

The Deutsches Buch- und Schriftmuseum in the annex building of the German National Library in Leipzig

Its move to the annex building of the German National Library in Leipzig has signalled the start of a new era for the Deutsches Buch- und Schriftmuseum. Air-conditioned storage space, expanded work areas and generously proportioned public areas provide optimum conditions for the preservation, cataloguing and presentation of the stocks.

The new permanent exhibition "Signs - Books - Networks: From Cuneiform to Binary Code" presents a brief cultural history of graphic characters. Three major media innovations in human history - handwriting, book printing with movable characters and digital online worlds - constitute the chronological backbone of the exhibition. Nearly 1,000 exhibits displayed behind tall glass panels allow visitors to explore early written cultures, a wide variety of recording methods, notable inventions, censorship, forms of reading and book design. Mass media, global knowledge worlds and media visions of the future are topic areas designed to encourage visitors to reflect on the prospects for media development in our society.

A separate exhibition room and a display vault are available for staging temporary exhibitions. There is plenty to do in the new museum gallery. This is aimed at younger users aged between 6 and 16, providing them with an opportunity to learn all about writing, books and paper in a more informal environment. Specialist literature and the museum's own book and media collections are held in the modern museum reading room for research, study and practical use.

Guided tours and special events

Guided introductory tours and theme-based discussions are offered to groups visiting the new permanent exhibition. Students and scientists can also book events on specialist topics based on the museum's study collections. The museum has also organised a programme of events entitled "Museum zum Mitmachen" ("The Hands-On Museum") which explores writing, paper, book and media culture in ways which are suitable for schools, or as leisure or family-based activities. To coincide with the public guided tours around the German National Library, the Museum organises a "Family Sunday" at 11 am on the third Sunday every month.

Guided tours, theme-based events and other activities are by appointment only.

Contact

Phone:
Exhibitions, guided tours, events +49 (0)341 2271-324
Museum reading room, library use +49 (0)341 2271-318
Fax +49 (0)341 2271-240
e-Mail dbsm-info@dnb.de

Other information

Opening hours:
Exhibition Area Tuesday to Sunday, 10:00-18:00
Thursday 10:00-20:00
On public holidays (except Mondays) 10:00-18:00
Museum reading room Monday to Saturday, 10:00-18:00

Admission to the Museum is free.

Public transport: Tram lines 2 or 16 and bus line 74 to "Deutsche Nationalbibliothek" stop

Deutsche Nationalbibliothek
Deutsches Buch- und Schriftmuseum
Deutscher Platz 1
04103 Leipzig
www.dnb.de

November 2012
Photos: Klaus-D. Sonntag

GERMAN MUSEUM OF BOOKS AND WRITING



Manuscript with texts about St Elizabeth, Freiburg im Breisgau, completed 1481

The German Museum of Books and Writing of the German National Library

The book has shaped our culture and civilisation like no other medium. For centuries our knowledge about the world and its peoples has been stored, handed down and updated in books. The task of the Deutsches Buch- und Schriftmuseum (German Museum of Books and Writing) is to collect, exhibit and process evidence of book and media history. The main focus of the museum's work is on the book and its myriad aspects: as an ingenious invention and as the product of economic and technical processes, as a social icon and the most important vehicle of culture, as a work of art and as a censored and burned repository of ideas. The main purposes of the museum are to view the book as the sum of its functions even after the transition to the era of digital networks, to focus on the history of writing and paper, and to highlight the production, distribution and reception of books.

The Museum is both a workshop for research into the history of writing, books and paper and also a location which aims to stimulate curiosity, discovery and investigation with its exhibitions and educational programmes.

DEUTSCHES
BUCH- UND
SCHRIFT
MUSEUM
DEUTSCHE
NATIONAL
BIBLIOTHEK

Review: History of the Museum

The Deutsches Buch- und Schriftmuseum of the German National Library – founded in Leipzig in 1884 as Deutsches Buchgewerbemuseum – is the oldest book culture museum in the world, and one of the most important in terms of the breadth and quality of its collections. When Leipzig was chosen as the site for the book museum at the end of the 19th century, this was no coincidence. Thanks to its outstanding achievements and innovations in the field of book and printing craftsmanship – such as the publication of the first daily newspaper in the world (1650), the development of movable music engraving and the Leipzig Book Fair with its centuries-old history – Leipzig already possessed a distinct historical profile as a city of books.

The State of Saxony laid the foundations for the museum's comprehensive collection of books in 1886 by purchasing the 3,000 historical copies of the Dresden tailor, publisher and book collector Heinrich Klemm's extensive collection. The museum and its collection suffered heavy losses in the Second World War: the Deutsches Buchgewerbehaus – home to the museum from 1939 – was razed to the ground in 1943. The most valuable items of the Klemm collection (in storage elsewhere at the time) – manuscripts, incunabula including a 42-line Gutenberg Bible and a valuable collection of book cover and cloth prints – were confiscated by the Soviet occupying force in September 1945. They have been held ever since by the Russian State Library in Moscow. After losing its home in the War, the museum was integrated into the Deutsche Bücherei Leipzig as a means of securing its continued existence. The Unification Treaty of 1990 saw the museum become a department of the German National Library.



Bookseller and poet, copperplate engraving, c. 1800

Holdings

Featuring over one million objects, the collections of the Deutsches Buch- und Schriftmuseum of the German National Library are exceptionally heterogeneous in nature and permit an interdisciplinary approach to book and writing-related issues which also takes the culture, media and communication history contexts into account.

Book collections:

(Klemm Collection, Collection of Art Prints, Bibliothek des Börsenvereins der Deutschen Buchhändler zu Leipzig)
Manuscripts, incunabula, printed works from the 15th to 19th centuries, writing master books, trade fair catalogues, outsize books, book covers, international book art of the 20th/21st centuries, hand press prints, original-graphic portfolios, artist books, dust covers

Archival papers and documents on book history:

Booksellers' business circulars, publishers' correspondence, Göschen collection of letters, Dr. Alphons-Dürr-Stiftung, Kummersches Archiv, Faber & Faber publisher's archive, privileges, publishers' and antiquarian bookshop catalogues

Paper history collections:

Water marks, paper samples, coloured paper, ream prints and wrappers, archive papers and documents on paper history

Graphic collection:

Works from artists, workshops, printers and publishers on book design, illustration, typography, calligraphy, graphic design, bookplates, luxury paper, imperial prints, art prints, printed portraits of booksellers, bookprinters and publishers

Cultural history collection:

Palaeography, writing instruments, devices and machines for graphic techniques, printing, printing forme production and bookbinding; materials for producing and testing paper, early book forms, book sculptures, paper art

Literary estates (including deposits) of scientists, book and type designers:

Axel Bertram, Karl-Heinz Birkner, Hans Heinrich Bockwitz, Dora Doss, Johann Goldfriedrich, Erich Gruner, Bernhard Hartmann, Albert Kapr, Albrecht Kirchhoff, Adolf von Kroener, Hermann Marggraff, Hans Ticha, Walter Tiemann, Jan Tschichold, Hans-Joachim Walch, Karl Theodor and Wisso Weiß, Hans-Peter Willberg, Paul Zimmermann

Picture library:

Photos, films, digital data carriers

Specialist library:

The museum has its own book and writing library containing roughly 80,000 volumes of German and international literature on book research and approx. 200 periodicals. Both historical specialist literature from the 16th century onwards and current research literature is collected and provided for use.

Use

The museum provides specialist information, advice and a modern working environment. The new museum reading room is where the library of German and international literature on book and media culture plus materials from the museum stocks can be accessed for research and study purposes and for practical use. A reference library provides rapid access to the key areas of information.

The book stocks can be ordered via the catalogue of the German National Library at <https://portal.dnb.de>. Acquisitions from 1998 to 2006 can be searched for via an internal catalogue. Local catalogues offer further possibilities for book and media history research. Directories of the bookseller business circulars, of the archive sources on the history of the German book trade and publishing in the 19th and 20th centuries plus incunabula of the Deutsches Buch- und Schriftmuseum can be viewed at www.dnb.de.



Handwritten Koran, North Africa, c. 1900