



LATER EUROPEAN AND CHINESE AMBER ARTWORKS

By the late 18th century amber had fallen out of fashion, displaced by newer luxury materials such as porcelain. Only in the Baltic regions did it continue to be valued as a national heritage. In terms of style, 19th-century Baltic designers retained the original shape of the raw amber in their jewellery and decorations as much as possible. In China, amber had fully entered the Chinese artistic repertoire by the Ming dynasty (1368-1644), with artists transforming amber pieces into miniature creations that catered to the taste of the elites. Qing rulers (1644-1911) continued to hold amber in high esteem, perhaps due to their shared ancestry with the Qidan, their nomadic precursors. Qing artworks demonstrate great technical mastery, exploiting amber's various colours to achieve very different effects.

後期歐洲及中國的琥珀藝術

在十八世紀後期，琥珀在歐洲已不再時尚，取而代之的是瓷器等較新穎的奢華材料，只有波羅的海地區仍視琥珀為國家文化遺產。至於風格方面，十九世紀波羅的海設計師在珠寶及裝飾中，盡量保留琥珀原有的形狀。在中國，琥珀在明朝期間（1368年-1644年）已完全融入中國藝術，藝術家將琥珀轉化成小雕飾，迎合精英品味。清朝（1644年-1911年）皇室仍然推崇琥珀，或者是因為他們與契丹人有共同祖先，擁有游牧血統。清朝文物展現出色的技藝，探索琥珀多樣的顏色，營造不同效果。

20TH-CENTURY AMBER

Between the two World Wars, European designers like Cartier, Mauboussin, and Laloe Frères, combined amber with gold, diamonds, and coral in wonderful Art Deco designs. For the middle-class market, amber accessories were fashionable, such as men's cufflinks and cigarette holders. In the Baltic states, amber's role was affected by the Soviet occupation; countries like Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, and Poland became centres of amber mining and production. Workshops produced such standardized objects as tankards, candlesticks, and necklaces for the tourists. Only after the Soviet occupation did local artists and designers begin reviving amber's artistic heritage and traditional styles, leading to a rejuvenation in amber jewellery and design.

二十世紀的琥珀

在兩次世界大戰之間，歐洲的設計品牌如卡亞、Mauboussin和Laloe Frères將琥珀與黃金、鑽石和珊瑚結合，製成精美的裝飾藝術風格化妝盒。在中產階級市場中，琥珀飾物風行一時，例如有男士袖扣及煙架等。當時琥珀贗品的數量大增，可見琥珀具強烈吸引力。在波羅的海國家，蘇聯佔領改變了琥珀的角色。立陶宛、拉脫維亞、愛沙尼亞和波蘭等國成為琥珀的開採及生產中心。工場大量生產如啤酒杯、盾牌、燭台和項鍊等產品供給遊客。直到蘇聯佔領完結，本地的藝術家及設計師方才重新發掘琥珀的藝術歷史及傳統風格，復興琥珀首飾和設計。



CONTEMPORARY WORKS IN AMBER

Few European designers work with amber today, in part because of Modernism's rejection of decorative elements, and in part because of amber's limited availability. However, a renewed interest in traditional arts and crafts has led to creative and often startling uses of amber, for instance on furniture and ornamental objects. In the Baltic regions, artists are consciously reappropriating amber, a material seen as representing their culture for thousands of years. Their new explorations highlight amber's multi-faceted role as an independent object, a compositional element, and a decorative feature within a larger design.

當代琥珀作品

時至今日，甚少歐洲設計師使用琥珀，一部分是由於現代主義全面拒絕裝飾元素，另一部分是由於琥珀供應有限。然而，對傳統藝術及工藝的興趣風潮再起，令到琥珀的用途深具創意，甚至令人驚訝，例如用於家具和裝飾品之上。在波羅的海地區，藝術家正在有意識地重新使用琥珀——這數千年來被視為代表他們文化的物料。他們的探索突顯了琥珀在較大的設計中，作為獨立物品、組合元素及裝飾特色的多個面向。

CODA: FAKE AMBER

The history of fake amber is almost as long as that of amber itself. Both Roman and ancient Chinese authors document the fabrication of materials that mimic amber and deceive buyers. Over the ages more sophisticated means have produced better imitations, especially with the use of 20th- and 21st-century technology. For instance, synthetic materials can simulate the translucent quality and texture of amber, while adding amber powder can replicate its smell. These make it more difficult to distinguish the true from the false, although a few traditional methods can still work—by the object's weight (amber is extremely light and floats in water); by its smell when heated (for a pinecone odour); and by its appearance under ultraviolet light (amber will glow blue or green).

結尾：琥珀贗品

琥珀贗品的歷史，與琥珀本身一樣源遠流長。羅馬和中國古代作家都曾記錄仿製琥珀，以至它如何以假亂真及欺騙買家。經年累月，偽冒手法更為精巧，尤其配合二十及二十一世紀的科技，令仿製品更像真。例如，合成材料足以模仿琥珀的半透明特性和質感，只要加上琥珀粉就可複製其氣味。這些技法令辨別真假更為困難，然而，一些傳統方式仍然行之有效：測試重量（琥珀非常輕，且可浮於水面）、辨別燃燒時的氣味（它會散發出松果氣味），以及觀察它在紫外線下的外觀（琥珀會發出藍或綠光）。

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AMBER BALTIC GOLD 琥珀 波羅的海黃金



AMBER: BALTIC GOLD

Divided into six sections, the exhibition highlights key moments in amber's artistic trajectory over the last 4,000 years. The first introduces its origins and its significance for scientific research; the second presents ancient amber objects from the Baltic regions; the third focuses on amber art during the Liao dynasty and in medieval Europe; the fourth traces amber's popularity in the Ming and Qing dynasties, in contrast to its decreasing use in 19th-century Europe; the fifth explores amber's role in 20th-century Latvia; and the last looks at amber in contemporary artworks. The exhibition concludes with a few examples of fake or composite amber masquerading as original pieces.

琥珀：波羅的海黃金

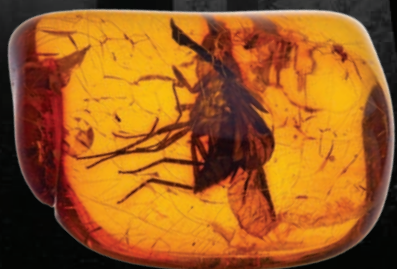
展覽分為六個部分，呈現琥珀在過去四千年藝術軌跡中的關鍵時刻。第一部分介紹琥珀的起源及其對科學研究的意義，第二部分展示波羅的海地區和意大利的古代琥珀文物，第三部分聚焦遼代及中世紀歐洲的琥珀藝術，第四部分追溯琥珀在明清時期風行的情況——對比歐洲在十九世紀使用琥珀的風氣漸退，第五部分探索琥珀在二十世紀拉脫維亞的角色，最後是當代藝術作品中的琥珀，而展覽以人造或合成的琥珀贗品作結。

AMBER'S CONTRIBUTION TO GEOLOGY AND PALAEONTOLOGY

Amber results from fossilization which occurs when the original resin is protected from all natural degradation. The sudden insertion of the resin material into the ground triggers the fossilization during which the organic elements are replaced by mineral elements contained in the soil. The oldest pieces of Baltic amber date back more than 35 million years. Fossilized amber is a treasure trove for palaeontologists, providing precious information about the original ecosystem. Amber can entrap small vertebrates or more often invertebrates like insects. By studying these, scientists can determine their species (discover new ones) and better understand the evolution of early life on earth.

琥珀對地質學和古生物學的貢獻

琥珀由非常複雜的石化過程形成，在樹脂不受自然降解下發生。物質突然進入地下，引發緩慢的石化過程，令有機物質被土壤中的礦物元素取代。最古老的海琥珀，可以追溯到三千五百萬年前。對古生物學家而言，琥珀化石仍是名副其實的寶藏，為其生態系統提供了大量寶貴的資料。琥珀可以困住如蜥蜴等小型脊椎動物，而通常受困的都是無脊椎生物，尤其是昆蟲。通過研究這些琥珀，科學家可以斷定其物種（或發現新物種），並深入了解早期物種的演化過程。



ANCIENT AMBER

Amber was already being used as early as the Upper Palaeolithic period (40,000 to 10,000 BCE). In Latvia, processed amber survives from the Middle Neolithic Period (around 4,100 BCE). Baltic peoples started trading amber quite early and it appears in China around 1,000 BCE, valued both as a fragrance and even more as a gemstone. While some amber pieces survive from the Han dynasty (202 BCE-220 CE), these reflect the localized influence of trade rather than a genuine appreciation of amber itself. Only under the influence of nomadic kingdoms in North China, especially that of the Liao dynasty (907-1125) established by the Qidan, does amber emerge as a highly prized artistic material.

古代琥珀

早在舊石器時代晚期，即大約公元前四萬到一萬年，人類經已使用琥珀。在拉脫維亞，可以找到從新石器時代中期（約公元前4100年）保存至今的經加工琥珀。波羅的海的人民甚早開始進行琥珀貿易，而琥珀大約到公元前一千左右在中國出現，它被視為香料，更被視為寶石。漢代（公元前202年-公元220年）只有少量琥珀存世，它們在海上絲綢之路沿線的墓地出土，反映貿易為當地帶來異國的珍奇物品，而並未令人真正欣賞琥珀。直到中國北方受游牧王國影響，尤其是契丹人建立的遼代（916年-1125年），琥珀才成為備受推崇的藝術物料。

AMBER IN EARLY MODERN EUROPE AND THE LIAO DYNASTY

The Liao dynasty (916-1125) and the nomadic kingdoms were especially fond of amber—a taste not initially shared by the Han population. The Liao greatly valued amber objects, especially long amber necklaces worn by the nobility, and their amber jewellery, pendants, and small figurines display a high level of craftsmanship. In Europe, the wars of religion directly affected the amber trade. German rulers occupied the Baltic regions—the main source of amber—and controlled its harvesting and production. As Protestant states, the German Baltic regions focused more on creating secular artworks and kept the highest quality amber for themselves. Catholic states, however, had a great need for more religious amber artefacts, such as rosaries and chaplets, then fabricated using cheaper beads.

歐洲早期現代和遼代的琥珀

遼代（916年-1125年）的契丹統治者以至先前的游牧王國，都對琥珀情有獨鍾，而當時漢人尚未懂得欣賞琥珀。遼人相當重視琥珀，尤其貴族佩戴的琥珀長項鍊，以及琥珀首飾、墜飾、小俑等，都是工藝精湛。在歐洲，宗教的對立直接影響了琥珀貿易。德國統治者佔領了波羅的海地區，亦即琥珀的主要產地，並且控制了其採收和生產。由於德國的波羅的海地區信奉新教，其工場專注於世俗藝術作品，並為此預留最優質的琥珀。同時，天主教國家對琥珀宗教物品的需求大增，例如玫瑰念珠及花冠念珠，當時都以廉價的珠子製作。



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National History Museum of Latvia

拉脫維亞國家歷史博物館

Romulis Family Collection

Romulis 家族藏品

Liang Yi Museum

兩依藏博物館

Fondation Fourvière – Musée d'art religieux

富維耶基金會-宗教藝術博物館

Collection de l'Association Trésors de Ferveur

Association Trésors de Ferveur 藏品

Aline Putot-Toupry and Bruno Toupry Creations

Aline Putot-Toupry 及 Bruno Toupry 作品

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