



Exhibit of the Month

BINOCULARS

Museologist Simona Gustaitytė

- Material: bronze body, glass;
- Width – 10.5 cm;
- Inscription on the binoculars "Oscar Richter St Petersburg;"
- The Russian Empire, Saint Petersburg;
- The beginning of the 20th century.

Binoculars are an optical device designed to monitor remote objects or locations; therefore, they are useful in various activities and are categorised into outdoor, astronomical, theatrical, military, etc. The idea for binoculars originated several hundred years ago, and their development is closely linked to the invention of the telescope. The development of both devices was essentially almost parallel since the 17th century; yet, the construction of practical and modern binoculars was a much longer and more complex process. The 19th century was especially significant for the development of binoculars. In 1823, the device, developed in Vienna and called "theatrical binoculars," looked close to modern binoculars. It consisted of telescopes connected in parallel by two bridges. Such binoculars had a narrow field of view and slightly enlarged the images, but the optical capabilities of the invention were rapidly improved by other inventors. In mid-19th century, the use of prisms in binoculars became an innovation. The first prism binoculars were patented by Italian Ignazio Porro in 1854.

In the 19th century, binoculars were started to be used in warfare because of their potential. The exhibit in the photos is binoculars used by the army of the Russian Empire, which were created by Oscar Richter's company founded in 1850 in St. Petersburg. The company developed optical, physical, mathematical and meteorological devices and became well known in the city at the end of the 19th century and at the beginning of the 20th century. Its popularity was influenced by the fact that the appliance store was located in a strategically convenient location in the center of Saint Petersburg, close to Admiralty Square and Nevsky Prospekt. A number of customers were Russian soldiers and sailors who purchased and evaluated the possibilities of the goods. In 1861, after testing the binoculars of Oscar Richter's company, it was decided to supply them to the artillery units of the Russian Empire by the end of the decade.



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