

Media texts (2 short)

Text 1

Expeditions. The World in a Suitcase, as from 29 June 2012

Explorers on Expeditions: What they brought to Basel

The era from the end of the nineteenth to the mid-twentieth century was the heyday of anthropological expeditions. Scholars from Basel too set out to study foreign cultures, bringing home with them rich collections of artefacts. The exhibition *Expeditions. The World in a Suitcase* follows on the trail of four of these journeys. The 540 artefacts on display in the exhibition help to explain what motivated the scholars to go on expeditions, and provide a sample of what they brought home to Basel in terms of collections and new knowledge.

Text 2

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Explorers on Expeditions: What they brought to Basel

The era from the end of the nineteenth to the mid-twentieth century was the heyday of anthropological expeditions. Scholars from Basel too set out to study foreign cultures, bringing home with them substantial collections of artefacts. The exhibition *Expeditions. The World in a Suitcase* takes the visitors on four of journeys: with Paul and Fritz Sarasin to Sri Lanka (Ceylon 1883-86; 1890; 1902; 1907; 1925); with Felix Speiser to Vanuatu (New Hebrides, 1910-12); with Alfred Bühler to Indonesia and East Timor (1935); and with Paul Hinderling and René Gardi to Cameroon (1953).

Measuring, salvaging, comparing, and taking pictures

The explorers were driven by different motives. The Sarasins were originally natural scientists, their interest in anthropology came later. For Felix Speiser-Merian salvaging an ancient culture on the verge of extinction was of primary concern. Alfred Bühler set out to study pre-industrial technologies in diverse fields of craft and seek evidence for old cultural relations between South East Asia and the islands of Melanesia. The aim of the Cameroon expedition was to document the material culture of the Mafa people by assembling a collection, taking photographs, and filming.

Building the foundation of a world-famous collection

The exhibition featuring 540 artefacts, photographs, film sequences, and sound recordings gives a superb overview of the famous Basel collections. It is complemented by a rich supporting programme relating to issues of anthropology, both past and current.

Museum der Kulturen

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