

The Children's Gallery in the Bode Museum: 1984–2013

The Children's Gallery was founded in 1974 by the Nationalgalerie and the pedagogical department in the Altes Museum. In 1984, after moving to the Bode Museum, it had 100 m² of gallery space to its disposal. As a museum education facility, it stood on an equal footing with the collections housed in the Bode Museum.

In the Children's Gallery, 21 exhibits were conceived for various themes and in cooperation with different museums and collections (Sculpture Collection, Paintings Gallery, Numismatic Collection, Museum of Pre- and Early History, Egyptian Museum and Papyrus Collection, Antiquities Collection, Museum of East Asian Art, Museum of Islamic Art, Museum of European Culture). For almost every exhibit there was a didactic pamphlet.

It offered exhibition conversations and artistic initiatives for school groups. A club was established for interested children. Saturday afternoons were long a tradition for families with the motto: "See – Hear – Participate".

With the reunification of Germany and the consolidation of the two museum education departments in East Berlin and West Berlin, the model for success was continued with further exhibits and a new logo. "Islam, what is that? A voyage of discovery in the museum" was the first joint project in 1992. However, even after reunification visitors for the free events in the Children's Gallery were predominantly school classes from the eastern part of the city.

During the comprehensive renovation of the Bode Museum from 1999 to 2006, the Children's Gallery was also closed. Afterwards, it lost its space in the middle of the permanent exhibition on the upper floor and had to make do with one exhibition gallery and a too-small workroom in the basement, which is

not at comparable with the previous exhibition conditions. Henceforth, visiting school groups must be split up. The original intention, to combine thematic exhibitions with expansive artistic activities, could no longer be realised. The needs of the educational activities were not sufficiently taken into account in the renovation plans.

After the re-opening in 2006 and until 2013, four different interactive exhibitions took place in Level 0. The evolving education situation called for a different use. The focus is now increasingly on children doing things themselves and on the active engagement with the works of art on display, no longer on the presentation of exhibitions prepared for children. The available workspace is too small. In 2013 began the re-design of the former Children's Gallery as an ample workroom, made possible by a donation from the family of Karin and Nicolaus von Oppenheim. On December 6, 2014, the new workroom opened with a day for families and children. Since then it has been used for varying school projects and offerings for families with children.



Figure legend: A sculpture – what is that? Exhibition by the Museum Education Department in the Children's Gallery in the Bode Museum, 1988-89 (concept: Heike Völker)