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.

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.

[image] *The current Wereldmuseum Rotterdam, 2024* (Andy Li)

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

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

Primary sources

Archive:

> *NL-RtSA, 563 Archief van het Museum voor Land- en Volkenkunde en Maritiem Museum Prins Hendrik te Rotterdam Archives of the Museum voor Land- en Volkenkunde and the Maritiem Museum Prins Hendrik in Rotterdam. This archive runs until 1960 because the organisations of the two museums continued separately from that time. Inventory numbers 282 to 302 contain documents relating to the formation of the collection.*
>
> https://hdl.handle.net/21.12133/C5532B05532547EB975A5FDCC489E105

Archive:

> *NL-RtSA, 1407 Archief van het Museum voor (Land- en) Volkenkunde te Rotterdam Archives of the Museum voor Land- en Volkenkunde. This archive runs from 1961 because the organisations continued separately from that time. Inventory numbers 147 to 177 contain records relating to the formation of the collection.*
>
> https://hdl.handle.net/21.12133/D93AA4DF253A4F2B85ABDE76E164DE67

Secondary sources

Book:

> *Faber, Paul, Linden, Liane van der and Wassing, René. Schatten van het Museum voor Volkenkunde Rotterdam. Meulenhoff/Landshoff: Amsterdam, 1987. Book,*

and also catalogue, dedicated to the exhibition Schatten van het Museum voor Volkenkunde Rotterdam. Contains a brief history of the museum and an extensive description of collections from various continents.

ISBN 9789029080941, WorldCat 905426025

Website:

History Wereldmuseum. From Yachtclub to ethnographic museum Website of the Wereldmuseum with a short history of the museum in Rotterdam.

https://rotterdam.wereldmuseum.nl/en/about-wereldmuseum-rotterdam/history-wereldmuseum

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Relevant Data

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