\_This is a level 3 Research Aid\_  
\_first edited by wiebe reints as original\_author on 2024-08-22\_  
\_last edited by abacus as translator on 2025-04-28\_

Wereldmuseum Rotterdam

# Abstract

The Wereldmuseum Rotterdam was founded in 1885 by the municipality of Rotterdam. The museums holds a large collection of objects from Asia, the Pacific, Afrika and the Americas. The basis of the museum's collection finds it's origin in the collection that was established by the members of the former Yacht Society of Rotterdam.

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## Description

Today's Wereldmuseum Rotterdam evolved from the Royal Yacht Club (Yachtvereniging), which was founded in 1851 and was located on Willemskade in Rotterdam. Members donated all kinds of objects to the society, such as ship models, but also ethnographic objects. In 1873 this led to the foundation of the Maritiem Museum Prins Hendrik, named after the president of the Yacht Club. After Prince Hendrik died in 1879 and the Yacht Club ceased to exist in 1880, the municipality of Rotterdam decided in 1883 to take over the building on Willemskade and establish an ethnographic museum there. The need for such a museum was driven by the Netherlands' overseas trade contacts, the emerging ethnological sciences and the increasing missionary work in the Dutch colonial territories. In 1885 the collection of the former Prince Hendrik Maritime Museum was also acquired, after which the new museum opened its doors on 1 May of that year.

The collection of the Museum voor Land- en Volkenkunde initially comprised a wide variety of donations from traders and naval and military personnel, among others. The donation in the late 19th century of the collection of Javanese batik textiles and other items by Elie van Rijckevorsel, who later also took a seat on the Advisory Board of the museum, served as one of the initial encouragements to the municipality of Rotterdam to establish the ethnographic museum. From the beginning of the twentieth century collection activities became more structured in accordance with the notion of the upcoming science of anthropology, for example through the organisation of collecting trips. Much attention was focused on the cultures of New Guinea.

It was not until 1961 that the Museum voor Land- en Volkenkunde and the Maritiem Museum Prins Hendrik continued as separate entities. Today they are still separate municipal museums, although the collections of both museums have been stored in the same depot since the 1980s. In May 2017 the Wereldmuseum Rotterdam established a partnership with the National Museum of World Cultures (NMVW) foundation, which manages the various ‘Wereldmuseums’ in the Netherlands. The museum's collection, however, is still owned by the municipality of Rotterdam. As of 2023 all museums within the NMVW continue under the name of Wereldmuseum, with the museum in Rotterdam thus becoming Wereldmuseum Rotterdam.

## Provenance research

The collection of the Wereldmuseum Rotterdam is accessible via the Datahub and the collection website of the Wereldmuseum; the collection of the Wereldmuseum can be identified by the attribute 'WM'. Specific questions regarding the collection of the Wereldmuseum Rotterdam can be asked through collectieinfo@wereldmuseum.nl.

The Wereldmuseum Rotterdam archives are located in the Rotterdam City Archives. Note that the archives are divided into two parts: an archive from 1883 to 1960 and an archive from 1961 to 1990. Both archives are structured in a similar manner. Documents related to the formation of the collection can be found in both accesses under the heading “Collectievorming en beheer” in the “Taken” section.

The photograph collection of the Wereldmuseum Rotterdam has been transferred to the Nederlands Fotomuseum. You can find the photograph collection of the Wereldmuseum Rotterdam by searching for 'WMR\*' within the Nederlands Fotomuseum's collection database.

# Related Aids

\_see also: Sources\_  
\_see also: The trade in objects from a colonial context\_  
\_see also: Army and navy personnel in colonised territories\_  
\_see also: Scientific research in colonised territories\_  
\_see also: Wereldmuseum Leiden\_  
\_see also: Wereldmuseum Amsterdam\_  
\_see also: Wereldmuseum Berg en Dal\_  
\_see also: International Colonial and Export Exhibition 1883\_  
\_see also: Natuurhistorisch en Volkenkundig Museum Oudenbosch\_

# Primary sources

Archive:

Archive:

# Secondary sources

Book:

Website:

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# Relevant Data

Identifiers:

http://www.wikidata.org/entity/Q2042754  
,  
 Name variations:

Museum voor Land- en Volkenkunde, Museum voor Volkenkunde, Wereldmuseum, Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen  
,  
 Tags:  
 Activity:

Collection, Ethnographic museum  
,  
 Type of objects:

Ethnographic objects  
,  
 Geographical:

Africa;, Asia, North America, Oceania, South America  
,  
 Period of activity:  
 Year of start:  
 1851,  
 Year of end:

,  
 Collections:  
 General remarks:  
 content:  
 "Since 2017, the Wereldmuseum Rotterdam has been a part of the National Museum of World Cultures association. However, the Municipality of Rotterdam is still officially the owner of the museum's collection."  
,  
 content-type:  
 text/markdown,  
 Within the Data Hub:  
 https://app.colonialcollections.nl/en/objects?query=WM