

Universalmuseum Joanneum Press

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The new History Museum

History Museum, Sackstraße 16, 8010 Graz, Austria

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The Museum at Palais Herberstein is reinventing itself: from April 26, 2017 the History Museum combines the Cultural-Historical Collection with the Multimedia Collections of the Universalmuseum Joanneum under one roof.

The Cultural-Historical Collection's mission is to document the 'province's cultural epochs from the Early Middle Ages to the present'. Opened in 1895 as the "Cultural-historical and Arts and Crafts Museum" in Graz' Neutorgasse, the collection has been housed in the Museum im Palais in Sackstraße since 2011.

It originates in an initiative of the sculptor Karl Lacher (1850-1908), who was fascinated by the movement arising from the first World Fair (held in London in 1851) that rebelled against the might of industrialisation and the accompanying symptoms of decline in craftsmanship. The collection's identity has been developed over the last few decades mainly in the direction of arts and crafts and design; the appointment of Bettina Habsburg-Lothringen as head of the collection in 2014 signalled the beginning of a reprofiling in the form of a return to the original mission. The Cultural-Historical Collection comprises some 35,000 objects from a range of areas: fashion, musical instruments, furniture, glass, ceramics, jewellery and scientific instruments. The history of the Multimedia Collections began in 1958 as the Styrian 'Central Archive for Image and Sound Recordings'. In 1971 it was renamed the 'Image and Sound Archive', and in 2009 it became the 'Multimedia Collections'. Originally accommodated in Bürgergasse and then in Palais Attems, the items, meanwhile grown to more than 2.5 million objects, were transferred to the Joanneum Quarter in 2011. Despite the growing importance for museums of photographs, sound and film recordings as documentary evidence of periods, regions, and the history of technology, the Joanneum Multimedia Collection had been unable so far to position itself properly.

Reliving history

The interplay between both collections now enables us to view the evolution and transformation of Styria since the Middle Ages from ever fresh angles. Thanks to the Multimedia Collections, the 20th century is now also given appropriate space in coming exhibitions. The planned exhibitions also represent the first markers on the route that the History Museum has carefully set out for itself. Three areas will take centre stage in future: a focus on people, insights into the museum's storage depot, and relations with the region. The redesign of the museum as regards space has been carried out by INNOCAD Architectural Office.

Collected history in the new viewable storage depot

Redesigning the museum has also meant opening the new display storage depot from the Cultural-Historical Collection. Under the motto 'Collected History', around 2,000 of the total of 35,000 objects are arranged for viewing as a dense collage, ordered by such themes as 'eating and drinking', 'travelling and transportation', or 'research and knowledge'. Over a surface area of some 4,800 square feet, musical instruments, furniture, technical devices, women's, men's and children's fashion, monstrosities, tools, tiles and busts, locks, lamps and burial crosses, jewellery, clocks, bicycles and much more besides are on show. The concept of interior design, of the historical premises, is based on a flowing wall covering made of metal cable trays, which simultaneously serve as supports for the exhibits. The light-bearing, freely-designable metal construction protects the inner walls on the one hand, and gives them the industrial, modular feel of a depot on the other.

In addition, the permanent exhibition will be extended by objects from the Multimedial Collections as of autumn 2017, which, with their two million objects or more, are among the most important audiovisual collections in all of Austria. The presentation in the viewable storage depot allows for the first time a lasting insight into the comprehensive collections, as well as the history and perspectives of both History Museum collections.

The Multimedia Collections on show at the new location

With their first exhibition at the new location, the Multimedia Collections present a 'photo-archaeological' find: *The Fauth photographs* remembers Franz Fauth (1870-1947), who ran a professional photo studio at his parents' farm in the Deutschlandsberg district. In 2016 Multimedia Collections staff found thousands of objects dating from the pre-digital age in the hayloft there. A selection of these now tells the story of this extraordinary personality, allowing insights into western Styria in the first half of the 20th century.

From November the second special exhibition *Styrian Nightscape. Photo Expedition to Styria by Night* is dedicated to the period between sunset and sunrise: neon-lit advertising and light-filled shop displays, urban street scenes and staged (historical) architecture, villages and landscapes, enchanted guests at feasts and members of various professions who work at night.