

Rijksmuseum Amsterdam

Abstract

Today's Rijksmuseum Amsterdam was founded in 1885. It is an amalgamation of several 19th century Dutch collections. The collection includes objects coming from the Royal Cabinet of Curiosities. Additionally, the collection of the Royal Asian Art Society in the Netherlands is exhibited in the Rijksmuseum.

History of the museum

The Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam in its current form dates from 1885, when the collections of several Dutch museums were merged. Direct predecessors of the Rijksmuseum are the [Nationale Konst-Gallery](#), ['s Rijks Verzameling van Moderne Kunst](#) in Haarlem, Nederlandsch Museum van Geschiedenis en Kunst and the [Royal Cabinet of Curiosities](#), both in The Hague. Since 1952, the collection of the [Royal Society of Friends of Asian Art](#) (KVVAK) has also been exhibited at the Rijksmuseum. In the context of research into collections from a colonial context, the collections of the KVVAK and the Royal Cabinet of Curiosities within the Rijksmuseum collection are of particular interest.

[image] *The Rijksmuseum Amsterdam in ca. 1885* ([Wikimedia Commons](#))

Provenance research

The archives of the Rijksmuseum and its predecessors up to 1995 are available via the [Noord-Hollands Archief](#) and are accompanied by a detailed archival description. The more recent archives are available through the Rijksmuseum itself. For information on these archival materials and consultation options, please contact archief@rijksmuseum.nl.

The Rijksmuseum collection is accessible and searchable via the [collection website](#). The 'search options' button offers more selection options for finding objects. Relevant information on the provenance of objects can often be found on the object pages, which also display relevant publications. In addition the website has topic pages on the [history of slavery](#) and the [colonial past](#). These pages provide further information about the relationship between the Rijksmuseum collection and these topics.

The [Rijksmuseum Research Library](#) contains a large quantity of books, journals, exhibition, trade and collection catalogues. These publications can be consulted in the Rijksmuseum library. The Rijksmuseum also owns around 130,000 auction catalogues, dating from the seventeenth century to the present. Just under half of the catalogues can be found within the digital library catalogue of the Rijksmuseum Research Library. Catalogues acquired before 1989 can only be found in the paper catalogue. You can enquire at the Rijksmuseum Library whether the catalogue you are looking for is available. Also accessible in the library collection is the [Art Sales Catalogues Online](#) (ASCO). This database contains over 20,000 historical auction catalogues from the period 1600-1900. The so-called Special Collections segment within the Rijksmuseum Library collection includes old prints, books with original prints or photographs, special bibliophile editions, artists' books, recipe books and all the works of the [Royal Archaeological Society](#) (KOG).

Related Aids

- [Sources](#)
- [Civil servants in colonised territories](#)
- [Army and navy personnel in colonised territories](#)
- [Scientific research in colonised territories](#)
- [The trade in objects from a colonial context](#)
- [Royal Cabinet of Curiosities](#)
- [Royal Asian Art Society in the Netherlands](#)
- [Wereldmuseum Amsterdam](#)
- [Wereldmuseum Leiden](#)
- [Rijksmuseum van Oudheden](#)
- [International Colonial and Export Exhibition 1883](#)

Primary sources

Archive:

Rijksmuseum en rechtsvoorgangers te Amsterdam Archives of the Rijksmuseum Amsterdam and its legal predecessors. The archive goes back to the beginning of the nineteenth century and contains documentation up to and including 1995, the year that the museum became an independent organisation. The archive of the Royal Cabinet of Curiosities is also located within this archive.

<https://hdl.handle.net/21.12102/01644F687DD84B309BF24360FD2B2A25>

Secondary sources

Publication:

Mooren, Jona, Stutje, Klaas and Vree, Frank van. Sporen: onderzoek naar herkomstgeschiedenis en betekenisgeving van culturele projecten en collecties verworven in koloniale situaties (Amsterdam: NIOD, 2022). The Pilot Project Provenance Research on Objects of the Colonial Era (PPROCE) included research into a number of objects from the Amsterdam Rijksmuseum. The extensive provenance reports are online and contain many useful insights.

https://d3mb4k8bvt6xe4.cloudfront.net/2023-03/_ME_Lijst%20herkomstverslagenwebsite_01.pdf

Relevant Data

TO BE FILLED

*first edited by Wiebe Reints as original_author on 2024-09-05
last edited by Wiebe Reints as original_author on 2025-12-23*