

THE UNIVERSITY'S HOUSE OF TREASURES



The new Gustavianum



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Gustavianum was built in the 1620s for Uppsala University. The Anatomical Theatre with its crowning cupola, which gives the building its characteristic profile, was added in 1663. As the University's oldest preserved building, Gustavianum is an attraction in itself, but in 1997 it acquired a new function as home for the recently established University Museum. Since then, objects from the University's historical collections have been displayed in Gustavianum. However, after nearly three decades, the time has come for a fresh start.

As Uppsala University Museum, Gustavianum is responsible for a magnificent cultural heritage. The University

has developed extensive collections over the centuries: objects from the ancient civilisations of Egypt and the Mediterranean regions; archaeological and historical objects from the Nordic countries; extensive collections of art and coins; scores of scientific instruments – and much more. In order to create the best possible conditions for displaying these treasures in the future, the building is undergoing extensive renovation. In the summer of 2024, the new Gustavianum will open its doors!





A world-class university museum

A series of newly produced exhibitions showcases a wide selection of objects from the University's outstanding collections. The historic building's architectural qualities, new exhibitions and modern museum technology combine to offer visitors a completely new experience of the Museum and of the University's rich cultural heritage. In the new Gustavianum, visitors encounter a world-class university museum.

An important part of the renovation involves improving the indoor climate in the exhibition galleries. The application of modern technology will allow the levels of light, humidity and temperature to be maintained at

optimal levels for the exhibited objects. In this way, the collections can be displayed without endangering their preservation. The advanced museum climate control also makes it possible for more of the University's most fragile and unique objects, which have previously been kept in storage, to be put on display in Gustavianum.

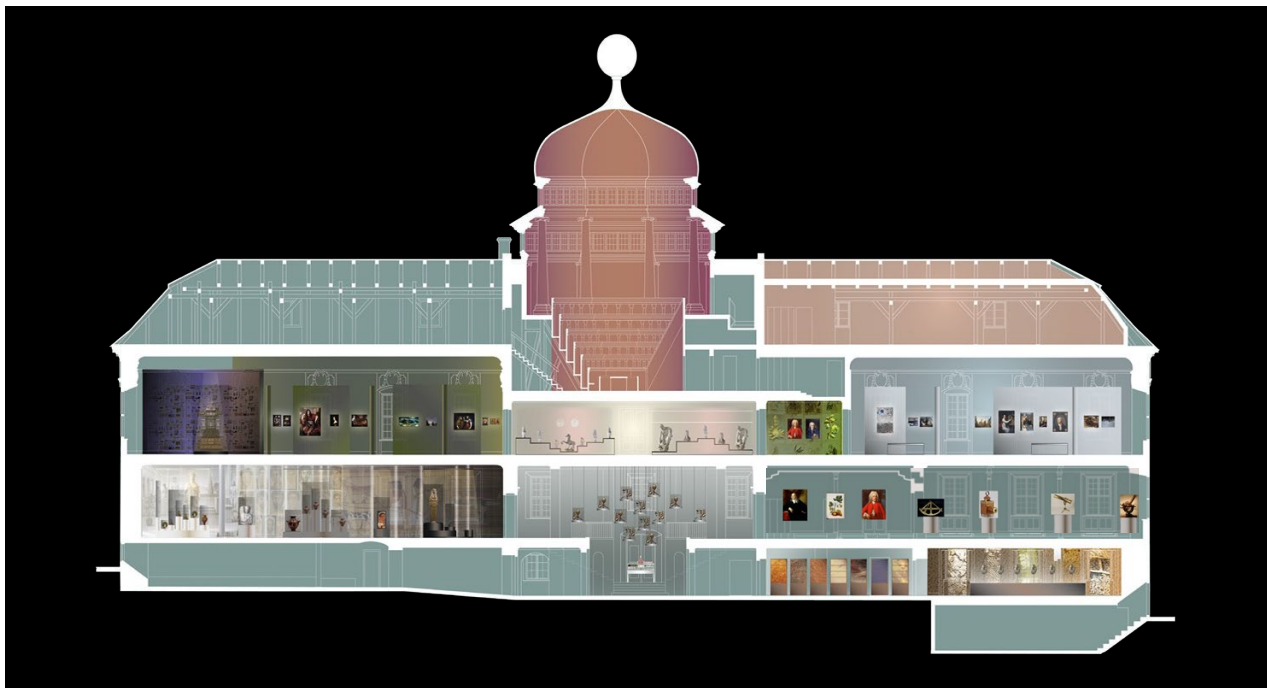


The University's treasure chamber

As a result of the University's activities over the centuries of its existence – in classrooms and laboratories, during expeditions and excavations, through donations and purchases – the objects in the various collections have contributed to the teaching, research and knowledge-building that have taken place at the University. The individual collections and their objects document different aspects of human history, but together they also narrate the University's history. The University can be seen as the hub around which the various collections revolve.

One of Gustavianum's most famous objects is the Art Cabinet from Augsburg, which was donated to Gustavus

Adolphus, King of Sweden, in 1632. The Cabinet, with the thousand objects it contains, is the only one of its kind to survive with its collections of objects and curiosities preserved intact. In the development of the new museum, the Augsburg Cabinet has served as a metaphor and source of inspiration for the new exhibitions. In a similar way to the Art Cabinet with its innumerable doors, drawers and hidden spaces containing objects from all corners of the Earth, Gustavianum's new exhibition spaces invite exploration of hidden worlds, works of art, amazing objects and distant eras. Like the Art Cabinet, Gustavianum is a treasure chamber of objects to explore and experience.



New exhibitions

Gustavianum's mission as Uppsala University Museum is to be a space for communication between the University and society at large. Thus, the aim with the new exhibitions is to offer to a wide audience a series of inspiring, entertaining and educational encounters with the unique objects and the many fascinating stories they carry. These encounters are rooted in new knowledge about the collections that has been created at the University.

In the exhibitions, the stories about the objects are conveyed in different ways – through both exhibition texts and digital techniques. An important feature of the exhibitions is a long series of 'microstories', where the University's researchers contribute through texts, audio guides and printed catalogues. The idea of a mu-

seum filled with such micro-stories is to let the voices of individual researchers, as well as the unique objects themselves, speak. The objects bear witness to historical events; they illustrate the development of arts, sciences, technology and crafts; they tell us how people's living conditions have changed, about social contexts, about religious beliefs and about existential experiences. Through a wealth of stories attached to the individual objects, their unique histories are highlighted. The exhibition spaces thus contain a diversity of stories, which convey nuances, details and historical complexities from different perspectives. At the same time, these micro-stories also encompass broader contexts, viewed through the lens of the specific object.



Before the Vikings

On the entrance floor, the visitor encounters the first exhibition. Unique objects from the Museum's collection of finds from the burial fields at Valsgärde, near Uppsala, are displayed here. The graves are mostly from the Vendel Period, of the late Iron Age, which preceded the Viking Period. They were first excavated by archaeologists from Uppsala University in the 1920s. Helmets, weapons, jewellery and cult objects, among other things, are displayed in an enticing presentation.

The exhibition is based on recent developments in understanding the transition from the Vendel Period to the Viking Period, and new ways of following continuities in the culture and societies that evolved between the 6th and 11th centuries. Drawing upon the latest research on these eventful centuries, the exhibition provides fresh insights into the burial traditions, material culture, international contacts and religious beliefs of this time.





The Mediterranean region and the Nile Valley

This first floor exhibition contains a rich selection of objects from the cultures that developed around the Mediterranean in classical antiquity and from Ancient Egypt in the Nile Valley. The exhibition includes sarcophagi and other objects that were part of the 'Victoria Museum', a display that previously occupied this space. In the new presentation of the collections, the visitor can

follow different routes – via Ancient Egypt or via the ancient cultures of the Greeks and Romans. Both exhibition routes lead to a final section where these civilizations are united in a common Mediterranean culture during the Hellenistic Period.



History of the University and history of science

An exhibition about the University's own history, from its foundation in 1477 until the present day, is also found on the first floor. A concise presentation takes the visitor on a five-hundred-year journey through documents, objects and images. In the next room, Auditorium Minus, the history of science is explored in more depth through a wide selection of instruments and objects used in research and teaching at the University over several centu-

ries. Auditorium Minus will also function as a space for lectures, talks and a range of public events. In an adjacent room, visitors can learn about current research at the University through films and digital presentations.



The University Art Collection and Coin Cabinet

Uppsala University owns one of Sweden's largest art collections, but this has previously only been accessible to the public to a limited extent. One of the features of the new Gustavianum is that works of art from the University's collections have been given a prominent place: a selection of important pieces from the Middle Ages to the 20th century is displayed on the second floor. The famous Augsburg Art Cabinet also occupies

a central position on this floor. Next to the Cabinet, visitors can study hundreds of objects and curiosities of human and natural origin that accompanied the Cabinet from Germany to Sweden in the 1630s. On the same floor, another room is dedicated to the University Coin Cabinet – also one of the foremost collections of its kind in Sweden.



Gustavianum and the Anatomical Theatre

An important part of the experience of visiting Gustavianum continues to be the building itself. As the University's oldest preserved building, Gustavianum has great architectural and cultural-historical value. Alterations to the fabric of the building in connection with the renovation are therefore limited and carefully monitored by building historians and the National Heritage Board. All additions to the building, as well as the new exhibitions, are carefully adapted to interact aesthetically with

the existing architecture and its characteristic elements – staircases, wrought iron railings, room shapes, doors, decor and other details. One of the building's major attractions is the Anatomical Theatre, created by Olof Rudbeck the Elder in the 1660s. The Anatomical Theatre, situated just under the cupola-shaped roof of the building, is in its own right a first-class attraction and provides the visitor with a grand finale to their journey through the museum.



Gustavianum as a stage for contemporary issues

Gustavianum is thus a place where the University's unique historical collections, together with the University's continuing research and knowledge-gathering, can communicate with the surrounding society.

In addition to displaying historical objects, the Museum also aspires to be a meeting place for conversations about important current issues, research and science. Gustavianum's public activities therefore include programmes, theme days, lectures and temporary exhibitions with

a focus on the present – where new research and new knowledge can be discussed and debated with a historical perspective. The Museum's ambition is to be an important arena for such conversations – a gathering point for the entire University where students, teachers and researchers from various departments, faculties and projects meet a wider audience for discussions about the pressing issues of our own time – and about the role of science in the present and the future.



A modern museum in an old building

In the new Gustavianum, the public areas are larger, while better use is made of the building's possibilities and layout. Here, visitors encounter the collections in new and attractive exhibitions, where the objects are presented in a new light, based on new knowledge and recent research. Additionally there is a new visitor reception and improved accessibility facilitates movement around the building. A new main entrance from University Park leads into the reception and shop, from where visitors can easily find their way to the cloakroom, toilets, stairwell and lift. A new signage system facilitates navigation through the building and to the various exhibitions.

An important part of the renovation involves improving the Museum's technical infrastructure. New and advanced systems for climate control, lighting and digital features create a modern exhibition environment with expanded opportunities to display the collections. Air conditioning of the exhibition rooms means that humidity and temperature can be controlled and adjusted to guidelines that follow modern and international museum standards. This allows more fragile objects from the collections to be displayed and creates opportunities to borrow objects from other museums for temporary exhibitions. The new technology allows Gustavianum to become a modern museum in an old building.



The renovation of Gustavianum is being carried out by the National Property Board in partnership with Uppsala University.

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