

Press-Information

Frankfurt – A City of Museums

The museums on Frankfurt's Museumsufer (museum embankment) are lined up like pearls on a string. A total of nine are situated on the southern Main bank alone. Two museums are located directly on the northern bank and three in the immediate vicinity. Plenty of other museums can also be found all over the city.

The "Museumsufer - Idea of the Century" was brought to life in the 1980s. Frankfurt's museum embankment represents a synthesis of the city's high-quality cultural life and well-thought-out architectural planning. Several 19th century buildings worthy of preservation were stripped of their interiors and given a new breath of life; their façades still remain a characteristic feature of the Main bank. Many of the newer buildings and extensions are true architectural gems, designed by internationally renowned architects.

Should you be strolling around the museum embankment coming from the Holbeinsteg (a footbridge built in 1991), your museum tour will start on the southern Main bank. Take a few paces down the Main and you will find the **Giersch House – Museum of Regional Art** at Schaumainkai 83. This museum was opened in 2000 and is dedicated to the history of art in the Frankfurt Rhine-Main region. Exhibitions are changed twice a year, and contain works by 19th and 20th century artists whose lives and works were vitally linked to the region's economical centre, Frankfurt.

Directly next door at the Schaumainkai 71, you will find the **Liebighaus**. This museum of ancient sculptures displays its collection within a former mansion and its adjoining park grounds. In 1990, an extension symmetrical to the gallery space was added to the 1896 building. Apart from all types of small sculptures, the Liebighaus exhibits an extensive collection of sculptures from the Antiquity to more recent times.

Not much further down the street you will arrive at the **Städel Art Institute and Municipal Gallery**, Schaumainkai 63, opened in 1878 as a gift to the city from the merchant and art collector Johann Friedrich Städel. This painting gallery holds works by European artists from the 13th through to the 20th century, including famous painters such as Dürer, Elsheimer, Rembrandt and Botticelli. Impressionist and expressionist works are on display, as well as woodcuts, lithographs, copper etchings and modern graphic prints. The gallery extension, finished in 1990, mostly exhibits 20th century works. Temporary exhibitions of exceptionally high and the café/restaurant “Holbein’s” continually provide new attractions.

The next cultural attraction to be encountered on the Main bank is the **Museum of Communication Frankfurt**, Schaumainkai 53, situated in a mansion that was built in 1891. Extensions, including a striking glass structure, were added by the architects Günther Behnisch & Partner in 1990. The museum houses graphic collections and documents concerning the history of communication from the time of the counts Thurn and Taxis up to modern telecommunications. Post wagons, historical uniforms, old mailboxes and postal counters as well as modern amateur radio systems and high-tech telecommunications devices are on display; exhibitions also include postage stamps, post-marks and paintings by Spitzweg, Beuys and Dalí, which reflect these artists’ engagement with the theme of communication.

Walk a few metres further and you’ll find a beautiful patrician house from 1912, redeveloped into a museum building by the architect Oswald Mathias Ungers. In 1984, the **German Architecture Museum** was opened at Schaumainkai 43, the first of its kind in Germany. It holds a comprehensive collection of 19th and 20th century architecture plans, drawings, sketches, designs and models, as well as the museum’s “house inside a house”. Changing exhibitions underline the museum’s pledge to be a forum for the presentation of contemporary architecture and to contribute to the discourse on international architecture.

The next pearl on the string of museums is to be found right next door: the **German Film Museum** (Schaumainkai 41), also opened in 1984 and also originally a patrician house from the year 1910, which was in this case

redeveloped by Bofinger & Partner. The museum includes interactive exhibits and visitors are permitted to explore many wondrous devices from the world of cinema. A permanent exhibition is in place to guide you through film history. Marvel at cameras, projectors, film posters and stills; filming techniques can be simulated in the reconstructed film studio. The in-house art cinema offers up to three screenings of historically or cinematographically significant films a day (except Mondays), as well as hosting retrospectives and film forums.

An insight into exotic cultures may be gained at the **Museum of World Culture/Gallery 37** (Schaumainkai 29-37). The museum stages extensive theme-based exhibitions in support of its vision of demonstrating the contrasts between different peoples, cultures and religions, and of contextualising current issues. At around 70,000 works, the museum holds the biggest collection of contemporary “third-world” art in Europe. Gallery 37 exhibits works by largely unknown artists of Indian, African, Oceanic and Indonesian descent.

The **Bibelhaus am Museumsufer** (Entrance: Metzler Str. 19) took up its current location at the rear of the park in January of 2003. The “House of Bible” endeavours to promote the history of the “good book” in a more modern and adventurous manner, covering everything from the early beginnings in a nomad’s tent to today’s fast-moving world of multimedia, all the while recounting the colourful and compelling story of the “book of books”.

Richard Meier of New York is the architect responsible for the “white house by the Main”, the centrepiece of the museum embankment’s architectural string of pearls. This white house is the 1985 extension of the 1804 Villa Metzler, home of the **Museum of Applied Arts** at Schaumainkai 17. The museum, also known as “mak.frankfurt”, is subdivided into four areas (Europe, Islam, Far East, book-design/calligraphy), where a diverse range of arts and crafts are on display: minute treasures made from glass, porcelain, ceramics, bronze, ivory and gems are exhibited here alongside rugs, furniture, medieval manuscripts and printwork objects; naturally, the recent collection of “digital craft” is equally well represented. Holding approx. 30,000 objects, this is one of the most significant applied-arts museums in the world.

A visit to the **Icon Museum** in the Deutschordenshaus, Brückenstrasse 3-7, concludes the promenade around the southern bank of the Main. The contrast between the building interior, designed by Oswald Mathias Ungers, and the Baroque exterior provides an interesting entry point to the exhibitions on display inside. The iconic portraits of saints of Russian, Bulgarian, Yugoslavian and Greek origins were donated to the city by the internist Dr. Jörgen Schmidt-Voigt, who had collected them during numerous professional visits to the former Soviet Union over three decades. Thanks to gifts, purchases and items on loan, the museum's collection has been expanded to encompass around 1,000 works; not only icons but also metal sculptures, church fabrics and Ethiopian magic scrolls are on exhibition.

Crossing the River Main at the Icon Museum via the Alte Brücke, one passes the **New Portikus**, which is situated on a small Main islet. This museum for contemporary art, designed by Christoph Mäckler, has replaced the Portikus Art Hall at the Old Municipal Library in May of 2006, which was also once used as an exhibition hall the Städel's Art School. Today, the Municipal Library, which has been reconstructed according to its classicistic style, is home to the House of Literature.

If you cross the Main on the nearby Eiserner Steg (a footbridge opened in 1869) you will find yourself directly outside the **Historical Museum** on the northern bank, Saalgasse 19. Founded in 1878, this museum is housed in five interconnected buildings grouped around an inner court, namely the Bernus and Burnitz buildings from the 18th and 19th centuries, the Saalhofkapelle (court chapel) and Rententurm (customs tower) from the 12th and 15th centuries, and a modern building opened in 1972. Visiting this museum is like taking a walk through the city's history. Pictures, photos, prints, furniture, fabrics, household items and trade tools all demonstrate vividly how people of Frankfurt lived, worked and played throughout the ages, from Medieval times until today.

A short walk from the Historical Museum over the Römerberg, Frankfurt's historic old town centre, leads to two exhibition sites dedicated primarily to the fine arts: the Schirn Art Hall and the Steinerne Haus. Both buildings are within sight of the Kaiserdom cathedral. The **Schirn**, opened in 1986, hosts changing

exhibitions with works by famous artists from a variety of countries and periods, as well as photographic exhibitions. Kandinsky, Miró, Picasso, Guido Reni, Chagall, the art of Mexico and other exhibitions have drawn many thousands of visitors in the past. The 15th century **Steinerne Haus** is used by the Frankfurt Art Association to exhibit contemporary artists from within and outside Germany.

At the nearby **Leinwandhaus**, one finds Museum **Caricatura – Museum for Comical Art**. This excellent venue is home to a collection representing the “New Frankfurt School”, and features works by Germany’s most popular satirists and political cartoonists.

A little further to the north between Berlinerstrasse and Braubachstrasse you will find Frankfurt’s most modern museum, often described as a “Tortenstück” (slice of cake) due to its triangular floor plan. It was designed by the Viennese architect Hans Hollein and is the home of the **Museum of Modern Art**, Domstrasse 10. Since the summer of 1991, art works created after 1945 have been on display throughout the 5,000 square metres of exhibition space, ranging from pop art to current styles. Roy Lichtenstein, Andy Warhol, Frank Stella and Joseph Beuys are just some of the names of artists represented in the Museum of Modern Art.

The 13th-15th century Carmelite Monastery) is located to the west of the Historical Museum, not far from the River Main. The architect Josef Paul Kleihues added an unconventional extension to the old building at Karmelitergasse 1-5. This ensemble of the old and the new in the Carmelite Monastery is the home of the **Institute for City History** (Karmelitergasse 5), and the **Archaeological Museum** in the new annex. This museum holds a near-complete collection of archaeological finds from the provincial Roman city of Nida (now the northern Frankfurt suburb Heddernheim). Prehistoric evidence from the Frankfurt area dating back to the Neolithic period and items from the early Middle Ages are on permanent display, as are artefacts from the Mediterranean region and the Middle East.

A little further down the Main bank at Untermainkai 14-15, culture enthusiasts will find the **Jewish Museum**, which was opened in 1989 in the former

Rothschild-Palais building (first altered in 1821, then recently modified by the architect Ante Josip von Kostelac). The museum provides graphic insight into Jewish family life in Frankfurt, offering a closer look at Jewish customs, celebrations and traditions. The walk-through model of the Frankfurt Judengasse, built to the scale 1:50 from original street plans, is particularly impressive. Original foundations of buildings from the Judengasse are on display in the **Museum Judengasse** (Börneplatz / Kurt-Schumacher-Strasse 10), a branch of the Jewish Museum.

Although the visit to the Jewish Museum concludes the tour of the famed museum embankment, it far from concludes the tour of Frankfurt's museums. There are many further museums of all shapes and sizes spread out all over the city, all of which are well worth visiting. The most notable would have to be the **Senckenberg Museum of Natural History** (Senckenberganlage 25), not far from the university in the Bockenheim district. This is Germany's largest science museum; its collection of dinosaurs and great whales from previous geological eras is regarded as the most significant in Europe.

Naturally, Frankfurt also pays a tribute to its greatest son, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. The **Goethe House** and **Goethe Museum** are situated at Grosser Hirschgraben 23. Goethe's reconstructed birth house provides insight into the routine and life style of the Goethe family, a typical 18th century middle-class family. The Goethe Museum shows exhibits that document the life and works of this prince of poets and his contemporaries.

Another well-known Frankfurt native, the psychiatrist Dr. Heinrich Hoffmann, author and illustrator of the famous children's book "Struwwelpeter", is remembered by the **Heinrich Hoffmann Museum** (Schubertstraße 20). At the Heinrich Hoffmann Museum, children of all ages can relive the story of the "bad boy" Struwwelpeter (a cautionary children's book published in 1847), while grown-ups get informed about the author's life and works. It exhibits "Struwwelpeter" editions and parodies from one-and-a-half centuries, as well as documents inherited from Hoffmann to visually emphasise the commitment of the psychiatrist and psychiatry reformist.

The **EXPLORA Museum+Science+Technology** is situated on Glauburgplatz in the north end of Frankfurt. Extraordinary attractions showing optical and visual phenomena that reflect on the visitor's subjective perception are showcased here. The EXPLORA Museum purports to be a science centre that demonstrates simply and feasibly the wide range of scientific laws and technologies of our time. By experiencing and interacting with the exhibits, visitors gain insight into the complex correlations inherent in the physics of nature.

Contact:

Tourismus+Congress GmbH Frankfurt am Main, Kaiserstraße 56,
D-60329 Frankfurt, phone: +49 (0) 69 / 21 23 88 00, Fax +49 (0) 69 / 21 23 78 80,
eMail: presse@infofrankfurt.de, Internet: www.frankfurt-tourismus.de.