

Presseinformation

Museum am Rothenbaum

Rothenbaumchaussee 64 | 20148 Hamburg Germany | markk-hamburg.de

August 28, 2026 to June 27, 2027

Label: Jewish

Questioning MARKK's History

The exhibition *Label: Jewish. Questioning MARKK's History* focuses on Jewish cultural property in the MARKK's holdings, tracing the histories of the objects and biographies of individuals from the early 20th century to the present. Its starting point is the collection of the former Hamburg Society for Jewish Folklore, which was long thought to have been lost. Drawing on current provenance research into Nazi-looted cultural property in the museum's ethnographic collection, the exhibition reassesses the MARKK's role under National Socialism and critically examines the classification of objects as Jewish.

The museum's holdings include numerous objects that have been interpreted and documented as Jewish, whether they entered the collection as Judaica or as ethnographic objects. The exhibition questions the museum's historical treatment of these objects and their classification as Jewish. It also examines the meanings produced through practices of collecting and exhibiting.

At the heart of the exhibition are ten objects from the former Society for Jewish Folklore. Comprising of initially more than 400 objects, the Society's collection was displayed on loan from 1913 in the permanent exhibition of the newly opened museum on Rothenbaumchaussee. It also formed the basis for the development of the museum's own Jewish collection. The history of the Society is connected to numerous Jewish figures in Hamburg, many of whom lived in the museum's neighbourhood and played important roles in the city's Jewish communities. Under mounting pressure, the collection was removed from display in 1935 and returned to the Society in 1937. In the years that followed, its remaining active members were forced into exile or were deported and murdered. The subsequent fate of the collection remains largely unknown to this day. In 1991, however, ten objects were found and transferred to the museum on Rothenbaumchaussee.

Following the museum's opening in 1913, further Judaica entered the collection through private owners and the art trade. Today, alongside their scholarly significance, these objects also bring personal and family histories into the exhibition. One example is a Torah binder that entered the collection in 1917. The influential court agent Berend Lehmann of Halberstadt had commissioned it in 1712 to mark the birth of a son. Its donation in 1917 offer insights into Jewish family history in Hamburg and Lower Saxony.

The exhibition also presents private everyday and ceremonial objects whose histories are marked by persecution and dispossession under National Socialism. Between 1933 and 1945, the museum knowingly accepted confiscated property. In 1961, it also acquired silver objects that Jewish owners had been forced to surrender from 1938 onwards.

Provenance research into Nazi-looted cultural property has been conducted at the MARKK since 2021. It investigates changes of ownership that took place under contexts of injustice between 1933 and 1945, including the histories of objects that

Weitere Medieninformationen und Bildmaterial:

Julia Daumann | Presse- und Öffentlichkeitsarbeit | Museum am Rothenbaum
fon +49 40 428 879 — 548 | [mail presse@markk-hamburg.de](mailto:presse@markk-hamburg.de)

MARKK
MUSEUM AM ROTHENBAUM
Kulturen und Künste der Welt

Presseinformation

Museum am Rothenbaum

Rothenbaumchaussee 64 | 20148 Hamburg Germany | markk-hamburg.de

did not enter the museum until after 1945. The research also considers the colonial foundations of the ethnographic collection.

A further focus is the museum's institutional role and position under National Socialism. As early as 1933, members of staff were affected by the National Socialist policies of persecution and expropriation. At the same time, the museum benefited from these policies until 1945.

A catalogue will accompany the exhibition. A joint [online exhibition](#)¹ by the MARKK and the Institute for the History of German Jews will also be available on the MARKK website, presenting the collection and history of the Society for Jewish Folklore Hamburg.

Lead curator: Jana Caroline Reimer (Curator and Provenance Researcher for Nazi-Looted Cultural Property)

Curatorial team: Julianne de Sousa (Provenance Researcher for Nazi-Looted Cultural Property), Callum Fischer (Assistant Curator); in collaboration with Dr. Anna Menny (Institute for the History of German Jews).

Supported by the Exhibition Fund of the Ministry of Culture and Media of the Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg and the German Lost Art Foundation.

Running concurrently with *Label: Jewish. Questioning MARKK's History*, the Bucerius Kunst Forum will present *From Monet to Picasso. Jewish Art Collectors in Germany* from September 11, 2026 to March 29, 2027. This exhibition reunites outstanding works of Classical Modernism from fifteen major art collections assembled by Jewish collectors in Germany before 1945. It commemorates the owners, their contribution to cultural history and their fates under National Socialism. At the Altona Museum, the exhibition *People & Places. Hamburg's Jewish History*, running from 12 November 2026 to 5 July 2027, explores the diversity of Jewish life past and present. Through historical objects, artistic perspectives, and multimedia formats, it highlights the role that social, cultural, and economic contexts and relationships play in the attribution of identities and in experiences of belonging and exclusion.

¹ <https://markk-hamburg.de/en/exhibition-on-the-collection-and-history-of-the-society-for-jewish-folklore-in-hamburg/>