Tourguide

Change of View

— Tracing Racism

Historisches Museum Frankfurt

Welcome to the Historical Museum Frankfurt!

The art intervention track 'Change of View – Tracing Racism' focusses on colonial history and its continuing effects to this day. Tracks from the 16th to the early 20th century can also be found in Frankfurt. Imperial and colonial concepts still have an impact today in the shape of racism and structural exclusion. These tracks can also be found in the exhibitions and collections of the Historical Museum – sometimes it is more obvious, sometimes less so: this can be seen clearly in the form of racist depictions and texts on exhibition objects. Or there are gaps because people and their narratives have been consistently left out. With 18 art interventions, the participatory project adds critical reflections and new perspectives to the exhibits.

Artists and activists of color comment on, change and complete selected objects and their stories with their contributions to the exhibition. They present their critical view of the stories handed down in the museum using artistic means. The tour is predominantly formulated from the perspective of non-white and intersectional positions. In their role as co-curators, they offer insight into experiences of racism and stereotyping descriptions. Strategies of self-empowerment and resistance are employed, in addition to uncovering racisms. This means the art interventions encompass a spectrum of fictional narratives, ironic additions, comparisons and protest campaigns, as well as superimpositions of individual museum objects.

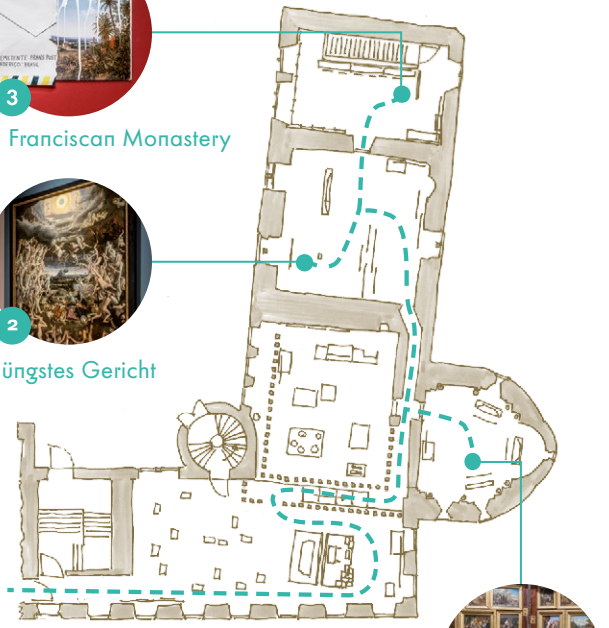
The terms white/whiteness and being Black or of Color denote sociopolitical categories. They are used to draw attention to racialising constructions of origin, skin colour, gender etc. In the process, political terms and self-designations such as BIPoC (Black, Indigenous and People of Color) are used for 'people affected by racism'. The glossary in the tour booklet explains these and other terms (see page 33).

Collectors' Museum

Level 1

3 Franciscan Monastery

2 Jüngstes Gericht



1 Cabinet of miniatures

1 Decolonial Window

An autonomous Black man with flowers at the window of time.

Ana Paula dos Santos

J.F. Morgenstern's miniature painting 'A richly dressed Lady at the Window with a Black Bellboy' emphasizes the superior role of the white woman. In terms of a Eurocentric worldview, she is at the centre and outshines the Black man. By reconstructing the former image, Ana Paula dos Santos shifts the position of the BIPoC. He becomes an autonomous protagonist who challenges viewing habits and prejudices about Black people that are based on colonialism.

2 Ama Löwenstein

Kaja

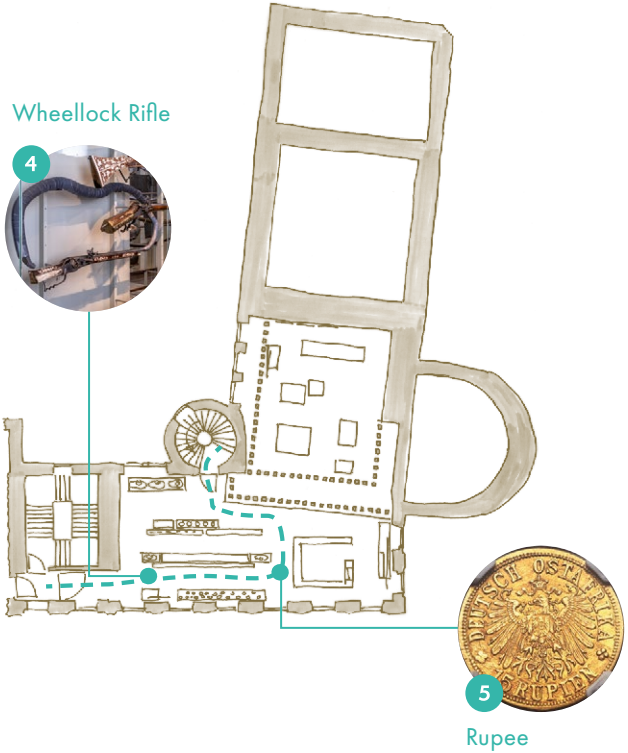
Right in the middle of the painting ‘Das Jüngste Gericht’ (transl. Last Judgment) by Philipp Uffenbach you can see a Black person. Who this person is or what their presence is supposed to express is not historically known. This gap is no exception. The co-curator Kaja uses this gap for an experiment. In the audio contribution ‘Ama Löwenstein’ she reacts to the racist exclusion and omission of BIPoC biographies in the past and present. She uses the resistance method of a power-critical, fictional narrative to give the person their identity and their social role back.

3 Send Me a Post-Postcard

Ana Paula dos Santos

The painting ‘Franciscan monastery in Igaraçú’ by the painter Frans Post is an idealised depiction of Brazil during the Dutch colonial period. Through this distortion, power structures, exploitation and slavery in people’s day-to-day lives are excluded and romanticised. The art intervention by the artist expresses her dissatisfaction with this whitewashed representation of colonised regions. She challenges this by exposing the image as a postcard motif. What this art intervention shows is that the idealised motif of the tropical is still present today.

Collectors' Museum
Level 2



4 Curved Gun

Liu Xue

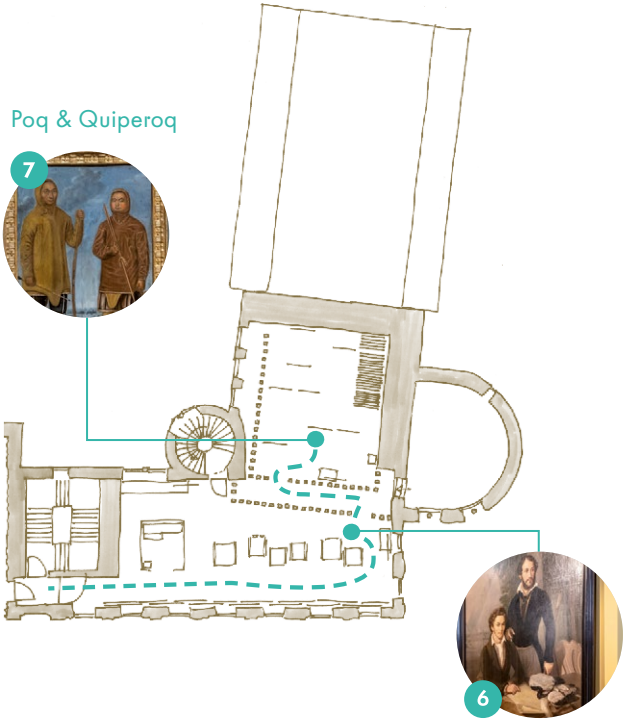
The wheellock rifles from Christian Alexander Fellner's collection were historic firearms produced in the 17th century, which primarily served as representation. Back then and also today, weapons were often an expression of masculinity, power and wealth. By referring to the ivory decor, the artist Liu Xue imagines a brutal cycle in the installation 'Curved Gun'. He addresses symbolism and the exploitative links of the object.

5 Small Coins, Big Change

Gladys Burk

World War I created a shortage of money in the former German colony of German East Africa. This led to the local production of coins. In 1916, so-called emergency coins were minted, including the 15-rupee gold coins. In a generational conversation between Kenya and Germany, the Burk-Obachi Machoka family reflects on the colonial significance of the gold coin. The impact on local trading systems, as well as personal and cultural practices to this day.

Collectors' Museum
Level 3



6 Distorted Memory

Luisa Benzinger

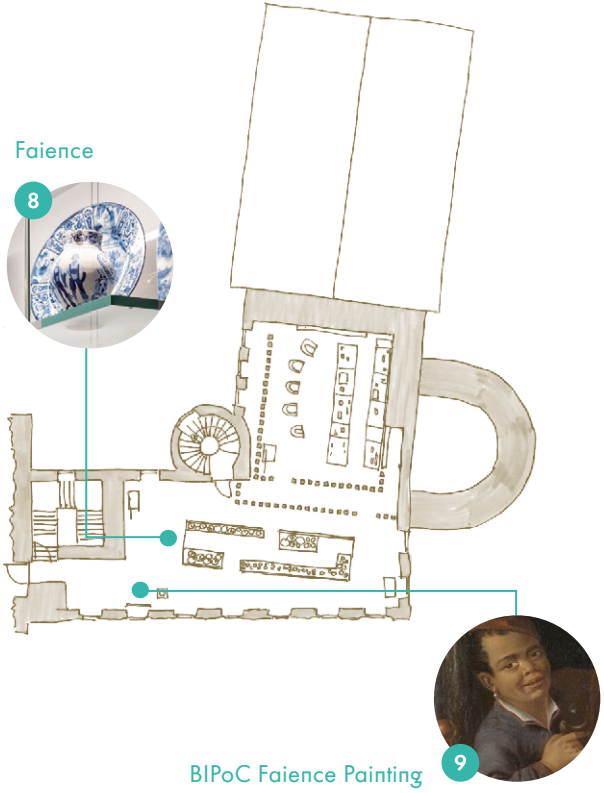
Just like Eduard Rüppell, plenty of Europeans travelled to countries they viewed as 'unknown' or 'foreign' as so-called 'explorers' during the 19th century. During their travels, they often amassed collections of natural-historical or ethnological objects, whose contexts of acquisitions are often difficult to understand today. The audio contribution questions the romanticised image of the explorer and views collecting as a problematic colonial practice.

7 Indigenous Bodies, racist Glances

Halil Can

Poq and Quiperoq were the first Inuits from West Greenland to leave their country. They were sent to Copenhagen by a missionary and presented to the Danish people and the king. Their biographies exemplify how, in the context of colonisation, people were repeatedly put on display for the entertainment of Europeans. The political scientist Halil Can uses world maps from different eras to show the extent of colonisation, but also the following decolonial liberation.

Collectors' Museum
Level 4



8 Made in Frankfurt

Liu Xue

The faience from the Kratz Collection from the late 17th and 18th centuries are based on Chinese porcelain from the Ming Dynasty. The Frankfurt ceramics both reflect and shaped the concept the Frankfurt middle class had of Chinese faience. These cultural concepts also exist on the other side. In the art intervention 'Made in Frankfurt', the artist Liu Xue plays with various stereotypes and questions them.

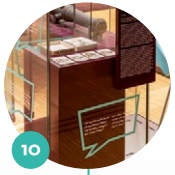
9 Ebo blows bubbles

Kaja

The 17th century still life shows luxury objects in the background as well as a Black person without a name or biographical references.
At the time of the painting's creation and during European colonisation, many BIPoC lived in rich European households as slaves or exoticised subjects of prestige. Co-curator Kaja shifts the perspective of the painting by giving the Black person a name and placing them at the centre of the painting. She challenges hegemonic viewing habits through a transparent curtain that covers the objects.

Frankfurt Once?

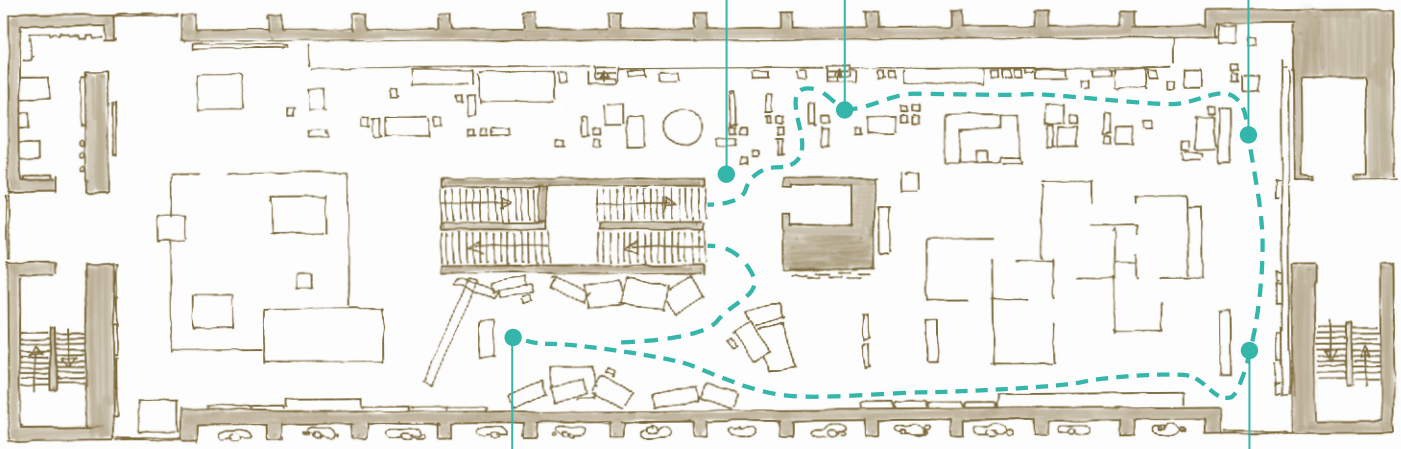
Level 1



Der Struwwelpeter 10

11 Human Zoo Poster

12 Rhinoceros



Puppets 14

Dean Dixon 13

10 From whose perspective is the story told?

Aanchel Kapoor

The children's book '*Der Struwwelpeter*' (transl.: Shock-headed Peter) is a well-known collection of educational short stories and the basis for the card game on display. One of these stories, 'The story of a Black boy', written in 1844, reproduces racist language and images without comment to this day.
Using speech bubbles, social scientist Aanchel Kapoor provides critical commentary on the book. She addresses the power and violence of language. The magazine provides counter-examples and proposals for action for children's literature conscious of racism.

11 Staring Back

On the continuing Influence of Viewing Habits based on Colonial Racism

Aanchel Kapoor

So-called '*Völkerschauen*' (transl.: human zoos) attracted large audiences in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. They also took place in Frankfurt. The shows were about staging the 'foreign' and the 'exotic'. They existed to amuse the white audience and perpetuated racist stereotypes. The audio contribution by Aanchel Kapoor addresses the brutality of racism and the continuity of viewing habits based on colonial racism. She turns exoticisation around and applies it to white people as a practice of resistance.

12 Colonialism-Clara

Amina Boujnah

The Dutch captain Mout van der Meer brought the rhinoceros Clara to Europe in 1741. In the beginning, it was for scientific research, before van der Meer put the animal on display at fairs all over Europe.
The image on display and the story of Clara the rhino show Europe's colonial interests. Using a pocket quiz, co-curator Amina Boujnah playfully conveys information and content on colonial history and colonial continuities in the present.

13 Dean Dixon – a Token?!

Halil Can

The African-American conductor Dean Dixon (1915-1976) was the first Black conductor to lead the radio symphony orchestra of the Hessischer Rundfunk from 1961 to 1974. Although Dixon left the USA because he experienced racism, he also encountered racism in Germany. Co-curator Halil Can questions whether equality is achieved by the museum showing Dean Dixon's portrait without comment. Or is a critical commentary necessary to expose racist structures?

14 Germany has an antisemitism- and racism problem!

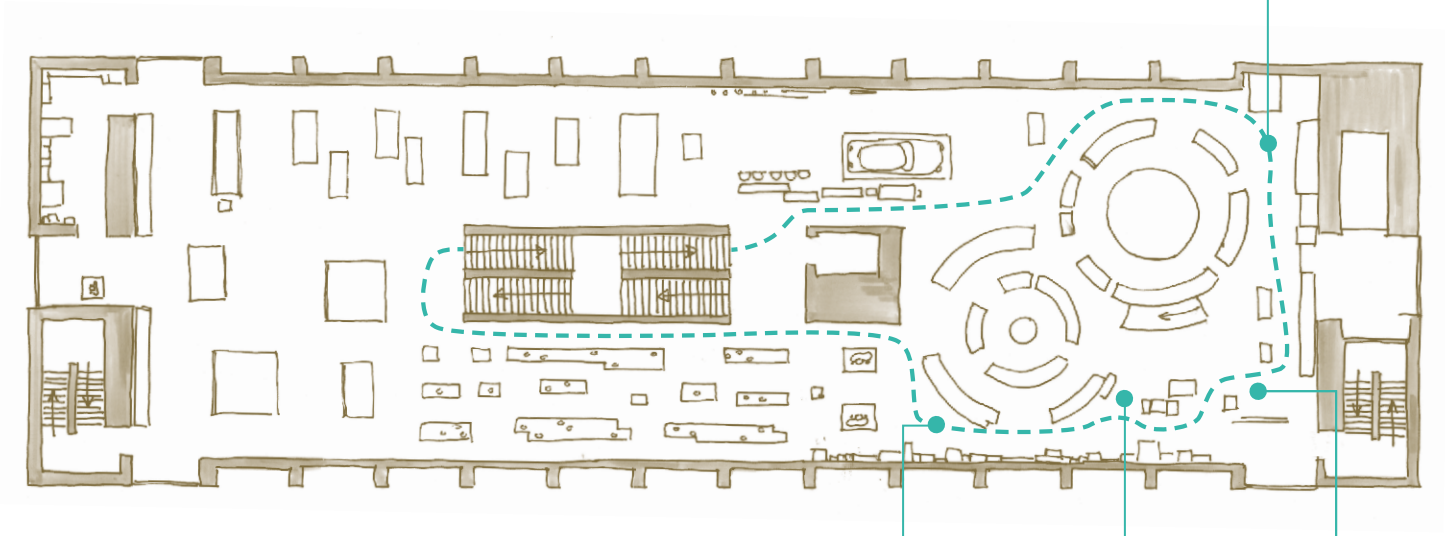
Xinan Pandan

The puppet show was created in the context of the Frankfurt protest movements of the 1960s and 1970s. It expressed left-wing criticism of capitalism in a diverse society through exaggerated depictions of the puppets. From a contemporary perspective, the stereotypical imagery repeats antisemitic and racist attributions. Artist Xinan Pandan criticizes the persistence of unconscious racist and antisemitic prejudices as a problem of society. Protest banners obscure the view of the installation and leaflets explain the protest.

Frankfurt Once?

Level 2

Frankfurter Ratssilber 15



18 Cookbook

17 DeBry AMERICA

16 Schöner-Globe

15 No End in Sight

Marie Antoinette N'gouan

Through colonisation, the depletion of raw materials from countries in the Global South became the focus of European expansionist efforts. This was still the case in the 19th century, which can be seen in the prestige objects of Frankfurt's Ratssilber and continues to the present day. Among other things, the mining of metals for the production and consumption of technology promotes the struggle for resources. In times of resource scarcity, this is one of the most common causes of conflict.

16 Constructed Realities

Mariama Koller

In 1507, Martin Waldseemüller produced a world map which the Schöner Globe is based on. It shows the world from a Eurocentric perspective, based on the knowledge Waldseemüller had of the world when he created the map. But what happens if we move the centre of a map? What happens to our understanding of this world when we question the depictions of this map?
The audio contribution focusses on historical and contemporary maps and points out the influence the context of origin has on the worldview that is depicted.

17 Once upon a Time in America ...

Puneh Henning

Theodor de Bry and his sons published 16 illustrated volumes about the supposedly newly discovered continent of America between 1590 and 1634. These illustrations supported the image of Christian Protestant superiority at the time and therefore endorsed the colonial conquest of America. With quotations and overpaintings on a 2019 coloured edition, the art intervention refers to the stereotypical concepts presented in the depictions and texts. It shows the continuing effects they have on the present.

18 Food is political

Xinan Pandan

Mary Hahn's cookbook from 1912 proves that with European colonisation, ingredients that were considered exotic were also adopted into European cuisine.
In connection to this, Xinan Pandan addresses the political dimensions of food and eating habits for diaspora communities in the context of racist experiences and cultural appropriation. In the video, topics like racial profiling, family anecdotes and feelings of belonging and longing are brought up.

Glossary

- **Afro-Germans:**
  Self-designated term for German Black people.

- **BIPoC:**
  Black, Indigenous and People of Color. Self-designation by and for people who are affected by racism.

- **Co-Curator:**
  People who share the task of curating something with one or more people. Independently and in close exchange with the museum team, they work on parts of the exhibition with a thematic focus, bringing in perspectives from outside of the museum context.

- **Diaspora:**
  The scattering of a community from its home country across multiple distant regions. The term was mainly shaped by Jewish history, but is now increasingly used by other communities. It is closely linked to traumatic experiences of forced migration, displacement and exile. In addition, the longing for one's native country is also linked to the concept of diaspora.

- **Eurocentrism:**
  A perspective in which Europe is at the centre of the world. All other continents and countries are distanced from this centre and are perceived to be different. During the course of colonisation, the Global North enforced its values worldwide.

- **Exoticisation:**
  Description for people or things from faraway and tropical countries. Based on one's own norms and values, the Other is seen as fundamentally different, unusual and strange.

- **Global South / Global North:**
  Independent of a geographical understanding, both concepts denote the attempt to describe different positions within a globalised world in a politically neutral way. The Global South refers to countries that occupy a socially, politically and economically disadvantaged position in it. On the opposite side is the privileged position of the Global North.

- **Hegemony:**
  Supremacy or dominance of a societal institution. This superiority can be based on cultural, economic or military aspects.

- **Intersectionality:**
  Overlapping discrimination. People who belong to various societal groups are often not just discriminated against due to a single attribute but also face different types of discrimination, such as racism, sexism, classism and more. Very specific types of exclusion often occur when someone experiences multiple forms of discrimination. Intersectionality requires people to view these various types of oppression at their intersections and see how they converge.

- **Migranticise:**
  Active process of assigning migrant parts or attributes, regardless of whether a person actually migrated themselves or has lived in Germany for generations. Phenotypical characteristics are the deciding factor.

- **Othering:**
  Distinguishing between 'Us' and 'the Others'. This construction of otherness displays societal power structures as natural, lending them legitimacy, meaning they continue. It serves to reassure oneself of one's own superiority – just like in the days of colonialism.

- **Racialisation:**
  A process in which people are placed in a hierarchy and devalued by attributing characteristics to them as a group. These characteristics and standards are based, for example, on white beauty standards or on the social and/or economic status one has achieved.

- **Racism:**
  Acting and thinking based on the fundamental assumption that people are not equal due to supposed biological differences and therefore cannot be the same. Racism views people as homogeneous groups based on actual or perceived physical or cultural characteristics (e.g. skin colour, origin, language, religion), assesses them according to a hierarchy and marginalises them.

- **Self-designation:**
  Reality is shaped by language and the usage of terms. Self-designations are terms people use to describe themselves or their group. Self-designations and self-ascriptions reject racist terms, which means they are very important.

- **Structural/Institutional racism:**
  Racism should be understood as a societal structure. This means that every one of us carries racisms. In turn, this means that various institutions also function according to racist logic. As a result, racialised people don't just experience discrimination in interpersonal contact, but also in the workplace, on the housing market, in government agencies, etc.

- **Subalternity**
  as a term encompasses several dimensions of exploitation, oppression and power. The term refers to the result of power structures that assign supremacy to a particular group. Subalterns are therefore people or groups who are denied access to this hegemonic part of society and social advancement.

- **Tokenism:**
  describes and criticises the merely symbolic effort to put individual members of a socially marginalised group on an equal footing with mainstream society as representatives of that group. While the dominant society can pride itself with how open, inclusive and diverse it is, an illusion of equal opportunity is created – this conceals and perpetuates the dimensions of inequality.

- **white:**
  Political label for white people. White is a sociopolitical description and is written in lower case.

- **Whiteness:**
  is a social, sociopolitical category. The term describes the many ways in which white people inhabit a privileged position. It is often not perceived in that way. Instead, whiteness is often seen as the societal normality and the norm and in comparison to Blackness, it is rarely named.

Imprint

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Historisches Museum Frankfurt

If you are interested in more information about the project, please visit our website.

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▷ **Getting here**
Tram 11, 12 Römer/Paulskirche, U4, U5 Dom/Römer
Parking Dom/Römer

▷ **Opening hours**
Monday closed
Tue – Sun 11 am – 6 pm, Thu 11 am – 9 pm

▷ **Tickets**
Permanent exhibition €8/€4
Temporary exhibition €10/€5 reduced
Full price €12/€6 reduced
Free admission for children and youths under 18

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