

animalistic! No Culture Without Animals

In recent decades, the relationship between humans and animals has been fundamentally reassessed. Animals are no longer viewed just as the passive recipients of human action, but are understood as beings endowed with animal agency of their own. Occasionally they are viewed as subjects that act actively and shape the world on a par with humans.

Fixture in our lives – Animals are important players in the lives of humans who themselves shape the lives of animals. Humans and animals share the same homes, humans breed animals in order to consume them, and laugh at stunts performed by circus animals. Which roles do humans play? Which roles do animals play? What shape does coexistence take on the one hand, and avoidance of each other on the other?

Materialized – Objects testify to how humans interact with animals. In the form of statues, animals are worshipped as gods; yokes and cowbells are evidence of their exploitation, but can also express human appreciation of animals, while the merry-go-round horse invites us to have fun riding round and round. How does the relationship between humans and animals take shape? What aspects influence the connection? Do they reveal the transition from object to subject?

“animalistic! No Culture Without Animals” reveals various facets of the relationship between humans and animals, and how it can differ. To be an animal within human society has little to do with biology, and everything to do with culture.

Closeness

Intimacy in the relationship between humans and animals was not always a given. A sense of closeness developed over the long process of domestication. In recent decades, the number of pets in the Global North has rapidly increased, and now supports an industry worth billions. As humans provide for animals, animals profit from coexistence with humans, but there is a price to be paid for that: if they had to be self-sufficient, many animals would not survive. Humans look after their pets and in return receive love, affection, and company. The day-to-day lives of humans are not just filled with real animals, however: people surround themselves with a multitude of animal forms, ranging from utensils to toys to figurines. In books, films, and online, too, animals are found everywhere – and some have even shot to stardom.

Domestication

Humans and animals have become accustomed to each other over thousands of years. Formerly wild animals have now come to depend physically, if not also emotionally, on their humans. Selective breeding has allowed humans to modify animals for their own purposes, with certain traits or external characteristics selected.

The emotional bond between humans and animals can be intense: pets have a name, live under the same roof as their owners, enjoy a fixed place within the home and family routine – and are not eaten. They are very much part of people’s social and cultural life.

- 1 “Lady-in-pink” soft harness; made in Italy, purchased in Switzerland; 2021; synthetic fur, fabric,
metal, hook-and-loop fastener, plastic; purchased in 2021; VI 72187
- 2 Lady with dog; Imaginerie d'Épinal, France; 20th c.; paper, wood; Hans Peter His, bequest in 1974;
H 1063.06
- 3 “First Swiss index of dog names”; Bern, Switzerland; 1974; paper; VI 68503.01
- 4 Anti-rabies vaccine for dogs *darnouh*; Tunis, Tunisia; before 1968; beetles; Germaine Winterberg,
purchased in 1968; III 17545w
- 5 “Knotie” toy for dental hygiene in dogs; Germany/Switzerland; 2021; cotton; purchased in 2021;
VI 72188
- 6 “Donut Safari” dog bed; Switzerland; 2021; artificial fur, plastic, filling material; purchased in 2021;
VI 72182
- 7 “Poodle Club” by Ursula Sprecher and Andi Cortellini; Basel, Switzerland; 2008; lightbox
photographic image; on loan from the artists
- 8 “Feels Good” hoodie for dogs; made in Italy, purchased in Switzerland; 2021; fabric, plastic, metal;
purchased in 2021; VI 72186
- 9 Leash and collar with Burberry design; Switzerland; 2021; plastic, fabric, metal; purchased in 2021;
VI 72189
- 10 Boat ticket for dog travelling from Thun to Interlaken; Thun, Switzerland; ca. 1950; cardboard, colour;
Gérard Böckner, gifted in 1985; VI 60105b
- 11 Sunglasses for dogs; Switzerland; 2021; plastic, textile; purchased in 2021; VI 72184.01
- 12 Vaccination certificate for dogs; Switzerland; 1964-1971; paper; Luise Bojanus, gifted in 1997;
VI 68598.03-04
- 13 Spiked dog collar; Bilecik, Turkey; before 1971; wrought iron; Arnold Niederer, gifted in 1971; VI 38731

Materialized

Besides real animals, “unreal” animals are also ubiquitous in people’s lives. Children are given animals practically from birth, and they grow up with all kinds of animal-shaped toys. Bric-a-brac, kitsch, or utensils in animal form are a feature of the lives of adults, too. The presence of animals is wanted – humans wish to be near to animals.

- 14 Carousel horse; Basel, Switzerland; ca. 1880; wood, lacquer, paint; Hans Peter His, bequest in 1974;
VI 48490.01
- 15 Trailing duck; Czech Republic; ca. 1995; wood, paint; Robert and Cécile Hiltbrand-Grimmeisen, gifted
in 2014; RH 16063
- 16 Bird whistle; Luino, Lombardy, Italy; 1975; plastic; Theo Gantner, gifted in 1980; VI 52672.01
- 17 Teddy bear; Germany; 20th c.; fabric, plush, wood wool, wool, glass; gifted anonymously in 2012;
VI 71537
- 18 Donkey mask; Mexico; before 2014; cardboard, newsprint, paint; AMEX Basilea, purchased on behalf
of MKB in 2014; IVb 5875
- 19 Bird-shaped toy animal; Bengal, India or Bangladesh; before 1959; bronze or brass; Georges Gogel,
purchased in 1959; IIa 2263
- 20 Elephant; Matanumadh, Gujarat, India; before 1971; terracotta, colour; Eberhard Fischer, purchased
in 1971; IIa 5305
- 21 Toy stag beetle; China; before 2014; tin; Robert and Cécile Hiltbrand-Grimmeisen, gifted in 2014;
RH 14855
- 22 Stingray-shaped bowl; Boyowa, Trobriand Islands, Papua New Guinea; before 1929; wood, lime; Baron
Paul Berens von Rautenfeld, bequest in 1957; Vb 14102
- 23 Wooden bench *musärä*; Bipalata, Rio Parú, Brazil; between 1963 and 1970; wood, bone, paint;
Manfred Rauschert, purchased in 1971; IVc 14827
- 24 Double bottle with neck in the shape of a bird's head; Moche; Peru; 100-800; terracotta; Eduard
Gaffron, purchased in 1910; IVc 275
- 25 Clay pipe; Caltagirone, Sicily, Italy; ca. 1972; clay, paint, wire; Hans Peter His, bequest in 1974; H 1053

- 26 Toy horse; Thebes, Egypt; before 1979; wood, paint, wool thread; Nes Purtscher, gifted in 1979; VI 50145
- 27 Toy cow; Aosta Valley, Italy; wood; Jules Brocherel, purchased in 1930; VI 11046
- 28 Tiger cushion; Shanxi Province, China; 2nd half 20th c.; polyester, colour, metal; Myriam Michel-LeGallo, gifted in 2010; IId 15135
- 29 Duck; Milingimbi, Arnhem Land, Australia; before 1962; wood, paint; Karel Kupka, purchased in 1962; Va 1230
- 30 Figure of a dog *assu*; Nikiniki, Amanuban, Timor, Indonesia; before 1935; wood, metal; Alfred Bühler, purchased in 1935; IIc 5312
- 31 Callus rasp; India; mid-20th century; brass; Werner Rothpletz, gift from estate in 1980; IIa 7824
- 32 Wooden cow carved by Arnold Trachsler; Engstligenalp, Adelboden, Switzerland; before 1985; wood, leather; Robert and Cécile Hiltbrand-Grimmeisen, gifted in 2014; RH 13700
- 33 Figure of a deer; Arrazola, Oaxaca, Mexico; between 1965 and 1990; wood, paint, metal; Marcelle Geiger-Vifian; IVb 6357
- 34 Geese with flexible necks; Erzgebirge, Saxony, Germany; ca. 1920; wood, paint; previous owner: Ludvik Kunz, Hans Peter His, bequest in 1974; H 0154.01-02
- 35 Wisa Gloria rocking swan; Lenzburg, Switzerland; ca. 1960; wood, paint; on private loan
- 36 Figure of a dog with fish in its snout *hirato*; Japan; before 1923; porcelain, colour; heirs of Hans Burckhardt-Burckhardt, bequest in 1923; IId 1323
- 37 Standing jaguar; Karajá; Santa Isabel, Brazil; ca. 1955; terracotta; Hans Dietschy, purchased in 1955; IVc 8309
- 38 Toy monkey; Japan; before 1969; tin; Robert and Cécile Hiltbrand-Grimmeisen, gifted in 2014; RH 2567
- 39 Cat-shaped cookie cutter; Hanover, Pennsylvania, USA; 20th c.; sheet metal; Theo Gantner, gifted in 1991; VI 64183.01
- 40 Wind-up toy frog; China; before 1991; tin; Robert and Cécile Hiltbrand-Grimmeisen, gifted in 2014; RH 14828
- 41 Crocodile hand puppet; Basel, Switzerland; 20th century; wood, fabric, felt, colour; VI 70644.04
- 42 Cat with vacuum Hoover; Japan; 1958; tin; Katzenmuseum Riehen, gifted in 1999; VI 70798
- 43 Pestle in the shape of a bird's head; Aztec; Mexico; 1450-1521; stone, basalt; Lukas Vischer, gifted from family estate; IVb 619
- 44 Pig-shaped pot; San Cristobal, Solomon Islands; before 1929; wood, mother-of-pearl, *Cypraea* shell; Eugen Paravicini, purchased in 1929; Vb 7182
- 45 Toy camel on wheels; Cornaux, Switzerland; early 20th c.; wool, felt, sheepskin, trimmings, metal thread, beads, sequins, iron, wood; Josette Frey de Perrot, gifted in 1972; VI 41155

Story-telling

Animals are often substituted for humans in stories to reflect human behaviour. They are concerned with the similarities humans recognize in animals and project onto them. Animals take a starring role in stories in many genres. They are found in literature, comics, on television and the Internet. Communication, language, and the reversal of human and animal roles are central themes.

Lol, laughing out loud – The Internet is awash with animal formats such as animal *memes*. In the case of *lolcats*, images are captioned with *lolspeak*, the amusing thoughts attributed to the feline subject. The use of non-standard grammar and spelling is quite intentional.

46 Internet station: *lolcats*

Three wise monkeys – The image of the three wise monkeys that see no evil, speak no evil, or hear no evil has its roots in a Japanese proverb. Now well-known everywhere, in this oil painting it is applied to conditions in Mali. The slogan reads, “For a better life in this world”. In the red, yellow, and green of the Malian flag, the statement becomes political

47 Three monkeys; Bamako, Mali; before 1987; canvas, paint; Bernhard Gardi, purchased in 1987; III 24659

The story of a dog – This illustration of three figures tells two stories: on the one hand, the kimono-clad dog instructs the ritual specialist to enable him to interpret the future; on the other hand, it represents an appointment between a doctor and a patient, in this case the dog. The dog feels ill and asks the doctor for help. He enquires about symptoms and suggests a cure, for which the dog is very grateful. This woodblock print is by the famous Japanese artist Tsukioba Yoshitoshi.

48 Woodblock print *inu no hanashi* (The story of a dog); Kanto, Tokyo, Japan; ca. 1861; ink, colour, Japanese *washi* paper; Alice Keller; gifted in 1979; IId 7427

Kitsch cats – As cherished pets, cats are popular subjects when it comes to messages that are intended to stir the viewer's emotions. To this end, cats are trivialized and sentimentalized. Cats are made to appear human – and not just through the words that are put in their mouths.

49 Installation of postcards featuring cats from the museum's European Department
50 Portrait of a woman and cat; Japan; before 1973; silk, Japanese *washi* paper; H. R. Geigy-Köchlin; gifted in 1973; IId 8489

Usages

The transition from hunting/gathering to sedentism and farming between 12,000 and 9,000 BC fundamentally changed the relationship between humans and animals. Humans began to use animals not only for purposes of work and transport, but also as sources of food such as honey, eggs, milk, and meat. Animal skins, fur, wool, feathers or hair found a wide variety of uses.

In this relationship, humans assumed the role of master; animals became their property. In the economic processes involved in dominating nature, animals and their behaviour were and still are optimized for profit by means of breeding. Humans now depend on animal products.

Valued

Animals are more than an economic factor. Many livestock farmers feel close to their animals and value them. There are certain occasions when animals are richly decorated with elaborate objects. Decorations not only enhance the look of animals; they are also intended to protect them from misfortune.

Valuable oxen

Oxen are important as draught animals in the subsistence farming of South Asia. Still viewed as a source of wealth and prestige, they are held in correspondingly high regard – as expressed in the decorations made for their horns and foreheads.

51 Necklace for oxen; India; before 1959; bronze; Georges Gogel, purchased in 1959; IIa 2246

52 Headdress for bulls; Saurashtra or Maharashtra, India; before 1967; yellow metal; Eberhard Fischer, purchased in 1967; IIa 4126

53 Decoration for ox horns; Rajasthan, India; before 1984; silk, cotton, mirror, shells; Joss Graham, purchased in 1984; IIa 10017

54 Decoration for ox horns; Colombo, Sri Lanka; before 1907; brass; Paul and Fritz Sarasin, gifted in 1907; IIa 400+401

The Nuer and their cattle – The breeding, rearing, use, and veneration of cattle permeated the lives of the Nuer. They looked after them, saw to their needs, and performed even everyday tasks like milking or pasturing with a deep sense of appreciation. The relationship between the Nuer and their cattle was understood to be symbiotic: both parties had services to provide and forged a close community in which cattle were viewed as members of human society and even as relatives of their owners.

55 Shield; Nuer; Sudan; before 1955; leather, wood; CA. L. Burckhardt-Reinhardt Foundation, gifted in 1955; III 13313

Mythical Alps

In the Alps, there is a tradition of decorating domestic cattle. For the duration of the summer, many farmers drive their cattle up to alpine pastures. The ascent in the spring, but more especially the descent in the autumn, is accompanied by various rituals. If all the cows survive the summer, they are decorated with splendid floral wreaths for their descent. In many places, a large cowbell is hung around the necks of the best cows.

56 “*Poya*”-style painting of a cattle drive up to high pastures, painted by Aimé Mesot; Vuadens, Fribourg, Switzerland; ca. 1920; oil paint, canvas; Heimatwerk Zürich, purchased in 1973; VI 41786

57 Cowbell collar “Nicolla”; Fribourg, Switzerland; 1626; iron, maple wood; R. Grumser, purchased in 1909; VI 2883

58 Prestigious cowbell; Fribourg, Switzerland; 17th century, sheet metal; Robert Schwaller, gifted in 2010; VI 70646

59 Cowbell buckle; Fribourg, Switzerland; probably 17th c.; iron, leather; Museum der Landschaft Saanen, gifted in 2010; VI 70647

60 Wreath for cows’ horns; Bad Goisern, Austria; before 1966; Bärlapp; Ernst Burgstaller, purchased in 1966; VI 32688

61 Decoration for heifers returning to the valley; Upper Ennstal, Styria, Austria; before 1965; fabric, crepe paper, glossy paper, mirror, tissue paper, metal foil, cotton ribbon; Karl Haiding, purchased in 1965; VI 32370

62 Decoration for the horns on the cow leading the *Hörnerschoadn* descent; upper Ennstal, Styria, Austria; before 1965; wrapping paper, fabric, glossy paper, tissue paper, metal foil, crepe or wax paper, silk ribbon, silver ribbon, linen ribbon; Karl Haiding, purchased in 1965; VI 32367a+b

Survival artists

Camels live and work in hot and cold climate zones – from the Sahara to the steppes of Central Asia. Tough, strong, and possessed of great stamina, camels can cover great distances without food or water. With a body weight of around 600 kg, they can carry loads of up to 200 kg on long journeys. Appreciation of the animals is reflected in a rich storytelling tradition, in the amount of time a rider or camel herder devotes to his animals, and in their trappings: belts, bridles, and saddles can be elaborately made and richly decorated.

63 Camel strap; Aswan, Nubian Desert, Egypt; before 1955; wool, felt, cowrie shell; Burckhardt-Reinhardt Foundation, 1955; III 13662

64 Camel face covering; Afghanistan; before 1978; wool, cotton, silk; G. Redard, purchased in 1978; IIa 6965

65 Necklace for a camel; Sindh, Pakistan; before 1974; cotton, mirror, sequins, glass beads; Georges Gogel, purchased in 1974; IIa 6030

66 Tassel from a camel bridle; Makran, Baluchistan, Pakistan; before 1973; wool, goat hair, cowrie shell, *soumak* cloth, brass; Georges Gogel, purchased/gifted in 1973; IIa 5743g

Consumption

Animals supply products that people use to eat or wear, for instance. In the eyes of many individuals, such uses are incompatible with animal welfare. For this reason, many choose to be vegetarian or vegan as they seek to reduce or eliminate their use of animal products. This not only refers to issues of nutrition, but the use of any type of animal product. Such practices question how we ensure the ethical treatment of farm animals, and reset the relationship between humans and animals.

67 “Delivery: man with hogs walks through Chinatown” by Chien-Chi Chang; 1998; New York, USA; photographic image on fabric in a light box; on loan from the artist

68 “Animals are Friends not Food – Go Vegan” T-shirt; made in Bangladesh; 2021; cotton, vinyl; purchased in 2021; VI 72185

Milk – For thousands of years, humans have used the milk of cows, goats, and sheep, but also of camels, mares, jennies (female donkeys), yaks, and reindeer. In many places, dairy farming is central to nutrition and is socially significant. Over the course of the 20th century, milking in the Global North was gradually industrialized. The focus lay on the improved breeding of cows so as to increase milk yield.

69 Device to prevent young camels from suckling; Aswan, Nubian Desert, Egypt; before 1954; wood, fabric; Burckhardt-Reinhart Foundation, gifted in 1954; III 13297

70 Milking stool; Fénis, Aosta Valley, Italy; ca. 1880; wood, paint, iron; purchased in 1930; VI 10984

71 Label for powdered milk and dietary supplement; Germany; 20th century; paper; Eva Stille, gifted in 2011; VI 71041

72 Device to secure a cow’s tail during milking; Sagogn, Switzerland; before 1949; wood; Robert Wildhaber, purchased in 1949; VI 18845

Meat – Commercial meat production employs breeding techniques that modify animals to ensure they produce the best quality of meat. In the countries of the Global North, the process of rearing and slaughtering animals is driven by economic efficiency and profit. Before the advent of slaughterhouses in the 19th century, animals were slaughtered in people’s backyards. The slaughterhouse represented an innovation that saw the butchering of animals disappear from public awareness. Since then it has largely gone unobserved. Which animals end up on the menu and which do not is determined by culture, and occasionally matters of religion.

73 Woman with plate of guinea pigs, made by Pedro Bernardo Gonzalez; Aza, Junin, Peru; ca. 1980; wood, plaster, chalk, fabric, paper, paint; Hugo Zumbühl, deposited in 1982; VI 55871

74 Butcher’s cleaver; Steffisburg, Bern, Switzerland; before 1909; iron, wood; Chr. Althaus, purchased in 1909; VI 3138

75 Pork seller; La Paz, Bolivia; 1986-1988; plaster, paint, fabric; Daniel Haller, purchased in 2004; IVc 25716

76 Panel painting “Pig killing” by Johann Conrad Starck; Toggenburg, Switzerland; ca. 1820; oil paint, wood; Max Wydler, purchased in 1959; VI 25373

Honey – Even Stone Age cave paintings attest to the use of honey as a foodstuff, while the actual practice of beekeeping is thought to date as far back as the 7th millennium BC. Considered a valuable substance, honey has even been found as a burial offering. In agriculture, bees play an essential role as pollinators of fruit and vegetables. With world-

wide bee mortality rates increasing as a result of illness, pesticide use, and general environmental degradation, numerous initiatives are under way to ensure the protection of bees. Beekeeping is currently experiencing something of a boom, both in rural and even in urban areas.

77 Beehive; probably Emmental, Bern, Switzerland; before 1934; straw, wood; Lehrer Sooder, purchased in 1934; VI 11653

78 Beehive fascia; Slovenia; before 1971; wood, paint; Gottlieb Hofer, purchased in 1971; VI 39201

At your service

Animals serve humans in any number of ways. The latter make use of all kinds of appliances and materials to create and perpetuate an unequal relationship. Humans typically determine what happens to “their” animals; in return, the animals are fed, receive veterinary care, and are sheltered.

Going into battle

Horses were already being deployed in armed conflicts 5,000 years ago. Innovations such as horseshoes, saddles or stirrups increased the efficiency of cavalry forces. They were even a decisive factor in the colonization of the Americas and Australia. During the First World War, horses ensured that supplies got through, and even in the Second World War they remained an important element of military transport. Police forces around the world maintain mounted units to this day.

Hobby horse – In 1648, the Peace of Westphalia brought an end to the Thirty Years’ War. The proclamation of the treaty is still commemorated today in Osnabrück on October 25th when some of the city’s primary school children parade through town on hobby horses.

79 Hobby horse used during commemorations of the Thirty Years’ War; Osnabrück, North-Rhine-Westphalia, Germany; ca. 1900; wood; Schweizer Sportmuseum Basel, gifted in 1966; VI 32632

Battle victorious – A *tenugui* is a Japanese hand towel of fine cotton fabric with many uses. The motif here shows a Japanese horseman slaying two Russian soldiers on the ground. It is a reference to the Russo-Japanese War that started with the Russian attack on the Japanese Empire in 1904; it ended in defeat for the Russians the following year.

80 Hand towel *tenugui*; Japan; before 1944; cotton, dye; Ch. Bolard-Tallère, purchased in 1944; IId 1980

Playing soldiers – These three cavalymen were used as toy soldiers. The figures have been dated to 1870; their uniforms suggest two are French, the third German, and so they might be associated with the Franco-German war. The men and the horses alike are elaborately worked.

81 Toy cavalymen; Sonneberg, Thuringia, Germany; ca. 1870; wood, wool, felt, mohair, leather, tin; Hans Peter His, bequest in 1974; H 0027.01-03

Commemorative horseshoe – This horseshoe on a base in the form of a horse’s leg commemorates Swiss Army operations to secure Switzerland’s border during the First World War. They were necessary because the country was exposed to new and ever-changing developments between the two enemy camps of the Entente and the Central Powers. The supply situation was precarious, and the role of horses in carrying supplies was hugely important.

82 Horseshoe “Border defence 1914–1916”; Basel, Switzerland; 1914–1916; iron; Rudolf and Margrit Kaufmann, bequest in 1987; VI 61647

Decorative protection – Shabracks were rectangular saddlecloths. Some types extended across a horse’s neck and flanks. Quilted shabracks protected a horse from injury, and were lavishly made to match a rider’s colours and insignia.

83 Shabrack; Cameroon; before 1912; wool, leather; Eugen Schwarz, purchased in 1912; III 3909
84 “Some riders and their horses wear colourful and thickly padded coverings as protection”; Tschamba, Poli, Cameroon; 1958; negative film (monochrome), silver gelatine DOP (baryta coating); Harald Widmer, gifted in 1988; (F)III 20536

Tethers

Keepers of pets and livestock can restrict the freedom of movement their animals have. This form of dominance over them manifests itself in objects such as ropes, chains, or muzzles. Such items starkly illustrate the human treatment of animals.

85 Hobble for camels with amulet; Aswan, Nubian Desert, Egypt; before 1955; wool, wood, cowrie shell; Burckhardt-Reinhart Foundation, gifted in 1955; III 13616
86 Pig catcher; Dévaványa, Békés, Hungary; ca. 1910; iron; Ethnographic Museum Budapest, exchanged in 1956; VI 22393
87 Muzzle for oxen; Dévaványa, Békés, Hungary; ca. 1910; wire; Ethnographic Museum Budapest, exchanged in 1956; VI 22425
88 Muzzle for oxen *shikla*; Savar Kundla, Gujarat, India; before 1967; vegetable fibre; Eberhard Fischer, purchased in 1967; IIa 4252
89 Muzzle for calves; Unterwasser, St. Gallen, Switzerland; before 1908; ash wood; Gottlieb Bosshardt, purchased in 1908; VI 2647
90 Device for tethering calves *chenva con zap*; Campello, Switzerland; 20th c.; iron, wood; Alfred Bühler, purchased in 1972; VI 41054

Riding

Riding revolutionized locomotion because it meant greater distances could be covered more efficiently. Horse riding began around 3,000 BC. Besides horses, Arabian (one-humped) camels were also used early on for riding. Donkeys, mules, hinnies, Bactrian (two-humped) camels, and elephants are also used for riding.

91 Horse and rider; Mali; before 1976; wood; Ganthaus Basel, purchased in 1976; III 19536
92 Bridle; Seno Mango, Mali; before 1980; leather; Bernhard Gardi, purchased in 1980; III 23756
93 Bridle; Afghanistan; before 1970; leather, silver, brass, carnelian, glass beads; Marguerite Reut, purchased in 1970; IIa 4740b
94 Whip; Matto Grosso, Argentina; before 1918; leather; Mittelschweizerische Geographisch-Commercielle Gesellschaft, purchased in 1918; IVc 2794
95 Horse’s harness; Mexico; 19th c.; metal; IVb 1397
96 Snaffle bit; Baguia, Timor, East Timor; before 1935; brass; Alfred Bühler, purchased in 1935; IIc 6512.01
97 Stirrups; Kano, Nigeria; before 1905; brass; Hanns Vischer, gifted in 1905; III 2168+2169
98 Spurs; Mexico; before 1975; brass, steel; Gotthelf Kuhn, bequest in 1975; IVb 4587a+b
99 Horseshoe; Shahrud, Lorestan, Iran; before 1949; iron; Paul Aellen, purchased in 1949; IIe 1188.01
100 Leather horse saddle; Mexico; 1828-1837; leather; collection of Lukas Vischer, Carl Vischer-Vonder Mühl, gifted in 1909; IVb 764
101 Camel saddle *tamazaq*; Agadès, Niger; before 1964; leather, sheet metal; René Gardi, purchased in 1964; III 16724
102 Horse saddle; Air Mountains, Niger; before 1911; wood, leather, cloth, brass, leopard skin; Hanns Vischer, gifted in 1911; III 3684

Animals in harness

Oxen and horses were, and still are to some extent, deployed to haul heavy loads. They are harnessed to agricultural implements such as ploughs or harrows. They pull carts, carriages, or sledges to carry people and goods. In the Global North especially, motorization largely ousted draught animals from the agricultural sector, although they are still found occasionally in non-industrial forestry. Nowadays horses are called on above all in sport and tourism.

- 103 Horse's harness *Kummet*; Burgenland, Austria; before 1968; wood, leather, brass, fibres; Adalbert Riedl, purchased in 1968; VI 35839
- 104 Yoke for a team of oxen; Barcelos, Minho, Braga, Portugal; 1912; wood; Domus, Kornfeld & Co., purchased in 1965; VI 32522
- 105 Appliance for easing oxen into a yoke; India; before 1959; iron; Georges Gogel, purchased in 1959; IIa 2282
- 106 Shoe for an ox; Oberschan, Switzerland; before 1967; iron; Emma Müller-Klöti, purchased in 1967; VI 35481

Rearing

Ensuring the food intake of animals and promoting their health, the appliances that are used in the rearing of farm animals are highly practical and useful. Instruments, troughs, medicines, and food supplements are all intended to maximize the benefit to humans.

- 107 Feeding trough for pigs *garaba wai*; Kabunduk, Anakalang, Sumba, Indonesia; before 1951; wood; Alfred Bühler, purchased in 1951; IIc 12248
- 108 Remedy to prevent mites in camels *kotran*; Kairouan, Tunisia; before 1968; charred wood; Germaine Winterberg, purchased in 1968; III 17550a
- 109 Dietary supplement for pigs *sijrij walak*; Nokopo, Finisterre Mountains, Papua New Guinea; before 1988; quartz; Christin Kocher Schmid, purchased in 1988; Vb 30067
- 110 Rectal syringe; Basel, Switzerland; before 1914; tin; Max Kraye-Freyvogel, gifted in 1914; VI 6058
- 111 Feeding trough for pigs *bai faffi*; Kupang, Timor, Indonesia; before 1935; bamboo; Alfred Bühler, purchased in 1935; IIc 5814
- 112 Bucket for pig feed; Uerzlikon, Zurich, Switzerland; before 1909; wood, metal; Jakob Lörch, purchased in 1909; VI 2916

What a pest! – At the start of the 20th century, the buffalo fly (*Lyperosia exigua*) became a serious problem for cattle farmers in Australia. The infections that the fly transmitted to cattle threatened the nascent industry. Eduard Handschin, former director of the Naturhistorisches Museum Basel, undertook research into the buffalo fly in Indonesia and Australia. In the end, he failed to come up with a solution.

- 113 Buffalo flies *Lyperosia exigua*; Timor and Flores, Indonesia; 1930; buffalo flies; on loan from Naturhistorisches Museum Basel

Power

Animals are fascinating. When people track wild animals, they do so to observe them or to hunt them. The hunt is usually an unequal contest: animals stroll into traps set by humans and are captured. A bagged animal can serve as a trophy that reinforces the hunter's status, yet animals are also a source of entertainment. When appearing as trained entertainers in the circus, for instance, they cause people to marvel and laugh; when doing battle in an arena they are a source of tense excitement.

Brought down

Hunting and killing wild animals was essential for human survival before the advent of agriculture. Hunting ensured a food supply; in addition to meat, it provided animal products such as bones, skins, and sinews. Hunting and capturing animals was a foundation of human civilization – and hunting remains a significant cultural practice in many locations to this day.

Hunting is still viewed ambivalently, however, with big-game hunting regularly causing outrage. While hunters argue that what they do is a necessary part of species conservation, those opposed to them highlight the animal suffering involved.

In pursuit of game

Hunting, the tracking, catching and killing of wild animals involve much more than their slaughter. Hunters interact with their environment and animals in processes that are governed by rules, laws, and procedures. The environment must be maintained and tended.

- 114 “Man killing a kangaroo with a spear “, bark painting; Yirrkala, Arnhem Land, Northern Territory, Australia; 1959; bark, paint; Karel Kupka, purchased in 1962; Va 1168
- 115 Wildlife market; probably Guangzhou, China; before 1889; albumen; Georges Passavant-Fichter, Claude Passavant-Christeller, gifted in 1998; (F)IId 2902
- 116 Toy, “Par force” hunt; Seiffen, Germany; ca. 1860; wood, bread dough, oil paint, brass; Hans Peter His, bequest in 1974; H 0247.01
- 117 Diorama of figures illustrating an African lion hunt; Nuremberg, Germany; ca. 1890; pewter, glass; Hans Peter His, bequest in 1974; H 0529.01

Shooting, spearing, slaying

In hunting, bows and arrows, spears, throwing sticks, or slings are used - indeed, every type of weapon is. Weapons were adapted as appropriate for the type of animal to be bagged. Towards the end of the 19th century and at the start of the 20th, firearms increasingly superseded traditional weapons. Their accuracy and efficiency, even at great distances from animals, made them the weapons of choice.

- 118 Diving mask for spear fishing *mata boak*; Rote, Indonesia; before 1935; wood, glass, wax, string, fabric; Alfred Bühler, purchased in 1935; IIC 4072
- 119 Hunting gear; Inari, Lapland, Finland; ca. 1911; leather, horn, wool; Julius August Konietzko, (Freiwilliger Museumsverein Basel, on permanent loan in 1911); VII 91
- 120 Model of a kayak and hunter with a rifle, harpoon, and inflated seal bladder; Labrador, Canada; ca. 1870; walrus tusk; R. de Bary-von Bavier, gifted in 1918; VII 394
- 121 Frog poison for arrows; Emberá, Colombia; ca. 1971; frog; Borys Malkin, purchased in 1971; IVc 15041
- 122 Bamboo quiver and blowpipe darts; Emberá, Colombia; ca. 1971; bamboo, bast, seeds, string; Borys Malkin, purchased in 1971; IVc 15037
- 123 Fowling sling *fiu*; Kupang, Timor, Indonesia; before 1935; *gebang* palm fibres; Alfred Bühler, purchased in 1935; IIC 5412
- 124 Boomerang *tjunkana*; Central Australia; before 1908; wood; Museum der Weltkulturen, Frankfurt am Main, purchased from bequest of Bruderer-Olivari 1908; Va 86
- 125 Fowler’s throwing stick; Makassar, Sulawesi, Indonesia; before 1904; wood; Paul and Fritz Sarasin, gifted in 1904; IIC 787
- 126 Rifle; Vanuatu; before 1912; metal, wood; Felix Speiser-Merian, gifted in 1912; Vb 247
- 127 Fowling arrow; Paraguay; before 1930; wood; G. Sieber, gifted in 1930; IVc 4509
- 128 Trident fish spear; Sumatra, Indonesia; before 1924; bamboo; Robert Pfister, gifted in 1924; IIC 2233
- 129 Dart *koroa*, used to hunt the large fruit bat; Larantuka, Flores, Indonesia; before 1935; Alfred Bühler, purchased in 1935; IIC 3312

- 130 Spear for hunting caribou; Paallirmiut; Hudson Bay, Nunavut, Canada; 1938–1839; wood, iron; Jean Gabus, purchased in 1940; VII 753b
- 131 Spear for killing pigs *nibu kalola*; Anakalang, Sumba, Indonesia; before 1950; wood, bamboo, rattan, iron; Alfred Bühler, purchased in 1951; IIc 12076
- 132 Spear for killing crocodiles; Wogamush, Sepik, Papua New Guinea; before 1930; palm wood; Felix Speiser-Merian, purchased in 1930; Vb 8990
- 133 Spear for hunting jaguar; Rio Putumayo/Rio Caqueta, Colombia/Ecuador; ca. 1925; wood, bamboo; Henry Pillichody, purchased in 1928; IVc 4448

Big Game Safari – After gaining his doctorate in zoology, Adam David, a native of Basel, travelled to Egypt where he first did odd jobs before deciding in 1906 to go into big game hunting in Sudan. At the same time, he ran a station for captive animals that he sold on to zoos in Europe, including Basel's. His activities in Africa and his thoughts on the continent were captured in documentary films that enjoyed great success at the box office in Switzerland. Latterly David achieved fame with a radio programme in which he reminisced about his adventure-filled trips and hunting expeditions.

- 134 "Safari 1908", documentary by Adam David; Rep. Sudan; 1908–1910; digital copy; original 16mm, silent, B/W, on triacetate, length ca. 300m/40 min; Film AV-00077

African ethnographica – Johann Jakob David was Adam's older brother. He collected ethnographica on his travels in north-west and central Africa. Later on in Sudan, his brother Adam also established a business buying and selling ethnographica in addition to dealing in wild animals (live and dead). This bag of wildcat skin was used to carry seeds and tobacco.

- 135 Bag made of wildcat skin; Uganda; before 1904; skin, fur; Johann Jakob David, gifted in 1904; III 1843

No Way Back

Fish traps are usually deployed in a chosen location to catch fish and other aquatic creatures. These traps are usually barrel or cone-shaped, and are made from wicker, rope, or wire mesh. Traps are designed differently depending on the species of fish or crustaceans they are intended to catch.

- 136 Fish trap; Milingimbi, Arnhem Land, Northern Territory, Australia; before 1957; painted bark; Karel Kupka, purchased in 1957; Va 960
- 137 Woven trap *namak*; Aibom, Kumalio River, Middle Sepik, Papua New Guinea; 1965–1967; palm spathe; Meinhard Schuster, purchased in 1966; Vb 23446
- 138 Lobster trap; Mare, New Caledonia (Kanak); before 1913; wood; Fritz Sarasin, gifted in 1913; Vb 2617
- 139 Fish or turtle trap; Peranap, Indragiri River, Sumatra, Indonesia; before 1900; bamboo, rattan; Gustav Schneider, purchased in 1900; IIc 187
- 140 Trap; Embera, Colombia; before 1971; wood; Borys Malkin; IVc 25968
- 141 Wire trap; Nicosia, Cyprus; c.1985; wire; Margit Krpata, purchased in 1991; VI 64288
- 142 Fish trap *bubuk*; Kudat Division, Sabah, Borneo, Malaysia; before 1966; wood; John Staehelin, purchased in 1966; IIc 15996

Straight into the trap

Traps restrict animals in their movements; some are intended to kill them. Traps are hunting devices triggered by an animal itself, and their mode of operation is adapted to specific animal behaviour. People need only set a trap and return to remove the prey.

- 143 Wire trap for birds; Magliaso, Ticino, Switzerland; before 1927; wire, bird; Ornithologischer Verein Horgen, gifted in 1927; VI 10460a+b

- 144 Bird trap; China; 20th ca.; wood, bamboo, straw, metal; Basel Mission collection; permanent loan in 1981; IId 9815
- 145 Mouse trap; Bundi, Bismarck Range, Papua New Guinea; before 1942; bamboo, wood, bast fibre, string; Georg Höltker, purchased in 1942; Vb 12118
- 146 Toothed salmon trap; Mumpf, Aargau, Switzerland; ca. 1880; iron; Ernst Wunderlin, gifted in 1921; VI 9593
- 147 Mouse trap; Basel, Switzerland; 1990; wood, copper wire, tin; Dominik Wunderlin, purchased in 1990; VI 64020
- 148 Animal trap; Kleinhüningen, Basel, Switzerland; before 2009; metal; Christian and Marianne Heckendorn, gifted in 2009; VI 70405
- 149 Giraffe trap; Sudan; before 1921; straw, wood; Dr Pierre A. Chappuis-Speiser, gifted in 1921; III 5638
- 150 Trap for rats, badgers and weasels; Ticino, Switzerland; before 1949; iron; J. Pellegrini, purchased in 1949; VI 18774
- 151 Hyena trap; Mali; before 1980; iron; Bernhard Gardi, purchased in 1980; III 21962

Netted

Nets of fine mesh are used for catching birds and fish; there are different mesh and knotting techniques.

Worldwide growth in net fishing has led to criticism of nets. Not only is by-catch a problem; “ghost nets”, those lost at sea, increasingly pollute the ocean and endanger marine creatures.

- 152 Model of a fisherman; Krishnagar, India; before 1954; clay, wood, twine; Herr & Frau Arnold, gifted in 1954; IIa 1964
- 153 Fisherman’s amulet; Yamdena, Tanimbar Islands, Indonesia; before 1947; sea urchin spine; Friedrich Weber, purchased in 1947; IIc 7796
- 154 Leather apron: workwear for fishermen; Inari, Lapland, Finland; c.1911; leather; Julius August Konietzko (Freiwilliger Museumsverein, gifted in 1911); VII 123
- 155 Net for trapping birds; Varese, Italy; 1927; vegetable fibre, leather, metal; Horgen Ornithological Club, gifted in 1927; VI 10458
- 156 Fishing net *wokakela*; Mulosaida, Trobriand Islands, Papua New Guinea; before 1973; vegetable fibre, pith, shell; Godfried Johan Marie Gerrits, purchased in 1973; Vb 25569
- 157 Net for river fishing; Kofan; Santa Rosa, Rio San Miguel, Putomayo, Colombia; ca. 1970; *Mauritia* palm fibre, stone, cork; Borys Malkin, purchased in 1972; IVc 15253
- 158 Fishing net *dala*; Rote, Indonesia; before 1935; rope yarn, lead; Alfred Bühler, purchased in 1935; IIc 4078

Baiting and poisoning

Decoys or baited hooks are deployed to lure game and trap it. Various materials and forms are used to do so. Poison stuns fish, making them easier to catch.

- 159 Pole for catching crocodiles *sakang*; Kualakapuas, Kapuas River, Borneo, Indonesia; before 1934; rattan, vegetable fibres, pelt, iron; Mattheus Vischer-Mylius, gifted in 1934; IIc 3091
- 160 Decoy salmon; Basel, Switzerland; ca. 1950; wood, leather, paint, glass, metal; Oliver Wackernagel, gifted in 1995; VI 67439 02
- 161 Spear for catching salmon; Kleinhüningen, Basel, Switzerland; before 1948; iron; Adolf Wendnagel, gifted in 1948; VI 18450
- 162 Root used as a poison; Baing, Waijelo, Sumba, Indonesia; before 1951; root; Alfred Bühler, purchased in 1951; IIc 12168
- 163 Decoy to lure salmon; Angmagssalik, Greenland, Denmark; ca. 1930; leather, vegetable fibres, stone, bone; Nationalmuseet Copenhagen, exchanged in 1932; VII 643
- 164 Angling items in cigar boxes; Kleinhüningen, Basel, Switzerland; ca. 1960; wood, feathers, plastic, metal; Christian and Marianne Heckendorn, gifted in 2009; VI 70403.01-03
- 165 Fish-hook; Admiralty Islands, Papua New Guinea; before 1930; tortoiseshell; Alfred Bühler, purchased in 1932; Vb 9565

Amusement

Human beings appear to derive great pleasure from watching animals eating, playing, sleeping, performing tricks, or even fighting. To that end, wild animals are brought into man-made surroundings. These encounters between humans and animals tend to be for the amusement of the former, and to the detriment of the latter.

Unfamiliar visitors

During the night, when no museum staff are around, wild animals start to stir in the grounds of the museum. With the help of a camera trap, we were hot on their trail.

166 Camera trap; marten in the grounds of the museum; camera trap footage; 2021

Wild ride

Rodeo is an especially popular sport in the United States which was originally brought across the Atlantic from Europe. Rodeo is all about the control and subjugation of a wild animal, and is based on skills associated with cattle ranching.

167 Charrería; Mexico; 1964; colour film; Heidi and Kay C. Hansen, gifted in 2018; (F)IVb 2945

Ritual bloodshed

Cockfighting on Bali is both a leisure activity and an element of a religious ritual that is held to satisfy the bloodlust of local demons. The blood of fighting cocks is said to be to their liking. Cocks have razor-sharp spurs fitted to their legs for battle. When blood flows, the defeated bird is usually slaughtered.

168 Pouch for cockfighting spurs; Southern Bali, Indonesia; before 2008; wood, metal; Peter Horner, purchased in 2008; IIC 22342

169 *adu ayam*, cockfight; Java, Indonesia; 1973; oil on canvas; signed: "Affandi 1973" (assumed to be by an unknown artist, copy after Affandi); Urs Ramseyer, purchased in the 1990s; IIC 25500

Clear the ring!

The circus in its classic form began in mid-18th-century England. At the time, the emphasis lay on dressage. Only later did it become fashionable to have wild and exotic animals appear as performers. In the meantime, interactions between humans and animals in the circus ring have become heavily regulated, and training methods are designed to be as animal-friendly as possible. Nowadays very few animals are found performing in the circus ring, in fact.

170 "Monkey Theatre" toy; Basel, Switzerland; ca. 1900; wood, synthetic material; Alice La Roche-Respinger, gifted in 1972; VI 40156

171 Figure of an elephant made by Pedro Bernardo Gonzalez; Aza, Junin, Peru; ca. 1980; plaster, fabric; Hugo Zumbühl, deposited in 1982; VI 55919

172 Figure of an elephant made by Pedro Bernardo Gonzalez; Aza, Junin, Peru; ca. 1980; plaster, fabric; Hugo Zumbühl, deposited in 1982; VI 55925

173 Figure of a cycling bear made by Pedro Bernardo Gonzalez; Aza, Junin, Peru; ca. 1980; plaster, fabric; Hugo Zumbühl, deposited in 1982; VI 55928

174 Figure of a seal made by Pedro Bernardo Gonzalez; Aza, Junin, Peru; ca. 1980; plaster, fabric; Hugo Zumbühl, deposited in 1982; VI 55922

175 Figure of a tiger made by Pedro Bernardo Gonzalez; Aza, Junin, Peru; ca. 1980; plaster, fabric; Hugo Zumbühl, deposited in 1982; VI 55921

Nationwide amusement: crickets doing battle

Male crickets are primed to fight by various means, and pitted one against the other. When one of them retreats, the contest is settled. Bets are placed on the outcome of cricket fights, which – in Bali, for instance – serve to entertain local men.

- 176 Insect cage; China; before 1926; bamboo, wood, lacquer, bronze; Baron Paul Berens von Rautenfeld, gifted in 1926; IId 1411
- 177 Arena for cricket fights; Bali, Indonesia; before 2007; wood, paint, bamboo, aluminium, vegetable fibre, nails, synthetic thread; Georges Breguet, gifted in 2007; IIC 22348.01-07
- 178 Desak Putu Lambon, cricket fight; Batuan, Gianyar, Bali, Indonesia; 1937–1945; ink on paper; Ernst Schlager, acquired by bequest in 1971; IIC 16448
- 179 Wood container with 10 cages for crickets; Bali, Indonesia; before 1976; wood, string, metal, bamboo; Urs Ramseyer, purchased in 1976; IIC 18012

Grabbing the bull by the horns

Bullfighting exists in a variety of forms, each with its own rules. It involves the use of bulls that are almost always slaughtered after a ritualized “battle” between them and a bull-fighter. Bullfights are mass spectator events held in specially built arenas, and are significant factors in regional economies. Although strongly criticised by animal rights campaigners, bullfights are still common in southern Europe and South America, and are often viewed as part of regional cultural identity.

- 180 *banderilla* for use in bullfighting on foot; Lisbon, Portugal; undated; wood, steel, paper; Domus, Kornfeld & Co., purchased in 1971; VI 38977+78
- 181 Barbed dart (*banderilla*) used in bullfighting; Zaragoza, Spain; before 1968; steel, paper, sand, blood; Theo Gantner, gifted in 1968; VI 36271a+b
- 182 Bullfighting sword *espada*, Spain; before 1917; metal; Robert and Cécile Hiltbrand-Grimmeisen, gifted in 1917; VI 7729
- 183 Figure of a bull / dancing prop / mask; Oruro, Bolivia; ca. 1988; wood, animal skin; Valentin Jaquet, gifted in 2012; BO 1522
- 184 Stirrups to protect the feet from a bull’s horns; Guatemala; before 1974; leather, metal; Thomas Meyer, purchased in 1974; VI 42797a+b
- 185 Bullfighter’s jackknife; Spain; before 1917; metal, wood; Eduard Hoffmann-Krayer, gifted in 1917; VI 7732
- 186 Figure of a bull; Malaga, Spain; before 1946; clay, paint, iron wire; Hans Peter His, bequest in 1974; H 0118.01
- 187 Miniature *corrida* (bullfight); Mexico City, Mexico; before 1973; ceramic; Robert and Cécile Hiltbrand-Grimmeisen, gifted in 2014; RH 4509

Representation

Impressive parts of animals such as antlers, heads, teeth or skins are displayed as status symbols. The prestige associated with them derives from the dangerous nature of the animal killed, or the impressive amount of animal material.

Prized teeth – These 112 ornamented dogs’ teeth were used as money. In the early 20th century, they were so popular they had to be imported from China and Turkey. Strings of dogs’ teeth were used for the ritual payment of bride price.

- 188 String of dogs’ teeth, dogs’ teeth money; Soheneliu, Manus, Admiralty Islands, Papua New Guinea; before 1930; dogs’ teeth, shell discs; Alfred Bühler, purchased in 1932; Vb 9457

Primeval age – As a mythical creature from the dawn of time, the crocodile has special status in New Guinea: it is venerated as a primordial being, feared and hunted as a dangerous creature.

189 Crocodile skull; south coast of Papua, Indonesia; before 1926; bone, rattan palm; Paul Wirz, purchased in 1926, Vb 6584a

Risky business of hunting – This hunting trophy is made from two jaguar fangs suspended on a length of twine. Made by men, this decorative item is worn around the hunter's neck during ceremonial occasions. A grain of shot damaged one of the fangs; the triangular-shaped fragment has been re-inserted using a mixture of resin and wax.

190 Hunting trophy *ya'warāi* made with jaguar fangs; Temeoni, Rio dos Peixes, Upper Rio Tapajos, Mato Grosso, Brazil; ca. 1966; jaguar fangs, twine, resin-wax mixture; Georg Grünberg, purchased in 1968; IVc 12089

Basel's camel – In 2018, archaeologists excavating a site in central Basel unearthed the lower jaw of a camel. Believed to be Asian in origin, the object was dated to late Roman antiquity. The route by which the animal reached Basel is unknown, but the find suggests the town had early and long-distance trade relations.

191 Fragments of a lower jaw of a camel; Basel, Switzerland; ca. 1100; camel bone; on loan from Archäologische Bodenforschung des Kantons Basel-Stadt, 2017/45.2019 and 2017/45.5020

Adorned warriors – With the skin of a civet, and the bill and feathers of a hornbill, this garment makes use of valuable animal materials. The hornbill is said to be a messenger of the ancestors.

192 Warrior's ceremonial garment; Upper Kayan River, Borneo, Indonesia; before 1911; civet skin, bill and feathers of the hornbill; Walter Bernoulli, gifted in 1915; IIc 1499

Boar's tusks – Boars continue to be highly prized in Papua New Guinea to this day, their tusks serving as status symbols. Circular tusks in particular are in high demand.

193 Ornamental breastplate; Sepik, Papua New Guinea; before 1955; feathers, boar's tusk; Elsa Eckert-Voegelin, Legat 2001; Vb 31045

Leopard – The renowned Basel couturier Fred Spillmann made use of leopard skin in this handbag. Wearing animal skins and furs is associated with an air of exclusivity; nowadays animal welfare concerns mean the fashion industry prefers the use of artificial over real fur. Artificial skins usually imitate the patterns of animal hides.

194 Circular handbag and leather carrier, designed by Fred Spillmann; Basel, Switzerland; before 1968; leopard skin, leather, metal; Marie-Thérèse Altermatt-Nicol, gifted in 2004; Inv.2004.82; on loan from Historisches Museum Basel

The King – In the Ethiopian Empire (until 1974) only rulers were permitted to wear a lion-skin collar. The symbol of royal rulers, the lion was depicted on the empire's flag and coat-of-arms.

195 Chief's lion-skin collar; Abyssinia (Ethiopia); before 1918; lion-skin; Museum Aarau, purchased in 1918; III 4949

Antlers – Stags use their antlers to impress potential mates during the rutting season, to fight other males, and to defend themselves against attack. Antlers are classic hunting trophies. As status objects, they indicate their owner's skill and success in hunting.

196 60 red deer antlers from the Naturhistorisches Museum Basel

Sublimity

In a number of world views, and particularly in religious systems, the relationship between humans and animals is sometimes reversed: animals and deities in animal form then take precedence over humans, forging a special bond with them, instructing, guiding, protecting, favouring them – and are revered by them in turn. The sublimity of animals in the divine shows that, in principle, the relationship between humans and animals can be conceived and fashioned differently.

Connecting

In some worldviews, humans are not held to be superior to animals, but rather are viewed as equal partners within the natural environment. The categories of “Nature and Animals” on the one hand, and “Culture and Humans” on the other are not opposed; rather they are interdependent. Accordingly, stories describing the creation and conservation of the world are stories of animal creations, mythical beings that gave birth to humans and animals alike. That special bond requires human beings to take a different approach in their dealings with animals.

“Learn from the past” – Members of the Ga people on the coast of Ghana have been making fantasy coffins since the mid-20th century. They are modelled on everyday items, flora and fauna, and imaginary mythical beings; motifs are said to be based on family emblems and military insignia.

The mythical *sankofa* bird has turned its head to pick up its egg in a movement that unites the past, present, and future. “Learn from the past”, as the Ghanaian saying to go with it.

197 Fancy coffin; Accra, Ghana; 2006; wood; artist: Paa Joe; Kunstmuseum Bern, gifted in 2017; III 27814

Unity – Rattles and drums are important instruments in the shamanic practices of North America. While the shaman is on a spiritual journey, a rattle can create a sacred space in which he can mediate between human and animal beings. This rattle carved in the shape of a duck is a visual representation of his mediation. The duck might have played an important role in the shaman’s biography, or maybe it assisted him with its abilities of an animal that lives on the earth and is very “talkative”, that can fly and has the stamina to undertake long journeys.

198 Medicine rattle carved in duck form; North-west coast of Alaska, USA; 1911; Wood; coll. Alioth-Merian, gifted in 1911; IVa 128

Thunderbird – The thunderbird is a common motif across North America. It can assume the form of a raven, eagle, or human being. By flapping his wings and rolling his eyes, he causes thunder and lightning. According to some stories, the thunderbird adopts human form by removing his beak as if it were a mask, and by slipping out of his feathers.

199 Tablecloth decorated with a thunderbird motif; Kwakwaka’wakw; Vancouver Island, British Columbia, Canada; 1971; painted linen; artist: Ellen May Neel (Ka-Ka-So-Las); Hermann Jöhr, gifted in 1971; IVa 2378

Emblematic Animals – This wooden chest comes from the northwest coast of Canada. The animals it depicts have been so strongly abstracted that outsiders can barely recognize them. The animals depicted are either wolves, bears, beavers, eagles, ravens, whales, or salmon.

These animals are assigned to a particular kinship group. The privileges associated with particular animals devolve to the respective clan.

200 Lidded storage chest; Northwest coast, Canada; before 1890; cedar wood, paint; Alfred Sarasin-Iselin, gifted in 1890; IVa 57

Totem pole – Animals such as ravens, eagles, bears or beavers are frequently seen on totem poles. The animals' significance can be understood only when it is known whose story a totem pole represents. A totem pole validates the status of a family within its community, and the figures on it make reference to the mythical origin of certain privileges.

201 Totem pole model; Tsimshian; Kitkatla, British Columbia, Canada; before 1909; wood, paint; William Ockelford Oldman, purchased in 1909; IVa 109

Worthy of royalty – The seating area of this colourful stool rests on a leopard's back. The animal is considered to be a symbol of royal power.

202 Leopard stool; Bali, Cameroon; before 1937; wood, vegetable fibres, glass beads, cowrie shells; Hans Himmelheber, purchased in 1938; III 1092

The antelope teaches farming – The Bamana pay homage to their mythological hero Ci-wara in rituals at sowing and harvest time. He is represented in a stylized figure that is half antelope, half man. The male mask is used in rituals associated with farming, but also during initiation ceremonies intended to teach young men social values and farming skills. There has been a steady decline in the cult of Ci-wara since the mid-20th century; now it is found only in a few villages.

203 Antelope mask *chiwara*; Seebu, Mali; before 1987; wood, leather, brass; cowrie shells, glass beads, copper wire; Bernhard Gardi, purchased in 1987; III 24841

Animal masks

dje, a ritual masked dance, was performed among the Guro people when justice was administered, tasks were assigned within the community, or funerary rites were performed. Masked dances were intended to propitiate the gods, nature spirits and ancestors, and to encourage their support for the living. Up until the early 21st century, some dozen animal masks performed before human masks: elephant, antelope, dog, monkey, hippopotamus, goat, water buffalo, ram and bull masks were involved. Antelope masks looked especially graceful; elephant masks were massive and forceful. The animal qualities of the masks were able to develop fully only in the course of the ritual.

204 Antelope mask *zro*; Ivory Coast; before 1965; wood, colour; Hans Himmelheber, purchased in 1987; III 16859

205 Elephant mask *bi*; Guro, Ivory Coast; before 1965; wood, colour, hair; Hans Himmelheber, purchased in 1965; III 16853

206 Monkey mask for the *dje* dance; Guro, Ivory Coast; before 1965; wood, monkey skin; Hans Himmelheber, purchased in 1965; III 16849

Wisdom and a thirst for knowledge – This hyena mask might have been part of an ensemble of puppets. In Mali, the hyena is associated with wisdom and a thirst for knowledge as well as strength and vitality.

207 Hyena mask; Mali; before 1981; wood; Bernhard Gardi, exchange in 1981; III 23733

Sacrifices for the gods – The Tiwah Festival is the Festival of the Dead of the Ngaju people of Borneo. Strictly regulated, it is held only every few years because it is such an extravagant

event. During it, the souls of the dead are guided into the afterlife, and their mortal remains are buried. With its figure of a lion, the *sapundu* serves as a sacrificial post. On the fifth day of the Tiwah festival, animals such as buffalo or chickens are tethered to the post and sacrificed.

208 Sacrificial post *sapundu*; Kahayan River, Central Borneo, Indonesia; before 1934; wood; Mattheus Vischer-Mylius, gifted in 1934; IIC 3099

Culture heroes – The Marind-Anim had various mythical ancestors. Ancestor worship took a particular form in that ancestors functioned as *dema*, culture heroes able to merge the past with the present. Involving the use of splendid costumes, their rituals illustrated the bringing into being of plants, animals, and cultural artefacts.

209 Figure of a pig for the *humum* festival; South coast, Papua, Indonesia; 1920; wood; Paul Wirz, gifted in 1920; Vb 5328

Bush spirit – In the understanding of the Yupno of the Finisterre Range, the world around them is a living, animated entity. This figure in the form of a pig is a representation of the bush spirit called *sindok*. Its “bones” were used within rituals in the Yupno men’s house.

210 Figure of the *ndankwit* bush spirit; Ndevil, Finisterre Range, Yupno River, Papua New Guinea; before 1988; stone, earth pigment; Verena Keck, purchased in 1988; Vb 29886

Creator being – This contemporary take on a crocodile draws on an ancient tradition. In Papua New Guinea, the crocodile is firmly established as the mythological creator being, and it has an important role to play in the initiation of young men when their backs and chests are scarified. The resulting scars reveal that an initiate has been in contact with the primordial: having been devoured by the crocodile, his initiation into manhood is complete.

211 Crocodile; Waigani, Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea; before 1974; sheet steel, iron; Centre for Creative Arts (artist: Ruki Fame), purchased in 1974; Vb 27648

Protection during raiding parties – *nguzunguzu* were figureheads affixed to the prow of war canoes just above the water line, and they protected men engaged in head hunting. The iconography of the bust-like figures is always similar: they have large heads, small arms, and circular earrings. The hands are raised to below the chin, and sometimes hold another head or – as here – a bird.

212 War canoe figurehead; Maravo Lagoon, New Georgia, Solomon Islands; before 1929; wood, mother-of-pearl; Eugen Paravicini, purchased in 1929; Vb 7525

Shark calling

Shark callers in the Bismarck Archipelago are skilled at communicating with sharks in which they believe their ancestral spirits live on. Sitting in a dugout canoe, shark callers make contact with sharks by speaking magic spells and agitating a coconut rattle in the water. In their dealings with sharks, shark callers show great respect for the animals that offer themselves up as prey.

213 Figure of a shark; Santa Isabel, Solomon Islands; 1929; wood, mother-of-pearl; Eugen Paravicini, purchased in 1929; Vb 7759

214 Shark rattle; Nitendi, Santa Cruz, Solomon Islands; 1913; rattan, coconut shell; Felix Speiser-Merian, gifted in 1913; Vb 1950

215 Shark magic in a small pouch; Lemeris, New Ireland; Papua New Guinea; before 1931; pandanus leaf, wood, wax, resin, human hair; Alfred Bühler, purchased in 1932; Vb 10806

- 216 Fish figure *koa apuna*; Kupuna, Santa Ana, Solomon Islands; 1933; wood; Dr Hugo Adolf Bernatzik, purchased in 1933; Vb 11722
- 217 Shark-fishing gear; New Ireland, Papua New Guinea; 1921; wood, rattan; Felix Speiser-Merian, gifted in 1921; Vb 5668

Flying cassowary – The homes of village chiefs in Lake Sentani were decorated with various carvings such as snakes, crocodiles, lizards or cassowaries. While the snake had an important role in mythology, the other animals were associated with secret cults. A huge cassowary symbolically swallowed boys during initiation rituals.

- 218 Gable ornament (flying cassowary from an initiation house); Asei, Sentani, Papua, Indonesia; ca. 1920; wood; Paul Wirz, purchased in 1927; Vb 6665

Intermediary – Kauyumari is a messenger of the gods. Able to assume the form of any natural phenomenon, animal, plant or human, his preferred guise is that of a deer (typically a blue one). He is considered their guardian, although he is as much the guardian of the *peyotl* cacti whose use in rituals is essential — and whose form he can also assume.

- 219 Kauyumari in deer form; Ajijic, Jalisco, Mexico; ca. 1986; wood; Jesus Higuera, purchased in 1987; IVb 5284

The power of the Jaguar – Jaguar warriors formed an important unit of the Aztec army; besides Eagle warriors, they were its elite troops. The power of the jaguar was transferred to a warrior who wore decorative jaguar symbols. Jaguar warriors were renowned for their spirit, gallantry, and swiftness.

- 220 Jaguar warrior; Central Mexico, Mexico; 1350–1521; clay; collected by Lukas Vischer between 1828-1837; IVb 686

Ensuring balance – The Bororo in Brazil feel ambivalent about the jaguar: on the one hand, it is their mythical ancestor, and on the other a feared predator. Their mortuary practices reflect this: human mortality is considered unnatural, and a spirit that resides in the jaguar is held responsible for it. By killing a jaguar as part of their mourning, the family of the deceased achieve a form of recompense.

- 221 Animal skin for a ritual dance; Central Brazil, Brazil, South America; 1885-1893; jaguar skin, vegetable dyes; Emil Hassler, gifted in 1919; IVc 2423

Giving

Specific protective effects are attributed to some animals and animal materials. Animals are thus integrated into a cultural context in which they serve as potent intermediaries and protectors of people. Animals can help people to live a long life, to achieve happiness, health, and wealth, and also to ward off evil. These attributions show the power that people ascribe to certain animals. Such practices endanger animals because they end up being hunted in order to satisfy the demand for desirable substances.

- 222 Figure of a *nuchu* guardian spirit; Kuna, Utsupu, Panama; before 1963; wood, colour; Adolf Richard Herrmann, purchased in 1964; IVb 3818
- 223 Set of shark teeth; Ghana; before 1944; bone, teeth; Missionary Otto Lädach, purchased in 1944; III 9218
- 224 Long-beaked “Luck Bird” toy; Russia; ca. 1910; clay, colour, glaze; Hans Peter His, bequest in 1974; H 0698

- 225 Child's cap; China; before 1986; silk, cotton, leather, silver thread; Jeanpierre Voiret, purchased in 1986; IId 10615
- 226 Bovine skull as protection against thunderstorms; Biglen, Bern, Switzerland; before 1907; bone; Leopold Rüttimeyer, gifted in 1907; VI 1966
- 227 Amulet to ward off the evil eye; Tunis, Tunisia; before 1970; velvet, cord, tin, cloth; Rosmarie Stutz, purchased in 1972; VI 41391
- 228 Bird fetish; Cameroon; before 1938; wood, colour; Anna Wuhrmann, Basel Mission Collection, permanent loan in 1981, gifted in 2015; III 23948
- 229 Lucky cat *maneki-neko*; New York, USA; before 2010; porcelain, colour; Stephanie Lovász and Franziska Jenni, purchased in 2010; IId 15025
- 230 Figures of a cat and hare; Japan; before 1974; papier mâché, colour, fibre; Hans Peter His, bequest in 1974; H 1117
- 231 Hare-shaped lucky charm; New York, USA; before 2010; imitation silk, plastic beads; Stephanie Lovász and Franziska Jenni, purchased in 2010; IId 15033
- 232 Order of the Lion and the Sun; Iran; before 1996; yellow metal, paste, porcelain; Missionary Haas, Basel Mission Collection, permanent loan in 1981, gifted in 2015; IIe 2968a
- 233 Lucky horseshoe, "El Secreto de la Virtuosa Herradura"; Mexico City, Mexico; before 1974; iron, silk, plastic, seeds, herbs; Thomas Meyer, purchased in 1974; VI 43290
- 234 Piggy bank; China; before 1898; clay, glaze; Basel Mission Collection, permanent loan in 1981, gifted in 2015; IId 8858
- 235 Crocodile head amulet; Yendi, Togo; before 1923; bone, leather; Missionary Otto Schimming, Basel Mission collection, permanent loan in 1981, gifted in 2015; III 26105
- 236 Bird skull amulet; probably Ghana; before 1979; fabric, vegetable fibre, bird skull, cowrie shell, wire, wood; Fr. Osih, Basel Mission Collection, permanent loan in 1981, gifted in 2015; III 26140
- 237 Lizard-shaped umbilical cord amulet; Lakota, Porcupine Creek, South Dakota, USA; ca. 1900; leather, glass beads, hair, tin, feathers; Missionary Schmitt, purchased in 1970; IVa 2376
- 238 Bear, auxiliary spirit for success in healing or hunting; Zuni, New Mexico, USA; before 1960; stone, shell, pearl; Charlotte Zbinden, gifted in 1992; IVa 2444
- 239 Seahorse lucky charm; Venice, Italy; before 1932; seahorse; Eduard Hoffmann-Krayer, gifted in 1932; VI 11238
- 240 Child's duck-tail amulet; Jelasnica, Serbia; before 1919; feathers, skin, thread, beads; Julius August Konietzko, purchased in 1919; VI 8832
- 241 Child's beetle claw amulet; Sulawesi; before 1904; beetle claws; Paul and Fritz Sarasin, gifted in 1904; IIc 484
- 242 Crayfish claw amulet; Estonia; ca. 1900; crayfish claw; Julius August Konietzko, purchased in 1933; VI 11509

Wholesome – These materials were bought by the collector from a pharmacy in 1955 in what is now Kinshasa; they were used medicinally. They were spread out on the ground, then placed on the painful spot, and the patient's skin was vigorously rubbed with the chalk.

- 243 Pharmacy; Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of the Congo; before 1955; fur, skins, chalk, seeds; M. Holzmann, on loan from Pharmaziemuseum der Universität Basel

Guiding spirit

Gods transforming into animals and animals transforming into gods is a widespread phenomenon. One reason for doing so might be a wish not to be recognized as they go about their business, or to test humans, or to allow gods to make use of animal abilities and strengths. Examples are found in various aspects of Hinduism. The relationship between animals and humans in the Jewish, Christian, and Islamic traditions is different in nature: here animals tend to embody religious concepts such as purity or morality. This produces a hierarchy of animals.

Taking a vow – Votive offerings lend emphasis to prayers and vows. They are often made as an expression of thanks for a wish granted, and their form indicates the nature of the wish. Here the wax figure of the cow suckling her calf and the wooden hoof indicate a wish for a good, healthy herd. The votive image interprets the theme differently: it shows Mary with the infant Jesus, a woman kneeling, Saint Fromund, and a horse. Fromund is considered the patron saint of cattle and ensures their wellbeing.

244 Votive image of a suckling cow; Austria; before 1926; wax; Eduard Hoffmann-Krayer, gifted in 1926; VI 10287

245 Votive image; Bonfol, Jura, Switzerland; 1806; card, gouache; Kurt Max Forcart, gifted in 1917; VI 7921

246 Votive offering of a carved hoof; Blauen, Baselland, Switzerland; ca. 1900; wood; Anton Bürge, gifted in 1940; VI 15679

Symbol – The Book of Genesis in the Old Testament records how humans and animals were created differently, with God giving humans dominion over the animal kingdom. Animals are important in Christian doctrine: take the example of the lamb as a symbol of Christ, or the humble sparrow that God nonetheless cares for.

247 Vessel for holy water, made by M. J. Hummel; Germany; ca. 1920; porcelain, paint; Theo Gantner, purchased in 1973; VI 42434

Away in a manger – We cannot imagine illustrations of the Christmas story without animals. The ox, ass, and sheep are usually also present in manger scenes. The ox and ass are not mentioned in the biblical story, and were a later addition to it, bringing these representatives of the animal kingdom into the presence of Jesus.

248 Nativity scene; Lucerne, Switzerland, ca. 1880; wood, paint, glass, paper, card, fabric, silver, iron, flowers, moss, lichen, beetles, synthetic material, wax, shiny metal; Historisches Museum Basel, permanent loan in 1962; HM 1893.0218

Mummified cats – The Ancient Egyptians mummified various animals in the millions. Many families mummified their pets and buried them in the family vault in the belief they would be reunited in the afterlife. Cats in particular, and other sacred animals, were mummified because they were regarded as reincarnated gods, which explains the dignified burial they received.

249 Mummified cat; Egypt; middle Ptolemaic period, 3rd –1st c. BC; fabric, pigment, cat remains; Inv. BSAe III 734; on loan from Antikenmuseum Basel und Sammlung Ludwig

Companion and food – Animals were depicted frequently at Colima, dogs being the favourite subject. They were significant not merely in terms of ritual; they were also appreciated as a delicacy. This figure does not merely represent the close association between people and dogs in this part of Mexico; it also represents a food source for the dead on their final journey.

250 Figure of a fattened dog; Colima, Mexico; 250–600; terracotta; René M. Falquier, purchased in 1972 (Freiwilliger Museumsverein Basel, permanent loan in 1972); IVb 4468

Messengers of the gods – *manjangan seluwang* are carved wooden deer with real antlers that in Bali are seen as a symbol of Maospait, a god of the settlers from Majapahit, a former sea power. These deer figures are installed in temples throughout Bali, and are said to know the future.

- 251 Deer figure *manjangan seluwang*; Bali, Indonesia; before 1975; wood, antlers; Urs Ramseyer, purchased in 1975; IIc 17881
- 252 Deer figure *manjangan seluwang*; Bali, Indonesia; before 1975; wood, antlers; Urs Ramseyer, purchased in 1975; IIc 17882

Fulfilling wishes – Kamadhenu, the wish-fulfilling cow, is the ancestor and mother of all cattle. Brahma decreed that all cattle should revere her. Krishna created her and her calf from his hip.

- 253 Kamadhenu with her calf, Krishna and Radha; India; before 1981; marble, colour, gold leaf; Basel Mission Collection, gifted in 2015; IIa 9837

Cow dung and urine are considered valuable in India where they are used as a fuel, as a coating for walls, or as a cleaning agent.

- 254 Ball of cow dung ash; India; before 1981; cow dung ash; Basel Mission collection, gifted in 2015; IIa 9073

Riding a rat – Ganesha is the Hindu god of favourable beginnings, of science, learning, and the arts. He is invoked at the outset of countless rituals. He is helped by his mount, the rat – not merely his constant companion, but a manifestation of Ganesha's skill and intelligence.

- 255 Ganesha; Jaypur Odisha, India; before 1898; alabaster, gold; Alfred Sarasin-Iselin, gifted in 1898; IIa 209

Animal avatars – The god Vishnu is the embodiment of protection and preservation, divine grace and benevolence towards all fellow creatures. If danger threatens the world, he comes to the rescue in an appropriate form – be that as a fish, turtle, boar, or man-lion. On this stela, he is depicted with his consort Bhudevi, surrounded by an arc that shows the ten main avatars of Vishnu.

- 256 Stela showing Vishnu and Bhudevi; Himalayas, Nepal; 17th/18th c.; stone; Jean Eggmann, gifted in 2003; IIa 11342

Protective deity of four-legged creatures – Nandi, the Indian humped bull, is the servant and mount of the god Shiva. Like Shiva, his nature is ambivalent: he unites creative and destructive powers. Nandi is considered the protective deity of all four-legged creatures.

- 257 Nandi; Madurai, Tamil Nadu, India; before 1925; granite; Fritz Sarasin, gifted in 1925; IIa 541

A horse for a wish – In the Indian state of Gujarat, sacrifices to the gods are made in the form of terracotta horses. The high status the horse enjoys makes it one of the gods' preferred animals. By offering this and other sacrifices, believers solicit the aid and favour of the gods.

- 258 Figure *ghodo*; Bajipura, Surat, Gujarat, India; 1971; terracotta; Eberhard Fischer, purchased in 1971; IIa 5034
- 259 Figure *ghodo*; Valod, Surat, Gujarat, India; 1971; terracotta; Eberhard Fischer, purchased in 1971; IIa 5270
- 260 Figure *ghodo*; Bajipura, Surat, Gujarat, India; 1971; terracotta; Eberhard Fischer, purchased in 1971; IIa 5032

Deity on horseback – Ayyanar is a Hindu deity worshipped in southern India in his very own village temples. His assistance is particularly in demand after nightfall when he rides

around his realm to ensure that all is well. Galloping across the fields on his horse, he frightens off evil spirits and demons.

261 Figure of a horse, Ayyanar altar; India; late 20th c.; clay; Kunstpalast Düsseldorf, gifted in 2012; Ila 11496.01-08

262 Figure of horseman; Thanjavur, Tamil Nadu, India; before 1937; bronze; Paul Wirz, purchased in 1937; Ila 784

Animal guardians – Winged lions are common in Bali and come in many different forms. Looking fearsome, but with a protective function, they are often found on roof beams in temple structures. Winged lions are regarded as mounts for the gods.

263 Winged lion *singa barong*; Denpasar, Bali; before 1932; wood, paint; Fritz Sarasin, gifted in 1932; IIc 2911

Terracotta horses – Grave goods were replicas of the deceased's worldly possessions. Even after his death, the head of a family continued to be the owner of his wives, servants, animals and other assets. Long-legged, swift horses were greatly admired, and supernatural powers were attributed to them. Terracotta replicas of such horses found widespread use as grave goods during the Tang Dynasty.

264 Funerary pottery in the form of a horse; China; 1938; clay; Hans Merian-Roth, gifted in 1938; IID 1636

265 Funerary pottery in the form of a horse; China; 1978; clay; Emilie Derboven, gifted in 1978; IID 7281

Provisions for the afterlife – Chinese ancestor worship is based on the belief that the dead require the same items in death as they did in life. Ancestors protect the family group and ensure its prosperity – if they are adequately provided for. Food, money, items of clothing, and other desirable items are therefore offered up to them regularly. Such sacrifices are burned to allow their essence to enter the next world. The bill of fare for ancestors includes seafood, pork, duck, and chicken.

266 Sacrifice in the form of a fish; China; 20th c.; wood; Otto Schultze, Basel Mission Collection, gifted in 2015; IID 10090

267 Sacrifice in the form of a cockerel; China; 20th c.; wood; Otto Schultze, Basel Mission Collection, gifted in 2015; IID 10091

268 Sacrifice in the form of diced pork; China; 20th c.; wood; Otto Schultze, Basel Mission Collection, gifted in 2015; IID 10089

269 “Lord Ganesha” by Magoo (Markus Stöckli); 2021; spray paint on tarpaulin