

BASA Museum

Bonn Collection of the Americas

The BASA Museum is the lively centre of the Department for the Anthropology of the Americas at the University of Bonn. It is a space for exhibitions, communication, lectures, teaching and working used by students, teachers and researchers. Frequently changing special exhibitions are presented in the museum as well as the Display Depot (*Schaudepot*), where a cross-section of the more than 10,000 objects of the collection is permanently accessible. The BASA Museum presents itself to the urban public with the *BASA-Baukasten* – a flexibly adaptable showcase – through the large windows leading to one of Bonn’s busiest streets.



Contact

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Opening hours

Tuesday to Thursday, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. and
during the opening hours of the Department’s library

Front: *mañanónie*, set of feather pendants,
Ayoreóde, Col. Ulf Lind © BASA Museum



Friends of the BASA Museum

The association BASS (*Bonner Altamerika-Sammlung und Studien e.V.*, Bonn Americanist Collection and Studies) supports the scientific and cultural work of the BASA Museum. BASS is also the editor of the BAS publication series (*Bonner Amerikanistische Studien*, Bonn Americanist Studies).

Mail: bass@uni-bonn.de | Web: www.bass-bonn.org

Donation Account
IBAN: DE04 4306 0967 4109 1615 00 (GLS Bank)

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History & Present

The archaeological-ethnographic teaching and study collection was founded by Hermann Trimborn in 1948, in the same year as the then *Seminar für Völkerkunde*, today's Department for the Anthropology of the Americas. It has been the cornerstone of anthropological teaching and research in Bonn ever since. In 1961, the collection was opened to the public for the first time in the main building of the university.

The systematic assembly of the collection began in the 1950s. Trimborn himself, his successor Udo Oberem and his colleagues began collecting objects on their research trips, as did students and doctoral students, staff, guest researchers and citizens of the former capital Bonn who had lived abroad for a time.

Until the 1980s, objects were purchased systematically; others were added to the collection through donations and loans. Today, the collection of the BASA Museum continues to grow through selected donations of smaller and larger collections.

Ekeko, Col. Hermann Trimborn © BASA Museum

Nazca bowl © BASA Museum

Maya pottery, permanent loan of the city of Grevenbroich © BASA Museum

Participatory workshop with representatives of the Wayana in the BASA Museum (Project Men-Thing-Entanglements), 2016 © BASA Museum

Focus Areas of the Collection

The BASA Museum holds more than 10,000 objects of pre-Columbian and contemporary indigenous societies of the Americas. Other world regions are also represented, albeit to a lesser extent.

The main pillars of the collection are ethnographic collections of the 20th century from the South American lowlands (especially Brazil, Bolivia, Ecuador) and the Andean highlands, as well as archaeological objects from the Andean region and Mesoamerica, especially from the Mayan regions. Likewise, these areas are the focal points of teaching and research in the Department for the Anthropology of the Americas at Bonn.

The collection also contains the research corpora of the former chair holders (Trimborn, Oberem, Prem) and academic staff members (Hartmann, Meyers). Besides objects, these include research documentation, diapositives, photographs, cartographic material, written texts, administrative documents, and correspondence.

Research & Teaching

The collections at the BASA Museum, which are unique among university museums in Germany, are the subject of seminars and biannual practical courses, of seminar papers and dissertations by students, as well as of ongoing research projects.

It is this combination of different sources (three-dimensional objects, visual sources and texts), which substantiates research processes, that makes the BASA Museum an extraordinary research infrastructure, not only for researchers based in Bonn, but also for scientists from Germany and abroad. The new conception and renovation completed in 2014 have made it possible for research, teaching, and exhibitions at the BASA Museum to go hand in hand. Since then the work in the BASA Museum has been largely influenced by research projects on specific collections:

- Men-Thing-Entanglements in indigenous societies (2015-2018)
- The collections – a *Kosmos*. From Alexander von Humboldt's interconnected sciences to object-based knowledge structures in the era of digital networks (2016-2019)
- Excess and reduction of meaning of, through, and with objects. Materiality of cultural techniques to cope with the extraordinary ("SiSi") (2018-2021)

