

EXPANDING HORIZONS

A MUSEUM
TRAIL ON
MIGRATION

GERMANISCHES
NATIONAL
MUSEUM

Expanding Horizons: Migration Trail through the Museum

Many works in the permanent exhibition at the Germanisches Nationalmuseum already highlight the topic of migration. This trail takes you to 13 such objects in the museum itself and its immediate surroundings.

The trail takes you through the ages, from late antiquity to the present, and demonstrates how migration has always been an integral part of the human story. The trail was created as part of the 2023 special exhibition “Horizons. Histories and Futures of Migration” and was developed in conjunction with young adults on the museum’s Youth Council. It is their voices that are gathered below. Their immediate responses, questions, and ways of seeing things illustrate how individual experiences can influence how an object is perceived. In some cases we have recorded merely the young people’s initial responses, thus leaving room for further interpretations. The trail invites everyone – including you – to explore visible traces of earlier migration and to look at the museum objects from your own personal standpoint, based on your own experiences.

In doing so, it is worth keeping the following questions in mind:

Looking at the work, what’s the first word that comes to mind?

What does it remind me of?

What feelings does it stir in me?

What title would I give it?

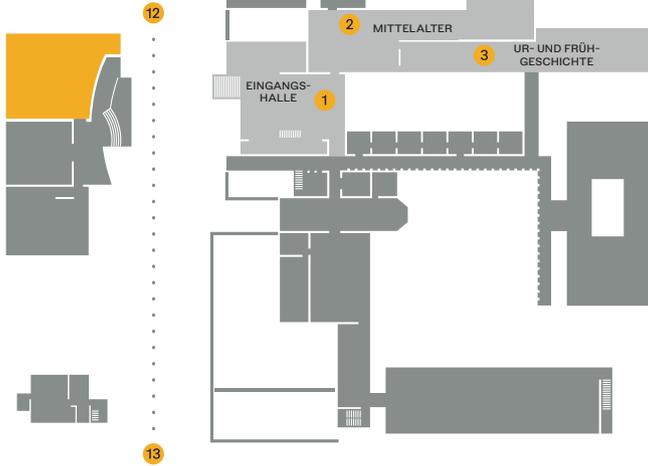
What could its connection with migration be?

Does it relate in any way to me and my life?

What is the Youth Council?

The Youth Council (Junger Beirat) consists of young adults aged 16 to 25. It was founded for the special exhibition “Horizons.” In regular meetings, the following viewpoints and responses emerged from conversations held on each object. The Council also provided the opportunity for young people to share their perspectives on the GNM itself.

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1. Hauptstadt

Capital City

Raffael Rheinsberg,
Berlin, 1993/94
Pl.O.3362

2. Fiale vom Dom zu Köln *Pinnacle from Cologne Cathedral*

Rhineland/Cologne,
1st half 14th c.
A3588

3. Adlerfibel *Eagle Brooch*

c. 500 CE
FG1608

12. Straße der Menschenrechte

Way of Human Rights

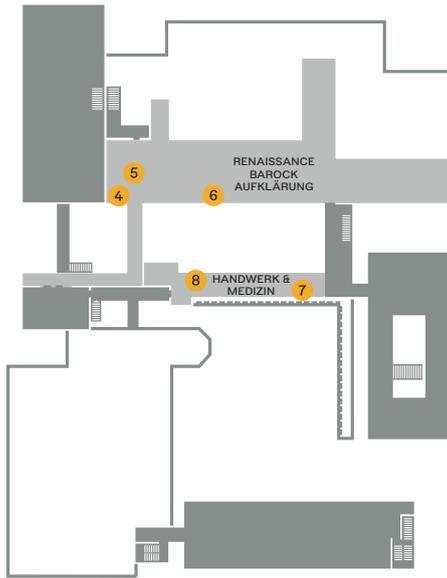
Dani Karavan,
Nuremberg, 1988/93
Pl.O.3187

13. NSU-Mahnmal

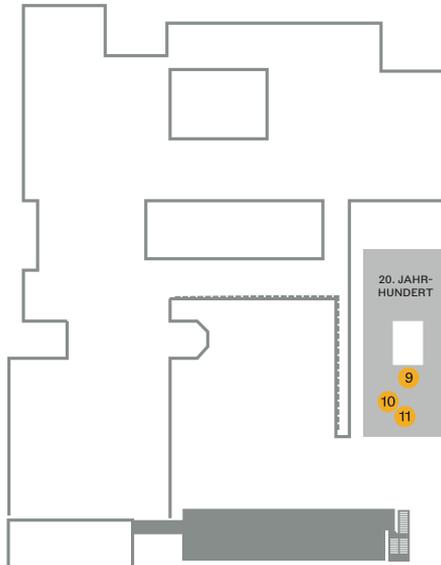
NSU Memorial

Memorial for the victims of
NSU terror, officially unveiled
on 21.3.2013
Kartäuser Tor

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4. Behaim-Globus

The Behaim Globe

Design: Martin Behaim and Georg Glockendon the Elder, Nuremberg 1492/94 with later additions
WI1826

5. Porträt der Barbara Dürer, geb. Holper

*Portrait of Barbara Dürer,
née Holper*

Albrecht Dürer, Nuremberg, 1490
Gm1160

6. Heiliger Mauritius

Saint Maurice

Peter Vischer the Elder and Simon
Lainberger, Nuremberg, c. 1507
Pl.O.2220

7. Sogenannter Schlosserbaum

So-called Locksmiths' Tree

Kiel, 1884
Z1964

8. Hebammenkoffer

A Midwife's Suitcase

c. 1930/45
WI2238,0

9. Der Trinker

The Drunkard

Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, 1914
Gm1667

10. Liege

Recliner

Marcel Breuer, 1935/36
HG12663

11. Marine

Seascape

Lyonel Feininger, 1919
Gm2495



1. Capital City

Raffael Rheinsberg, Berlin, 1993/94
PI.O.3362

Familiar and at the same time unfamiliar, this work is on view in the lobby. A multitude of street signs invite visitors to read their names. Various worn or marked, sometimes with stickers and graffiti, the signs evidently once served as real signage in the public space. We are all able to recognize the odd name familiar to us. It may be that some street names also exist in our own city or in other places where we have lived. Often, our own passage through life is recorded as a string of place names and addresses – that belie a wealth of personal memories. Behind every official-sounding street name lies countless personal stories, experiences, expectations, and paths through life.

What are the names of the streets I have lived on so far? What do I associate with these places?



2. Pinnacle from Cologne Cathedral

Rhineland/Cologne, 1st half 14th c.
A3588

This object looks heavy and somehow light at the same time. Light, like petals – but also heavy thanks to the sandstone it's made of. The stone gives weight to the light, breezy forms; through it they become rooted to the spot. At the same time they protect the sandstone, like a kind of canopy.

Any idea what this object has to do with migration?

Whenever people end up on the move, so does knowledge, as demonstrated here by this pinnacle from Cologne Cathedral. Pinnacles are slender, spire-like caps on the top of pillars and were often used in Gothic architecture, i.e., in the Middle Ages. The many master builders involved in the cathedral's construction (which took several centuries) traveled across Europe to work on various construction sites. The construction of the Cologne Cathedral would not have been possible without the on-the-job knowledge they gained along the way.



3. Eagle Brooch

c. 500 CE, Domagnano (Rep. San Marino)
FG1608

Byzantine – heavy – precious stones – different colors – priceless – refined – extremely valuable – variety of materials – cross – family heirloom?

Who owned this piece of jewelry? How do you think it was used?

The eagle brooch is one of the most important finds from the Migration Period. The owner of the piece of jewelry was an Ostrogoth close to King Theodoric. In late antiquity, the Ostrogoths migrated from eastern Europe and entered what was then still the Roman Empire. This fibula, a kind of brooch, was found in Domagnano near Ravenna (Italy). In style, it displays the influences of Byzantine, Gothic, and (Western) Roman art and is the product of the lively cultural mixing of this era – a time of great flux.

Symbols, fashions, and of course materials and the knowledge of how to work them also migrated with people as they moved across the continent. Jewelry is often passed down within families from one generation to the next. Jewelry pieces often hold very personal memories.

Are there any family heirlooms in my own family that hold special memories?



4. The Behaim Globe

Design: Martin Behaim and Georg Glockendon the Elder, Nuremberg 1492/94 with later additions
WI1826

What did people imagine the world looked like, before this knowledge became accessible at the click of a button?

How many different sources of information flowed into the making of this globe? And how many different countries did that data come from?

How many people were involved in the long and arduous voyages of exploration that resulted in such cartographic knowledge?

What were the dangers of their endeavor?

What did they leave behind?

How did they leave their mark?

How is the impact of European colonialism still felt today?

How is the issue currently being addressed?

What most shapes my view of the world? Imagine the opposite view – what would that look like?



5. Portrait of Barbara Dürer, née Holper

Albrecht Dürer, Nuremberg, 1490
Gm1160

*When was this woman alive?
What kind of life did she lead?
Where did she live?
Was the headscarf fashion or did it symbolize something? Does it reflect her religion?*

Clothing can be vital in expressing one's identity or status. It can be a statement of belonging as well as exclusion and exclusivity, be it for religious, professional, or cultural reasons, or sometimes simply as a fashion statement.

Albrecht Dürer painted his mother Barbara wearing her bonnet, and so showed her as a devout, married woman. The work was only classified as a bona fide Dürer relatively recently. Albrecht Dürer is not merely the city of Nuremberg's most famous son but also its most famous citizen with foreign roots: his father was a Hungarian immigrant who settled here as a goldsmith.

What makes me feel like I belong?



6. Saint Maurice

Peter Vischer the Elder and Simon Lainberger,
Nuremberg, c. 1507
PI.O.2220

This figure reminds me of the moon landing – stabbing the flag into the ground like that is a statement, saying you have conquered the land.

Migration was and still is associated with conquest, with war and thus always with flight and expulsion. In the Catholic Church, Saint Maurice was known as a religious martyr, and in the 12th century people started envisaging and depicting him as Black. There are different interpretations of this figure. One way to see him is as representing Christianity's global mission to convert non-Christian populations everywhere, not just those in central Europe. Alternatively, the figure can be read as representing the promise of inclusivity by the Church ever since the time of the early Christians, by showing that anyone could share in Christian salvation, regardless of their ethnicity.

If I copy his pose, how does it feel to stand like that?
Can I think of a situation when I might decide to stand in this way?



7. So-called Locksmiths' Tree

Kiel, 1884
Z1964

The trunk has been separated from its roots, and has long left the place where it originally stood. Its surface is littered with "wounds" or scars; the wood managed to grow over many of the nails, "absorbing" them. Some superficial injuries can have profound consequences.

Can you find out where this tree stood just by looking at the wood?

Who hammered all those nails into it?

Young craftsmen would travel from town to town as a formative and essential part of their training. They would thus be exposed to other workshops and techniques. Any journeymen locksmith leaving the city of Kiel had to hammer a nail into a tree trunk like this one in a farewell ritual. Work or education is still a major factor behind migration today.

Has migration for work or education affected me personally?



8. Midwife's case

c. 1930/45
WI2238,0

A matter of life or death?

Who was the intended patient?

Is this a precursor of the first-aid kit or even a mobile pharmacy?

What are the instruments used for?

Who decided to take this case along with them?

What kind of journey has it been on?

What kind of things are so indispensable that you couldn't leave them behind when fleeing your home?

What would I take with me?

Elise Dudek took her midwife's case with her when she was forced to abandon her home in Upper Silesia and flee westwards in 1945, in the hope of continuing her work as a midwife in her new home. However, this wasn't to be. In the end, she left the suitcase with the last mother whom she assisted in giving birth, in 1945.



9. The Drinker

Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, 1914
Gm 1667

Why did the painter choose to use these colors?

What does a skin color like this tell us?

Does the person look healthy to you, or on the verge of death?

What is this person thinking about?

What is in the glass? Does its shape remind you of anything? What could it mean?

Do its contents help the drinker overcome loneliness?

What does the gesture of the hand mean?

Is the person showing us something? Or is he trying to reach out to us? Is it an inviting gesture?

How would I react to seeing this gesture – and why?

In this self-portrait, Ernst Ludwig Kirchner presents himself with the facial features of a man called Sam, a Black performing artist who sat as model for this picture. The sense of loneliness is palpable; perhaps the hand is stretched out in search of contact or support.



10. Recliner

Marcel Breuer, 1935/36
HG12663

Reclining – taking a breather – uncomfortable – sedentary – sense of unease – ready-to-assemble furniture – skatepark – sled – But why this shape? – What kind of wood is that? – up and down – not suitable for all body shapes

Being of Jewish descent, Marcel Breuer decided to flee Germany in 1933, spending a few years in England before finally settling in the USA. He had already established himself as a successful designer at the Bauhaus in Germany. After his migration to the USA, he rose to become an influential architect and, together with Walter Gropius, established the architecture department at Harvard University. This reclining chair shows how Breuer was already thinking of sustainability at the time: its arms were assembled from recycled packing crates.



11. Marine

Lyonel Feininger, 1919
Gm2495

*The longer you look, the more details you discover.
The sharp edges are reminiscent of Japanese origami.*

*Will the people in the boat arrive safely?
The picture evokes thoughts of travel, discovery,
departure – but at the same time also of misfor-
tune, peril, and danger.*

*The ups and downs of the waves are reminiscent
of life.*

*The colors seem on the one hand restrained, on
the other hand also oppressive and threatening.*

Lyonel Feininger painted many seascapes. The horizon deliberately looks like a perforated surface. The motif can stand for the longing to get far away, but also for uncertainty. Restlessness and fragmentation are palpable in his painting.

Feininger was finally able to emigrate to the USA, just before his works were banned by the Nazis as being examples of “degenerate art” and partly destroyed.

What do I think of when I stare at the horizon?



12. The Way of Human Rights

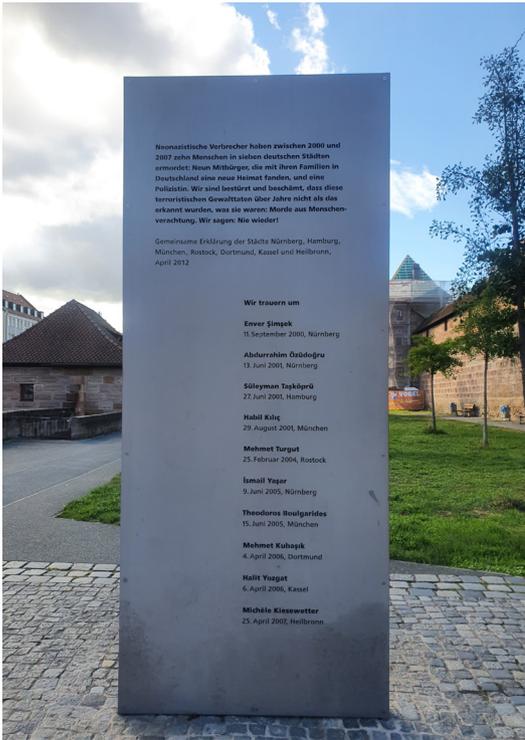
Dani Karavan, Nuremberg, 1988/93
Pl.O.3187
In front of the museum main entrance

*In many countries, human rights are not respected.
When governments or communities disregard
them, it can make people decide to migrate in
search of personal safety.
Universal human rights may be declared in writing,
but that doesn't make them universally attainable.*

Artist Dani Karavan based his design on a group of ruined Byzantine columns in the Iraqi desert. Even then, inscriptions on Roman or Egyptian columns had the purpose of recording declarations of great importance and making them public.

Which law has had the greatest impact on my life?
Which languages on the columns do I recognize –
which ones do I understand?

For your thoughts:



13. Memorial

Memorial for the victims of NSU terror, officially unveiled on 21.3.2013
Kartäuser Tor

Even though they called this place home, it didn't offer them protection.

The memorial sign and the surrounding trees are meant to draw attention to human rights in everyday life.

The trees were planted to reflect the idea that human rights should take root and flourish in our daily lives.

The sign and trees serve as a reminder of racially motivated violence that still occurs today.

Unfortunately, racism is not a thing of the past and is still experienced on a daily basis, right here in our community.

