

(Please note: blocking period ends: 17.10.2006, 11am)

Berlin, 17.10.2006

Reopening of Bode-Museum Museum Island, Berlin October 2006

The Bode-Museum, formerly the Kaiser Friedrich Museum, is set to open its doors again to the public on Thursday 19.10 and Friday 20.10. 2006, almost eight years since it closed for extensive refurbishment.

The Bode-Museum houses a number of collections of international importance:

- the Sculpture Collection and the Museum of Byzantine Art
- the Numismatic Collection – the study room and library reopened in October 2004; the Numismatic Collection now has an exhibition extending over 5 rooms
- selected works from the Gemäldegalerie - Old Master Paintings and the Museum of Decorative Arts to round off the imposing inventory on display at the Bode-Museum.

The refurbishment project as a whole was completed at a cost of 152m euros, with 10m euros devoted to fitting out the Museum and preparing the exhibitions. The Bode-Museum has 66 rooms comprising 6,600 m² of exhibition space.

Inauguration ceremony, Tuesday, 17th October 2006, 6pm

attended by

Norbert Lammert

President of the German Parliament
and

Bernd Naumann

Minister for Arts and Culture

Press Conference, Tuesday, 17th October 2006, 11am

Open Days

Thursday, 19th October and Friday, 20th October 2006

10am – 6pm

First day of normal admission: Saturday, 21st October 2006

The Bode-Museum

The Bode-Museum has emerged gleaming from a long period of refurbishment. The building is proud home to the Sculpture Collection, the Museum of Byzantine Art, the Numismatic Collection and approximately 150 works from the Gemäldegalerie - Old Master Paintings. Following the reopening of the *Alte Nationalgalerie* in 2001 the new Bode-Museum marks the second milestone in the completion of the master plan for the reformation of the city's Museum Island.

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Staatliche Museen
zu Berlin
Generaldirektion
Stauffenbergstraße 41
10785 Berlin

Dr. Matthias Henkel
Leiter Öffentlichkeitsarbeit
matthias.henkel@
smb.spk-berlin.de

Anne Schäfer-Junker
Pressekontakt
a.schaefer-junker@
smb.spk-berlin.de

Tel +49(0)30-266-2629
Fax +49(0)30-266-2995

www.smb.museum/presse

www.MuseumShop.de

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After a long planning phase that began as far back as the 1870s what was then the Kaiser Friedrich Museum was eventually built between 1897 and 1904 by Berlin architect Ernst Eberhard von Ihne. Following restoration work that extended intermittently from 1948 to 1986 it was first used to house a number of art collections. In 1956 the building was renamed the Bode-Museum in recognition of the driving force behind its inception, Wilhelm von Bode. It is now set to be reopened in October 2006 after extensive refurbishment reflecting modern museum design considerations and stringent regulations governing listed buildings.

The Museum building was handed over to the Prussian Cultural Heritage Foundation a full year ago following almost seven years of refurbishment under the aegis of the Office of Public Works and Planning. Since then custodians and curators of the National Museums in Berlin have been occupied moving the various collections into the modern exhibition rooms.

In accordance with the original concept the Bode-Museum will once again house the Byzantine and Sculpture Collections and the Numismatic Collection. The Bode ethos will also be reflected in the many paintings stemming from the Gemäldegalerie - Old Master Paintings and a selection of works from the Museum of Decorative Arts. These unique collections are all now on view in this magnificent neo-Baroque monument to Wilhelminian architecture.

The **Sculpture Collection** is one of the largest collections of older sculptures in existence. The earliest exhibits date back to the Brandenburg-Prussian *Kunstammer*, in particular to the works amassed by the Great Elector (1640-1688). Although the smaller sculptures were housed in the Berlin Palace until the *Kunstammer* was dissolved in 1875 a number of larger sculptures were put on display in the *Alte* Museum. Gustav Friedrich Waagen and in particular Wilhelm von Bode began adding to the collection, largely through the acquisition of Italian sculptures. Wilhelm von Bode was keen to create a collection dedicated to the history of European sculpture. The Kaiser Friedrich Museum, conceived as a Renaissance museum and inaugurated in 1904, provided the premises – ground-breaking in their day - for a collection that had already grown considerably. In 1930 the expanding number of exhibits soon led to the collection being split up, north Alpine sculptures moving to the north wing of the new Pergamon Museum in the Deutsches Museum. The partitioning of Berlin after the Second World War had the effect of dividing the Sculpture Collection between premises in the Dahlem district of West Berlin and in the Bode-Museum (East Berlin).

The **Museum of Byzantine Art** boasts a formidable collection of art from the Late Antique and Byzantine periods and was the first of its kind in Germany. It focuses on the art of the Western Roman Empire and the Byzantine Empire between the 3rd and 15th centuries. It also houses an extensive collection of post-Byzantine icons and smaller works of art. The ancient works in the Museum of Byzantine Art span almost all regions of the Mediterranean famous for Antique art, from Rome to the Middle East via Istanbul and the Balkans, charting the western reaches of the Roman Empire, the Byzantine Empire and the countries that inherited the wealth of Byzantine culture. This is the broad canvas from which the unique profile of the Museum has emerged. The art falls into four main categories: late antique sarcophagi and sarcophagus fragments from Rome provide a panoramic view of early Christian iconography while the extensive collection of figurative and ornamental sculpture from the Byzantine region and precious ivories and mosaic icons are a powerful reminder of the high technical and artistic quality of Byzantine court art.

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Dr. Matthias Henkel
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matthias.henkel@
smb.spk-berlin.de

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smb.spk-berlin.de

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Fax +49(0)30-266-2995

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In 2000 the Sculpture Collection and the Museum of Byzantine Art were amalgamated into a single museum.

After decades of partition and division the new exhibitions are now set to be unveiled in their full glory – as united collections of international importance in the Bode-Museum on Berlin's Museum Island.

With its 500,000 exhibits the **Numismatic Collection** is one of the largest numismatic collections on earth. Its reputation stems from the richness and comprehensiveness of its coin series covering the entire history of coinage, from its 7th century BC beginnings in Asia Minor to the coins and medallions of the 21st century. On display in four cabinets on the second floor are approx. 4,000 coins and medallions. There are also individual troves containing over 1,000 coins. The Numismatic Collection serves as a metal chronicle of the history of mankind, from the earliest mints six centuries before Christ to the Euros of the 21st century. An exhibition specially mounted for the reopening of the Museum shows coins acquired since 1990. Numismatic Collection items not on exhibit may be viewed on appointment in the study room in the basement of the Bode-Museum, where numismatology volumes may also be consulted.

Bode-Museum

National Museums in Berlin
Museum Island, Am Kupfergraben, Berlin-Mitte
Open: daily from 10am to 6pm; Thurs. from 10am to 10pm
(subject to change)

Admission:

www.smb.museum/smb/service

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smb.spk-berlin.de](mailto:a.schaefer-junker@smb.spk-berlin.de)

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