

# Museum History

## From Cabinets of Curiosities to Public Museum

Museums belong to the oldest forms of cultural display in historical societies. They were established long before the first national institutions appeared in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries and continue to occupy a central space in the cultural imaginations of today's increasingly connected societies. Master theses in this field might want to tackle questions such as:

- Why did the first public museums emerge in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries?
- Is there a connection of early museums with the 'first globalisation' and the 'scientific revolution'?
- Who financed, supplied, visited and worked in these 'cabinets of curiosities'?
- How did these institutions or 'assemblages' change with the national framing of the 19<sup>th</sup> century?
- Is the Museum a Western phenomenon and what alternative pathways existed outside Europe?
- How have non-Western objects been displayed in Western museums (and vice versa)? How is this changing?
- Which traditions have current Museums inherited from their historical cousins and what differences are there in collecting practices, identity politics, curatorial practice and visitor engagement?

Students might also explore the 'connected histories' of individual institutions and their collections (such as the KHM and NHM in Oslo) or tackle the question of how their individual objects can tell different histories.

NB: The proposed themes are only meant to illustrate a range of possible topics. Students are also encouraged to bring in their own proposals and interests.