

Name 1	BARRELS FOR MIXING MERCURY AND SULFUR (COLLECTION)
Name 2	/
ID number	002.291.Idrija
Manager / Administrator	Idrija Municipal Museum, Prelovčeva 9, SI-5280 Idrija.
Ownership	Public
Owner	Municipality of Idrija, Mestni trg 1, SI-5280 Idrija
Local / Original ID Number	510:IDR;RZ-43-RZ-56, RZ-494, RZ-495
Type of Object	Mine, Smelting

DESCRIPTION

Short description	The collection contains 16 barrels for mixing mercury and sulfur. Barrels served for the dry procedure for obtaining cinnabar. They are made from wood and reinforced with four steel bands. It has a steel axle, which allows the barrel to rotate. The barrel has an opening for mercury and sulfur dosage, which is covered with the cover secured with two screws. Their volume is approximately 13 litres. Colloquially in Idrija, because of its function the little barrel for mixing was called the “black negro”.
Measures	16 barrels of different dimensions.
Materials	16 barrels of different dimensions.

Dating	1782
Author / Producer	The Cinnabar Factory of the Idrija Mercury Mine.

**Picture
attachments**

Original use

In certain conditions, the artificial cinnabar was obtained with mercury and sulfur synthesis. The first phase of this process was mixing mercury (25 kg) and powdered sulfur (5 kg) in the barrels. The latter had partitions inside which served for better stirring. With the eccentric drive it was possible for the barrels to rotate around the horizontal axis in both directions and thoroughly stir the contents. After four hours of stirring, the homogeneous black mass ("Mohr") was formed. This was a mixture of black sulfide (HgS) and unreacted, nicely mutually distributed mercury and sulfur. After the stirring process, the black mass was poured from two barrels into a 50-litre cast iron jug. In Idrija, cinnabar was obtained from the beginning of mining until 1922, with an interruption between 1658 and 1782. During that time, 8,800 tons of mercury was obtained, which is 6.6% of the total amount of mercury obtained in Idrija.

Present use

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Original location

Idrija Mercury Mine (The Cinnabar Ore Factory, on the left side of the Smelting Plant complex).

Present location	Idrija Municipal Museum, Gewerkenegg Castle (showroom 9); Idrija Municipal Museum, Prelovčeva 2 depot.
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STATE OF CONSERVATION

History of conservation:	All the barrels were properly restored and conserved. Therefore, no additional interventions are necessary. Security of the premises is taken care of.
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Present state	good
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Necessary activities:	Regular seasonal maintenance.
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DOCUMENTATION

Addresses / collections / links etc. where further in-depth information is accessible:	- Inventory Book of the Idrija Municipal Museum; - Janouš, Alois, senior furnace supervisor (k. k. Oberhüttenverwalter). Geschichtliche Entwicklung der Zinnoberfabrikation in Idria, Ad B. D. Z. 4521 de 1897; - Janouš, Alois, senior furnace supervisor (k. k. Oberhüttenverwalter). Darstellung des Zinnobers in Idria in der Gegenwart, Ad B. D. Z. 4521 de 1897; - Kavčič, Ivica. Živo srebro: Zgodovina idrijskega žgalništva. Založba Bogataj, Idrija, 2008; - Kavčič, Ivica. Proizvodnja živosrebrovih spojin pri idrijskem rudniku skozi stoletja. Idrijski razgledi, 61/2, 2016, p. 60–76.
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Submitted	Mestni muzej Idrija
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Submitted by	Miha Kosmač
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Date Submitted	12. 3. 2018
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Date Edited

Never
