

A top-down view of a room with teal patterned wallpaper. In the top left, there is a red heart-shaped rug. In the bottom left, a portion of a wooden cabinet with drawers is visible. In the bottom right, a wooden bed frame with two light blue pillows is shown. A small blue shag rug is on the floor near the bed. The word "AlEinig" is written in white in the center of the image.

AlEinig

Alleinig | Glauben Götter Gleichgesinnte

Photographs by Sabine Braun

AlIEinig

All \approx Universum, alle = Universe, all

Einig \approx gemeinsam, wesensgleich, einmütig = agreed, at one, united

alleinig \approx einsam, alleine = exclusive, sole, only

AlIEinig \approx Glaube = Faith

Faith is a key issue in all human cultures. Faith gives support and hope, faith offers community and identity, faith provides space and calm where rational answers do not suffice, faith creates meaning and compassion.

But faith also brings about death, hatred and discord. All too often, a difference is made between believers and non-believers. Salvation is only for those with the right beliefs. All others are threatened with damnation be it in the here and now or in the afterworld.

Why do people kill each other for their religious beliefs? Why do they try to impose upon each other the supposedly right belief? What if people were not afraid of different faiths, and thus faith were no longer an instrument of power?

I have been preoccupied with the question of faith for a long time, searching for answers: artistic, photographic answers to questions that are as exciting, multi-faceted and difficult as the universe is wide.

Wandering over the surface of this large dwelling called faith I have encountered multiple approaches and traversed many rooms: kitschy andw critical, irritated, political, very angry, fearful, God-trusting, cynical and judgmental.

But may one judge without having a clue? Therefore I have put myself in the shoes of different religious orientations, trying to grasp their underlying ideas and manifestations. The deeper I went, the more impossible it became to pass judgment.

With the help of many interested, open and appreciative people from all over the world and followers of completely different religious persuasions, and thanks to the perfect and affectionate guidance I received in questions of costuming and in rag shops, thanks also to a fabulous treasure trove of things, objects, information and insights, and last but not least through many hours of internet research, my latest work, **AlIEinig**, came into being. A dolls‘ house from the 1960s serves as platform and stage for this project.

It is my wish to mirror a peaceful image from a few selected faiths. For at the end of this journey it is clear: I do not want to pass judgment, to scoff, to criticize or be afraid. I want to relate what I have found, sensed and learned. This catalogue shall support this; a minuscule source of information about an unutterably exciting, moving and universal subject.

A subject where judgment between “true” and “false” beliefs has no place.

Alleinig | Buddhist Faith



Chenrezig | Bodhisattva of Compassion

Chenrezig is a popular figure in Tibetan Buddhism, and is often portrayed on art objects and arts and crafts products. Bodhisattva embodies mercy and universal compassion and is familiar in various incarnations. In China, the female form of this figure is Guanyin.



Dorje | Ritual Instrument

The dorje is one of the most important ritual objects in Buddhism. It has a positive pole for restocking energy and a negative pole for discharging energy. Literally, dorje means something like “indestructible diamond” or “Lord of rocks”.



Prayer Wheel | Mani Wheel

A prayer wheel is a rotating drum with prayers or mantras printed on a paper roll. The more often the drum is turned, the more often the mantra „Om mani padme hum“ is being recited and thus through this movement, carried into the world.



Butter Lamp | Memorial Candle

Butter lamps are lit in Buddhist sites, in front of Buddha statues and at the time of Puja, the most important element in Buddhist everyday life. The lighting of the butter lamp symbolizes the enlightenment of mind and man.



Conch Shell | Dung Dkar

The conch shell is the simplest and oldest trumpet-like musical instrument. It is most often played in tandem so that the intake of breath by one player will not result in an interruption of the music. The conch shell is used in rituals, for example to drive out demons.



Buddha | The Awakened One

Siddhartha Gautama lived approximately 2.500 years ago in India, born into a dynasty of rulers. Being confronted with the misery outside the palaces, he began searching for wisdom. He did not get very far with asceticism. It was only through the Noble Eightfold Path that he experienced his “awakening” and became Buddha.



Dharmachakra | Wheel of Life

The Dharmachakra is the symbol of Buddha’s teaching. The eight spokes of the wheel refer to the Noble Eightfold Path, a central element of Buddhist teachings. They stand for: right beliefs, right aspirations, right speech, right conduct, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, right meditational attainment.



Prayer Flag | Rlung-rta („wind horse“)

Tibetan prayer flags mostly show the four animals of the cardinal points in their corners, and the wind horse in their center. (Hence the name rlung-rta.) By fluttering in the wind, the flag sends out the prayers printed on it, just like a horse flying in the wind.



Masks | Vital Energies

Masks are worn during ritual and religious dances and often embody an element of Yin and Yang, the opposed yet related vital energies of life.



Peepul tree | Ficus Religiosa

In striving for salvation, Gautama achieved the complete awakening (“Bodhi”) at age 35. This happened on the shores of the Neranjare River under a peepul tree which is today revered as the Bodhi Tree or the Tree of Wisdom. It is often found on reliefs and paintings in Buddhist temples.



AlEinig | Chinese faith



Guanyin | Goddess of Compassion

One of the most-revered figures in Eastern Buddhism, Guanyin is abundantly present in iconographic and literary depictions and religious practice. People turn to her in search of consolation and happiness and in their homes provide a place of honor for her on the family altar.



Fu Lu Shou | Happiness, Wealth, Long Life

In China, in addition to a long life, happiness and wealth are the most important goals in life. The three deities Fu, Lu and Shou embody these three goals. Arranged from right to left one finds them in many Chinese houses and shops.



Lao Tse | Chinese Philosopher

He is considered to be the founder of Taoism. The most influential Taoist scripture, the Tao Te King, is attributed to him. However, it probably originated or at least acquired its present form, in the 4th century B.C.



Chinese Characters | Happiness

Placed above the doorway, the Chinese character for “happiness” gives protection and companionship.



Yi Jing | Book of Changes

The Yi Jing is one of the most important works of Chinese literature. At its core is a collection of oracles dating back to the 10th to 8th century B.C. Still today, the Yi Jing plays a key role in Chinese everyday life.



Fruits & Flowers | Sacrificial Offerings

Fresh offerings are regularly brought to the goddess Guanyin: fruits as symbols of immortality, a bowl of tea and fresh flowers. These offerings for the goddess of compassion, promising relief and deliverance from the world’s sorrows, are placed around the altar.



Eight Trigrams | Yin and Yang

The eight oracle symbols serve divination. They consist of three lines which are either solid (Yang) or dashed (Yin); the signs are often assembled to form a ring. They are the basis of the ancient Chinese Yi Jing, the Book of Changes.



Kungfutse | Chinese Philosopher

Kungfutse (Confucius) was revered by his followers as an ideal role model, his moral teachings and his conduct in life were regarded as exemplary. Confucianism is one of the “three teachings”, along with Buddhism and Taoism. It has been shaping Chinese culture for many centuries.



Money Frog | Bonanza

A particular reason why frogs are associated with money is the fact that they are always found in the vicinity of water. Water means wealth. It is also said that the money frog looks like a big wallet which again attracts wealth.



Dragon | Peace of Mind

Chinese dragons are the most famous mythical creatures of the Eastern Asian cultural sphere. A Chinese dragon is a symbol of happiness, peace, and a long life. He is most often male, standing for the Yang principle. He signifies power, strength and virility.



Alleinig | Protestant Faith



Ecumene | Inhabited Universe

For the ancient Greeks and Romans “oikumene” was the inhabited part of the world. Today there is talk about the “grand oikumene”, the dialog between the monotheistic religions, supported by the churches. Some churches include polytheistic religions as well.



Bible | God's Word

A collection of various “books” (Greek: biblia). The protestant version of the bible consists of 39 books plus 11 late scriptures in the Old Testament and 27 in the New Testament. The Old Testament relates the Israeli people's experiences with God, the New Testament tells of Jesus and his disciples.



Pace | Peace

The rainbow is a symbol of peace and connectedness. In the Christian faith it is considered a tie between God and mankind. The Italian peace movement adopted this idea and developed the rainbow flag. It is used all over the world in demonstrations for peace.



Cristo Redentor | Rio de Janeiro

Christ the Redeemer is 30 meters tall, with arms 28 meters outstretched. In 2006, this monument, located in Brasil, was consecrated as a Catholic pilgrimage site. At times this landmark of Rio de Janeiro is also of great importance for a Protestant woman.



Christ Rosary | Prayer Beads

The Christ rosary is a protestant modification of the Catholic rosary. It mainly differs from the latter in that the Ave Maria is replaced by a different framing verse with mysteries of its own.

Confirmation | Blessing

As an act of benediction, confirmation marks the passage to adulthood as understood by the church. It confirms membership in the Christian faith and the Church, granted earlier at christening. Confirmees receive their blessing during a ceremonial service. Afterwards they usually receive many presents.



The Psalms | Bible

A psalm is a poetic religious text. The “Book of Psalms” is a collection of 150 poems, songs and prayers from a period of several centuries, divided into five books. The first psalm of each book serves as a motto for that book. Each book closes with a extolment of god.



Last Supper | Congregation

Jesus Christ celebrated the last supper, of bread and wine, with his 12 disciples on the eve of his crucifixion. By instructing them to “do this in memory of me”, he instituted the communal meal, as a token of his continuing presence; whence the Lord's Supper as we know it.



Taizé | Community

Taizé is a small town in France. In the 1940s, an at first evangelically and later ecumenically oriented brotherhood came into being. The community became known through its international youth meetings, the “pilgrimage of trust”, and its characteristic chants.



Fish | Symbol

One of the oldest symbols for Jesus Christ. The earliest Christians, for fear of persecution, used it as an identifying sign. The Greek word for fish is “ichthys”. Each letter of this word is the beginning of a new word. Together these form a short profession of faith.



Alleinig | Hindu Faith



Shiva | Augur of Happiness

Shiva is one of the most important Gods of Hinduism. Shiva is often depicted with his wife Parvati or with Ganesha. The trinity of Shiva/Parvati/Ganesha is regarded as a divine family. Shiva embodies creation and new beginnings as well as preservation and destruction.



Ganesha | Lord of Success

Ganesha, the elephant-headed God of wisdom and strength, is the eldest son of Shiva. Puja, the daily Hindu early morning service, always begins with a prayer to Ganesha. His name is invoked prior to embarking on an auspicious task and at the beginning of every kind of worship.



Rudraksha Mala | Prayer Beads

A string of beads made of the dried seeds of the holy Rudraksha tree. Rudraksha literally means “Shiva’s tear”. The beads help with staying healthy, gaining self-reliance and living fearlessly. They are also used for meditation.



Holy Cow | Fulfiller of Wishes

In the Hindu religions the protection of the cow remains a vital element to this day. For most Hindus the cow is sacrosanct. Its manure is considered of particular relevance. It is employed on a material as well as on a spiritual level.



Kama Sutra | The Art of Love

This work belongs to the Indian tradition of educational books on erotica. As a guide to eroticism and love, the Kama Sutra is related to the Tantra that deals with the transformation of sexuality. The Kama Sutra is a guidebook for the art of living, both erotic-sexual and at the same time, ethical.



Lingam | Lord Shiva

The symbol of the Hindu deity Shiva. In the ritual performance ghee, sandalwood oil, milk or water are poured over the lingam and channeled via the linga-base into a dish or to the exterior. This ritually pure substance is divine food. It is distributed to the faithful as nourishment and a blessing.



Murugan | Fearlessness

According to Hindu mythology, Murugan is Ganesha’s brother and belongs to the most popular deities of the Tamil Hindus. Murugan is a guardian fighting against wicked forces and banishing fear.



Bilva Tree | Sacred Tree

Hindus believe the bilva tree to be an incarnation of Lord Shiva himself, thus regarding as holy its globular fruit, its blossoms and its leaves. The trifoliate leaf symbolizes the three basic elements of purity, activity and inertness.



Tulsi | Ocimum Sanctum

Tulsi (Indian basil) is regarded in India as the herbal manifestation of the God Vishnu. The “queen of herbs” is grown as a holy plant in the garden of every Indian temple and house. The Tulsi seeds are also used for prayer beads. They strengthen the immune system and metabolism.



Yoga | Religious Teaching

Originally, yoga was a purely spiritual path dedicated primarily to the search for enlightenment through meditation. The purpose was to make it possible for the body to remain in the typical meditation posture, the lotus position, for longer periods with a minimum of pain.



Alleinig | Jewish Faith



Menora | Symbol

The menorah, a seven-branch candlestick, is one of the most important religious symbols of Judaism. When the state of Israel was founded the menorah was included in its coat of arms.



Siddur | Prayer Book

The Siddur, the Jewish prayer book, contains the daily prayers for weekday mornings, afternoons and evenings and Shabbat. Every Jew should read in the Siddur three times a day. The Siddur also contains benedictions and prayers for the most important Jewish holidays and for special occasions.



Tefillin | Prayer Straps

Tefillin are a set of two small black leather boxes on leather straps containing parchment scrolls with handwritten texts from the Torah, the five books of Moses. They are worn on the arm and head for the morning prayer on workdays.



Scheitel | Head Cover

Women with shiny, silky long hair are a familiar sight on Israeli streets today, as are the black hats and kippot of men. They comply with the religious commandment for married women to cover their hair. These wigs (Yiddish: “scheitel”) reconcile religion with the fashion trends of the day.



Shofar | Horn

The shofar is an ancient Middle Eastern musical instrument. Manufactured from ram or kudu horns, it serves mainly ritual purposes. The shofar is the only ancient instrument still in use in synagogues today.



Hanukka Lamp | Festival of Lights

The Hanukkah lamp is an eight- or nine-branched lamp lit for the Hanukkah holiday; it is not to be confused with the seven-branched menorah. The Hanukkah lamp is lit shortly after sunset. It is positioned, if possible, right outside the front door or in the window.



Yad | Torah Pointer

The Yad is a pointer used to indicate lines of text in a Torah reading. Its main purpose is to avoid touching, dirtying or damaging the sometimes centuries-old hand-written scrolls. Torah scrolls are deemed holy and are kept in the synagogue.



Tallit | Ritual Object

The tallit, a prayer shawl, is a square-shaped piece of woolen, cotton or silk cloth, white or cream-colored. It is often decorated with black or blue stripes. A characteristic of the tallit are the knotted fringes in the four corners of the cloth, intended to remember the 613 commandments and prohibitions.



Kiddush Cup | Blessing

The Kiddush is a benediction pronounced over a cup of wine, as an introductory ceremony for Shabbat and Jewish holidays. The benediction is usually uttered by the male head of the family immediately prior to the meal.



Dreidel | Spinning Top

A dreidel is a four-sided spinning top, steeped in tradition. Jewish children spin it during the eight days of the Hanukkah festival of light, most often to obtain sweets in the form of chocolate coins. Each side of the dreidel displays a different Hebrew letter.



Alleinig | Catholic Faith



✝ Mary | Worship of Saints

Holy Mary, mother of Jesus Christ, is worshipped in the Old Catholic church as the virgin mother of God. Revered as the first among the saints, her intercession is invoked on behalf of the worldly church. Sculpturally, Mary is predominantly depicted with the divine infant.



✝ Bible | The Holy Scripture

According to the teachings of most Christian confessions, God directed and inspired the writing and handing down of the holy scriptures, meaning that the authors of the Bible texts were led by the Holy Spirit. On the other hand, the Bible is regarded as human testimony containing, reflecting and passing on God’s revelations.



✝ Pietà | Mater Dolorosa

In sculptural art, Pietà is the depiction of Mary as Mater Dolorosa (Mother of Sorrows) with the dead body of Jesus Christ after his removal from the cross. It is a theme common in sculptural art from the early 14th century on.



✝ Holy Water Font | Transition

Holy water fonts are receptacles for holy water. In Catholic churches they mark the threshold between the mundane and the sacred. In private homes holy water fonts are smaller. The consecrated water is used in the morning and in the evening to make the sign of the cross.



✝ Christmas crib | Birth of Christ

The nativity scene is an arrangement of figures depicting the birth of Christ as related in the Gospel; it is mostly set up in December, in the run-up to Christmas. The crib with the infant Jesus, the Virgin Mary, Joseph, animals and the three Magi, remains on display until Epiphany on the sixth of January.

✝ Cross | Connection

The cross is one of the most meaningful emblems of Christianity. For Christians, the cross symbolises Jesus Christ’s self-sacrifice, and the connection between the earthly (the horizontal axis) and the heavenly or divine (vertical axis).



✝ The Pope | Head of the Catholic Church

“Pope” is the religious title of the head of the Roman-Catholic Church. The official residence of the Pope is the Vatican. Since 1871, the Pope has resided in the Apostolic Palace next to St. Peter’s Basilica in Rome. He is considered the successor of Peter the Apostle. He is revered highly regarded by Catholics.



✝ Rosary | Prayer Beads

Rosary beads, of which there are 59, are used when saying the rosary, a popular Catholic prayer. The rosary begins at the cross, followed by a large, three small beads, and another large one. After that, a different mystery of the faith is associated with each decade of beads.



✝ Angels | Messengers and Guardians

Gabriel, Michael and Raphael are the three angels mentioned by name in the Bible. They are worshipped as saints in the Catholic Church. Besides Christianity, the concept of the guardian angel is also familiar in Islam and Judaism. In Buddhism, the Bodhisattvas are worshipped.



✝ Devotional Objects | Pilgrimage Souvenirs

Devotional objects, such as crucifixes, rosaries, or holy pictures, are meant to serve religious devotion. Sometimes the term “devotional object” is used in a derogatory way, referring to artistically inferior and overpriced items.



AlEinig | Muslim Faith (Islam)



Koran | Holy Book

The Koran is the Holy Book of Islam; for the faithful it is the literal revelation of God (Arabic: Allah) to Muhammad the Prophet. When not being read the Koran must be kept in a safe place above waist level.



Koran Stand | Elevation

A support for the Koran when it is open for daily reading - for Muslims their very personal, intimate contact with Allah and His word. The Koran must be stored in a dignified place, where possible higher than other things, and especially higher than other books.



Prayer rug | Purity

The prayer rug is a carpet which Muslims use to cover the floor, in order to avoid contact with impurities that renders their prayers invalid. Outside, a prayer rug is not normally needed as in Islam, soil is considered purifying.



Qibla | Compass

It is important for Muslims to know the four points of the compass, so that they can say their prayers. Qibla is the direction towards the Kaaba in Mekka (Saudi-Arabia), the most sacred site of Islam. There are various methods, based on orientation marks, used to find the Qibla.



Taqiyah | Head Covering

The taqiyah is a head covering worn by Muslim men when they pray. The custom originates from the sunnah of the prophet Muhammad. The taqiyah, also called prayer cap, is often richly adorned and embroidered.



Kaaba | Sanctuary

The Kaaba is a cuboid building in the inner courtyard of the Holy Mosque in Mekka. As “God’s House” it is Islam’s central sanctuary. The pilgrimage to Mekka is called Hadj. Pilgrims circle the Kaaba seven times counter-clockwise, praising Allah.



Misbaha | Prayer beads

The misbaha (and the Christian rosary derived from it during the Middle Ages) originated in India. It makes it easier to count when uttering the 99 names of Allah. It also serves as a lucky charm, as a symbol of Islam or as a necklace.



Hamsa | Hand of Fatima

The “Hand of Fatima” is a cultural token in the Islamic folklore of Northern Africa and the Middle East. It is deemed to offer universal protection and the best deterrence against ghosts. The historical evolution of this symbol shows parallels to the Christian adoration of Mary.



Ramadan | Month of fasting

During the ninth month of the lunar-based islamic calendar, the faithful fast every day from dawn till dusk. It is Islamic understanding that the Koran was received during the month of Ramadan. The breaking of the fast at the end of Ramadan is Islam’s second most important holiday after the Feast of the Sacrifice.



Drum | Ramadan

For many people in Turkey, the drum is one of the most important attributes of Ramadan. Drummers wake the faithful so they can have their meal before sunrise. While drumming they recite Turkish poems.



Alleinig | Russian-Orthodox Faith



✙ Cross | Russian-Orthodox

The orthodox cross is a further development of the symbolism of the cross. The slanting lower crossbeam is a reminder of the passion of Christ and symbolises the board on which Jesus put his feet when he was crucified or it symbolises the crossing-over from “hell” to “heaven”.



✙ Icon | Saints

Icons are pictures of saints; they are particularly widespread within the Orthodox Church. They are mostly painted on wood, and consecrated by the church. The inscription on the icon depicted here figuratively translates as “You must love as you want to be loved.”



✙ Icons | Intermediary

Icons are viewed as intermediaries between this world and the afterworld; miraculous feats are ascribed to them. The figures often face the viewer frontally in order to establish a direct relationship between the depicted and the beholder.



✙ Rice, Bread, Vodka | Commemoration

The dead are specially commemorated on the 9th, 40th, 182nd and 365th day after their passing; dark attire is put on, and a sacrificial candle in a glass of rice and often a glass of vodka and a slice of bread are placed next to a photo of the deceased.



✙ Frankincense | Sacred Incense

Frankincense was already known to the ancient Egyptians as a ritual incense. It produces a fragrant smoke as it smolders. Various religions have used it in ritual acts since the middle of the first millennium A.D.

✙ Orthodox Bible | Septuaginta

In the Orthodox Church, the printed edition of the Old Testament is based on the Septuaginta, the earliest translation of the Testament into the vernacular of Ancient Greece, dating from the 2nd century B.C. It encompasses a larger number of scriptures and is still the standard bible for orthodox Christianity.



✙ Icon | Mother of God

Depictions of Mary, Mother of God, have a special place in the world of icons. Next to Jesus, Mary is the most popular icon subject. Very often, Mary is depicted together with the Christ child.



✙ Oil | Consecration

In the Orthodox Church (as in the Catholic Church), consecrated olive oil, sometimes with added balsam, is used for ritual unctions on various occasions including christening and confirmation. The oil symbolizes health, joy, strength and happiness.



✙ Candles | Reverence

Historically, the use of candles in churches goes back to the earliest days of Christianity and is akin to the use of graveside candles. In the Orthodox Church, candles are tokens of greeting and the veneration of icons.



✙ Cathedral | Basil the Blessed

The Russian-Orthodox Cathedral of the Protection of Most Holy Theotokos on the Moat, also known as St. Basil’s Cathedral, stands on the southern edge of the Red Square in Moscow. The cathedral consists of altogether nine different churches. It is one of Moscow’s landmarks. Souvenirs of all sorts are sold of it.



Alleinig | Shamanism



Shamanism | Healing

Shamanism is the knowledge of the invisible and healing powers of the universe. Shamans are intermediaries between the worlds; in trance they move in the upper and the nether world to obtain healing and a return to harmony for their environment.



Rattle | Tool

Indispensable for shamanist rituals. It calls up the spirits of the four cardinal directions and the spirit of the earth and the heavens. Its rattle releases and harmonizes.



Power Animals | Spiritual allies

Spiritual guides of the soul in animal form. These guardian spirits help the shamans to find their way through the worlds, and with their support the shamans perform their healing work.



Smudge Sticks | Smoking

The smoke from smoldering bundles of dried herbs connects to the divine. It serves to make contact with the invisible, enables connections to the past and future, clears and purifies the spirit and protects from sickness and danger.



Jaw Harp | Musical Instrument

One of the oldest instruments, it originates from Siberia and Central Asia. It is played either on its own or together with mirrors, sticks, fans, drums, rattles and little bells, to call the healing spirits and make contact with deceased ancestors.



Drum | Travel support

The frame drum, beaten with a stick, is the most important tool in shamanism. By its rhythm, one leaves the reality of everyday life and travels to the “other world”, to obtain information. Its sound connects to age-old knowledge.



Eye Curtain | Protection

The eye curtain covers the shaman’s face while he goes into trance. It enables him to move in two worlds at a time.



Goose | Power Animal

She is the reliable, faithful companion of the female force of creation; she shows the way of the soul and stands for highly developed social behaviour. She embodies the access to parenthood, and also stands for one's own creative energy and an understanding of the power of community.



Sun and Moon | Custodians of Time

All life orients itself on the cycles of the moon and the sun. The sun determines the time of day and watches as a bright light over the day. The moon regulates the tides, watches over the night and guards the secrets of the stars. Together, they watch over the seasons of the year.



Runes | Supporting Shamanic Spirits

In general they are understood to be old Germanic characters. But they are also symbolic images, carriers of energy, and magical symbols used in hands-on oracle work. The essence of the runes can be contacted during the Shamanic journey.



Alleinig | Shintoist Faith



Kamidana | Shintoist House Altar

A Japanese Kamidana is a wooden miniature of a shrine. In a Kamidana various deities, the Kami, are worshipped. Buddhist house altars are also common in Japan; called Butsudane they serve the veneration of the ancestors and the dead.



Shimenawa | Accessories

Shimenawa are lengths of laid rice straw rope that in Shinto separate the world of the Gods (Kami) from the secular world. Furthermore, Shimenawa delineate dwellings of the Kami and symbolize the presence of a God or a divine force.



Offerings | Adoration of the Kami

The sacrificial offerings to the Kami, rice, salt, water, sake or fruit, are placed before the shrine on the 1st and 15th day. The water is changed every morning. The adoration rite performed before the house altar consists of bowing twice, clapping twice, and bowing again.



Tsuru | Crane

In Japan, the crane is a symbol of happiness and longevity. According to Japanese lore, a person who folds a thousand origami cranes will have a wish fulfilled by the Gods. Even today, folded paper cranes are given on special occasions.



Daruma | Good Luck Charm

A Daruma is a popular Japanese good luck charm made of papier-mâché. It helps to fulfil wishes. At first one eye is painted in. When the wish has been fulfilled the other eye is painted in. Afterwards, the Daruma can be burned in a temple.



Buddha | Connection

The religious practice of most Japanese is a synthesis of Shintoist, Buddhist, local and other traditions. One of the four persuasions of Buddhism practiced in Japan today is Zen Buddhism.



Sakaki | Japanese Cleyera

Sakaki twigs are arranged in Shinto shrines and on Kamidana, a twig on the left and on the right. The twigs are replaced twice a month. In Japan one says the sakaki tree stands on the border between the human world and the world of the Kami.



Torii | Transition

Torii are elements of traditional Japanese architecture; they are gates of wood or stone. Often varnished vermilion, they mark the transition from the profane to the sacred. A Torii frames the entrance to a Shinto shrine.



Universe | Sengai Gibon

Sengai Gibon (1750-1837) was a Japanese monk and known for his controversial teachings and his sumi-e paintings. One of his most famous paintings shows a circle, a square and a triangle, shapes which Japanese people usually associate with “true”, “half true”, and “false”.



Manekineko | Waving Cat

A Japanese good luck charm in the shape of a cat waving to the beholder with its paw. It is placed in private houses, to bring wealth and keep bad luck away. Japanese tradition holds the manekineko to be the rebirth of Kannon, Goddess of mercy.



Alleinig | Vodun Faith (the correct term for “voodoo”)



Vodun | Mawu-Lisa



The Fon, an ethnic group in Benin, West Africa (the country of origin of the Vodun religion), believe in a great Vodun-God-Cosmos presided over by the twin deity Mawu-Lisa (moon and sun). Many more deities exist beside them, including the Goddess Mami Wata.



Fà Oracle | Divination



Kauri shells or nutshell necklaces serve the Fà Oracle, a consultation of the Gods. For the vodunsi (followers of Vodun) this complex system of divination has a significance comparable to the Bible for Christians, the Torah for Jews or the Koran for Muslims.



Ayidohouedo | Rainbow Snake



Ayidohouedo is a deity embodying happiness and wealth. Snake symbols can be found in many Vodun cults. This pot contains herbs put together by Vodun healers. They spread their healing effects through the wall of the vessel.



Iroko Tree | God of Roots



For West Africans, the iroko tree has many-faceted meaning and serves as a representation of Atissou Loko, God of roots. Solidly rooted in the native soil, Atissou Loko symbolizes, at this holy location, the head of the family bestowing strength for the solution of problems.



Denzu | Male Head



Denzu is the spiritual head of the Mami-Wata family of Gods and has great spiritual strength. With his bold determination, great energy, his courage and his patience even the gravest problems can be overcome. Denzu has no negative properties.



Mami Wata | Goddess



Mami Wata is the youngest goddess. Inspired by figureheads on the prow of Portuguese merchant ships of the 15th century, she became the goddess of water. She is depicted as a mermaid. Ideas from African, Indian and European traditions blend in her.



Mami Sika | Contentment and Happiness



People to whom the Fà Oracle allots this sign can count themselves lucky, for Mami Sika does not have any negative properties and stands for the lightness of being. Accordingly, the spiritual significance of this Goddess and her positive influence on life as a whole are great.



Hooho | God of Twins



In West Africa, twins are a gift from supreme powers, and thus of superhuman origin. Thereby deceased twins attain divine status. Their souls are then represented by artfully crafted figures that are cared for like living children and are also adopted into the family.



Powder & Candy | Sacrificial Offerings



Mami Wata is revered as a sensitive, friendly Goddess with a preference for white purity, beautiful scents, candy, flowers and European luxury items. Vodunsi dust and spray her with powder and perfume and donate her various cosmetics. Fanta is a favorite offering to her.



Maria | Syncretism



Vodun is a syncretist religion which adopts foreign influences, rituals and objects into its creed, and gives them new form. Thus, for example, religious objects from Christianity are integrated and acquire a new meaning within the Vodun religion.





Eiffel Tower | Souvenir

The Eiffel Tower is a landmark of Paris, the French capital, which in turn is regarded as the city of love. For this reason, this little souvenir can be found in each of these pictures, as a symbol of something that unifies all mankind, no matter of which faith: love.



Imprint

AlIeinig | 22 Photomontages | 120 cm x 2400 cm | Colourprint on Textil-Banner
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