Fontainebleau)' | VI 19090.06

'La Place Vendôme (Paris)' | VI 19090.07

'55. Heronniere du Château – Le Chêne des Fées (Fontainebleau)' | VI 19090.09

'Temple Bar (Londres)' | VI 19090.10

'Canal de Canton. Fête des Lanternes (Chine)' | VI 19090.11

147 Reproductions of slides | France | ca 1850, reproduced in 2023 | lithograph, paper, wood, textile | Brockenhaus Basel, purchased in 1918 | VI 8252.02-03, 05-06, 10

'Le Palais Royal / La Galerie d'Orléans' | VI 8252.02

'Château des Fleurs aux Champs-Élysées (Paris)' | VI 8252.03

'Regent's Street (Londres)' | VI 8252.05

'Oxford' | VI 8252.06

'Versailles' | VI 8252.10

Light and Dark

Shining a Light in the Dark – To allow us to use the hours of darkness for all kinds of activities, we fill them with light. From open fires to wood shavings, gas lamps and electric light bulbs to today's LED and LCC bulbs, humans have developed a great range of aids and technologies.

Out and About in the Dark – Until the 19th century, there was only limited illumination of streets and squares. Anyone out and about after dark needed a portable source of light; anyone without one aroused suspicion – and might be fined. Portable lamps were also used indoors. With the advent of electricity and light bulbs, the installation of fixed lights became a possibility – at which point portable lights fell into disuse. The MKB collection contains a large number of such portable light sources.

Light pollution – Since the invention of electricity, more and more parts of the world have been lit up, which in turn has consequences for the environment. Man-made sources of light influence the biorhythms of plants, animals, and humans too. Politics and wider society need to discuss how calls to reduce light levels in populous areas can be reconciled with safety needs.

Innovative Ideas for the city of the future

A lot of research is going into new forms of street lighting. Industrial designer and photographer Damian Byland has created a concept of a new type of streetlight. Using a sensor, the luminaire determines the brightness of the sky at night to enable systematic measurement of light pollution. The modular system allows the integration of a motion detector, a charging station for e-mobility and a seat to complement the street furniture.

148 Concept 'Vision Orion' | Damian Byland | Basel, Switzerland | 2022 | PLA 3D Print | private loan

As part of his research, Damian Byland photographed levels of street lighting within the city of Basel. He captured a special moment on 7 March 2022: at the 'Morgenstreich' marking the start of Basel's Fasnacht carnival, the streetlights in the city centre are switched off at 4 am sharp.

149 Two photographs 'Mittlere Brücke, 03:45 / 04:00' | Damian Byland | Basel, Switzerland | 2022 | Prints from digital photographs | © Damian Byland

Whizzy gang, a group of parkour enthusiasts in France takes a practical approach to reducing light pollution: they make it their goal to switch off backlit advertising signs on buildings simply by flicking their out-of-reach switches. French law requires advertising signs and shop-window lighting to be switched off overnight.

150 Video <Opération luciole> | Wizzy Gang | 2020 | © @gang_wizzy

Light to Go

Lanterns usually have a metal or wooden casing. Glass panes or funnels serves to protect the light source from the wind and weather, and reduce the risk of fire. Some models can focus light and increase brightness. A handy size, lanterns were easily carried and put down where light was needed. Nowadays we often use the flashlight function on our smartphones.

151 Lantern used by a mule driver | Engadin, Grisons, Switzerland | ca 1900 | steel, pewter | Historisches Museum Basel, on permanent loan since 1933 | VI 11546

- 152 Lantern fitted with a bulb | Zurich, Switzerland | ca 1900 | steel, pewter, paint, glass | Ernst Gimmi, purchased in 1982 | VI 55730
- 153 Candle lantern | Basel, Switzerland | ca 1900 | steel, free-blown glass, paint, wax, paper | Elisabeth Vonder Mühll, gifted in 1912 | VI 5283
- 154 Oil lamp lantern | Dottenberg, Lucerne, Switzerland | ca 1900 | metal | Jakob Lörch, purchased in 1910 | VI 3435
- 155 Lantern with a pyramid-shaped lid | Aosta Valley, Italy | ca 1900 | wood, glass, metal | Jules Brocherel, purchased in 1932 | VI 11309
- 156 Lantern | Fextal, Grisons, Switzerland | ca 1900 | wood, glass, metal | Leopold Rütimeyer | VI 7194
- 157 Lantern with frosted glass | Appenzell, Appenzell Innerrhoden, Switzerland | ca 1900 | steel, pewter, glass | P. Moser Antiques, purchased in 1941 | VI 16167
- 158 Lantern for use on a town sleigh | Basel, Switzerland | pre 1900 | steel, copper alloy, paint, glass | A. Rensch, purchased in 1976 | VI 46010e
- 159 Night light *veilleuse* equipped with a warming device | Ormont-Dessous, Vaud, Switzerland | ca 1900 | steel, copper, pewter, wood | Eduard Hoffmann-Krayer, gifted in 1906 | VI 1202
- 160 Lantern | Inwil, Lucerne, Switzerland | ca 1900 | steel, copper alloy, pewter, glass, | Jakob Lörch, purchased in 1911 | VI 4826
- 161 Lantern | Lindenham, Zug, Switzerland | ca 1900 | steel, pewter, glass, paint | Jakob Lörch, purchased in 1910 | VI 4205
- 162 Draught-proof carriage lantern with flue | Basel, Switzerland | ca 1900 | copper, steel, pewter, glass | Theo Gantner, gifted in 1980 | VI 52940
- 163 Oil lamp | Aarau, Aargau, Switzerland | ca 1900 | glass, metal | Eduard Hoffmann-Krayer, gifted in 1907 | VI 1611
- 164 Oil-burning lantern | Rotenhof, Küssnacht am Rigi, Schwyz, Switzerland | ca 1900 | steel, paint, glass | Jakob Lörch, purchased in 1910 | VI 4317
- 165 Candle lantern from the 'Zehntenscheune' (tithe barn) | Oberdorf, Basel-Landschaft, Switzerland | ca 1900 | wood, glass, metal | August Meyer, purchased in 1914 | VI 6423
- 166 Lantern | Santa Maria Val Müstair, Grisons, Switzerland | ca 1750 | wood, glass | Robert Wildhaber, purchased in 1953 | VI 20418
- 167 Lantern | Walchwil, Zug, Switzerland | before 1900 | wood, glass | Jakob Lörch, purchased in 1910 | VI 4174
- 168 Lantern with candle and oil lamp, for hunting snipe | Bern, Switzerland | ca 1900 | steel, paint, free-blown glass, wax | J. Lanz-Ruchti, purchased in 1946 | VI 17764
- 169 Candle lantern | Langwies, Grisons, Switzerland | before 1945 | wood, glass | Chr. Mettier, purchased in 1945 | VI 17326
- 170 Stable lantern | Rio de Onor, Bragança, Portugal | ca 1850 | steel, pewter, glass | Theo Gantner, purchased in 1986 | VI 60944
- 171 Candle lantern painted blue | Switzerland | ca 1900 | steel, pewter, glass, cork | Ernst Gimmi, purchased in 1985 | VI 59990
- 172 Solar lantern 'Sonnenglas' | Switzerland | 2023 | glass, metal, solar panel, LED | private ownership
- 173 Lantern | Switzerland | ca 1900 | steel, paint, glass | Ernst Gimmi, purchased in 1985 | VI 59995
- 174 Candle lantern | Zurich, Switzerland | ca 1900 | steel, pewter, paint, glass | Ernst Gimmi, purchased in 1982 | VI 55729
- 175 Stable lantern 'Nier-Feuerhand' | Wyssachen, Bern, Switzerland | ca 1910 | steel, pewter, glass | Edwin Denz-Eiche, gifted in 1990 | VI 63950
- 176 Candle lantern to give warning of air-raids in WWII | Zurich, Switzerland | ca 1900 | steel, paint, glass | Ernst Gimmi, purchased in 1982 | VI 55733
- 177 Cart lantern, used by 'Züribot' Studer | Maschwanden, Zurich, Switzerland | ca 1900 | steel, copper, pewter, horn | Eduard Hoffmann-Krayer, gifted in 1907 | VI 1821
- 178 Carriage lantern | Basel, Switzerland | ca 1900 | steel, pewter, glass, wax | Brockenhaus Basel, purchased in 1908 | VI 2445

- 179 Oil lamp with floral decoration | Aarau, Aargau, Switzerland | ca 1900 | glass, metal | Eduard Hoffmann-Krayer, gifted in 1907 | VI 1612
- 180 Swiss Army lantern, used for hunting snipe | Huttwil, Emmental, Bern, Switzerland | ca 1900 | steel, pewter, glass, wax | J. Lanz-Ruchti, gifted in 1940 | VI 15672
- 181 Hand-held lantern lampara | Cacalomacan, Mexico | 1964 | tin, glass | Heidi and Kay C. Hansen, purchased in 1965 | IVb 3512
- 182 Blackout lantern | Basel, Switzerland | ca 1900 | steel, pewter, glass, wax | Annerose Scheidegger, gifted in 1988 | VI 62025
- 183 Lantern | Basel, Switzerland | pre 1911 | wood, glass, metal | Brockenhaus Basel, purchased in 1911 | VI 4446
- 184 Swiss Army lantern | Othmarsingen, Aargau, Switzerland | ca 1890 | steel, plastic, paint, wax | Anneliese Gertsch, gifted in 1990 | VI 63971
- 185 Cabin-shaped lantern | Ollomont, Aosta Valley, Italy | ca 1845 | wood, glass, metal, leather | Jules Brocherel, purchased in 1930 | VI 10989
- 186 Candle lantern with red and orange glass panels | Basel, Switzerland | ca 1880 | steel, pewter, glass, wax, paper | Werner Bellwald, gifted in 1990 | VI 63776
- 187 Lantern | Schanfigg, Grisons, Switzerland | before 1945 | wood, glass, metal | Chr. Mettier, purchased in 1945 | VI 17327

Users pour water and a thin film of cooking oil into a flameproof receptacle, place a wick on the cork float, and light it. Providing light in hallways for several hours, this type of night-light helps people get around without the need for bright lights. Marketed since 1867, it seems to have proven its worth as it is still available to buy today.

- 188 Tin of night-lights 'G. A. Glafey Nuremberg' | Nuremberg, Bavaria, Germany | 1893 | cardboard, paper, cork, metal, cloth, wax | Paul Schardt, gifted in 1993 | VI 66377

In the past, lamps and lights burned tallow or paraffin, fuels that are hardly used nowadays because they smell unpleasant and are harmful to health. Once really expensive items, wax candles, in contrast, are still in use, and represent an alternative source of light for which no electric current is required – the reason why we should all keep a store of candles at home just in case the lights go out.

- 189 Paraffin lamp | Basel, Switzerland | ca 1900 | metal, glass | estate of Alfred Gönner-Burckhardt, gifted in 1941 | VI 16017
- 190 Paraffin lamp | Huttwil, Bern, Switzerland | ca 1900 | metal, glass | Marthe Hartmann, gifted in 1991 | VI 64698
- 191 Paraffin lamp | Basel, Switzerland | ca 1900 | brass, steel, | Isidoro Pellegrini, purchased in 1949 | VI 18779
- 192 Paraffin lamp with reflector | Basel, Switzerland | ca 1900 | metal, glass | Annerose Scheidegger, gifted in 1988 | VI 62026
- 193 Lithophane oil or tallow lamp | Basel, Switzerland | ca 1900 | iron, porcelain, glass | Pro Arte, purchased in 1941 | VI 15837
- 194 Spirit lamp | Basel, Switzerland | ca 1900 | glass, porcelain | E. Pernoux, gifted in 1968 | VI 36175
- 195 Night light | Qingdao, Shandong province, China | undated | metal, glass | Samuel Preiswerk-Sarasin, gifted in 1909 | IId 830
- 196 Oil lamp | Aarau, Aargau, Switzerland | ca 1900 | tin plate, glass | Eduard Hoffmann-Krayer, gifted in 1907 | VI 1606

For centuries across the Alps, small lamps made of easily sculpted soapstone were widespread. Users filled them with vegetable oil, fat, butter or tallow; wicks were made of wool, hemp or dried mullein leaves.

- 197 Oil lamp | Ried, Valais, Switzerland | stone | Hans Leemann-Geymüller, gifted in 1917 | VI 7529

- 198 Stone lamp | Kippel, Valais, Switzerland | pre 1916 | stone | Leopold Rütimeyer, gifted in 1916 | VI 6883
- 199 Stone lamp | Oberwald, Valais, Switzerland | before 1919 | stone | Josef Bielander, purchased in 1919 | VI 8874
- 200 'PIAB' [Peter Josef Ambord] stone lamp | Grenchols, Valais, Switzerland | before 1917 | stone | collected by Annemarie Weis, purchased in 1917 | Adolf Krayer-Förster, gifted in 1917 | VI 7894
- 201 Cube-shaped stone lamp | Valais, Switzerland | 1718 | stone | Joseph Delacoste, purchased in 1929 | VI 10729
- 202 Stone base for kindling | Imfeld, Binn, Valais, Switzerland | before 1918 | stone, wood, metal | Annemarie Weis, gifted in 1918 | VI 8443
- 203 Stone lamp | Lü, Grisons, Switzerland | before 1920 | stone | Leopold Rütimeyer, gifted in 1920 | VI 9259
- 204 Stone lamp with iron-lined groove | Binn, Valais, Switzerland | ca 1900 | soapstone, iron | collected by Annemarie Weis, purchased in 1917 | Adolf Krayer-Förster, gifted in 1917 | VI 7899
- 205 Stone lamp decorated with the image of a hare | Valais, Switzerland | before 1928 | soapstone | Friedrich Siebenmann, gifted in 1928 | VI 10473
- 206 Stone lamp | Silvaplana, Grisons, Switzerland | before 1917 | stone, tallow | Leopold Rütimeyer, gifted in 1917 | VI 15691
- 207 Oil lamp in the shape of a stove | Ze Binne, Binn, Valais, Switzerland | 1854 | stone, glass | Annemarie Weis, purchased in 1917 | VI 7444
- 208 Tallow lamp | Aarau, Aargau, Switzerland | ca 1900 | fired clay | Eduard Hoffmann-Krayer, gifted in 1907 | VI 1609
- 209 Oil lamp | Taormina, Sicily, Italy | ca 1900 | fired clay | Max Krayer-Freyvogel, gifted in 1911 | VI 4684
- 210 Tallow lamp | Palermo, Sicily, Italy | ca 1900 | ceramic, soot | Leopold Rütimeyer, gifted in 1906 | VI 1004
- 211 Oil lamp | Taormina, Sicily, Italy | ca 1900 | fired clay | Max Krayer-Freyvogel, gifted in 1911 | VI 4683
- 212 Oil lamp | Naples, Campagna, Italy | ca 1900 | faience, paint | Eugen Paravicini, gifted in 1910 | VI 3842
- These 'light houses', model houses containing a light source, perhaps served to indicate the location of a house or estate; their bulbs are now lost. Such objects possibly also commemorated loved ones and protected them against evil forces.
- 213 'Light house' | Dottenberg, Lucerne, Switzerland | ca 1900 | stone | Jakob Lörch, purchased in 1910 | VI 3700
- 214 'Light house' | Zurzach, Aargau, Switzerland | 1746 | stone | Eduard Hoffmann-Krayer, gifted in 1906 | VI 1562
- 215 'Light house' | Basel, Switzerland | before 1911 | stone, metal, glass | Brockenhaus Basel, purchased in 1911 | VI 4780
- 216 Lamp for olive oil | Heraklion, Crete, Greece | ca 1900 | metal | Reimar Schefold, purchased in 1960 | VI 26267
- 217 Oil lamp with drip pan | Scotland, United Kingdom | ca 1900 | iron | Joseph King, gifted in 1926 | VI 10321
- 218 Lamp with adjustable candle cover and adjustable chimney-piece | Switzerland | before 1909 | copper, pewter, wax, glass | Brockenhaus Basel, purchased in 1909 | VI 2715
- 219 Candle lantern | Switzerland | ca 1900 | metal, glass | Jakob Lörch, gifted in 1910 | VI 3409
- 220 Lamp with adjustable candle cover | Switzerland | before 1909 | steel, copper, glass, wax | Brockenhaus Basel, purchased in 1909 | VI 2714
- 221 Oil lamp in the form of a juglet | Westphalia, Germany | ca 1900 | copper | Auguste Heusler-Hohenschild, purchased in 1921 | VI 9457
- 222 Conical oil lamp | Porto, Portugal | ca 1900 | metal | Paul Vosseler, purchased in 1929 | VI 10702

- 223 Hanging traffic lights | Hannover, Lower Saxony, Germany | ca 1900 | brass | Hermann Wilhelm Bröckelmann Antiques, purchased in 1919 | VI 8740
- 224 Oil lamp with snuffer | Basel, Switzerland | ca 1900 | metal | Brockenhaus Basel, purchased in 1909 | VI 2701
- 225 Rumford oil lamp | Cham, Zug, Switzerland | ca 1900 | metal | Jakob Lörch, gifted in 1907 | VI 2010
- 226 Oil lamp | Basel, Switzerland | ca 1900 | pewter | Antiquités Ségäl, purchased in 1908 | VI 2244
- 227 Lamp in the form of a small oil can | Basel, Switzerland | ca 1900 | iron, wood | Annie Kaufmann-Hagenbach, gifted in 1987 | VI 61489
- 228 Paraffin lamp | Basel, Switzerland | ca 1900 | copper alloy | Ms. H. Meier, gifted in 1945 | VI 17493
- 229 Lamp | Egypt | before 1888 | tin, wire, felt ring | collection Basel Mission, gifted in 1951 | III 11354
- 230 Oil lamp made from an old canister | Nakaru, Rift Valley, Kenya | 1985 | metal, printed | Sabine Loosli, gifted in 1993 | VI 66485.01
- 231 Oil lamp | Mali | 1980 | tin | Bernhard Gardi, purchased in 1980 | III 21965a+b
- 232 Night light | Basel, Switzerland | ca 1900 | brass, frosted glass | Brockenhaus Basel, purchased in 1911 | VI 4449
- 233 Stable lamp for candles | Chur, Grisons, Switzerland | ca 1900 | steel, paint, wax | E. Howald & Cie, purchased in 1948 | VI 18493

‘*Wachsrodel*’ were candles made of thin coils of wax that nowadays are hardly used, but they had a number of advantages over conventional candles: they burned more slowly, and could be used without any form of support. The handy-sized wax balls could be carried in one’s pocket, taken out and lit everywhere. When the flame reached the snuffer, it was extinguished.

- 234 Coiled candle with snuffer | Basel, Switzerland | ca 1900 | metal, wax, wood, cloth | Hermann Wilhelm Bröckelmann, purchased in 1919 | VI 8768
- 235 Coiled candle with snuffer | Basel, Switzerland | metal, wax, cloth | Lothar Forcart, gifted in 1947 | VI 18285

Tallow lamps were widely used by the urban poor and those living in rural areas. A hard fatty substance made from rendered animal fat, tallow was cheaper and more readily available than candles. Many such lamps have feet and different types of handles for easy carrying or hanging from a wooden beam.

- 236 Tallow lamp with four wicks | Grisons, Switzerland | ca 1900 | iron, tallow, cloth | Antiquités Ségäl, purchased in 1908 | VI 2689
- 237 Tallow lamp with seven wicks | La Punt-Chamuesch, Grisons, Switzerland | ca 1930 | iron | Arnold Büchli, purchased in 1947 | VI 18245
- 238 Tallow lamp with handgrip | Santa Maria Val Müstair, Grisons, Switzerland | ca 1900 | iron | [unknown forename] Hellrigl, purchased in 1953 | VI 20540

Tallow lamps were hung inside frames like this “when one was out after dark on the way to a *Stubete* (social gathering of neighbours and friends)”, according to the item’s index card from Samedan. They were used when village streets were still unlit and everybody had to carry their own light with them when out and about after dark.

- 239 Stand for three tallow lamps | Samedan, Grisons, Switzerland | ca 1900 | wood, metal, tallow | estate of Valentin Sutter, purchased in 1946 | VI 17912.01-04
- 240 Tallow lamp with feet, a hook, and spike | Valais or Grisons, Switzerland | ca 1900 | iron, tallow | Josef Anton Häfliger, gifted in 1933 | VI 11488
- 241 Tallow lamp with feet, a hanging hook, and spike | Avers-Cröt, Grisons, Switzerland | ca 1900 | metal, tallow, cotton | Arnold Büchli, purchased in 1944 | VI 17187

242 *cazzola de sef* tallow lamp | Zillis, Grisons, Switzerland | ca 1900 | metal | Arnold Büchli, purchased in 1944 | VI 17188

243 Tallow lamp | Grisons, Switzerland | ca 1900 | iron | Antiquités Ségal, purchased in 1908 | VI 2205

Light helps us to see in the dark, but in some circumstances it can betray our presence. In wartime, blackout lanterns and lamp chimneys (globes) made of blue glass were used to prevent the enemy from identifying the user's location while still allowing the user to see something of the immediate surroundings.

244 Blackout light bulb 'Metallum' with packaging | Basel, Switzerland | 1895–1925 | glass, metal, cardboard | Paul Schardt, gifted in 1990 | VI 63944.02

245 Light bulb suitable for blackout use | Basel, Switzerland | 1895–1925 | glass, metal | Paul Schardt, gifted in 1990 | VI 63944.06

246 WW II-era lantern with a globe suitable for blackout use | Basel, Switzerland | ca 1940 | glass, metal | Werner Bellwald, gifted in 1990 | VI 63774

247 Storm lantern with a 'Feuerhand' blackout globe, model no. 275 | Germany | ca 1900 | steel, pewter, glass | Ernst Gimmi, purchased in 1985 | VI 59999

In Japan, lanterns have been used for everyday purposes, in festivals, and in religious ceremonies since the Edo period (1603–1868). With a basic frame consisting of a bamboo spiral, lanterns can be collapsed. Traditional hand-made *washi* paper is stretched across the frame. Depending on the occasion and use, the paper can be decorated with Japanese characters or pictures. Such lanterns serve as sources of light, votive offerings, decoration or as souvenirs.

248 Three *chochin* lanterns | Kyoto, Japan | 1992 | *washi* paper, bamboo, wood, wire, glue, paint, ink | Gerhard Baer, purchased in 1994 | IId 11919, IId 11923+24

Flickering Torchlight

To make a flaming torch, easily combustible vegetable matter such as wood, rattan or palm leaf is bound together lengthwise. People in many places use such torches as a light source while working in their fields or hunting. Most torches are portable, and thus practical, sources of light.

250 Torch *mbele* for hauling in fish after dark | Nusa Tenggara Timur, Indonesia | before 1935 | coconut palm leaves, gebang palm fibres | Alfred Bühler, purchased in 1935 | IIc 4088

251 Torch *noa rao* for those out and about after dark | Nusa Tenggara Timur, Indonesia | before 1935 | coconut palm leaves, gebang palm fibres | Alfred Bühler, purchased in 1935 | IIc 5691

252 Torch | Kamberab, Upper Sepik, Papua New Guinea | before 1973 | wood, liana | Hanns Peter, purchased in 1973 | Vb 27058

253 Torch | Sri Lanka | before 1891 | coconut palm spathes, resin | Paul and Fritz Sarasin, gifted in 1890 | IIa 116

254 Torch of birch bark | Brione, Ticino, Switzerland | ca 1900 | Max Gschwend, gifted in 1948 | VI 18506

Torches like these were used in the harvesting of wild hay from steep mountainsides. Rich in nutrients, wild hay was once an essential supply of fodder during the winter months. With insufficient time to bring it down into the valleys during the summer, it went uncollected until the winter. To avoid triggering avalanches, farmers used torches like these for light as they moved harvested hay through the cold, dark nights. A *Buchle* torch burns for around 20 minutes. Wild hay is harvested to this day, especially in the cantons of Uri and Nidwalden.

255 Hay-harvesting torch | Erstfeld, Uri, Switzerland | ca 1900 | wood, willow wicker | Alois Blättler, purchased in 1943 | VI 16793

256 *Buchle* torch | made by forest warden Gamma | Meiental, Uri, Switzerland | 1931 | wood | previously owned by Heinrich Brockmann-Jerosch | Anni Waldmeier-Brockmann, gifted in 1950 | VI 1897

Thank you for returning this handout after use!

All texts also at www.mkb.ch