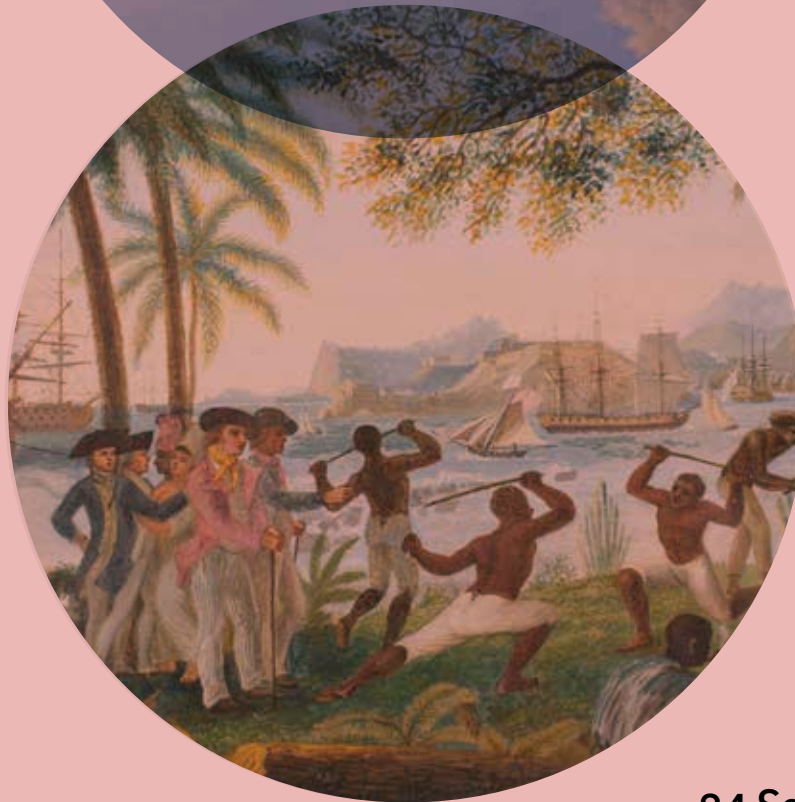


Exotic?

Switzerland Looking Outward
in the Age of Enlightenment

Palais de Rumine
Lausanne
Switzerland



exhibition
24 September 2020
to 28 February 2021

press
release

Exotic?

Switzerland Looking Outward in the Age of Enlightenment

24 September 2020 to 28 February 2021

Palais de Rumine, Lausanne, Switzerland

Opening: 23 September 2020, 6.00 p.m.

Press Visit: 23 September 2020, 10.00 a.m.

What is exotic?

How long has this word been used? How do we define what is exotic and what is not?

Is Switzerland exotic?

In Europe, the Enlightenment is a key period in building up this view, of which we are still the heirs.

This era was that of both human rights and the quadrangular trade, including trade in enslaved people. It can be reread critically.

Swiss history is often only considered within the borders of Europe, but the Swiss maintained close and complex ties with distant countries.

Why this exhibition?

This exhibition is the result of a collaboration between the team of Professor Noémie Étienne (Bern University, Swiss National Science Foundation) and the three museums of science and history of the Palais de Rumine. 'Exotic?' will be presented in the large temporary exhibition rooms of the Palais. It offers a historical and critical perspective in order to understand the emergence of this view of the Other and the acts of classification that accompanied it. Indeed, nothing is 'exotic' in itself: exoticism

is the product of representations, mediations, and translations, which assign a place to things and people in a given historical and political context.

This exhibition depicts the image of a dynamic and complex Switzerland that became part of the world, mostly through individual initiatives. It also adds complexity to an idealised interpretation of the 18th century, which was certainly an era of great scientific and artistic innovation but also of the first economic globalisation, and colonisation.

The issues of colonialism, power, gender, race and economy are at the heart of this exhibition, which aims at reflecting about Switzerland's past, especially the careers of individuals who wished to take part in colonisation and international trade.

Who were Swiss travellers in the 18th century?

Many Swiss People travelled beyond the borders, mostly individually. However, these journeys were often made under the aegis of a foreign crown and were often linked to economic, political, and religious networks that could go beyond the borders of the territory (Huguenot, banking, missionary, foreign service, and military networks). These travellers settled in the countries they visited and developed their careers in close cooperation with the peoples and territories concerned.

The objects that were collected by artists and scientists in the 18th century were brought back to Switzerland and included in local collections. Two types of collection can be differentiated:

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on one hand, those made through intermediaries that accompanied British and French national explorations, and on the other hand those created directly by Swiss People. During these voyages, which lasted several years, the crews collected objects and specimens that they brought back to Europe and then traded or sold. At the same time, they kept travel journals and filled sketchbooks in which they described the objects and the contexts of what they collected as well as the peoples they encountered.

The nature of the objects that were collected by Swiss People has many commonalities with examples that can be studied in neighbouring countries. One of the characteristics was the use of collections for education, particularly due to the presence of cabinets in the Protestant Academies, such as in Lausanne and Zurich. This use was part of a pedagogical process that favoured a pragmatic view of things, and differentiated the cabinets of the Swiss Academies from the German 'Wunderkammer', the royal cabinets and the princely collections of European courts.

Innovation and technology transfer

The circulation of techniques and objects that came from the outside world promoted the development of new technologies all over Europe and especially in Switzerland. This was the case of the porcelain factories in Zurich and Nyon that produced for a local clientele. However, other factories that developed in Switzerland manufactured objects (watches, enamels) for export to China and Turkey. The cities of Basel, Geneva and Neuchâtel also produced printed textiles known as 'Indian chintz', imitating a technique used in India.

Is Switzerland exotic?

Switzerland became gradually a subject of curiosity for travellers who were interested in its folklore and landscapes: it was therefore

exotic for those who visited it. This movement was prepared from the 18th century onward by the inhabitants of the large cities: they built up an image of Alpine and rural cultures that was a great success and that can still be found today in advertising and in tourist marketing.

Public and cultural mediation

The exhibition aims at reaching all kinds of people, especially through a varied scientific and cultural programme, while putting forward a new approach to Swiss history. It will attempt to connect the images that were produced in the 17th and 18th centuries to imaginations by offering avenues for thinking about alterity today through a historical perspective and contemporary art (performances, sounds, images). In view of the sensitive subject, many mediation activities will accompany this exhibition: guided tours and workshops, of course, but also a play produced by high school students, short films made by the students of the Swiss film director Lionel Baier at the University of Art and Design ECAL, lectures in coffee grounds by the Women Telling The Future collective, lectures, and a partnership with the programme of the Vidy theatre.

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Objects displayed

The exhibition will bring together 150 pieces from more than 30 Swiss collections and cultural institutions. Most of these pieces are very rarely shown.

The typologies of the objects are diverse: specimens of natural history, paintings, textiles, porcelains, non-European artefacts, archives, books and maps.

Contemporary artists

There will be a selection of works by contemporary artists (Marie van Berchem, Fabien Clerc, Susan Hefuna, Senam Okudzeto and Uriel Orlow), giving a different perspective of the exhibited objects and of the more general aims of the exhibition.



Georg Franz Müller, untitled ("A Persian, A Japanese, An Eastern Tartare"), in Georg Franz Müller, *Travel Account of the Alsatian world traveller Georg Franz Müller*, between 1669 and 1682, St.Gallen, Stiftsbibliothek, Cod. Sang. 1311, p. 49 (<https://www.e-codices.ch/de/list/one/csg/1311>). © Stiftsbibliothek St. Gallen.

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Agenda

- **23 September 2020, 6.00 p.m.**

Opening

- **3 October and 6 December 2020**

Women telling the Future

Coffee grounds reading and fortune telling

- **8 October 2020**

Public screening of short films

White card for ECAL film students, under the direction of Lionel Baier

- **25 October 2020 and 9 January 2021**

Exotic Travel Diaries

Writing workshops lead by Emmanuelle Ryser and Michel Krafft

- **27 November 2020, 6 to 7.15 p.m.**

Slavery and Switzerland. Then and now

Round table discussion about the role of Swiss in the slave trade during the 18th century, coming to terms with the past from a post-colonial perspective and modern forms of slavery.

- **28-29 January 2021**

Global Provenance. Revisiting Appropriated Heritage in the Light of Inclusive Partnerships?

International conference

- **6-7 February 2021**

Ciné au Palais

Exoticism in cinema

- **18-19 February 2021**

Swiss Art in/and the World

Scientific workshop

Other events

Dates to be assigned

- Workshop *Health through Plants?*

Guided tour of an herbalist's shop in the company of a botanist

- Workshop *The Art of the Table*

How do you set a table, in different times and places?

- Workshop *Around Spices*

Making Christmas cookies while learning where the spices come from

- Workshop *Gestures and Vocabulary of Salutations around the World and accross Time*

- Theater collaborations

With Lausanne's high schools and Théâtre de Vidy

- Guided tours

By migrants, artists and museum staff

- Taste tours

History and tasting of teas and coffees

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Stakeholders and partners of the project

Commissioners

Noémie Etienne,
Claire Brizon,
Chonja Lee,
University of Bern, Swiss National Science Foundation

Coordination

Etienne Wismer,
University of Bern, Swiss National Science Foundation

Organising Museums

Cantonal Museum of Archaeology and History
(Julia Genechesi and Lionel Pernet)
Cantonal Museum of Geology
(Gilles Borel)
Cantonal Museum of Zoology
(Michel Sartori).

Scenography and graphic design

Frédéric Dedelley, Zürich
Jocelyne Fracheboud, Paris

Partners

Association du Palais des Savoirs,
Bibliothèque cantonale
et universitaire (BCU) Lausanne,
Musée et jardins botaniques cantonaux,
Théâtre de Vidy,
ECAL,
Gymnase de Beaulieu à Lausanne

Book to accompany the exhibition

Exotic Switzerland? Looking Outward in the Age of Enlightenment, edited by Noémie Étienne, Claire Brizon, Chonja Lee and Étienne Wismer. Editions Diaphanes, Zurich/Berlin, forthcoming.

Visitor information

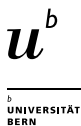
Palais de Rumine,
Place de la Riponne 6,
1005 Lausanne

Tuesday-Sunday: 10.00 a.m.-5.00 p.m.,
closed on Monday

Price: full price 8 francs, reduced price 5 francs.
Free for visitors under the age of 25
and on the first Saturday of the month.

Information and contact

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Unrecorded Maker(s) (Canton, China), *A milkmaid of Soleure*,
after engravings by Samuel Graenicher and Christian von Mechel, 1790-1810,
reverse glass painting, Musée historique de la ville de Lausanne, I 56 20.
© Musée historique de la ville de Lausanne.

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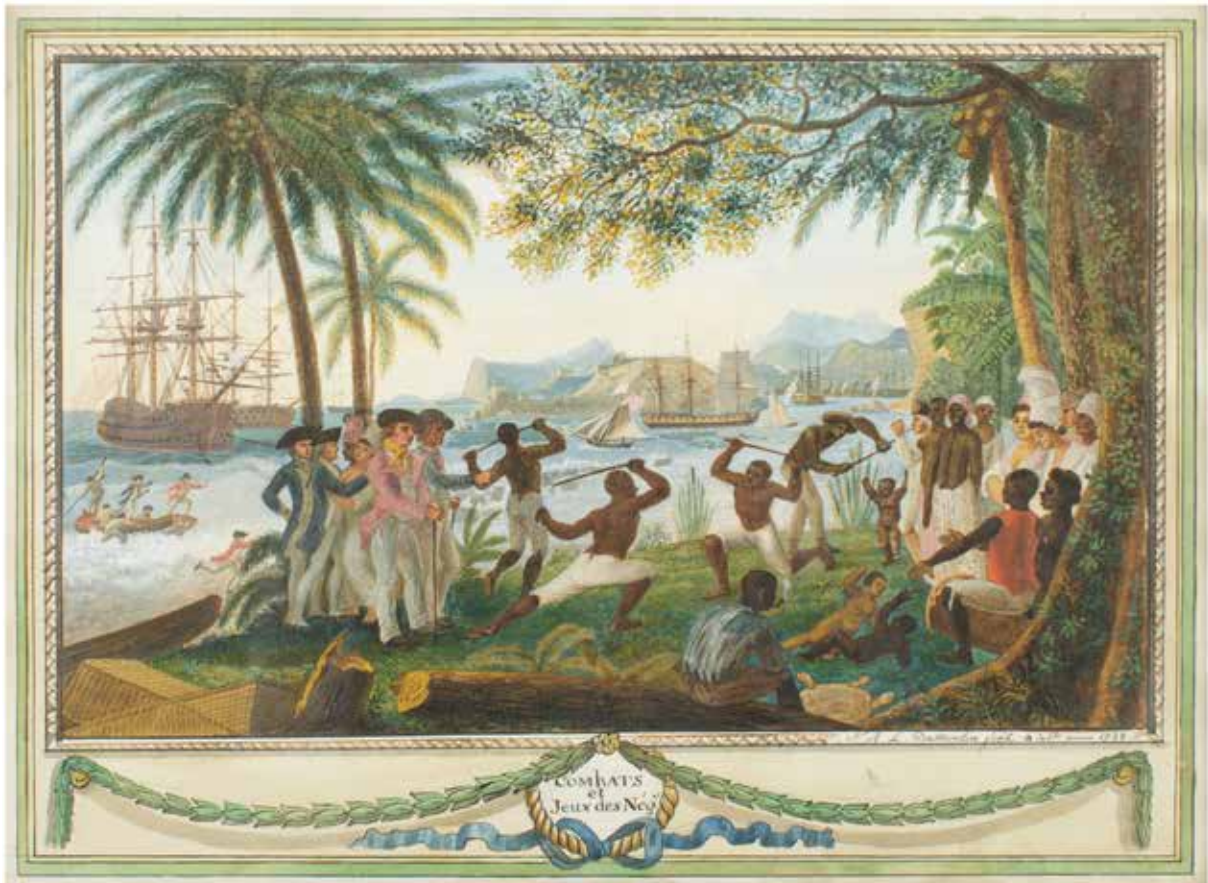


Frank Christian, *Nautilus Goblet*, circa 1680,
donated to Cabinet de la bibliothèque de Genève by Anne-Catherine Trembley in 1730,
Ville de Genève, Musée d'art et d'histoire, G 0937.
© Musées d'art et d'histoire, Ville de Genève. Photographer: Bettina Jacot-Descombes

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François Aimé Louis Dumoulin, *Combats et Jeux des Nègres*, 1788,
watercolour on paper, Musée historique de Vevey, 3494.
© Musée historique de Vevey – Ville de Vevey.

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Pierre-Louis De la Rive, *Le Mont-Blanc vu de Sallanches au coucher du soleil*, 1802,
oil on canvas, acquisition, 1969, Musée d'art et d'histoire, Ville de Genève, 1969-0022.
© Musées d'art et d'histoire, Ville de Genève. Photographer: Yves Siza.

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Jean-Etienne Liotard, *Simon Luttrell, future Earl of Carhampton*, 1753-1754,
oil on canvas, property of the City of Bern, permanent loan to Kunstmuseum Bern, G 1402.

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Franz Ludwig Michel, Extract from *Travelogue to America*, 1701-1702, Burgerbibliothek Bern, Mss.h.h.X.152, f. 64r.

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Unrecorded Maker(s) (New Caledonia/Melanesia), *Gi okono* or *N'bouet*, 18th century, probably collected during the an expedition led by Antoine Bruny d'Entrecasteaux, Delessert Collection, donated 1824, Musée cantonal d'archéologie et d'histoire de Lausanne, V/B-025. © Musée cantonal d'archéologie et d'histoire de Lausanne.

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Unrecorded Maker(s) (China?), *Pair of shoes for bandaged feet (Lotus shoes)*, collected between 1669 and 1682, Georg Franz Müller Collection, St. Gallen, Stiftsbibliothek, 16. © Stiftsbibliothek St. Gallen.

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Unrecorded Maker(s) (France, Europe), *Celestial Globe*, 18th century,
Louis de Treytorrens Collection,
Bibliothèque cantonale et universitaire BCU Lausanne.

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Joseph Mallord William Turner and Charles Turner, *Lake of Thun, Swiss*, 1808, etching, drypoint and mezzotint, Swiss National Library, Prints and Drawings Department, GS-GRAF-ANSI-BE-216.

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