Artis Ethnographic Museum

Abstract

The Artis Ethnographic Museum was an ethnographic museum in Amsterdam founded in 1851 as part of the Artis Zoo. In 1921, the collection was subsumed by the newly established Colonial Museum, today's Wereldmuseum Amsterdam.

History of the museum

The Artis Ethnographic Museum was founded in 1851 to house the collection of ethnographic objects of the Koninklijk Zoölogisch Genootschap Natura Artis Magistra, the royal zoological society. At the time it was not unusual for a zoo to also collect objects, as the rapidly changing sciences in the nineteenth century often focused on several areas of research at once. The interest both in other cultures, objects and customs and in plants, animals and geology was closely linked to the broader European colonial project. Artis' ethnographic collection grew steadily throughout the nineteenth century and so a special museum building, the Volharding, was constructed in 1888. The building is still part of Artis Zoo today. In the late nineteenth century, the collection was expanded with objects from the Internationale Koloniale en Uitvoerhandel Tentoonstelling, also known as the World Exhibition, of 1883 and objects collected by the Nieuwe Afrikaansche Handels-Vennootschap. As such, the Artis Ethnographic Museum was closely linked to Dutch colonial relations.

From 1905 to 1913 the collection of the Colonial Museum in Haarlem was temporarily included in the collection of the Ethnographic Museum Artis but not long after the decision was made to transfer the collections to the yet-to-be-established museum of the Colonial Institute, which finally took place in 1921. It was not until 1926 that the museum of the Colonial Institute, now Wereldmuseum Amsterdam, opened its doors. To this day, the collection of the Ethnographic Museum Artis forms an important basis of the collection of the Wereldmuseum Amsterdam.

[image] *Interior of the Artis Ethnographic Museum* (Stadsarchief Amsterdam)

Provenance research

The collection of the Artis Ethnographic Museum can be found within the collection of Wereldmuseum Amsterdam using the attribute 'TM-A'. The collection was originally brought together by a multitude of private individuals, including civil servants, missionaries, traders, other types of travellers and scientific societies. An important donor to the collection of the Ethnographic Museum Artis, for example, was the linguist Herman Neubronner van der Tuuk. Donations of objects to the Artis Ethnographic Museum, with the name of the donor, were listed in the 'Yearbook of the Royal Zoological Society Natura Artis Magistra'. The editions from 1852 to 1875 are available digitally on the Hathi Trust website (https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/007328956).

Archives relating to the Artis Ethnographic Museum are spread across several institutions. For example the general archives of the Koninklijk Zoölogisch Genootschap Artis Magistra are held at the Amsterdam City Archive under archive accession number 395. Inventory numbers that are relevant to the Artis Ethnographic Museum are: *1842-1860 Etnologisch Museum met insectarium, 1861-1873 Weekrapporten van het Etnologisch Museum, 1876-1905*

Ethnografisch Museum en verzamelingen, 1906-1919 Stukken betreffende de vestiging van een Koloniaal Museum te Amsterdam [...] and *1909-1919 Vereeniging "Koloniaal Instituut ", opgericht in 1910*. Archives of the Colonial Institute relating to the Artis ethnographic collection are available through the National Archives. Inventory numbers 4395 and 7851-7858 (which are still held by the Royal Tropical Institute, KIT) refer to the collection and its transfer to the Colonial Museum in Amsterdam in 1926. According to a report by the National Museum of World Cultures, the archives of the Artis Ethnographic Museum have been digitalised by KIT and are available through the Media module of the World Museum's collection registration system. For specific questions about the Artis Ethnographic Museum collection and to view the archives, contact collectieinfo@wereldmuseum.nl.

Related Aids

- Sources
- Civil servants in colonised territories
- Army and navy personnel in colonised territories
- The trade in objects from a colonial context
- Scientific research in colonised territories
- Royal Cabinet of Curiosities
- Wereldmuseum Leiden
- Wereldmuseum Amsterdam
- Koninklijk Bataviaasch Genootschap van Wetenschappen en Kunsten
- Museon-Omniversum
- International Colonial and Export Exhibition 1883
- Natuurhistorisch en Volkenkundig Museum Oudenbosch

Primary sources

Archive:

> *NL-AsdSAA - 395 Archief van het Koninklijk Zoölogisch Genootschap Natura Artis Magistra Archives of the Koninklijk Zoölogisch Genootschap Natura Artis Magistra at the Amsterdam City Archive. Inventory numbers 1876-1905 contain documentation on the museum's collection. Inventory numbers 1906-1919 contain documentation on the decision to transfer the Artis collection to the Colonial Museum in Amsterdam. Some documents are digitally accessible, others must be requested in order to be consulted.*
>
> https://archief.amsterdam/inventarissen/details/395/

Archive:

> *NL-HaNA 2.20.69 - 7851 until 7858 Relevant archival material relating to the Artis Ethnographic Museum is held in the inventory of the Royal Tropical Institute (KIT) at the National Archives in The Hague.*
>
> https://www.nationaalarchief.nl/onderzoeken/archief/2.20.69

Archive:

> *NL-HaNA 2.20.69 - 4395 Documents relating to the transfer of the ethnographic collection of the society 'Natura Artis Magistra' in Amsterdam. Part of the archives of the Royal Tropical Institute, held at the National Archives in The Hague.*

https://www.nationaalarchief.nl/onderzoeken/archief/2.20.69

Document:

Jaarboekje van het Koninklijk Zoölogisch Genootschap Natura Artis Magistra The yearbook lists donations of objects to the Artis Ethnographic Museum along with the names of the donors.

https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/00732895

Secondary sources

Article:

Dartel, Daan van. The Oldest Collections of the Tropenmuseum: Haarlem and Artis. In: D. van Duuren (ed.) Oceania at the Tropenmuseum. Amsterdam: KIT Publishers, 2011. Article by curator Daan van Dartel about the collections of the Colonial Museum in Haarlem and Ethnographic Museum Artis in a publication about the Oceania collection of the former Tropenmuseum.

https://search.worldcat.org/title/730403132?oclcNum=730403132, WorldCat 730403132, ISBN 9068327526

Book:

Pleyte, C.M. Verzameling Van Ethnographische Voorwerpen, Aan De Westkust Van Afrika, Voornamelijk in Het Congo-Gebied, Verzameld, En Voor Het Meerendeel Aan Het Genootschap Ten Geschenke Gegeven. Amsterdam: van Holkema, 1885. Description of the 1885 collection from West Africa of the Artis Ethnographic Museum by the curator at the time, C.M. Pleyte.

https://search.worldcat.org/title/836812327?oclcNum=836812327, WorldCat 836812327

Book:

Pleyte, C.M. Gids Voor Den Bezoeker Van Het Ethnographisch Museum. Amsterdam: Van Holkema, 1888. Guide to the museum's collection from 1888 by the then curator of the Artis Ethnographic Museum. Three volumes are available via Google Books: 'Insulinde I Java', 'Insulinde II Outside Occupations' and 'Australia and Oceania'. The guides give a very accurate description of how the objects were displayed in the museum.

https://www.google.nl/books/edition/Gids_voor_den_bezoeker_van_het_Ethnograp/wDpnAAAAcAAJ, WorldCat 1287660577

Article:

Wijs, Sonja, 'Een plaats voor de mens; de etnografische musea van het Koninklijk Zoölogisch Genootschap Natura Artis Magistra, in: Heden En Verleden, VVE Jaarboek 8. 2020. Article from 2020 by Sonja Wijs about the Artis Ethnographic Museum.

https://search.worldcat.org/title/1178618962?oclcNum=1178618962,

WorldCat 1178618962

Relevant Data

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