

This is a level 3 Research Aid

first edited by Wiebe Reints as original_author on 2025-05-13

last edited by Wiebe Reints as original_author on 2025-05-13

Volkenkundig Museum 'Gerardus van der Leeuw'

Abstract

Until 2003, the Gerardus van der Leeuw Ethnographic Museum was an ethnographic museum in Groningen and formed a part of the university in that city. The museum collection consisted of various sub-collections, including objects from the former Tropical Agricultural School in Deventer and the Princessehof Museum in Leeuwarden. After the museum closed in 2003, the collection became part of the University Museum of the University of Groningen.

History of the museum

The former Gerardus van der Leeuw Ethnographic Museum originated from the personal ethnographic collection of Theo van Baaren, a religion historian who was a professor at the University of Groningen. Van Baaren never visited the countries from which he collected objects, but acquired his collection through several art dealers. In 1968, Van Baaren donated his collection to the University of Groningen, after which a foundation was established, named after the professor who had succeeded Van Baaren, Gerardus van der Leeuw. Through this association, Van Baaren's collection was greatly expanded. Among others, the Princessehof Museum in Leeuwarden sent its ethnographic collection to Groningen, as the Frisian museum decided to focus solely on collecting ceramics. The municipality of Deventer donated the collection of the former Tropical Agricultural School. In addition, businessman [Fred ten Houten](#) gave his ethnographic collection on long-term loan. Together with the objects purchased by the Gerardus van der Leeuw Association, the above collections formed the core of the Gerardus van der Leeuw Ethnographic Museum, which opened its doors in 1978 on the Nieuwe Kijk in 't Jatstraat in the city of Groningen. During the museum's existence, the collection was supplemented by purchases and donations. After several unsuccessful attempts to merge the ethnographic museum with other museums in Groningen, the Gerardus van der Leeuw Ethnographic Museum closed in 2003. Afterwards, the museum collection was incorporated into the museum of the University of Groningen, where it remains until today.

Provenance research

Several catalogues of the collection of the Gerardus van der Leeuw Ethnographic Museum have been published. One of these is [Hoe het ging en verging](#), which describes the so-called “MG collection”, the collection of objects that the museum has accumulated during its existence. This book also contains an overview of all the exhibitions held within the museum between 1978 and 2003. In addition to the MG collection, *Hoe het ging en verging* also provides an overview of the CG collection, which was transferred to the ethnographic museum after the Cultural Anthropology department at the University of Groningen was closed down, and the A collection, which was donated by the Australian Government in 1978.

The collection of the former Tropical Agriculture Museum in Deventer (the TD collection) has its own catalogue: [De collectie Deventer](#). In addition to an overview of the collection, this catalogue also provides a insightful background information about the former agricultural museum in Deventer. The original Van Baaren collection (the VB collection) is described in the book *The Collection Van Baaren*, which is unfortunately not available online. The ethnographic collection of the Prinsessehof in Leeuwarden is referred to as the PL collection and does not have its own catalogue.

The archive of the Gerardus van der Leeuw Ethnographic Museum (until 1995) is housed at the [Groninger Archieven](#). In addition to documents about the organisation of the museum and its place within the Faculty of Theology, this archive also contains descriptions of the collection. Apart from the sources described below, catalogues of the museum's various exhibitions are also available. These can be found in the [RUG library](#) by searching for "Gerardus van der Leeuw".

Related Aids

- see also: [Wetenschappelijk onderzoek in gekoloniseerde gebieden](#)
- see also: [Wageningen University & Research](#)
- see also: [Natuurhistorisch en Volkenkundig Museum Oudenbosch](#)

Primary sources

Archive:

Regionaal Historisch Centrum Groninger Archieven, toegangsnummer 2924,
Archief van de Faculteit der Godgeleerdheid van de Rijksuniversiteit
Groningen, inventaris nummer 2.01
<https://hdl.handle.net/21.12105/71742EE35A20452A834C2A27055FE38E>
Archive of the Gerardus van der Leeuw Ethnographic Museum until 1995.
Contains, among other things, descriptions of the museum's collection.

Secondary sources

Book:

Schotanus, M., V. Arnoldus-Schröder, Nico de Jonge. *Hoe Het Ging En Verging : 25 Jaar "Gerardus van Der Leeuw"* (Groningen: Volkenkundig Museum "Gerardus van der Leeuw", 2003).
<https://search.worldcat.org/title/66693349>, [ISBN 9789080798915](#), [WorldCat 66693349](#)
Book and catalogue from 2003 which provides concise information about the history of the museum and an overview of the MG collection.

Book:

Arnoldus, G. *De Collectie Deventer* (Groningen: Volkenkundig Museum 'Gerardus van der Leeuw', 2003).
<https://search.worldcat.org/title/66725336>, [ISBN 9789080083295](#), [WorldCat 66725336](#)
Book and catalogue from 2003 which provides detailed background information about the museum of the former Tropical Agricultural school in Deventer. Also

contains an overview of the collection of this museum that was transferred to the Gerardus van der Leeuw Ethnographic Museum in 1972.

Book:

Leertouwer, L. L., H. Witte, and R. Wassing. The Collection van Baaren. Edited by V. Arnoldus-Schröder (Groningen: Volkenkundig museum 'Gerardus van der Leeuw', 1998).

<https://search.worldcat.org/title/901427514>, [ISBN 9789080083271](https://search.worldcat.org/ISBN/9789080083271),
[WorldCat 901427514](https://search.worldcat.org/title/901427514)

Book from 1998 containing a description of the Van Baaren collection, which formed the basis of the Gerardus van der Leeuw Ethnographic Museum.

Book:

Baaren, Th. P. van. Portret van Een Kollektie : Volkenkundig Museum Gerardus van Der Leeuw, Rijksuniversiteit Groningen (Groningen: Centrale Reproductie Dienst der R.U Groningen, 1974).

<https://search.worldcat.org/title/63510432>, [WorldCat 63510432](https://search.worldcat.org/title/63510432)

1974 book by Theo van Baaren, the founder of the Gerardus van der Leeuw Ethnographic Museum, about his collection.

Article:

Honnef, Harmen G. 'Volkenkundig Museum Gerardus van der Leeuw, Rijksuniversiteit Groningen.' Openbaar Kunstbezit Vlaanderen 12, no. 3 (1974).

<https://www.okv.be/archief/volkenkundig-museum-gerardus-van-der-leeuw-rijksuniversiteit-groningen>

1974 article from the Belgian magazine OKV (Opbaar Kunstbezit Vlaanderen, Public Art Collections), which describes the history of the Gerardus van der Leeuw Ethnographic Museum.

Relevant Data

TO BE FILLED