

PRESS KIT

HELSINKI CITY MUSEUM

NEW HELSINKI CITY MUSEUM

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THE NEW HELSINKI CITY MUSEUM

The Helsinki City Museum opened its flagship museum in the historic Tori quarters in May 2016. The museum is an overall experience combining the milieu, exhibitions and indoor design to a complete, contemporary experience about daily life in the Helsinki of past. The museum gathered over 315 000 visitors in 2016 in only eight months, smashing all previous city museum records.

The grand opening of the new museum was on the 13th of May 2016. After a thorough renovation, five historic buildings and a modern extension were joined to form a unique museum complex. The museum, designed based on a new philosophy of what a museum should be, brings a milieu previously inaccessible to most to use by the citizens.

– We wanted to create an overall experience which starts on the street already, continues into the courtyards and penetrates all rooms, says Museum Director Tiina Merisalo of the Helsinki City Museum. – Access is always free of charge, so we have designed the entire museum, the interior included, as a low-threshold facility. In addition to visiting the exhibitions, you can also pop in to do some shopping, to unwind a bit or to work, for example. The museum also has three beautiful courtyards. The Falkman Courtyard, for example, has only been open to the public on special occasions before.

The Helsinki City Museum is – quite naturally – the world's only museum focusing on Helsinki. The daily life of citizens of the past is reflected both in the exhibitions and in the interior. Different time spheres mix joyfully together in the entrance lobby sofas inspired by styles of various eras from Art Nouveau to the 90s. The large, city-dwelling animal sculptures by artist Jasmin Anoschkin hang around under acorn lamps. Old labels and candy wrappers decorate the coffee tables, and a locker familiar from the set of a 1980s TV game show stands proudly in the corner of an adjoining conference room.

In addition to being admission-free, the museum is also open on every day of the week. We encourage citizens and tourists alike to not only enjoy the exhibitions, but also the many public spaces available for everyone!

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MORE INFORMATION: EXHIBITIONS AND OTHER CONTENT

Smell

Producer of the exhibition Sauli Seppälä, +358 40 334 7001, sauli.seppala@hel.fi

Helsinki Bites

Producer of the exhibition Jari Harju, +358 40 334 7017, jari.harju@hel.fi

Children's Town

Producer of the exhibition Anna Finnilä, +358 40 334 7000, anna.finnila@hel.fi

Time Machine

Producer of Time Machine Sari Katainen, +358 40 173 8276, sari.katainen@hel.fi

AWARDS AND NOMINATIONS

Since its opening in May 2016, the Helsinki City Museum has garnered national and international acclaim.

Museums+Heritage International Award 2017 winner: Museums and Heritage

Museum of the Year 2016: Finnish Museums Association

The Best Place for Kids in Helsinki 2016 award: Svenska Kvinnoförbundet i Sörnäs, LillaLuckan, Ung Martha

New Museum of the Year 2016, Europe nominee: The Leading Culture Destinations Awards

Best Brand Identity and Best Design Silver Award 2016, Vuoden Huiput Best Finnish Design Awards: Grafia

Effie Awards Finland 2016 nominee, Museum launch campaign: The Finnish Association of Marketing, Technology and Creativity

THE PREMISES

HELSINKI CITY MUSEUM

Aleksanterinkatu 16

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OPENING HOURS AND ENTRANCE

Mon–Fri 11:00–19:00, Sat–Sun 11:00–17:00.

Groups of children and students also 9:00–11:00 on weekdays (by appointment).

Entrance to the city museum is always free of charge.

The museum is accessible for persons with reduced mobility.

PREMISES

FIRST FLOOR

- Time Machine
- Lobby: Info booth, toilets, cloakroom, sofa set over the decades, Timeline, city-dwelling animal sculptures, room for sitting/unwinding/doing stuff
- Café El Fant (not operated by the museum)
- The Kasari 80s room
- Picture Browsery
- Children's Town
- Multi-functional spaces Falkman Wing and Falkman Corner
- Museum Shop
- Courtyards: Sederholm Courtyard, Govinius Courtyard and Falkman Courtyard

SECOND FLOOR

- Falkman Atelier
- Children's Town
- Exhibition space: Helsinki Bites

FOURTH FLOOR

- Lounge
- Exhibition space: Smell (end 9 April 2017)

THE INTERIOR AS A COMPLETE EXPERIENCE

An inviting museum interior was a priority when designing the New City Museum, which plays with memories about the city's everyday life. The result is a complete experience.

Can a set of sofas take you on a journey into the past? What kinds of emotions does a teenybopper magazine poster from the 1980s or a soft drink label from the 1920s arouse? The interior design of the new Helsinki City Museum, situated in the Tori Quarters at the corner of the Senate Square, set out from the idea that in a museum with free entry, the focus must be extended from the exhibitions to other premises as well. Interior architecture office Kakadu from Helsinki was selected to design the interior, due to their proven track record and innovative approaches.

– Traditionally, the space hierarchy in museums is quite rigid: there are exhibition facilities and a lobby, shop and café. People come to the museum to see exhibitions and everything else is less important. We wanted the Helsinki City Museum to provide a total experience that starts from the street, continues to the courtyards and extends through all premises, says reform rector **Ulla Teräs** from Helsinki City Museum. – The aim was to create a new type of public, open space that would allow for different encounters and that people could use for their own purposes. We also wanted to introduce urban history in facilities other than the actual exhibitions, Teräs continues.

THE INTERIOR INVITES TO SHARE STORIES FROM HELSINKI

At Helsinki City Museum, the everyday life of the past in Helsinki takes the form of inviting lounges and meeting places. The actual museum consists of buildings from different periods—five old buildings and one new building. The interior, too, is a mixture of elements from different decades.

– This has been a fantastically interesting assignment. There are a wealth of premises in the complex, which consists of five buildings, all with a fascinating past, so we have had a lot to get ideas from, says **Milka Tulin** from Kakadu. In fact, Kakadu has introduced many elements to the interior that may arouse some vivid memories.

The set of sofas in the entrance lobby, for example, takes you from Art Nouveau to the 90s and invites you to sit in an elegant Functionalism-style chair or in a 1950s armchair. Labels and wrappers from the museum's collections have been recreated in coffee table covers to match each period. You can also sit with urban animals in the lobby where a rabbit and his friends are hanging out under acorn lamps. The animal sculptures were made by artist **Jasmin Anoschkin**. Creative new use was made of genuine old items in the furniture. For example, old doors have been used as a sales desk and shelves in the museum shop, and intermediate walls have been built out of old glass negatives.

The city stories are also told by the moving timeline build on the lobby wall, which incorporates real objects and it moves the visitor through the major points in the history of the city of Helsinki in just few minutes.

DISTINCT ATMOSPHERES IN PREMISES AVAILABLE FOR RENT

There are many premises in the museum that can be rented by anyone. With its overhead projectors and flamingo mirrors, the Kasari 80s room, which can be used for different types of meetings and festivities, creates a complete 1980s emotional experience.

The Falkman premises in the midst of the museum complex provide a wildly different, elegant experience: The Falkman Atelier, which was designed as the study of Severin Falkman in the 1880s is a bohemian meeting place with its ornamental fireplaces and Pompeii-red walls. A more modern artist atmosphere is conveyed in the Falkman Wing, which can be used for workshops and other, smaller events.

The fixed furnishings in the museum have been built by Stara, the furnishings of the Museum shop by Carpenters Heinonen and the set of sofas by upholsterers Palttina and Woods.

MORE INFORMATION

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HISTORICAL LAYERS OF ARCHITECTURE

The Helsinki City Museum on the corner of the Senate Square combines five old buildings with one new, conjoining building into a cross-section of historical Helsinki.

The renovation of the museum located in the Tori Quarters of the historical city centre started in summer 2014. The task of combining the five buildings from different eras into a functional museum complex was assigned to Davidsson Tarkela Architects. The result is a unique milieu merging together the old and new sections.

The buildings of the block date from the 1750s to the 1920s. One 1960s building inside the block, which was in poor condition, was demolished and replaced by a new section with lifts, providing improved access to the museum. The facade of the new building is coated with pre-patinated copper mesh. – The material will darken and turn greener over time. I find a temporal dimension such as this especially suitable for a museum, says Aki Davidsson, who was the main designer of the museum together with Hannele Storgårds.

The buildings are connected in a way that mixes the different eras and creates a multitude of different spaces, corners and atmospheres in the museum. The 'wow' element of the museum is in the plentiful heart-warming details. There is a wonderful view over the rooftops towards the Helsinki Cathedral, and the oldest blocks of Helsinki open up from a new perspective.

FROM AN OFFICE SPACE TO A FUNCTIONAL MUSEUM

The condition of the buildings of the future museum block varied a lot before the renovation. They had mainly been used as offices, and partition walls had been built to turn the spacious halls into cubicles.

– Creating clear, useful spaces in a complex consisting of several buildings was an interesting challenge, especially considering that they would need to highlight the exhibitions, says Aki Davidsson.

New spaces and routes have been opened up in the renovation, and technology allowing modern exhibition solutions has been built inside walls and ceilings. The original hierarchy of spaces was partially restored, creating spacious exhibition halls for the museum.

Details from different eras have been preserved in all the buildings. Visitors get to experience the joy of discovery when they find a banister from the 1920s, an archway clad with bricks in the 1960s or a courtyard milieu from the end of the 19th century. The preservation of the old is also reflected in the new solutions. On the Katariinankatu side, for example, street-level premises have been restored into business premises, with door openings restored to their original locations. The extensive renovation of the 1960s has been conserved in the staircase of the museum's highest floors in particular. The constructor was HKR-Rakennuttaja and the main contractor Pylon Rakennus Oy. Tuula Jeker worked as the project architect.

The larger renewal project of the historical centre of Helsinki and its Tori (Market) Quarters was partly responsible for the City Museum's relocation. The area between Market Square and Senate Square was developed to be a new and diverse platform for city life, business, events and experimental culture. The historical buildings used for administration offices for over 40 years were fully renovated, opening up new spaces for new businesses, Helsinki-dwellers and travellers alike. Already, Tori Quarters is home for approximately 50 different businesses: restaurants, coffee shops, design, concept stores and culture.

MORE INFORMATION

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YEARS OF CONSTRUCTION OF THE MUSEUM COMPLEX BUILDINGS

Sederholm House 1757

Katariinankatu 3, 1761 (elevated to three stories in 1892)

Remander House 1814

Falkman House 1829, east wing 1860, elevation of the west wing 1869, and Atelier 1872

White Hall building 1925

New building 2016

AN EMOTIONAL VISUAL IDENTITY

The museum's visual identity is a playful combination of colours and fonts familiar from old public transport tickets, advertisements and posters. The visuals were created by design agency Werklig.

As the physical museum itself focuses on the personal experiences and everyday lives of the people in Helsinki, so has to its visual identity reflect that philosophy. – We are building an easy-to-approach, free-entrance museum that appeals to the visitors' emotions. We wanted the visual identity of the new museum to emphasise this, says **Tove Vesterbacka**, *master of propaganda* at the Helsinki City Museum.

The cooperation between Helsinki City Museum and Werklig started in summer 2015 and continued intensely throughout the autumn. The designers at Werklig were inspired by the gems in the museum's collections, such as old public transport tickets, soirée programmes, century-old dance tickets and advertisements for various events.

The colours and typography of the new identity are based on said authentic fragments of the past. The new identity is rich in colour, but most of the applications are duotone, reflecting the old prints that inspired the design. Werklig created three unique typefaces for the museum. Falkman, Signe and Govinius each have their own way of exhibiting the living history of Helsinki that defy strict definitions of time and era. The colours and typography of the new visual identity are also used in the interior design of the museum. For example, the designs of the toilet, lift and café signs are based on the Falkman font. The new identity is on display on the museum website, built by Digital Agency Byroo.

The museum's new logo by Werklig— a capital H with an inset heart—captures the museum's vision; *everyone has the opportunity to fall in love with Helsinki*. – We wanted to shift the focus from the museum to Helsinki and its residents, Tove Vesterbacka says. – Everything irrelevant has been left out. This is a strong and simple image that even a five-year-old can remember and draw – and that is a proven fact!

MORE INFORMATION

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MUSEUM SHOP AND OTHER SERVICES

Dive into the world of old photographs in the Museum Shop! A vast selection of postcards, books and souvenirs guarantees that visitors will have plenty of memories to remember Helsinki by. You can now also buy some of the most popular books in the museum's online store.

Visit the Picture Browser during the museum's opening hours to browse through a vast collection of photographs. Traditional photo archive services are available by appointment. Currently, the museum's collections are also available at hkm.finna.fi, with more than 40,000 web-quality images published for free use.

The City Museum also rents its distinctive spaces for meetings and parties. You can, for example, give an overhead projector lecture in the Kasari 80s space, or rent one of the historical courtyards for your party.

Guided tours are arranged in Finnish every Sunday at 2 p.m. and on the first Thursday of the month at 5 p.m. Please see the museum website for the times of guided tours in Swedish and English. The museum also has an extensive range of services for schools, educational institutions and day-care centres. More information is available on the museum's web site.

A CITIZENS' MUSEUM

The renewal process has been an opportunity for the museum to reflect on its role in the changing city. Joint activity with city residents has been the chosen method from the beginning and it has continued during the museum's opening year.

The communal process has evoked a number of new ideas for how the museum could enrich citizens' lives. At the same time, the museum has received feedback on what works and what doesn't.

– We have been interested to hear, for example, where the city residents spend their free time and what kinds of places and spaces they return to time and time again, explains the Helsinki City Museum's project manager Ulla Teräs.

City residents and their thoughts on the significance of the museum have been heard in discussions and interviews and through joint activities. "We have spent a lot of time with our customers and tried to create space for dialogue and communication between the museum workers and city residents," says Ulla Teräs.

City residents have had the opportunity, for example, to rummage through the museum's million Helsinki-themed photographs and put together an exhibition based on the collection. They have also been invited to sense the city space and its sound landscape with guidance from a community artist. Questions that were put through a customer panel online have received hundreds of answers.

Overall, it would seem that the process and the new museum itself have been a success; from the opening in May, the museum gathered over 315 thousand visitors in 2016, smashing all previous city museum records. The early — traditionally slow museum-going — months of 2017 also witnessed tremendous growth from previous years.

HELSINKI BITES

The Helsinki Bites exhibition dives into the past of Helsinki, bringing up common memories about the city's history.

"I remember that, that's just what we used to have!" many visitors may exclaim in the Helsinki Bites exhibition, one of the opening exhibitions of the new Helsinki City Museum. History comes near us, allowing the visitor to experience the past of the city with all of their senses in many places.

A 1950s home was built for the exhibition, complete with selected items from the era. Visitors can laze around in a steel string bed and browse through an old catalogue. The favourite shows of the time play on the radio. When you turn the knob, you can listen to Uncle Markus telling stories to children or the "Kankkulan Kaivolla" comedy show. The big music stars of the era, such as Olavi Virta and Vieno Kekkonen, sing hits from the era.

The exhibition also showcases the miniature model of Helsinki of 1878, a long-time favourite the public hasn't seen in decades. The City Museum ordered the model in the 1920s, and it was exhibited in the Hakasalmi Villa until the 1980s. It is now reinstated in a prime position in the new museum.

The model shows the Katajanokka district before the time of Art Nouveau houses, largely unconstructed. Just a couple of wooden shacks dot the cape, with the Uspenski Cathedral watching over it. On the other hand, the buildings of the new Helsinki City Museum located at the corner of the Senate Square are shown pretty much as they are now.

FIND YOUR OWN HELSINKI

- It has been our goal that each visitor would find something familiar and personal in the exhibition, says Jari Harju, producer. We have therefore been seeking experiences and memories that bring the citizens of Helsinki together. A favourite part of the exhibit is the panoramic room, where visitors can examine wall-sized panoramas of different parts of Helsinki.

As is concurrent with the philosophy of the new Helsinki City Museum, citizens have participated intensively in the planning of Helsinki Bites. The cooperation will continue, as one section of the exhibition will be renewed by some citizens' group on a regular basis. The first one on display is the street skateboarding community of Helsinki, taking the visitor to familiar places, but with a new and surprising angle.

MORE INFORMATION

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SMELL

What does the nose remember? What does Helsinki smell like? Can a museum experience be built on a single smell?

The concept of the museum's fourth-floor space involves expanding the idea of a museum with content that inspires emotions and that can be, for instance, exhibitions or events—or as in this case, experiences. The fourth floor is also about experimenting. In many museums, scents have been used as a part of an exhibition or work of art, but *Smell* tests whether a museum experience can be built entirely on one smell.

SMELLS EVOKE EMOTIONS

Unlike other senses, information collected as smells by the nose goes directly to the most primitive part of the brain, the emotion and memory centre. A passing smell sensation may take you instantly back through the years or trigger a riot of emotions. People sense and interpret smells in different ways. Scents also have a subconscious effect and power over people's everyday life—over choosing a partner, for instance.

When the museum asked its customer panel in March 2015 what Helsinki smells like, it received more than 200 smell memories in response. The volume and thoroughness of the responses indicate how strong smell-related recollections are. The respondents described, for instance, the scent of coffee wafting from the roastery in Vallila, the aroma of asphalt on a sweltering day, wet parks in the spring, the reek of urine near the railway station as well as the smell of exhaust gas and sand on the streets in the suburbs. The responses were utilised when designing *Smell*.

SMELL GIVES ROOM FOR MEMORIES

Smell dedicates the fourth floor of the museum to smells that describe Helsinki and to listening to your own memories. The leading role is played by a Helsinki-related scent, changing weekly throughout the autumn and the winter. "We won't reveal in advance what the scent in the space refers to as we want visitors to be able to form associations as freely as possible," says producer Sauli Seppälä of Helsinki City Museum.

In *Smell's* calming environment, urban stimuli are absent. When one sense is emphasised and other senses play a smaller role, there is room for thoughts emerging from your mind. Lighting designed by Kristian Palmu highlights the atmosphere of concentration and the open space in which you can focus on associations inspired by your sense of smell—different for different people. The scents have been designed Max Perttula, "Finland's only perfumer".

During *Smell*, the museum collects smell memories as well as emotions evoked by the smells in the exhibition space.

Please note that people sensitive to scents may feel uncomfortable on the fourth floor of the museum.

MORE INFORMATION

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CHILDREN S TOWN

In Children's Town, Helsinki's past is illustrated by means of play and activities.

Children's Town was opened in the Sederholm House near the Senate Square November 2012 for the first time. When it closed because of the renovation of the museum block in April 2014, it had exceeded all expectations and gathered no less than 110,000 visitors. Many regular customers have been eagerly awaiting the completion of the renovation. The renewed family favourite opened again on 13 May 2016 as a part of the new Helsinki City Museum.

The best parts of Children's Town are still there after the renovation. You can still study everyday items from the 1970s in Grandma's House and watch the favourite TV shows of the time. Voluntary museum grandmas and grandpas are on duty in Grandma's House in the weekends. The Sederholm shop from the 18th century is available to play in just as it was, and you can just picture the schoolmaster with a pointy stick and a stern face in the *Volksschule* class.

AN EVEN MORE COMPREHENSIVE MUSEUM EXPERIENCE FOR TODDLERS

- In the renewal, we have followed an even more relaxed policy that everything may be touched, says producer of Children's Town, Museum Educator Anna Finnilä of Helsinki City Museum. The museum experience has been planned on the terms of toddlers even more than before. The renewals are based on various customer surveys, interviews, enquiries and observations.

Features of the children's museum include, amongst others, a marine-themed play corner for the youngest visitors as well as several new activity points for playing, reading and resting. There is more and more to study in the premises: the store is more ample than ever, and new role costumes and role cards are available in the theatre. In the school, you can practice your writing skills, using old tools from sandbox to blackboard, and in the childhood room, you can play with cars or decorate the dolls' house with new furniture. Tips and questions inspire children and adults to play together and reflect about how life was in the olden days.

Functional facilities are important for families with children. The city museum's premises with toilets and coat racks are also available for the visitors of Children's Town. The Children's Town also has its own toilet facilities and a comfortable break room for eating a packed lunch, for example. There is a canopy for prams and strollers in the courtyard.

The Exhibition Designer of Children's Town is Harri Tarkka, who is also responsible for the illustrations of the exhibition, inspiring you to join in play and activities.

MORE INFORMATION

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TIME MACHINE

The Helsinki City Museum will whisk visitors away on a time-travelling expedition one hundred years into the past. The Time Machine makes the photographs of famous Helsinki photographer Signe Brander come to life with a little bit of help from new technology. Time travellers can also visit the courtyards and streets of 1960s, 1970s and 1980s Helsinki.

Most of us have probably wished we could sneak a peek into the past to see how people used to live. Now, you can do exactly that and step on board our Time Machine that will whisk you away to visit a very lively and authentic Helsinki, just as the city was a century ago. The Time Machine makes use of a number of technologies, including projection, sound, animation and 3D virtual technologies. Put on the goggles and go!

When we carried out a survey and interviews to find out what point in time people would most like to travel back to, the early 20th century was the overwhelming favourite. Accordingly, we have chosen the early 1900s as our first ever Time Machine era. It was around that time that the Helsinki Board of Antiquities hired Signe Brander, a photographer, to capture images of the city that, by then, was in a state of great flux. The 907 glass negatives she shot between 1907 and 1913 form the basis of the Helsinki City Museum collection.

Brander turned her lens to record the wood-built Helsinki that by then was already giving way to new methods of housebuilding, the city's glorious Art Nouveau tenements as well as the everyday lives of ordinary people as she witnessed them on the city's streets and in private. She photographed everyone—from the washerwomen with their scarved heads and the stylish upper class ladies to the workers, the coachmen, the police, the horses, and especially the children. In the Time Machine, Brander's photos are given a brand new treatment that allows our visitors to step out on to Helsinki's cobbled streets and mingle with the city's residents of yesteryear. Time travellers can also visit the courtyards and streets of 1960s, 1970s and 1980s Helsinki.

MORE INFORMATION

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HELSEXINKI

HelSEXinki is an exhibition about sexuality, gender and sex—and the freedom to choose how to express and realize them. What kind of first-hand experiences do immigrants who identify as being of a non-normative gender have when it comes to the realization of their sexual rights? What about members of rainbow families or persons with disabilities? The exhibition, closely linked with topical themes, challenges the museumgoer to think about whose voice is heard and who has the freedom to be who they really are.

The exhibition opens May 12 2017 on the fourth floor of the Helsinki City Museum.

MORE INFORMATION

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