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The Museum of Ethnology, in Vienna, Austria, latest exhibition, "NAGA PEOPLE – Jewelry and Ashes", highlights the Naga People of India.

Long feared by their neighbors as notorious head-hunters, the Naga people live in the mountainous north-east of India. Nobody was interested in them. They recorded the stories of their life and their world not in ink on paper but in a complex system of textile patterns, **jewelry** designs and wood carvings – one that only they could read and understand. Objects of breathtaking beauty, their jewelry, recorded the desirable attributes of men and women in the woven patterns of their large shawls, ornaments their status and rank in society, and wooden figures allowed the deceased to live on in the tribe's memory or told of vanquished enemies. And songs and myths preserved stories that transcended the repertoire of material forms.



Then the others arrived: the British colonial masters

were the first, followed by American missionaries, and finally Indian soldiers who continue to

suppress all attempts to build an independent Naga state. These three tidal waves from beyond the borders changed everything. The old material vocabulary was increasingly forgotten, the jewelry turned to ash. Only a few of the older generation can still decipher the signs of their forefathers. Today they are the ones who give new life to the charred jewelry and burnish it – a glimmer that imparts appreciation of the Naga's unique identity to the younger generation. Visit the exhibition website for more information:

NAGA PEOPLE – Jewelry and Ashes

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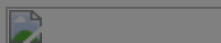
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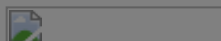
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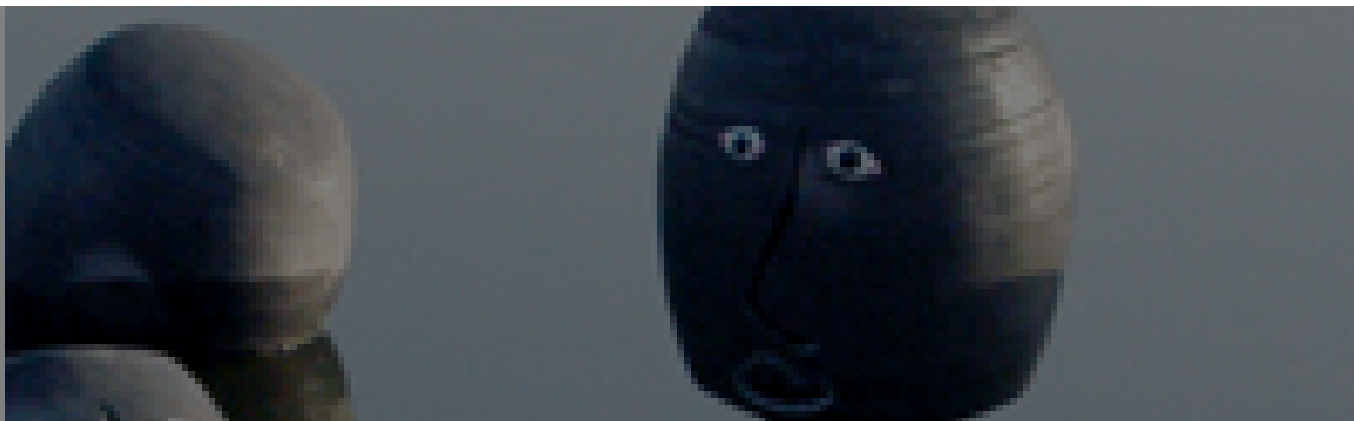
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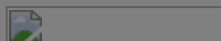
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