

# Forum Schweizer Geschichte Schwyz.

## Media release

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## The second life of things. Stone, metal, plastic

**Following its successful presentation at the National Museum Zurich, a fascinating exhibition on practices associated with the circular economy – from the Stone Age to the present day – is to be hosted by the Forum of Swiss History Schwyz.**

Although the term itself is fairly new, the concept of the "circular economy" has been around since the beginnings of human history. Our ancestors also produced waste and caused environmental pollution, of course, but before the advent of today's consumer and throw-away society, scarcity determined how people made use of things and resources. Wherever possible, items were recycled, repaired, repurposed or reused.

The exhibition presents an array of objects that were mended, reused, and appreciated across generations while raising awareness of the value of giving things a second life – a highly topical subject yet again. Covering the Stone Age to the present day, the exhibition reveals how people made clever use of resources: from fragments of shaft-hole axes that found new uses as axe blades or beating stones to the metal stock found in an Iron Age bronze workshop to a 17th-century cradle passed down over generations in the extended Waser family in Zurich.

What happened to textiles before they were mass-produced is of particular interest: whether they were handed down to servants or used to make rag paper, every single item was put to good use. Expensive garments even found new uses in churches and monasteries as liturgical vestments or altar cloths.

While scarcity drove the innovative re-use of resources in the past, nowadays overproduction and environmental impacts are the forces behind a re-think. Modern technologies offer new opportunities, ranging from online swaps of used goods to creative upcycling in contemporary fashion.

The exhibition itself is an example of sustainable practice: many of its elements have been used in previous exhibitions and will be used again in future ones.

The exhibition runs from 7 December 2024 through 27 April 2025 in the Forum of Swiss History Schwyz.

If you have further questions, or want to arrange an individual press tour, please contact:

Daniela Schwab | Exhibition curator | Schweizerisches Nationalmuseum.

T. +41 44 218 66 23 | email: [daniela.schwab@nationalmuseum.ch](mailto:daniela.schwab@nationalmuseum.ch)

Karin Freitag-Masa | Communications | Forum Schweizer Geschichte Schwyz.

T. +41 41 819 60 18 | email: [karin.freitag@nationalmuseum.ch](mailto:karin.freitag@nationalmuseum.ch)