

Blocking period until 17 October 2006, 11 o'clock

The Bode-Museum

On 21 October 2006 the Bode-Museum – formerly the Kaiser Friedrich Museum – will reopen its doors to the public. During the past nearly eight and a half years, the building has undergone a comprehensive interior and exterior renovation. Because of this, this impressive monument of German museum culture has been able to regain all its beauty and dignity.

The architects **Christoph Fischer, Berlin** and **Heinz Tesar, Vienna** have succeeded in executing the renovation according to strict principles of monument protection combined with an equally cautious modernisation. While the sandstone facades underwent a gentle cleaning, the two domes with their copper-covered caps have received their original form once again.

The renovation also led to a considerable expansion of the exhibition surface, because rooms in the basement formerly used as depots could be gained for this purpose. Two new staircases now connect three storey levels on which the artworks of the Museum of Byzantine Art, the Sculpture Collection and the Numismatic Collection – completed by precious paintings and treasures of applied art - are exhibited on 6600m² in 66 rooms of differing architectonic styles. In the future, the Archaeological Promenade will begin in the basement under the Small Dome Hall, connecting the Bode-Museum with the neighbouring buildings of the Museum Island.

Large halls flooded with light and atmospheric cabinets with original embedded features such as Renaissance covers, portals, door frames, fireplaces, wall fountains and coats-of-arms determine the character of the building, returning to the artworks some of the atmosphere and freedom in which they once flourished. After all, from the very beginning, many of the rooms of the Bode-Museum were themselves part of changing exhibiting concepts and constantly present in their unique effect.

The Bode-Museum bears significant witness to the architecture of the late period of Historicism; its architect, Ernst Eberhard von Ihne, was unjustifiably chided as "court architect" for a long time. The impressive gesture with which visitors are received in the Large Dome Hall, allowing them to forget at first that they have just entered a museum, is itself original. Other museums of the 19th and 20th centuries can also impress their visitors with very imposing staircases, but this one does indeed have a special touch. With the galvanic sculptural replica of the great electors, Andreas Schlüter's masterpiece in the centre of the hall and the portrait medallions of Prussian kings on the main pillars, the visitor is emphatically reminded of the rulers of the House of Hohenzoller whom we thank for the expansion of art collections in Brandenburg-Prussia, the idea of a "Museum Island" in the centre of Berlin and ultimately the construction of the former Kaiser Friedrich Museum.

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The triangular foundation of the Bode-Museum is due to the sharply pointed site of the island where the Spree River and *Kupfergraben* come together. The architect knew how to make the most of this: he grouped the exhibition rooms and the management wing round a central axis and five inner courtyards. The "main axis" runs through the building a like a spine, forming a series consisting of the Large Dome Hall, the Kamecke Hall, Basilica and Small Dome Hall, dividing it into two halves in which the actual exhibition rooms are found. The Kamecke Hall, a long extended, bright connecting room, allows for a view into the Basilica from afar, greeting visitors with four significant mythological figures by Andreas Schlüter which formerly decorated the roof balustrade of the Villa Kamecke in Dorotheenstadt, destroyed during the Second World War. Finally the Basilica, the room shape of which is clearly based upon Florentine and Venetian hall-churches with its side niches, massive wall patterns, barrel-vault ceilings and an apse, was reconstructed to duplicate its original 1904 appearance. Its style enables it to adequately house typical works such as altars and other pictorial works of the Renaissance. The small stairway, the Small Dome Hall – completely in the style of the Classicism of Friedrich's time – has a particularly solemn tone due to its exhibited statues of Friedrich II and six of his most famous generals, as well as the figures of Venus and Mercury created by Pigalle on the stairway pillars. In the series of halls along the main axis of the museum, the idea and creative will of its spiritual creator, Wilhelm Bode, and the intentions of Kaiser Wilhelm II, the actual building owner, can be most obviously sensed: embedded between the two glorious halls – more or less poles of Prussian confidence – lies the quasi-church at the centre of the building, the actual temple of the arts.

Sculpture Collection and Museum of Byzantine Art

A long period of separation, as well as neglect of the contents and many exhibition provisions, fortunately came to an end for the Byzantine Department and the Sculpture Collection with the reopening of the Bode-Museum. Already with the outbreak of the Second World War, the Berlin Museums had been closed and the artworks prepared for recovery. It can therefore not be sufficiently emphasised that the works of the Museum of Byzantine Art and of the Sculpture Collection have been reunited after 67 years and can be viewed in their original places – and in a fullness and completion that has never been seen before! From the very beginning, it must be remembered, the Kaiser Friedrich Museum suffered under acute shortage of space, since Bode had to accept certain compromises and share the building with other collections. The installation of the German Museum in the north wing of the Pergamon Museum, to which the works of northern alpine painting and sculpture had been moved in 1930, offered better exhibition conditions for the Early Christian-Byzantine Collection and the works of Italian art only for a short period of time. After the Second World War, things looked still worse. Since the roofs had been almost completely damaged, the rooms in the upper storey could only be renovated in succession, over a long period of time and opened for the Gemäldegalerie - Old Master Paintings. The building was threatened with

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demolition for a short time in 1948 anyway; an expert opinion of that time seriously recommended demolition because at least this part of Berlin could be freed of its "petrification." The negative evaluation, indeed contempt for Wilhelm-period Historicism lasted a long time and also left traces within the Bode-Museum that could only be finally wiped out through the overall renovation. Thus the sandstone pilasters and structural elements of the Basilica have been repeatedly painted over, the tile floors in the main storey were covered over with grey linoleum during the 1950s, and the Renaissance-like wooden ceilings were rendered unrecognisable by oil paint. Attempts at "modernising" the building usually failed due to the limited material and financial possibilities during the post-war period in the GDR. Still, there was something positive about this, for in this way a great deal of the original substance was preserved.

Five collections have occasionally had to share the limited exhibition surfaces of the building: the Museum of Pre-History and Early History, the Egyptian Museum and Papyrus Collection, the Early Christian-Byzantine Collection, the Gemäldegalerie and the Sculpture Collection. The first post-war exhibitions in the 1950s took place with the few remaining resources in painstakingly furnished rooms. It was only with the return in 1957-58 of the works brought primarily to the Soviet Union after 1945 that exhibitions of a high standard could be organised. Nevertheless, important works were missing; the collections remained separated over a period of decades, since significant items were "on the other side" in the western part of the city, in Berlin-Dahlem. With the reunification of the National Museums in Berlin and the State Museums – Foundation of Prussian Cultural Possessions on 3 October 1990, this chapter of German post-war history also ended for the Berlin Museums.

The works on exhibit from the Sculpture Collection and the Museum of Byzantine Art come from Turkey, Greece, Italy, Spain, Germany, France, the Netherlands and England. For the history of sculpture, the period of time for approximately 250 works extends to 1800, from late antiquity to Classicism. The two great cultural regions of the Middle Ages – Byzantium and Western Europe – are, if differently represented in terms of numbers, presented in brotherly union. Thus the Byzantine Department with its late-ancient items simultaneously forms the binding link to the archaeological collections which will, in the future, be exhibited in the Old Museum, the New Museum and the Pergamon Museum in a unique consistency. The sculptures of Romanticism, the Gothic Period, the Renaissance, the Baroque Period and Classicism can be experienced as an overall European cosmos, whereby they are distributed into north and south alpine schools for reasons having to do with the spatial situation of the Bode-Museum.

The Sculpture Collection includes works by important artists including Pisano, Donatello, della Robbia, Verrocchio, Giambologna and Bernini in the Italian department, and Multscher, Erhart, Riemenschneider, Leinberger and Schlüter in the German department. However, art history had to bestow alternative names to many of the most

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outstanding works, or names having to do with the artistic landscape in which they originated. For the area of Byzantine art, the personality of the artist – with some exceptions – plays no role anyway, which is why the object must speak for itself in this case. Thus the selection made serves primarily to sharpen one's view of outstanding artistic quality and uniqueness.

Unlike the painted picture, the freely-standing sculpture is ever-present in its form, in a dominating or even sometimes irritating way. Even an altar shrine and rather half-sculpted elaboration draws the viewer towards it, thereby proving to be a truly corporeal presence requiring communication and contact (although touching is so strictly prohibited in museums!). The distribution of the figures in the individual exhibition rooms may appear haphazard or "museum-like" at first glance, but it is not. The act of installation was directed by the insight that the figures enter into a relationship with each other and with the viewer, and want to communicate with him. Nothing is more damaging to the presence of the figures than a museum room stuffed full of figures.

The mixing of sculptures, paintings, furniture and objects of applied art, fascinating yet sharply criticised during Bode's time - lending the flair of inhabitable rooms to the exhibitions and making art history more comprehensible thanks to the proximity of the various genres - can no longer be realised in this way today. The museum of the 20th century has taken a different course, separating the genres of painting, sculpture and applied art from each other and banishing them in more or less "encyclopaedically" conceived special collections. Still, the Sculpture Collection has, from the very beginning, incorporated a considerable number of pictures from the Gemäldegalerie, as well as objects from the Applied Art Museum, into its conceptual considerations: namely, where the works in the exhibition obviously and clearly complement each other artistically and in terms of content.

The chronological principle has been very intentionally chosen in the series of works described. In the exhibition, the works have been presented according to their artistic origin in widely separated rooms, although the attempt has been made to maintain a chronological succession here as well, leading the visitor by means of a "red thread" through the rooms, as it were.

There are not a lot of written inscriptions on the exhibits – no long texts to read which would only distract from direct observation. The brief introductory comments on the artworks depicted should therefore serve as a model of how one's enjoyment of art can be increased and deepened through knowledge. Lexica on ancient mythology or Christian iconography can be found in any library; bookshops are full of easily readable introductions to art history.

The Bode-Museum presently offers interesting continuing thematic programmes in a media room, concentrating especially on the items of the Bode-Museum and its new exhibitions.

Seite 4 von 11
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Coins and Medals The Exhibition of the Numismatic Collection in the Bode-Museum

The Numismatic Collection, reopened in 2004 as a scholarly institute with a study hall, library and the Great Vault to celebrate the hundredth anniversary of the Bode-Museum – formerly the Kaiser Friedrich Museum – is now returning to the public as an exhibiting museum after decades of provisional agreement. The new permanent collection shows, in four cabinets on the upper storey of the Bode-Museum, coins of antiquity with emphasis on late antiquity, coins of the Middle Ages and modern times as well as medals. Metal steles in the middle of the room present 22 main pieces of the collection. The exhibition offers a panorama of the oldest mass medium of human history still in operation today, organised into one hundred subjects and illustrated by 4,000 objects from ancient Greece, the Roman Empire and the Middle Ages to the Euros of the 21st century.

Nowhere else in Germany can one see such a complete exhibition. The multiplicity of forms and pictorial messages of the coins are shown, as are witnesses of coin minting technique and counterfeiting coins. The coin treasures of various epochs make it clear that coins have always embodied wealth and been hoarded.

Nonetheless, the exhibition is not a representation of the history of money, but has been tailor-made to fit the character of an art museum. Thus, out of the variety of sculptural creation, the medal has been acknowledged as a special form of the round small relief. Alongside the medal incunabula of the 15th and 16th centuries, original models out of wood, stone and wax, treasures of the Baroque and Classicism, the essence and appearance of medals from the Renaissance to the present day are on display.

Acquisitions of the Numismatic Collection since 1990 are presented in a special collection; most of the items on display are gifts to the museum. Information on the exhibits, very limited due to lack of space, is supplemented by an interactive coin catalogue with extensive information, also showing the reverse side of the coins hidden in the glass cupboards. This interactive coin catalogue presents the coins and medals in their historical, art historical and cultural historical context.

Numismatic Collection Medals to Reopen the Bode-Museum

The opening of the Kaiser Friedrich Museum in 1904 has been preserved for posterity with a medal. The reopening of the Bode-Museum - formerly the Kaiser Friedrich Museum – is also being preserved by a medal.

The medal shows the entrance view of the building as seen from the Spree River on the front side. The inscription on the reverse side shows the dates of the construction and renewal. Its diameter is 41 mm.

A small circulation in silver, made possible by a sponsor, will be allocated on the occasion of the reopening to the National Museums in Berlin as an honorary medal. The State Museums will be offering the

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medal to the public in a different metal realisation (nickel silver) starting in November 2006 in the Bode-Museum.

Paintings in the Bode-Museum

The Gemäldegalerie presents itself in the spirit of service and in a complementary sense: it is represented by pictures which are meaningful in relation to works of sculpture for reasons of content and aesthetics. On the other hand, the Gemäldegalerie is pleased to be present at yet another location of the Berlin Museum Landscape besides the Main Building on the Kulturforum, for most of the paintings now shown in the Bode-Museum could not be regularly presented due to lack of space; a good number were restored just for this location.

The colleagues of the Sculpture Collection decided on the basic subdivision of the buildings, as well as which regions and epochs of art were to be exhibited at which location. Together with the custodians of the Gemäldegalerie, they selected works of painting which organically complemented the sculptures. Thus the masterly version painted by Michiel Coxcie after Rogier van der Weyden's monumental *Removal from the Cross* is not only an important bonus, viewed from its lateral position, to the sculptures exhibited with it. It also shows to what extent the basic idea of the colourfully composed sculpture in an altar shrine also fascinated a painter of rank. One of the works shown in the Numismatic Collection illustrates the subject of "the coin:" *The Two Tax Collectors* of Quinten Massys.

The harmony of sculpture and painting finds a particularly sonorous organ tone in the Basilica. Four examples of altar tablets of the Italian Renaissance are presented here with works by, amongst others, the studio of the Florentine della Robbia. Thus the room is given a church-like aura, above and beyond its name. In the area of the High and Late Middle Ages, painted altar tablets, e.g. the large altar piece from the Meadow Church in Soest are also exhibited in connection with sculptures of the same period.

The impressive room-sequence on the main storey of the copper tomb side shows major works of Italian sculpture of the Quattro cento and Quinto cento, completed by portraits by Girolamo da Carpi, Alessandro Allori and Tintoretto. One storey higher, connected with the treasures of the art chamber of the same period, one can see the miniature portrait of Eleonore of Toledo, newly recovered from English possession.

A large Flemish altar picture, the adoration of the shepherds by Jan Erasmus Quellinus, completes the giant Zürn stage; the works in small format by Franz Anton Maulbertsch, Franz Sigrist, Michael Lucas Willmann, Martin Johann Schmidt and Januarius Zick are next to sketches, and Bozzetti is placed next to South German sculptors of the 18th century.

Two intensely colourful pictures of Jean François de Troy with scenes from the myth of the wine-god Bacchus are exhibited together with monumental French sculpture of the Baroque and Rococo; the *Ruin Fantasy* by Hubert Robert sets a counterpoint to these in the same room. Prussian works of the Friedrich period are exhibited in the

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neighbouring room; alongside works of Schadow and his time there are paintings by Christian Bernhardt Rode and Antoine Pesne – the middle classes and the Enlightenment are represented by busts of Kant, Nicolai and Chodowiecki, keeping company with portraits from the hand of Anton Graff.

A special attraction of the exhibition in the Bode-Museum is that the paintings can be perceived differently when complementing works of sculpture then is the case in a gallery devoted only to paintings. The enormous variety of material used in sculpture – marble, sandstone, mounted and non-mounted wood, metals such as bronze, lead and iron, terracotta, ivory, wax, and many others – repeatedly gives the pictures a new environment, with a different and surprising effect each time.

Sculpture cannot be presents In the Gobelin Hall – a room of extreme proportions with surrounding wood panels. Due to its intended use as a place for lectures and assemblies, the Gobelin Hall has been exclusively turned over to the Gemäldegalerie for its exhibits. In accordance with the building's overall architecture and this room in particular, hung intentionally in a manner "appropriate for a palace," the Gemäldegalerie here shows specially selected paintings of the 17th century to the north and south of the Alps, especially Italian and Dutch painting, reaching a climax in the imposing *Crucifixion* of Andrea Vaccaro.

Text excerpts from contributions by:

Arne Effenberger, Director of the Sculpture Collection and the Museum of Byzantine Art

Bernd Kluge, Director of the Numismatic Collection

Bernd Wolfgang Lindemann, Director of the Gemäldegalerie

James Simon
(1851-1932)

By far the greatest Maecenas of the Berlin Museums was the humanistic educated Jewish businessman James Simon. On the occasion of the opening of the Kaiser Friedrich Museum in 1904, today's Bode-Museum, he donated his extensive collection of Italian art to the Berlin Museums. This collection of paintings, sculpture and furniture of the Renaissance built up in close contact with Wilhelm Bode, the main work of which may be considered to be Andrea Mantegna's painting *Mary with Sleeping Child* (today in the Gemäldegalerie - at the Kulturforum), was exhibited in its own cabinet on the upper storey of the Kaiser Friedrich Museum. Its presentation was in imitation of and in accordance with the private atmosphere of Simon's zoological garden/villa. A further endowment of James Simon found its place on the Museum Island in 1918: this was his copious collection of German, French and Spanish art. These items could only be partially exhibited in the Kaiser Friedrich Museum at first; in 1930-34 they could be viewed in their entirety in three rooms in the German Museum then located in the north wing of the Pergamon Museum. The present presentation in the Bode-Museum integrates the works from the collection of James Simon into the respective collection areas and designates their origins.

Seite 7 von 11
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Wilhelm von Bode
(1845-1929)

Wilhelm von Bode was the central figure in the Berlin Museum landscape in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. From 1872 onwards he was in charge of the Gemäldegalerie as a scholarly assistant, and at the same time of the Sculpture Collection as well. In 1885 he became the latter's Director and from 1890 he also directed the Gemäldegalerie; finally, in 1905, he was named General Executive Manager. Wilhelm von Bode succeeded in expanding the Gemäldegalerie and the Sculpture Collection to collections of world ranking. Just a few years after the beginning of his activity at the Berlin Museums, Bode planned a Renaissance Museum of his own for the growing collections. This was realised in the form of the Kaiser Friedrich Museum, opened in 1904 and designed by Eberhard von Ihne, today's Bode-Museum. Bode's conceptual renewal in the presentation of works of art consisted in the addition of decorative pictorial works and furniture which lent the paintings and sculptures a contemporary, effective framework. Thanks to his intuitive eye and phenomenal memory of form, Bode was considered the most important art connoisseur and museum man of his time. His numerous scholarly works, dedicated to small Italian bronzes of the Renaissance and the works Rembrandt, amongst other subjects, are still valid today.

Seite 8 von 11
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Collection History
A Building in Transformation

1904 Five museums were accommodated in the Kaiser Friedrich Museum: on the ground floor, the Numismatic Collection, the newly founded Islamic Department, the Early Christian- Byzantine Collection as well as the German and Italian Sculptures of the Department of the Pictorial Works of the Christian Epochs (today's Sculpture Collection).

The exhibition of the Apsis mosaic from San Michele in Ravenna with "the wholly splendid artificial lighting" was generally emphasised.

The installation of the Mschatta Façade seems to have completely misfired. ("Such extensive building parts do not belong in an art museum, no matter how precious and peculiar the remains of the ancient Sahara palace may be." – Hans Rosenhagen, in: *Der Tag*, 19.10.1904)

1909-10 The new organisation of the Gemäldegalerie is undertaken due to overfilling. The Near Easter Department is provisionally housed in three rooms in the basement.

1917 The exhibition surface of the German Sculpture Collection is expanded in comparison to the Italian plaster casts.

1926 The "Bode Gifts" on his 80th birthday are exhibited on the upper foyer. The re-organisation of the Italian paintings, due to numerous new acquisitions and the latent lack of space, is necessary. Lack of space increasingly hinders the originally planned loose hanging.

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1930 With the opening of the German Museum in the north wing of the new Pergamon Museum, which Bode does not experience, there is a relief and reorganisation of the exhibition. Alongside Old German and Dutch works of the 16th century, the Islamic Department with the Mschatta Façade and Near Eastern Antiquities occupy the new neighbouring building.

1939 The outbreak of World War II on 1 September leads to the immediate closing of all museums.

1949 Since the destruction of the New Museum, the Copperplate Engraving Cabinet is moved, on a makeshift basis, to the rooms of the intact Numismatic Collection in the basement.

1951 Renovated exhibition rooms on the ground floor are used for a special exhibition with Chinese art treasures on the occasion of the 3rd Youth and Student World Festival in Berlin.

1952 The Egyptian Museum and the Museum of Pre-History and Early History find their domicile in the "Museum on the *Kupfergraben*" (the former Kaiser Friedrich Museum) as a result of the destruction during the war.

1953 The Egyptian Museum is opened to the public on the ground floor. There follow exhibition rooms for the Early Christian-Byzantine Collection and renovated rooms on the upper storey, which take in Old German and Dutch paintings. The Copperplate Engraving Cabinet shows variable exhibitions in two rooms. The Museum of Applied Art is also present in two halls with a long-term exhibition "Furniture and Arts and Crafts of the 17th and 18th Centuries."

1954 The Numismatic Collection opens an exhibition on "Coin and Money History from its Origins to the Present Day" in seven former exhibition rooms of the Gemäldegalerie.

1956 Museum is named "Bode-Museum."

1958 198 pictures are returned by the Soviet government. The overall resources of the Gemäldegalerie in the Bode-Museum now consist of approximately 900 paintings.

1959 The Egyptian Museum expands its permanent exhibition with the artworks returned from the Soviet Union. The Early Christian-Byzantine Collection exhibits its show collection in six rooms.

1963 On 2 November the Gemäldegalerie finally also gets back ten of its original rooms, after having temporarily presented its resources in the Pergamon Museum and the Old National Gallery. "European Painting of the 14th-18th Centuries" is shown in three halls and seven cabinets. The Museum of Applied Art moves into Köpenick Castle.

Seite 9 von 11
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1964 On the 60th anniversary of the building, the Museum of Pre-History and Early History opens its first permanent exhibition after the war in the area of the Small Dome.

The Sculpture Collection organises an exhibition in commemorating the 250th anniversary of the death of Andreas Schlüter in the Basilica.

1966 Further exhibition rooms are made available to the Gemäldegalerie on the tenth anniversary of the naming of the Bode-Museum.

1970 The Gemäldegalerie now has eighteen exhibition rooms at its disposal.

1973 The Gemäldegalerie shows a permanent exhibition expanded by two cabinets and an upper lighted hall.

Through the restoration of wooden ceilings, arches and tile floors, the Early Christian-Byzantine Collection attempts to come close to the original room character of the construction by Ernst Eberhard von Ihne. On the occasion of its 150th anniversary, the Egyptian Museum also shows a newly formed exhibition. The original situation has changed: the Large Dome and the next room (so-called "Kamecke Hall") are especially reserved for the works of Schlüter.

1977 Two new rooms with Flemish art of the 17th century are opened in the Gemäldegalerie.

1978 The exhibition surfaces of the Gemäldegalerie are expanded by two halls with Italian painting and sculpture of the 14th and 15th centuries.

1979 The Gemäldegalerie now has a miniature cabinet and a hall with German, French and English paintings of the 17th and 18th centuries at its disposal.

1980 On the occasion of the 150th anniversary of the Museums, the Museum of Pre-History and Early History opens its long-term collection "From Europe's History" in five rooms on the main storey of the Bode-Museum.

1983 Twenty years after the reopening of the permanent exhibition of the Gemäldegalerie, 24 halls and cabinets are now accessible. Pictures from the depot are shown in alternation on the "Easel on the Fireplace." Partial closings take place due to the installation of a new heating system.

1984 The Museum was inaugurated 80 years ago. To celebrate this occasion, the collections are presented in expanded form and/or a new organisation. The Gemäldegalerie shows its works in 25 newly arranged rooms, the exhibition surface of the Sculpture Collection is expanded by four rooms and the Egyptian Museum is presented in a new organisation.

Seite 10 von 11
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1986 The Children's Gallery of the Department of Museum Pedagogy obtains approximately 100 sq metres of exhibition surface and from then on shows varying exhibitions.

1987 The reconstructed building opens with two special exhibitions to celebrate the 750th anniversary of Berlin.

1997 The Gemäldegalerie leaves the Bode-Museum with its special exhibition "Masters of the Sea – Masters of Art: the Dutch Sea-Image in the 17th Century."

1998 The Sculpture Collection presents "Belt Tailors on the Museum Island" until the closing of the Bode-Museum at the end of the year. The collection of the Egyptian Museum departs from the Museum Island in the direction of Charlottenburg.

2004 The centenary of the Museum is the occasion for the reopening of the renovated Numismatic Collection. The large vault is opened for the first time, and it possible to walk through "Prussia's Treasury."

2006 This is the year of the Bode-Museum's planned reopening with the united resources of the Sculpture Collection completed by selected works of the Gemäldegalerie from the Kulturforum and of the Museum of Applied Arts. The Children's Gallery will be located in the basement from now on.

Seite 11 von 11
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