

MUSEUM DE LAKENHAL

PRESS RELEASE

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King opens renewed Museum De Lakenhal in Leiden

His Majesty the King will open the renewed Museum De Lakenhal in Leiden on Wednesday afternoon, 19 June 2019. After over two years of restoration and expansion, the museum now has a new wing offering space for temporary exhibitions. The permanent collection of visual arts, history and crafts from the sixteenth century to the present day can be seen permanently from the opening onwards. Following the Royal Opening, Museum De Lakenhal will be returned to the public with a four-day opening festival from 20 to 23 June.

Since 1874, the city museum has been located in the historic Laecken Halle, which dates from 1640. This was previously an inspection hall for the renowned Leiden cloth, a woollen fabric that was traded across the world. The restoration means that the 17th-century palatial town house can now be admired again in all its glory. Famous masterpieces to be exhibited after the restored museum's reopening include: 'The Last Judgement' (approximately 1526-27) by Lucas van Leyden, 'A Pedlar Selling Spectacles' (approximately 1624) by Rembrandt van Rijn and 'Contra Composition VII' (1924) by Theo van Doesburg. The new exhibition halls offer space for contemporary photography, including Belgian photographer Karin Borghouts, who recorded the museum's restoration and expansion in expansive still life images. And a photo series by visual artist Marjan Teeuwen presents the historic installation 'Verwoest Huis Leiden' (2016).

Programme with the King

During a tour of the museum, the King will be shown the Nieuw Leids Laken, which has been developed by five contemporary designers and artists using old Leiden crafts and new techniques. The King will also pause by the masterpiece 'The Last Judgement' (approximately 1526-27) by Lucas van Leyden, the exhibit of a collection of works around The Siege and Relief of Leiden and the brand-new educational studio, where a school class will then be at work.

Present and past

Museum De Lakenhal would like as many people as possible to view Leiden's past with fresh eyes. The beautifully restored museum complex houses a rich variety of visual arts, crafts and history exhibits, based on seven core narratives. Eleven contemporary artists and designers were commissioned to make radical changes to the building in the context of the restoration and expansion. For instance, in cooperation with partner KEIM Mineraalverven, Maarten Kolk and Guus Kusters designed a 'Rembrand palette' using 17th-century pigments for all exhibition halls where collection is on show, and Ilja Leonard Pfeiffer wrote a poem about the passage of time.

Innovative architecture

The renovated museum is a carefully orchestrated 'Gesamtkunstwerk', which came about through intense collaboration with the team of architects. The restoration was led by the internationally renowned London firm of Julian Harrap Architects, working in the Netherlands for the first time. The new building and the complete interior design were developed by the young and talented architectural combination Happel Cornelisse Verhoeven from Rotterdam. The innovative attention to craftsmanship, the special use of materials and a significant attention to detail are all characteristic features.

Inclusive museum

From the festive reopening, Museum De Lakenhal will be an inclusive, welcoming museum in which everyone is welcome, irrespective of age, cultural or social background or impairment. The museum is also adopting an innovative approach to the world outside its walls via the L@kenhal app, which enables a contemporary visitor experience that switches seamlessly between the physical and online museum.

Opening festival

The restored Museum De Lakenhal is open to everyone from 20 June. Entrance is free between 20 and 23 June during a lively opening festival with a special programme full of Leiden-based surprises. The full programme is available on www.lakenhal.nl.

About Museum De Lakenhal

Museum De Lakenhal is the visual arts, history and crafts museum of the city of Leiden. The city's illustrious past is highlighted in seven collection presentations, including The Cradle of the Golden Age, Leiden University City, The Siege and Relief of Leiden, and Seven Centuries of 'Leids Laken'. The internationally renowned collection contains numerous highlights such as Lucas van Leyden's 'Last Judgment' (approximately 1526-27), beautifully stained glass, and paintings by Rembrandt and contemporaries. Since 1874 the museum has been located in a monumental 17th-century hall for woollen fabrics, carefully restored in 2017-2019 and expanded with modern architecture. The unique encounters between past and present that occur here make Museum De Lakenhal a source of inspiration for all!

More information | not for publication

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