

## PRESS RELEASE

## Museum A to Z: From the Beginning into the Future

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What characterises a museum and what should it be like in the future? What tasks does a museum have and what wishes do we have for the museum as an institution and for the Von der Heydt Museum in particular?

On the one hand, the exhibition provides unusual and unfamiliar insights into the history and diversity of the collection and, on the other, looks to the future. In addition to the classic tasks of collecting, preserving, researching, exhibiting and communicating dealing with current topics such as diversity, digitalisation, decolonisation and participation becomes increasingly important for museums. 'Museum A to Z' takes you from the beginning to the future: from the founding phase of the museum to topics such as local and global collecting, colonial contexts, provenance research, the diversity of the collection and possible future perspectives. The presentation complements the newly conceived permanent exhibition 'Times and Spaces. Classics of the Collection' and for the first time visualises the surprising diversity of the Von der Heydt Museum's historically grown holdings, including lesser-known areas such as decorative arts and non-European objects.

For example, valuable textiles from present-day Indonesia and non-European sculptures are juxtaposed with views of Wuppertal by Adolf Erbslöh, Carl Grossberg, Erich Heckel, Oskar Schlemmer and Marie Luise Oertel, among others. The diversity of the objects is conveyed by an organisational structure that transcends purely content-based categories: paintings by Ottilie W. Roederstein, Emmy Klinker or Paula Modersohn-Becker, for example, show the diversity of genres in painting, while craft objects bring the variety of materials and techniques to life. Provenance research is another important focus of the exhibition: Its significance and social responsibility is explained through the story of Max Liebermann's 'Portrait of Felix Benjamin', who was persecuted and murdered by the National Socialists. The painting was restituted to Benjamin's heirs in 2023 and subsequently reacquired.

A key feature of the exhibition is accessibility, both in the museum and in the digital space: for the first time, a tactile model of Max Pechstein's painting 'The Artist's Son on the Sofa' will make it easier for blind and partially sighted people to access art, and will be complemented by a specially developed guided tour programme.

'Museum A to Z' is accompanied by a diverse programme of educational activities and events. In the context of the Von der Heydt Museum's forthcoming 125th

anniversary in 2027, it invites visitors to discuss its current and future tasks and to formulate their wishes.

Funded by

