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If There Were a Tomorrow
Until 9 January 2024

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Saks Afridi
An exhibition as part of *Science Fiction(s)*
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Until 12 September 2023

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Thematic focus 2023:
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Science Fiction(s)
If There Were a Tomorrow
30 March 2023 to 9 January 2024

How do we together shape a future worth living for all? The major annual exhibition *Science Fiction(s) – If There Were a Tomorrow* in the Weltmuseum Wien presents alternative future scenarios against the background of global crises as tools for critiquing the present, decolonization, and healing. With a focus on Indigenous, Black, and Muslim voices, it draws attention to the perspectives of those who are often excluded from Western narratives about the future. Paintings, installations, films, spaceships, costumes for performances, comics, beadwork, and games by 24 international artists invite visitors to think about the limits of art, pop culture, and activism beyond clichés about the technological colonization of space.

Many of the artists use icons from science fiction to tell their own stories and to reinvent the genre. The exhibition is about empowerment, critiques of “science fiction” as a genre that continues colonial narratives, and imagining alternatives.

Indigenous artists show that their lives do not belong to the past, and that they are fighting for their future. They defend themselves against land appropriation and the destruction of their cultural identity. Fictional space travel projects present the journey into the unknown not as a conquest of space, but as a utopian experiment.

“Non-humans” such as algae report on a post-apocalyptic world. With a focus on cosmologies, the exhibition consciously shifts attention to world views that call for responsible action on the part of all and emphasize the connections between people, animals, and other beings.



Space Mosque
Saks Afridi

An exhibition as part of Science Fiction(s)
Theseus Temple, Volksgarten Wien
Until 8 October 2023

In connection with the exhibition *Science Fiction(s) – If There Were a Tomorrow*, Weltmuseum Wien presents the work *SpaceMosque* by Pakistani-American artist Saks Afridi in the Theseus Temple in the Volksgarten. As a spaceship minaret, *SpaceMosque* floats in the midst of the Theseus Temple and raises the question: What if all our prayers come true?

Behind the fusion of Islamic art and spaceship design lies the question of where we direct our desires. In the clash between generosity and greed, in which prayers become a global currency, we are confronted by the question of whether the world really would be better if our prayers were fulfilled? Would morality or selfishness prevail?

Saks Afridi was born in Peshawar, Pakistan, in 1975. He lives and works as an artist and designer in New York. Afridi makes art objects in various media, drawing inspiration from Sufi poetry, Afrofuturism, South Asian folklore, Islamic mythology, science fiction, architecture, and calligraphy. Afridi describes his work, in which he merges storytelling with Islamic mysticism, as "sci-fi Sufism".

Since 2017, Afridi has been working on the *SpaceMosque* project, which is now on view in Europe for the first time after installations in the United States and in Qatar.

Admission to the Theseus Temple is free.



Beyond the Future
Modern Japanese Calligraphy
30 March to 12 September 2023

On the occasion of the 80th anniversary of the calligraphy group *Keiseikai* in 2020, artists planned a memorial exhibition under the motto 'Japanese calligraphers dedicated to Vienna', which had to be postponed due to Covid-19. The artists paid tribute to Austria's and especially Vienna's generous support in 2011, when eastern Japan was hit by a major earthquake that caused the nuclear disaster of Fukushima.

The exhibition was co-financed on the Japanese side by the daily newspaper *Mainichi Shinbun* and the Mainichi Calligraphy Society. It will feature 61 works of art that have already entered into the collection of Weltmuseum Wien. The exhibits represent various calligraphic forms of expression, such as the Chinese *kanji* characters, the *kana* syllabary, the poetic written form of *shibunsho*, the *tenkoku* stone seal stamps, or the carved *kokuji* symbols.

Calligraphy is considered one of the fine arts in East Asia, where it is held in high esteem. It is not a coincidence that paper, brush, ink, and ink stone are called the Four Treasures of the Scholar's Studio.

The history of calligraphy dates to the Bronze Age. In China, in the course of several millennia, early pictograms evolved into traditional writing styles, such as standard and cursive styles or seal script, all of which ultimately ended up in Korea and Japan. The introduction of Buddhism and Confucian teachings stimulated calligraphy and its various styles in Japan, resulting in the development of additional syllabic writing systems.

This exhibition presents a contemporary expression of avant-garde calligraphy, characterized by its fluent transition from script to art. In calligraphy body and mind form a whole. Style and dynamics translate from arm and hand to paper.



Extinctions!?

An exhibition as part of the project *TAKING CARE*
23 February 2023 to 2 April 2024
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 exhibition is part of the *TAKING CARE – Ethnographic and World Cultures Museums as Spaces of Care* project, which started in October 2019. The project 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.



Whatever You Throw at the Sea...

Zara Julius

An exhibition as part of the project *TAKING CARE*

27 April 2023 to 2 April 2024

zam, Weltmuseum Wien

Whatever You Throw at the Sea... is a research-derived audio-visual project by Johannesburg-based artist and researcher Zara Julius. Having critically engaged the collections of the Weltmuseum Wien and those of the Phonogrammarchiv at ÖAW (Austrian Academy of Sciences) during a research residency in the summer of 2022, the project eventually culminates in an installation at Weltmuseum Wien in April 2023. Zara Julius's work considers the ways communities in Africa and the African diaspora have been at the literal frontlines of both ecological and cultural pillaging.

Through sonic assemblage in the form of a limited edition 12" vinyl and use of material from the Weltmuseum Wien's photographic collection, the installation thinks through oceanic and rhythmic logics as bound up in loss, life, death, and possibility.

Zara Julius is an interdisciplinary artist, researcher and vinyl selector. She is concerned with the relationship between performativity, frequency, concealment, and fugitivity in the settler (post) colony, with a special focus on what we call the 'Global South'. Working with sound, video, performance, and objects, Zara Julius' practice involves the collection, selection, collage, and creation of archives (real, imagined, and embodied) through extensive research projects. She is especially engaged in thinking through the internal workings of the Black sonic, and how they might help us imagine new futures, and experience different present(s). She has exhibited and presented her work across South Africa and internationally.

www.zarajulius.com

(Text provided by artist)

The exhibition and residency are part of the project *TAKING CARE – Ethnographic and World Cultures Museums as Spaces of Care*, which is co-funded by the Creative Europe Programme of the European Union.



Fruits of Labour

Maximilian Prüfer

18 May 2023 to 9 July 2024

With *Fruits of Labour*, the Weltmuseum Wien presents the German conceptual artist Maximilian Prüfer (born 1986), whose works deal with human interventions in nature in the age of the Anthropocene and point to their global consequences.

For Prüfer, nature is not a romanticised place, but a highly particular and complex set of rules that has fascinated him since childhood. Starting with the extinction of insects in Europe, especially of bees and wild bees, and the threat this poses to biodiversity, Prüfer addresses numerous ecological issues in his work, including those that occurred as a result of political developments in China in the 1950s and 1960s. *Fruits of Labour* shows the dimension of human effort needed to compensate for the loss of biodiversity. It fundamentally questions the relationship between humans and nature.

Prüfer's works - from installation to photography and film - are set in relation to objects from the collections of the Weltmuseum Wien and are complemented by loans from the Naturhistorisches Museum Wien.

Prüfer was inspired for his series of works presented at the Weltmuseum Wien by a trip to Sichuan province. There he found a valley without insects and birds where people pollinate the fruit trees by hand. A political campaign initiated by Mao Zedong (1893-1976) in 1958 to eradicate the four plagues (rats, flies, mosquitoes and sparrows) during the "Great Leap Forward" led, among other things, to a massive ecological imbalance of nature. As a result millions of people died of starvation. The effects can still be felt today. In regions of Sichuan province, the unnatural silence remains audible.

Maximilian Prüfer's photographic works *Performance - Hand Pollination* and *From Flower to Flower* testify to the human ingenuity of taking over the task of pollinating insects such as bees and wild bees and performing hand pollination on fruit trees.



In his staging of a single fruit - the pear - Prüfer refers to another of Mao's political campaigns of 1968 - the heroisation of the mango. Mao received mangoes, exotic fruits, as a gift from Pakistan's foreign minister. Mao gave them to the workers' and peasants' propaganda troops who had supported him. From then on, mangoes symbolised Mao's care and kindness and were reproduced many times in different materials.

The disappearance of pollinating insect species and the decline in biodiversity must also chasten us in Europe and Austria. The wild bee specimens on display from the collection of the Naturhistorisches Museum Wien are evidence of species of wild bees that are already extinct in Austria.

We humans are responsible for landscape destruction, excessive cultivation, monocultures, the use of chemical plant protection agents, and climate change. The exhibition is meant to inspire and make us think about how to deal carefully with the fragile ecosystem in which we live.

Maximilian Prüfer was born in Weilheim in 1986. He studied design and communication strategy in Augsburg and art in Bologna. In his work, Prüfer is primarily concerned with the exploration of natural processes and their transfer into visual media. In doing so, he explores existential, philosophical and political themes in relation to evolution and the manipulation of the ecosystem by humans. Particularly characteristic of his artistic practice is the recording of animal traces, which he calls nature antipodes. In doing so, the artist explores forms of collective intelligence of animals such as snails, ants and bees and the relationship to society and human instinct.



Thematic focus 2023:
150 Years Vienna World's Fair

In 2023 Vienna celebrates the 150th anniversary of the Vienna World's Fair in 1873. The Weltmuseum Wien will join the festivities and focus on the topic a whole year long:

Encounters in Vienna

The Vienna World's Fair of 1873 was a platform for meetings and exchange. It was the first world exhibition after the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 and offered ample opportunities to establish trade relationships.

Morocco, Egypt, Tunisia, the Ottoman Empire, and Persia were represented with own pavilions in Vienna. The newly formed 'oriental quarter' featured replicas of original buildings and presented local arts and crafts as well as resources. The Shah of Persia, Naser-al-Din, visited Austria on the occasion of the World's Fair, while western Asian countries were introduced to industrial processes. In Vienna the exhibition sparked a distinct oriental fashion trend: carpets, glasses, and ceramics modelled after oriental examples found their way into Vienna's households. The newly established Oriental Museum acquired collections presented at the World's Fair and stayed in touch with contacts to the Middle East. These collections gradually ended up at today's Weltmuseum Wien and MAK – Museum of Applied Arts Vienna; the museum itself evolved into today's Vienna University of Economics and Business.

1873 – Japan comes to Europe

The Vienna World's Fair also marked a particularly important moment in the history of Japan. After being forced by external pressure to open up, and after an interior restructuring of the country, Japan found itself in turmoil at the time of the World's Fair. Following the abolition of the old feudal system in the course of the Meiji Restoration, Japan endeavoured to present itself in Europe as a modern state. A commission, to which also foreigners such as the brothers Alexander and Heinrich von Siebold belonged, was formed in Japan. According to



the officially published catalogue, this group compiled over 6,000 objects to be presented in Vienna.

As one of the key themes of the exhibition in Vienna was architecture, Japan sent several architecture models to Europe. One of the largest items exhibited in the Japanese pavilion and today the central object in the Japan gallery of the Weltmuseum Wien is the model of a Daimyo residence of the Edo period (1600–1868).

The Vienna World's Fair was the first and only universal exhibition in the German-speaking region until the Expo 2000 in Hanover, Germany. It ushered in the period of Viennese Modernism.

Programme

From January to December 2023, the museum will offer a **guided tour** (alternating between German and English) entitled *The Vienna World's Fair 1873 and Art Nouveau* every Saturday at 11 am. Moreover, visitors will receive a **free booklet** (German/English) with information on the Vienna World's Fair 1873 as well as on objects in the collections of Weltmuseum Wien and Kunsthistorisches Museum either displayed at or entered into the collections after the World's Fair.

Find out more about the Vienna World's Fair 1873 and the supporting programme at Weltmuseum Wien on the **museum website**:

weltmuseumwien.at/en/programme/150-years-vienna-worlds-fair

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/>

Nicholas Galanin
***Things Are Looking Native,
Native's Looking Whiter***
2012

Giclée print

© Nicholas Galanin, courtesy of the artist and
Peter Blum Gallery, New York



SpaceMosque. Saks Afridi

Exhibition view

© KHM-Museumsverband



Belt with Zemi head

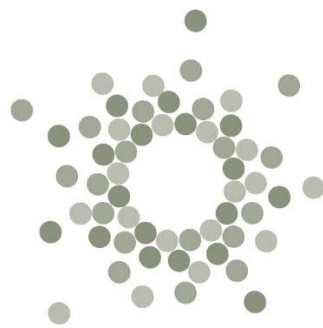
Taino, West Indies, c.1500

Cotton, snail shells, wood, fruit pits, pitch charcoal,
brass, concave mirror, resin

Ambras collection, Weltmuseum Wien

© KHM-Museumsverband





welt
museum
wien

Zara Julius

© Photo: Andile Buka



MATUMOTO Youshi 松本燁之
Sky above the Tower of Babel
「バベルの塔」の空
Collection Weltmuseum Wien
© KHM-Museumsverband



Maximilian Prüfer
Honey Picture 1
2022, photo print
© Studio Maximilian Prüfer 2023



Interior view of the Japanese pavilion
Photograph of the Vienna World's Fair 1873
Josef Löwy
© 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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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 presse@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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