

11th International Competition for Ex Libris and Small Graphic Form

Amber - The gold of the Baltic Sea

Baltic amber (succinite, *German: Bernstein*) is an unusual material, admired and desired for many centuries. This raw material was exported from the Baltic Sea via the amber trail to Rome, Southern Europe and the Middle East. It was more valuable than gold! Unique works of art were created in the studios of Gdańsk, which built the collections of wealthy burghers, magnates, clergy, kings, emperors or tsars. After over a millennium from its founding, Gdańsk now consciously nurtures the tradition of amber-related art, which is why it has been declared the **Amber Capital of the World**.



Sacred talisman, gold of the north, yantar - its beauty, aromatic fragrance and ease of processing have meant that it has always been used as a decorative stone or means of payment. This unique already solidified resin is attributed with **healing** properties, **but also magical powers**. With its help, charms and curses would be removed already in ancient times. It is believed that the signs of past eras are enchanted in it, so working with it helps and enables one to reach back to previous incarnations... It symbolises success, self-confidence, health, purification, and embodies the Sun, warmth and uniqueness.

Baltic amber is characterised by a rich colour palette. The most popular varieties of amber are yellow, but we can also find nuggets with rich shades of red, brown, beige, as well as white, bluish, greenish colours, which sometimes form unique mosaics. Amber can also be transparent, translucent and opaque, making virtually every nugget different.

Inclusions, on the other hand, are fragments of plants, animals, organic remains, but also water droplets or air embedded in the nugget. They are an important source of knowledge about past times, allowing us to find out what lived and sometimes even what happened millions of years ago. This arrested image of life has always stirred reflection, awe and desire among exhibitors and collectors from all over the world. At the same time, it incites the imagination of ordinary viewers, and as a tangible object, a witness to a changing world, it seems to be, thanks to its uniqueness and originality, an ideal medium for the **imagination of fine artists**: amber artists or graphic designers.

That is why **AMBER** is the theme of the 11th edition of the **INTERNATIONAL COMPETITION FOR EX LIBRIS AND SMALL GRAPHIC FORM** organised by two Gdańsk institutions: the **Gdańsk Archipelago of Culture** and the **Gdańsk Community Foundation**. Now it is time for **ex libris** representatives from around the world. How to show the uniqueness of the Baltic sun drop? How to capture the passing of time in it...? We hope the works submitted by the artists will represent the different faces, as well as the nature, of amber. They will present two worlds: the one frozen millions of years ago, as well as the non-obvious, fantastic...