

JOHANN
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MUSEUM

The Johann Jacobs Museum's first exhibition consists mainly of research materials mixed with items from the Klaus J. Jacobs collection (18th-century porcelain figurines from Meissen), archive material relating to Maya Deren (from the Martina Kudláček archive in Vienna and New York) and photographs by contemporary artists (Lidwien van de Ven and George Osofi).

A loose correspondence between themes (such as "black gold", which may be either coffee or crude oil), media (such as film, but also the exhibition) and textures (such as porcelain or sequins) provides a rough outline of the cultural hybrid forms that have developed along global trade routes. These intercultural hybrid forms will largely determine the Museum's exhibitions in years to come.

Our plans for the
future



Guilherme Gaensly (1843-1928) took the group photograph in front of the Hospedaria de Imigrantes (immigration centre) in São Paulo in the early 20th century. Once equipped with a passport and a job, immigrants from Europe would set out from here to start their new lives. The barefooted girl to the left of the foreground grips her clothing tightly, as if it gave her something solid to hold onto, and expresses the general mood: a mixture of abashed curiosity and scepticism. The fatigue of several weeks at sea is apparent, as well as the sense of relief at having finally arrived. New arrivals sent group photographs like these as postcards to their family and relations in the old world.

Like the Brazilian immigrants (or the paintings in Bo Bardi's MASP), the small figurines on Sigmund Freud's desktop (in the photograph by artist Lidwien van de Ven) remain firmly on the threshold. Freud arranged them in such a way that they faced him full on, as if they were interlocutors whose expertise he relied on in the course of his explorations into the civilizing recesses of the subconscious. Or like warders who accompanied him on his risk-fraught journeys into the psyche. The figurines come from a variety of different cultures. Chinese statuettes from the Tang dynasty, Egyptian divinities and pieces from ancient Rome are all clearly identifiable. If Freud's personal museum appears extremely fragile, it was at the same time eminently portable and able to adapt to the history's crueller moments. As Freud himself wrote, the "Egyptians, Chinese and Greeks" had survived his flight from the Nazis to exile in London intact. Today, his desk stands in the Freud Museum in Hampstead.



Little Beings

