It has been 20 years since the Rettig Palace was converted into a museum where the old and new unite. Aboa Vetus & Ars Nova celebrates its birthday on the April Fool's Day on 1 April, when the museum offers its visitors free entry and a special program.

The Palace Opens Its Doors to History and Contemporary Art

20 years ago the Aura riverside and Turku's museum scene changed, as the Matti Koivurinta Foundation opened a new museum into the space of the Rettig Palace (Jung & Jung, 1928). An opening was made into the wall surrounding the palace for the main entrance, and the closed-off, mysterious place was turned into an approachable and visible one.

Originally, the foundation’s aim was to open an art museum, but as the archaeological excavations on the site continued, the interest towards the ruins emerging from under the palace grew. The undertaking was doubled when it was decided to found a museum both of history and contemporary art. In 1995 the city discovered below ground was named Aboa Vetus (old Turku) and the art museum became Ars Nova (new art). The palace, which had now been turned into a public place, made public also the history below it. The palace and its garden, the medieval city block ruins of Aboa Vetus with its finds that was born through archaeological digs, and the foundation’s art collection are a valuable and unique part of our shared cultural heritage.

When it opened, Aboa Vetus & Ars Nova was characterized as a unique museum whole that tells the stories of the city found underground and displays gems of contemporary art. The new museum awoke wide interest on a national level, and the opening received coverage abroad, too.
A Million Visitors and Hundreds of Exhibitions

During the museum’s 20 years of existence, over a million of visitors have explored the medieval city ruins and seen hundreds of history and art exhibitions produced by the museum.

Aboa Vetus & Ars Nova has taken its place on the field of culture and produces services related to various contents and in interaction with the public. Being situated in the center of the city ensures a good location for the museum, but the site’s long history in Turku’s medieval area is also a productive subject for research.

From the beginning, the museum has developed its activity into a more open direction both for the public and collaboration. Through research, collection work, exhibitions and educational work, Aboa Vetus & Ars Nova provides for its customers a meeting place between history, art, memories, time and people. The aim of the museum is to produce the best museum experience ever!

Come Celebrate With Us!

The museum celebrates its birthday throughout the year. The birthday party will be held on the April Fool’s Day on 1 April, with free entry and a special program. It is then possible to take part in a free workshop aimed at the whole family, hear short bulletins about the museum’s activity and a sound sculpture by “the only official production unit of sound sculptures in the Nordic countries”, the (sound) sculpture duo Juha Hurme and Tomi Alatalo. The exhibition Nineties! – 20 Years of History and Contemporary Art in Omatila Gallery and the poster gallery connected to it offer a glimpse into the museum’s past. The staff are present in the museum space during the birthday.

On the week preceding the birthday, a retro campaign will be held during which the museum will publish newspaper headlines from the museum’s opening and old pictures from the course of the years on its social media channels, using the hashtag #retroAVAN.

Numerous museum visitors along the years have stamped themselves a lucky coin as a memento. To celebrate the occasion, a new lucky coin will be introduced. The solo exhibition by Nam June Paik in 1995 extended from the first floor of Ars Nova to the lobby. Image Seilo Ristimäki.
The coin will be announced later this spring. The previously used dime was based on a coin from the 1590s discovered in the museum area. The blueprint for the new one is a coin of 10 öre from the year 1615, found in 2012 in the archaeological digs of the museum.

The Year Continues with Work and Celebration

The celebration goes on throughout the year. In June, the 7th Turku Biennial will be opened in the museum, the theme being The Unexpected Guest. The internationally significant exhibition presents new works from 18 artists and artist groups from Finland and Europe. Towards the end of the year the museum will soak in the atmosphere of miniature worlds, as dollhouses from the collection of Victoria & Albert Museum of Childhood will be displayed.

The revision of the Aboa Vetus permanent exhibition proceeds during the jubilee year. Early in the year a new miniature model of the Convent Quarter was revealed, and the popular activity spots of the exhibition will be revised during the year. In autumn, a jubilee year lecture series will delve into history and contemporary art. Other surprises are planned during the year, as well, and all 20-year-olds can enter the museum for free for the whole year.

20 years of history and contemporary art have passed. Aboa Vetus & Ars Nova thanks its visitors for the past years.

On Display Now:

Annu Vertanen: A Breathing Gaze
13.2.–31.5.2015 Ars Nova 1st floor

Harri Larjosto: Dressing Room for Lugubrious
13.2.–24.5.2015 Takkuhuone Gallery

Unknown Territories – Works from the Matti Koivurinta Foundation art collection
13.2.–24.5.2015 Ars Nova 2nd floor

Nineties! – 20 Years of History and Contemporary Art
6.3.–19.4.2015 Omatila

The Permanent Exhibition of Aboa Vetus

Letter by Letter – Traces of Reading and Writing

Press images:
http://www.aboavetusarsnova.fi/tiedotusvalineet
username: press | password: avan95

Information:

Johanna Lehto-Vahtera, Museum Director
Aboa Vetus & Ars Nova
johanna.lehto-vahtera@aboavetusarsnova.fi
tel. 0207 181 633

Raila Tapio, Communications Officer
Aboa Vetus & Ars Nova
raila.tapio@aboavetusarsnova.fi
tel. 0207 181 639