

GODS RECREATED

Saturn devouring one of his children, graceful Venus with lowered gaze, Bacchus with grape clusters inviting to a celebration. New special exhibition GODS RECREATED showcases the Greco-Roman gods on the facade of Frederiksborg Castle and the impressive work of the Danish Agency for Culture and Palaces in recreating them.

The magnificent Marble Gallery adorns the facade of Frederiksborg Castle. Nineteen Greco-Roman gods representing wealth and fertility, war and power, hunting, music, and poetry. Gods of the heavens, human life, and the underworld. They were created in Amsterdam by one of the most famous sculptors of the time, Hendrick de Keyser, and installed at Frederiksborg during the reign of Christian IV from 1619-1621, as part of the portrayal of the king as an elevated ruler.

The new special exhibition showcases the history of the gallery and the work of the sculptors and stone carvers in restoring and recreating the sculptures in the expressive, mannerist style of Christian IV's era. The exhibition opens while the facade renovation and recreation take place at the castle, in the workshops of the Danish Agency for Culture and Palaces, and with selected stone carvers. Visitors can see several original sculptures from the 17th century and compare them with later versions and completely new ones. The child-devouring Saturn is carved in sandstone. Venus has been recreated in plaster and is ready to be carved in sandstone. In the exhibition, one can observe how she has been interpreted differently over time: in the 1870s, she held a mirror in her hand, while in the 1940s, she appeared broader and heavier. She now holds the golden apple in her right hand, with her left hand gracefully placed on her left breast. By 2028, all 19 completed sculptures will be installed on the facade of Frederiksborg Castle.

COLLABORATION AND EXTENSIVE RESEARCH BEHIND THE EXHIBITION

Frederiksborg · Museum of National History and the Danish Agency for Culture and Palaces are responsible for the extensive research and restoration collaboration that underlies both the exhibition, renovation, and reconstruction. Art historians and sculptors have extensively studied museums and libraries in Europe to understand Hendrick de Keyser's visual world based on 15th and 16th-century depictions of gods, preserved sculptures, paintings, engravings, as well as photographs of Frederiksborg before the fire in 1859. The overall project has been made possible with generous support from the Danish Agency for Culture and Palaces, provided by the A.P. Møller Foundation (20 million DKK) and the Carlsberg Foundation (36 million DKK).

Frederiksborg's Head of Collections and Exhibitions, Mette Houlberg Rung, looks forward to involving museum visitors in the history and significance of the sculptures: *"Frederiksborg Castle reflects 400 years of architectural and art history. Therefore, it is exciting to be able to showcase the gods of the Marble Gallery through the changing styles and tastes of those 400 years. We are very excited for the 19 reconstructed and newly carved sculptures to bring the castle closer to Christian IV's vision. It will be an impressive sight and a dignified entrance to the castle and museum."*



Gerti Axelsen, Deputy Director of the Danish Agency for Culture and Palaces, is pleased with the collaboration and the initial results of the reconstruction work: *"Saturn is the best-preserved of the original sculptures, and here one can clearly see how closely our skilled contemporary sculptors have come to their 400-year-old counterparts. I am delighted that, in good collaboration with the museum, we can now give the public the opportunity to come in and see a selection of the sculptures and the restoration work up close before the sculptures are reinstalled in their original positions on the castle's arcades."*

The exhibition will be open to the public from February 9, 2024, until early 2028.

PRESS MATERIAL

Press images from the exhibition opening on February 8, as well as images from the exhibition, can be found on Frederiksborg's press site. For further information, interviews with museum curator Lejla Mrgan, Head of Collections and Exhibitions Mette Houlberg Rung, leading sculptor Anders Krüger from the Danish Agency for Culture and Palaces, and project manager for the overall restoration project Simon Hvidt, please contact Frederiksborg's Communications Manager Sara Juel Andersen via email: sja@dnm.dk / phone: 29747553.



Photo: Frederiksborg · Museum of National History, Jonathan Damslund.

