

GUIDE

TO THE

EXHIBITS

AT

THE UNIVERSITY

MUSEUM

of

BERGEN

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Cultural history



Ground floor

The longest story – a brief encounter

The Stone Age exhibition presents objects from the period between 11 200 to 3 800 before present in Western Norway. All the objects in the exhibition are original objects. Bold choices were made by mounting the objects in presumed original contexts, and replicas have been made for this purpose. The themes the exhibition addresses are the first settlers and the oldest material, from raw materials to finished objects, hunting and fishing equipment, and the earliest traces of farming. A large chronology/typology board has been made which presents the kinds of tools that were common in different stages of the Stone Age. A separate room has been made for religion and, magic and a study corner with computer access is also available.

Towards Distant Lands and Eras

This is the children's exhibition at The University Museum. It is a quiet exhibition especially made for smaller children. Here they can play in Viking ships, in Middle Age castles, in Middle East bazaars, and in Bedouin tents - or listen to fairytales or make drawings. They can dress up as princesses, knights, or something else.

The Viking Age

On display here, are some of the many original objects from the Viking Age found in, inter alia, graves and dwelling sites or kept as stray finds at The University Museum. In the main, the finds have been made in Western Norway, but some of the objects stem from other parts of Norway. In the exhibition, we have chosen to attach particular importance to the domestic conditions during the Viking Age. These were the prerequisites for the outward expansion towards the East and the West. The exhibition addresses themes like the boat and the boatbuilding traditions, the iron, farms and farmland, soapstone quarries and resources, funeral material, weapons, jewellery, dresses and textile work, treasure finds and money economy, and finally, raids and settlements in the East and in the West.

1st floor

The Norwegian church art exhibition

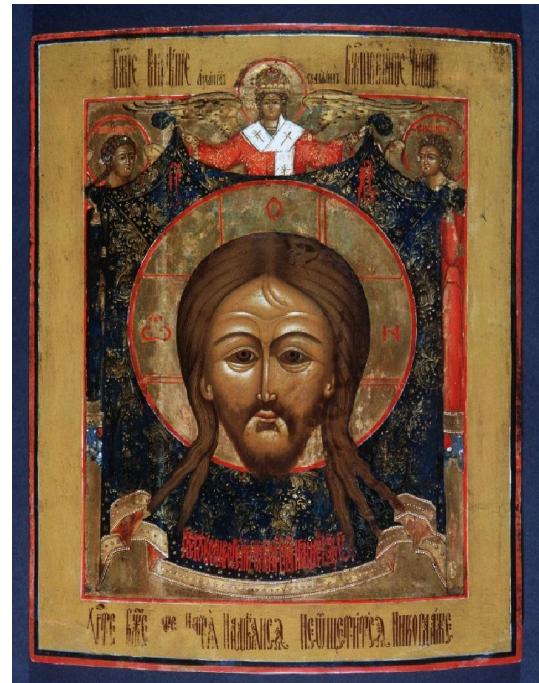
In addition to carved out pieces from stave churches of the 1100s and 1200s, the exhibition comprises art work that has embellished West Norwegian churches in the Middle Ages - from the 1100s to the Reformation in 1536. To be highlighted here are altar decorations of the High Middle Ages, crucifixes, Madonna sculptures and painted frontals. From the Late Middle Ages, we have triptychs and procession staffs. From the period after the Reformation, in particular from the 1600s and the first half of the 1700s, there are altarpieces, stained-glass paintings, and miscellaneous church furnishings.



Russian icons

The exhibition shows a small collection of Russian icons from the 1880s of the type that hung in private homes. The first Russian icons came to The University Museum as early as around 1830.

It was not until 1993 an actual collection materialised, when The University Museum received an exclusive gift from Anders and Janette Buraas and their two children Peter and Karen Winifred. The donation is in remembrance of Anders Buraas' mother Dagny von Tangen. The gift comprises all in all 45 Russian icons, all from the period 1750 to 1900.



2nd floor



Ibsen in Bergen

In the exhibition you will find an extensive presentation of both Ibsen's life and work in Bergen, and also the Ibsen tradition on Bergen stages. The exhibition's aim is to challenge the myth surrounding Henrik Ibsen and his six unhappy years in Bergen. The room's centre point is dominated by a model of the old theatre, placed directly on the floor. "Det norske Theater" (The Norwegian Theatre) (1850-1863), where Henrik Ibsen was employed from 1851 to 1857, was housed in the building. The reason behind Ibsen's presence in Bergen was an encounter Ibsen had with Ole Bull in Christiania on 15 October 1851 at an evening entertainment for the benefit of the theatre in Bergen. Henrik Ibsen wrote the prologue, Ole Bull composed the music. Ole Bull began to take an interest in Ibsen and invited him to Bergen. And Ibsen came...



The Christie room

The President of the first Norwegian Parliament, the Storting, Wilhelm Frimann Koren Christie (1778-1849) founded Bergens Museum in 1825. Based on the foundations laid by Bergens Museum, the University of Bergen was founded in 1946. In the Christie room, fine pieces of furniture belonging to the Christie family are exhibited. They are from the first part of the 1800s. In addition, a number of small things belonging to Christie: an ink stand, a pair of binoculars, a table clock, a medal collection, and a nightcap of linen with whitework and salmon-coloured silk lining are also on display. Furthermore, the display contains a spinning wheel, his mother's bridal shoes, the folding cot he used when travelling, his field dispensary where camphorated oils and other medication from the 1840s still remain on some of the bottles – and not least, examples of the large number of original documents on loan to The University Museum from the University Library.

Roses and heroes in Norwegian folk art

The exhibition shows a small part of our large collection of Norwegian rural art. Among the many things on display here, you will find beautiful chests, pieces of furniture like chairs and tables, and kitchen utensils like bowls and wooden boxes. Fine samples of Norwegian tapestry and costumes with accessories in silver are also shown here. The world's oldest Hardanger fiddle, the Jaastad fiddle, is on display and you can listen to music recordings where this fiddle is being played.



Knitting from the Past for Inspiration

This exhibition shows patterns and techniques used in old knitted pieces of clothing based on The University Museum's collection of knitting material. The material demonstrates how patterns of knitting were carried out in a variety of ways. The exhibition's aim is to give inspiration and enjoyment, and to present Norwegian knitting designs in a historical context. You will also have the opportunity to see the oldest fragment of a knitted piece we know of in Norway which dates from the Middle Ages and was found during an excavation at Bryggen in Bergen.



3rd floor



American Indian, Inuit, Aleut – the Native Americans

The exhibition gives an overview of some of the material received by The University Museum from the American continent over the years. As recently as 1951, the Museum employed its first ethnographer with a scientific background who was able to provide a scientific setting for the material. The material in the exhibition is presented according to ethnographic group or geographical area where the Arctic adaptations of the Inuits and Aleuts are shown first and then the exhibition takes us further south on the American Continent. You will see samples of equipment like clothing, weapons, and tools of various Indian tribes.

Eternal Life – Treasures from Ancient Egypt

In the exhibition “Eternal Life – Treasures from Ancient Egypt” you can experience mummies in an atmosphere similar to the one in the burial chamber where the mummies once upon a time were placed more than 3500 years ago. A mummy is an embalmed corpse that has undergone a process where the body’s natural shape is taken care of. Normally, they are placed in a painted coffin. Two mummies and one coffin lid are displayed in the exhibition. One of them – acquired by The University Museum in 1828 - is the priest’s daughter Teshemmin, who was buried between 525 and 350 B.C. She is wrapped in linen, and part of her face has been damaged. The coffin is richly decorated with images and text, telling the story of her parents. The other mummy with a coffin and the third lid were donated to the Museum by Fridtjof Sundt in 1902, along with many of the other grave finds that are displayed.

Mission in Madagascar

Norway and Madagascar, two countries on different sides of the globe. Two countries joined together with many ties through a nearly 200 year relationship. For many Norwegians, Madagascar and Norwegian mission became synonyms. Through mission, trade and development aid, Norway has been present in Madagascar until today. Letters, stories, photographs, films and ethnographical artefacts came back to Norway. Memories, family histories and persisting relations continue to keep Madagascar alive within many Norwegians' consciousness. Many of the artefacts ended up in the museums' storage rooms, or were displayed in order to fascinate and seduce as strange and exotic.

The exhibition at The University Museum is based on the Museum's own collection from Madagascar. Among the donators were missionaries, merchants from Bergen, ship captains and crew. The latter sailed on mission ships or participated on hazardous trade and emigration expeditions to Madagascar. The title of the exhibition, "Permit Me to Send You a Bundle of Malagasy Things" is the opening line of a letter to The University Museum in 1906. The letter was written by Anton Flygel, a missionary to Madagascar, when he forwarded a number of ethnographical artefacts to the museum. The Madagascar collection bears testimony of the Malagasy culture, but also of a Malagasy object culture among Norwegians. The way these objects speak to us is coloured by what we are, just as much as the objects speak to us a mere objects.



Natural history

Ground floor

Quaternary geology

and The mineral collection

The geological exhibitions present the main themes in geology. Of particular attraction is the mineral collection where magnificent specimens from all over the world and fine local samples are displayed.



Pollen - so tiny - so great

The pollen exhibition shows the great variation of form in pollen grains. Here you can learn more about how pollen analysis is used to describe vegetation history and you will be able to recognise the grains of the different plants. The word "pollen" was first used by Carl von Linné. It is a Latin word, and means fine dust or flour. In the exhibition you can also learn more about wind pollination, insect pollination, pollen allergy, systematics, and evolution. Moreover, you can recognise different species' unique pollen grains. In the exhibition, you will also find beautiful, modelled pollen grains in large formats made by the artists Marta Nerhus and Æsa Björk Thorsteinsdóttir from various materials like glass, metal, and papier mâché.



Botanical systematics

The exhibition presents the different plant kingdoms and the plants that are characteristic of the various kingdoms. You can see bacteria, algae, fungi, lichens, mosses, ferns, and seed plants. The exhibition utilises beautiful, old models made in the last century to display the distinctive forms and functions of plants, in combination with modern, digital presentations and plant material of museal value.

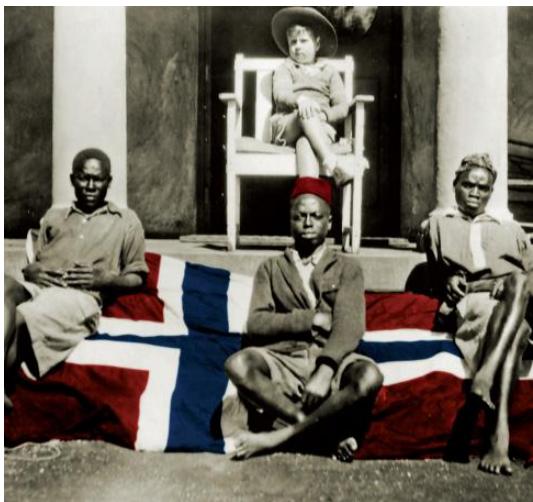


1st floor



Exotic mammals

The exhibition is largely preserved in its original form and expression as it was at the time it was set up around hundred years ago. Here you will find displayed mammals from most corners of the world, including a collection of primates, canines and felines, pangolins and magnificent deer. We recommend that you take a closer look at the platypus from Australia and the quite peculiar pink fairy armadillo from Argentina! A large part of the exhibited specimens at the Natural History Collections was acquired in the period 1860-1910 and have to some degree a significant antiquarian and museal value. In the course of the 1930s, the majority of the material from abroad arrived at the Museum.



Colonial times

The exhibition takes us on a journey to both "far off lands" (hutaheiti) and to "where the pepper grows". It is themed around Norwegians and Norwegian interests on the ultimately thinkable exotic places. We meet a sea captain from Farsund in Norway who was shipwrecked on Aitutaki and found love there. We also take a look at the The Norwegian Solomon Islands Trading Company and a Norwegian "sugar adventure" on Hawaii. Moreover, we get a glimpse of grand-scale business activity in South Africa and Mozambique, and get acquainted with entrepreneurs and dandies on safari in Colonial Africa.

The exhibition consists of two parts: On the right hand side, you can see what the Norwegians brought along when they left Norway and on the left hand side, what they brought home to Norway after they stay abroad. The computer screens turn themselves on when you are standing right in front of them and you may watch films and digital stories about the various places and persons mentioned in the exhibition.

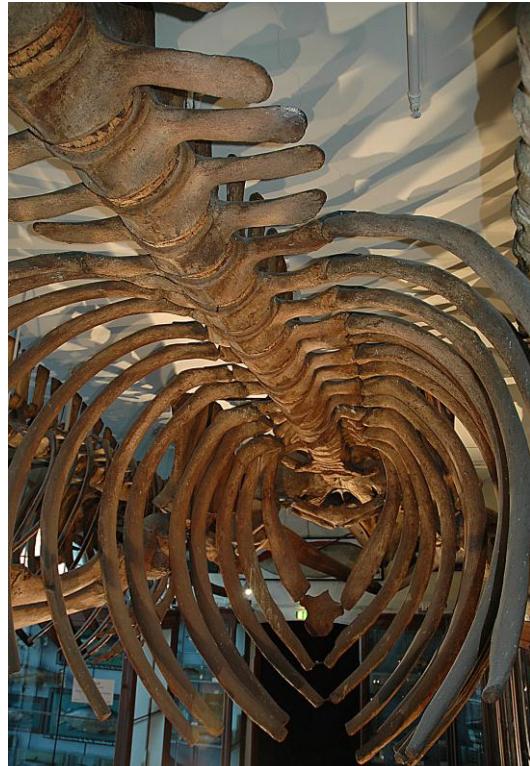
The whale hall

The exhibition of whale skeletons is one of the largest of its kind in the world. It was mounted towards the end of the 1800s and the beginning of the 1900s. All in all, 22 mounted skeletons and three craniums from 18 different species are on display.

Most of the North Atlantic whale species are included in the exhibition. Eleven of the skeletons are more than 5 m long; the longest one is a 24 m long blue whale. The exhibition also has a varied collection of marine invertebrates, all the Norwegian seal species, and a number of fish species from the sea and from lakes.

The whale exhibition is very valuable due to the great diversity of species that are represented there. With the exception of the mink whale, which is still being hunted for on a limited scale in Norwegian waters, all the species are listed today. In addition, several of them are quite rare. It would therefore be a difficult task to get hold of similar skeletons today.

The whale hall is today protected and work is carried out to conserve and stabilise the large specimens and to make sure that the climatic conditions for them are in order.





Reptiles

This is where you can see an abundance of snakes, lizards, and turtles – ranging from our domestic common European viper to the enormous anaconda and the estuarine crocodile.

The exhibition consists of specimens stored in alcohol, stuffed or cast. Some of the mounted skeletons also show in detail some of the magnificent structural features that characterise the reptiles.



Knuckles and bones

In Knuckles and bones, you can see a collection of beautiful skeletal objects ranging from limbs to craniums. The exhibition is based on an old collection produced for teaching purposes and it is also a display of old-fashioned exhibition techniques. Thus, it forms a basis for a presentation of the evolution of skeletons. You can, among other things, see the evolution of the horse in three display cabinets, the evolution of limbs, and a unique collection of whale pelvises.

Norwegian birds

Here you will find the major part of the approx. 450 bird species that nest in Norway, plus a few more. The birds are grouped according to affinity among species and are often set in the environment where they live. The exhibition contains common and rarer species – several of them with nests. When relevant, plumage variation in relation to sex and age are also shown.

2nd floor

Exotic birds

This is a very varied exhibition containing bird species from all corners of the world. Jointly, the collections Norwegian birds and Exotic birds contain nearly 15 % of the world's c.10 000 bird species. Take some time studying the diversity and the many beautiful details of the birds - their size, shape, and colours.



Find additional information on the Internet

From stone quarry to stone building

To increase the understanding of the use and mining of soapstone in the Middle Ages in Bergen and Hordaland, it is important to find out where the stone came from. Join us in our search for the quarries!

http://universitetsmuseet.uib.no/nettutstillinger/geoologi/mariakirkens_geoologi/index.htm



The Mummies tell stories

The mummies have undergone CT scans at Haukeland University Hospital. From here you can keep up with the project while new results come forth.

<http://universitetsmuseet.uib.no/nettutstillinger/mumie/index.html>



Bandoneon – an instrument on top of all the others...

In the German tradition, this was an instrument for the working classes ("Miner's Squeezebox"). It was so difficult to play that only the best and most patient persons managed to do it. Because of this, it gradually became a way for some people to feel little bit above all the others.

<http://universitetsmuseet.uib.no/nettutstillinger/bandoneon/index.html>



BUBO

Bubo is an owlet who lives at The University Museum, the Natural History Collections. Like the children who visit the Museum, Bubo is fascinated with all the strange things they have in it. They have animals and birds from all corners of the world.

<http://universitetsmuseet.uib.no/nettutstillinger/bubo/index.htm>



The Whale Hall on the Internet

Welcome to a virtual tour in the Whale Hall at the Natural History Collections.

<http://universitetsmuseet.uib.no/faqsider/osteologi/hvaler/index.htm>





Crystals, minerals, and rocks

This is where you, among other things, can learn more about species of rock, minerals, and about geological development. Over several chapters, you are guided through our exciting geological history.

<http://universitetsmuseet.uib.no/geoom.php>



Combs from the Middle Ages in Bergen

The Internet exhibition shows how travelling comb makers settled in various Scandinavian towns for shorter or longer periods of time and supplied exquisite comb craft to the population.

<http://universitetsmuseet.uib.no/middelalder/html/index.html>



Materials in the Iron Age

Learn more about Iron Age objects and Norwegian society. Watch digital lectures which tell you about the origins and the contexts of the objects.

<http://universitetsmuseet.uib.no/nettutstillinger/arkeologi/digmat/index.htm>



Eternal life – ancient Egypt on the Internet

"Eternal life – on the Internet" presents The University Museum' rich collection of ancient Egyptian objects.

<http://universitetsmuseet.uib.no/nettutstillinger/egypt/>



Old neighbours

Do you know the neighbours that live where you do? At a time long before present, other people used to live in your home district.

<http://www.gamlenaboar.uib.no/default.htm>



The travelling bag

Pack your travelling bag and join us for a round trip in Western Norway on the lookout for cultural monuments.

<http://www.reiseveska.uib.no/default.htm>

THE UNIVERSITY MUSEUM

was founded in 1825 by former President of the Norwegian Storting, Wilhelm Frimann Koren Christie (1778-1849).

The Museum became an important part of the groundwork that led to the establishment of the University of Bergen in 1946 and is today an integral part of the University. Today, The University Museum has the largest museum collections in Norway within cultural and natural history housed in one institution. The Museum is responsible for all museum activity at the University of Bergen.

The University Museum performs collection, documentation, conservation, research, and dissemination within its museum disciplines. The subject fields are anthropology, archaeology and art and cultural history, botany, geology, and zoology.

As a state-owned university museum, The University Museum has extensive scientific collections, and the Museum is a regional competence and dissemination centre.

The University Museum's staff works in two collection departments, the Cultural History Collections and the Natural History Collections. In addition, a joint services staff headed by the Director is responsible for administration, IT, photographic, and public outreach services.