



Extinctions!?

An exhibition as part of the project *TAKING CARE*
23 February 2023 to 2 April 2024

The first exhibition in the new, participatory exhibition space *zam*, Weltmuseum Wien

The planet is in the midst of a major extinction event caused by human beings. In the face of the ongoing climate crisis and its effects on biological diversity, questions of endangerment and fears of loss are at the focus of public discourse. Does 'extinction' have an absolute meaning?

In cooperation with partners, especially from Latin America, the museum questions conventional narratives of extinction and retells them from different perspectives. Stories of the extinction of human cultures, but also of their resilience and their survival can be derived from the collections of the Weltmuseum Wien.

In addition to objects from the Weltmuseum Wien, loans from the Naturhistorisches Museum Vienna can also be viewed. Visitors can inform themselves in greater detail about the individual thematic areas in the exhibition, and within these on the basis of *Points of View*, short texts from the perspective of curators, activists, or artists.



The themes of the exhibition

The exhibition spans a broad thematic range. As a work in progress, it will be adapted over the course of the year and complemented by the participation of visitors and cooperation partners. The following areas of thematic focus will be covered at the start of the exhibition:

the **Selk'nam** were the victims of a genocide in their area of settlement on the Isla Grande in the Tierra del Fuego region in the nineteenth century and are classified as extinct in Chile, as the survivors are not recognized by the state as a community. The Selk'nam activist Fernanda Olivares and the artist Nicolás Spencer from Chile were guests in the context of preparation for the exhibition. Fernanda Olivares is a member of a lively Selk'nam community that struggles against the myth of their extinction. Together they have developed an installation for the exhibition.

The **Taíno** populated the island of Hispaniola and the Caribbean islands for millennia. They were the first indigenous people of the western hemisphere to already be declared extinct in the sixteenth century. Disease, war, slavery, and other factors led to the disappearance of the Taíno, with hardly a trace of their culture and language remaining. However, DNA tests of the modern-day population of the islands have in the meantime shown that the Taíno are not extinct.

The collecting of objects in the founding years of ethnographic museums was also motivated by the **premonition of loss**. Scholars feared that the often violent contact with Western civilization was contributing to the disappearance of indigenous groups or might fundamentally transform their cultures. Such stories can be told with objects. However, here we far more often find **narratives of survival**, for example, in objects of the Kayapó and Panará (indigenous groups in the Brazilian Mato Grosso) from the collections of the Weltmuseum Wien. These will be joined by more examples over the course of the exhibition.

In 1987, **rock paintings** that are more than ten thousand years old were discovered in the La Lindosa mountains in the Chiribiquete National Park in Colombia. They are an artistic expression of the relationship of human beings with their environment. Indigenous groups make use of this form of expression even today. The GiPri research group documents and analyses the rock paintings, taking bioclimatic, geological, environment-specific, economic, and social factors into account. The findings of their study reinforce the thesis that the paintings were created over long periods of time and by different cultures. What became of the creators of these paintings?

The exhibition also occupies itself with **extinction in the animal kingdom**. The lonely polar bear on its ice floe serves as a symbol for the climate crisis per se – but there are also other perspectives on polar bears: in Greenland and Canada, indigenous groups have always lived together closely with polar bears, which they hunt as an important source of income and food. The observations and estimations of the local population are not entirely identical to the official endangerment status: according to them, polar bear populations are not decreasing but are instead remaining stable or even increasing.



Endangered languages are also addressed in the exhibition: forecasts estimate that 90 per cent of the more than 6,000 languages that are still spoken today will be extinct by 2100. More accurately, they will be asleep. This is because, as long as there are records and recordings of them, there is still hope that they can be reawakened. One can hear recordings of conversations in the exhibition about endangered languages that took place in January 2023 especially for this exhibition with members of the Wanano/Kotira and Tariana communities in Santa Rosa in the north-western Amazon region of Brazil and the anthropologist Janet Chernela.

The exhibition is ultimately also about immediately imminent extinction: the people of a region or a city like Vienna are characterized by **traditional crafts and trades**. We easily forget that both our cultural forms of expression and our manual capabilities disappear with a craft or trade. In 2018, the gold-beater trade was declared as intangible cultural heritage by UNESCO. Only one workshop in Vienna and another in Schwechat still supply gilders, restorers, stonemasons, sculptors, or artists with hand-beaten gold leaf today.

Please participate!

Visitors can be active at several places in the exhibition and in this way allow their own contributions to flow into it. In this context, it is possible to comment on questions or request additional content. Visitors can also participate in workshops within the framework of the exhibition.

An exhibition in the context of TAKING CARE

The exhibition is part of the **TAKING CARE – Ethnographic and World Cultures Museums as Spaces of Care** project, which started in October 2019. TAKING CARE focuses on ethnographic and global culture museums in the search for potential strategies for researching possible connections between ethnographic collections and questions revolving around the climate crisis and the Anthropocene. This also involves questions in connection with the afterlife of colonialism.

The project, planned for a period of four years, brings together fourteen partner organisations and is co-financed by the EU programme Creative Europe. As of the end of April, another exhibition can be seen in the context of TAKING CARE with *Whatever You Throw at the Sea...* of the South African artist Zara Julius (27 April 2023 to 16 January 2024). Both exhibitions are taking place in the *zam*, the new participatory space of the Weltmuseum Wien.



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Creative Europe Programme
of the European Union





The exhibition team

Curatorial team in the Weltmuseum Wien:

Claudia Augustat
Petra Fuchs-Jebinger
Nora Haas
Christiane Jordan
Doris Prlic (coordination of the TAKING CARE project)
Anna Resch
Renée Riedler

Design: Michaela Noll and Julia Neudorfer

Cooperation partners:

Jorge Estevez, Higuayagua Taino of the Caribbean, Dominican Republic
Carlos Andujar, National Museum of the Dominican Republic
Juan Muñoz, architect, Vienna, with the research group Prehistoric Indigenous Painting, Colombia
Fernanda Olivares, Selk'nam activist, Chile
Selk'nam community Covadonga Ona, Chile
Nicolás Spencer, artist, Chile
Janet Chernela, cultural anthropologist, University of Maryland, USA
Miguel Cabral, member of the Kotiria/Wanao community, Manaus, Brazil
Laura Angela Martins, member of the Tariana community, Manaus, Brazil
Reinhard Maurer, cultural anthropologist, Vienna
Silvia Miklin, lacquer artist, Vienna
Zita Breu, gilder, Vienna
Philipp Hofmann, gold-beater, Vienna
Gerard van Bussel, curator, Weltmuseum Wien
Florian Rainer, conservator, Weltmuseum Wien

With the support of the Embassy of the Dominican Republic



New: **zam** – a participatory space at Weltmuseum Wien

Extinctions!? is the first exhibition that we are presenting in the new participatory space *zam*, the former Galleries of Marvel on the ground floor of the Weltmuseum Wien. In cooperation with communities of memory, societies of origin, and visitors, *zam* raises new questions, shapes and develops them, and ultimately presents contemporary issues in various formats.

zam is a place where people listen to each other, talk to each other, and gain experiences together. It is a place where the roles at the museum are reinterpreted; where, for example, curators provide information, societies of origin tell their stories, and visitors come to curate.

zam is not merely an exhibition space; it is also a production site where work processes become visible and can be experienced first-hand. Visitors are welcome to actively participate in the museum and benefit from a diverse workshop programme. *zam* offers the opportunity to take a closer look at a topic or host small-scale events.

As with the *Galleries of Marvel*, the new *zam* will be accessible free of charge.

Information on current events at *zam* will be available at the Weltmuseum Wien website: <https://www.weltmuseumwien.at/en/programme/>



The next exhibition in *zam*:

Whatever You Throw at the Sea...

Zara Julius

An exhibition in the context of TAKING CARE

27 April 2023 to 2 April 2024

PRESS PHOTOGRAPHS

Press photographs are available in the press section of our website free of charge, for your topical reporting: <https://www.weltmuseumwien.at/presse/>

Belt with Zemi head

Taino, West Indies, c.1500
Cotton, snail shells, wood, fruit pits, pitch charcoal,
brass, concave mirror, resin
Ambras collection, Weltmuseum Wien
© KHM-Museumsverband



Belt with Zemi head

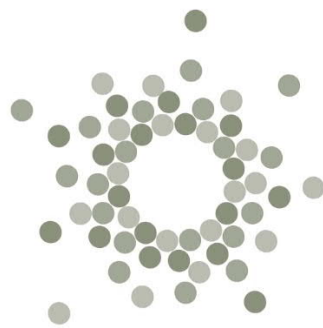
Taino, West Indies, c.1500
cotton, snail shells, wood, fruit pits, pitch charcoal,
brass, concave mirror, resin
Ambras collection, Weltmuseum Wien
© KHM-Museumsverband



Carrying basket

Southern Kayapó, Brazil, 1820
palm leaf, raffia
Pohl collection, Weltmuseum Wien
© KHM-Museumsverband





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Carrying basket

Southern Kayapó, Brazil, 1820
palm leaf, raffia
Pohl collection, Weltmuseum Wien
© KHM-Museumsverband



Feather headdress

Panará, Brazil, c.1975
feathers, plant fibres
Duschl collection, Weltmuseum Wien
© KHM-Museumsverband



String instrument, Mayuri Vina

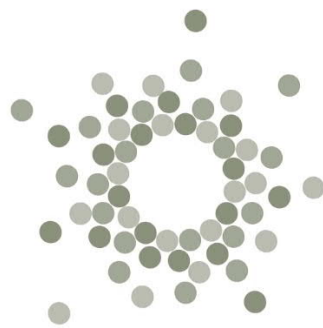
India, 19th century
poliment gilding on wood, textile, bone, metal
strings, peacock feathers, dyed animal skin, animal
hair (bow)
Sourindro Mohun Tagore collection,
Weltmuseum Wien
© KHM-Museumsverband



String instrument, Mayuri Vina

India, 19th century
poliment gilding on wood, textile, bone, metal
strings, peacock feathers, dyed animal skin, animal
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Sourindro Mohun Tagore collection,
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© KHM-Museumsverband





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Book binding

Persia, Iran(?), Safavid period, 10th century AH
(16th century CE)

embossed and gilded goatskin with filigree
decoration, gold leaf, gold paint

Österreichisches Handelsmuseum collection,
Weltmuseum Wien

© KHM-Museumsverband



Buddha Shakyamuni

Thailand, 20th century

polyester cast, acrylic paint, glass stone inlays,
gold leaf

Reinhard Maurer collection, Weltmuseum Wien

© KHM-Museumsverband



Polar bear (hunting amulet/toy?)

Inupiaq, North America\Arctic\USA\Alaska\Singek
Before 1886

Bernard Fillip Jacobsen collection,
Weltmuseum Wien

© KHM-Museumsverband

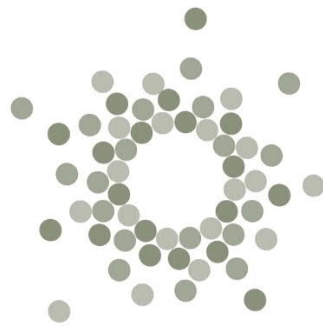


Stonecut print, bear hunt

Irqumia Juanisialuk (1917–1977), facsimile
Collection of La Fédération des coopératives du
Nouveau-Québec, founded 1967,
Weltmuseum Wien

© KHM-Museumsverband





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Selk'nam activist **Fernanda Olivares**
visiting the Weltmuseum Wien
© KHM-Museumsverband



Selk'nam activist **Fernanda Olivares**
and artist **Nicolás Spencer** from Chile
visiting the Weltmuseum Wien
© KHM-Museumsverband



Selk'nam activist **Fernanda Olivares** with curator
Claudia Augustat at the Weltmuseum Wien
© KHM-Museumsverband





OPENING TIMES, TICKETS, ENTRANCE FEES

www.weltmuseumwien.at/en/information/

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION REGARDING YOUR VISIT

Guided tours, bookings and reservations for events

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Information, questions and suggestions

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EXHIBITION PROGRAMMES AND EVENTS

All events can be found online in the [event calendar](#) of the Weltmuseum Wien.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Follow the Weltmuseum Wien on Facebook and Instagram.

JOURNALIST ACCREDITATION

Journalists visiting the KHM-Museumsverband for professional purposes are entitled to free admission to its exhibitions and locations. For this purpose, you need to register via info.pr@weltmuseumwien.at at least two working days in advance.

We request that, in addition to mentioning your medium, you also specify the date of your visit and attach a scan of your valid press pass. Many thanks for your understanding!

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