

Overview

Recently relocated to a stunning new facility in the heart of Seattle's Ballard neighborhood, the Nordic Museum is the only museum in the United States that showcases the impact and influence of Nordic values and innovation in contemporary society and tells the story of 12,000 years of Nordic history and culture, across all five Nordic countries: Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden, as well as the semi-autonomous regions of Sápmi, Greenland, Åland, and the Faroe Islands.

The Museum's mission is to share Nordic culture with people of all ages and backgrounds by exhibiting art and objects, preserving collections, providing educational and cultural experiences and serving as a community gathering place. The Nordic Museum presents a wide range of vibrant programs including contemporary art exhibitions, outstanding concerts, lectures, films, culinary arts, traditional folk culture, and a variety of special events throughout the year.

Address

2655 NW Market Street
Seattle, WA 98107

Admission

\$15/GA
\$12/seniors
\$10/students (w/ ID) and youth (5-18)
Free for members and children (0-4)

Hours

Monday: Closed
Tuesday: 10am–5pm
Wednesday: 10am–5pm
Thursday: 10am–8pm
Friday: 10am–5pm
Saturday: 10am–5pm
Sunday: 10am–5pm

On May 5, 2018, the Nordic Museum opened to the public in its new home along the working waterfront of Seattle's Ballard district, in the heart of the city's historic Nordic community and one of its most dynamic neighborhoods for arts, culture, restaurants, and nightlife. The grand opening celebration included local, national, and international dignitaries, including the President and First Lady of Iceland, Crown Princess of Denmark, all five Nordic ambassadors to the United States, members of Congress, the governor of Washington, and the mayor of Seattle, as well as many more. The \$45-million new museum was designed by Seattle's Mithun architects in conjunction with renowned Finnish architect Juhani Pallasmaa, featuring Nordic design, materials, and fixtures throughout, and a soaring central Fjord Hall with angular walls that narrow as visitors go deeper into the museum.

The core exhibition traces 12,000 years of Nordic and Nordic American history, and features artifacts from the Museum's 77,000-object collection, as well as numerous artifacts on loan from leading museums in the Nordic region. This *Nordic Journeys* exhibition was designed by Ralph Appelbaum Associates, the firm that helped create the new National Museum of African American History and Culture, the Newseum, and the US Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C.

The new museum is built to meet or exceed Smithsonian standards, allowing it to bring major international exhibitions to the temporary exhibition gallery. The first special exhibition, *Northern Exposure: Contemporary Nordic Arts Revealed*, presented in cooperation with The Phillips Collection in Washington, D.C., and lenders from institutions and private collections throughout the Nordic region, runs from May–September 2018. The second special exhibition, *The Vikings Begin*, featuring rare archaeological artifacts from Uppsala University in Sweden, will open in October 2018.

The museum has generated significant local, national and international coverage (partial list):

- Wall Street Journal, May 4, 2018: "[Nordic Exposure: A Seattle Museum Celebrates Immigrants](#)"
- National Public Radio (KUOW): <http://kuow.org/post/wedged-between-history-and-hipster-ballards-new-nordic-museum-ready-almost>
- National Public Radio (KNKX): <http://knkx.org/post/new-massive-nordic-museum-prepares-open-public>
- Seattle Times, April 30, 2018: "[Mad Dash to the Finish as Seattle's New Nordic Museum Prepares for its Grand Debut](#)"

- Seattle Times, May 6, 2018: “[A Royal Welcome for the New Nordic Museum in Ballard](#)”
- GeekWire, April 30, 2018: “[Seattle’s New Nordic Museum to Hold Tech Summit with Early Spotify Investor and Other Big Names](#)”
- SVT - Swedish Television: <https://www.svtplay.se/video/17753903/rapport/rapport-6-maj-19-30-3?cmpid=del:an:05-07-2018:rapport:pla:lp-app>
- Architectural Digest, January 8, 2018: “[The 15 Most Noteworthy Museums Opening This Year](#)”
- Architectural Digest, April 24, 2018: “[New Nordic Museum Prepares to Make Waves in Seattle and Beyond](#)”
- New York Times, January 2018: “[52 Places to go in 2018](#)”
- Thrillist Travel, January 2018: “[The Coolest New Things Opening in America 2018](#)”
- MSN Travel – April 20, 2018: “[Must-Visit Museums Opening in 2018](#)”

Grand Opening Exhibitions

Nordic Journeys | Permanent exhibition

Nordic Journeys expands the museum’s classic immigration story to include a broader understanding of Nordic life and culture as it has evolved over the last eleven thousand years. This exhibition encompasses five distinct galleries and will feature not only beloved and important artifacts from our own permanent collection, but also more than 100 objects that have been offered as loans from museums throughout the United States and the National Museums of all five Nordic countries—including stone axes and tools that are more than four thousand years old; Viking-era rune stones, swords, keys, and jewelry; religious objects from the seventeenth century; and examples of twentieth-century modern design.

- **Nordic Orientation Gallery**

Visitors begin their exhibition experience in the **Fjord Hall** on the first floor, from which they enter the **Nordic Orientation Gallery**. This gallery showcases the concepts and values that define Nordic culture and introduces visitors to the five Nordic nations of Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden, plus the semi-autonomous regions of Sápmi, Greenland, Åland, and the Faroe Islands. A large graphic display features contextual maps of the Nordic countries and regions, along with selected data regarding each area. Through first-person stories and a narrated script, a large-format video program conveys what it means to be Nordic today—both in the Nordic Region, and in Nordic America. Displays include traditional costumes, historical artifacts, and contemporary objects selected by Museum staff with input from members of the Museum’s national committees. Visitors who associate themselves with Nordic cultures will see their own heritage reflected within the displays and find personal relevance in the stories presented.

- **Sense of Place Gallery**

Continuing upstairs, visitors encounter the **Sense of Place Gallery**. Conceived as an immersive, sensory experience, this gallery introduces visitors to the Nordic landscape and environment and explores how the natural elements have influenced cultural development and values in the Nordic region. A large-format video projection presents rotating images and soundscapes that capture the variable climate and invites visitors to ground their experience in the details of this particular geographic setting. Immediately outside the gallery, a display devoted to **Norse Myths and the Natural World** introduces visitors to the Norse creation story and the primary gods in the Norse pantheon.

- **The Nordic Region Gallery**

Entering **The Nordic Region Gallery**, visitors begin their journey through the historical and cultural development of people in the Nordic region. Richly illustrated wall displays enhanced with short video presentations and hands-on activities present information thematically, in a chronological sequence.

The Nordic Region Gallery is divided into four distinct sections, each one focusing on a specific historical moment or time period:

- Nordic Prehistory and the Viking Era: 10,000 BC – 1,100 AD
- The Medieval Period and the Early Modern World: 12th – 18th Centuries

- Building Nations and National Identities: 18th – 19th Centuries
- The Nordic Region in the 20th Century

Throughout each section of the Nordic Region Gallery, thematic displays of significant artifacts—many offered as long-term loans from the Nordic National Museums—enliven the historical narrative. Large platforms containing additional object groupings and media programs expand upon the key themes and concepts introduced in The Nordic Region timeline wall displays.

- **Nordic America Gallery**

Crossing one of two architectural bridges over the Fjord Hall below, visitors continue their physical and metaphorical journey to the **Nordic America Gallery**. Here, they discover a new design and interpretation of the themes and artifacts featured in the museum’s longstanding *Dream of America* exhibition. Unlike The Nordic Region Gallery, content is organized geographically, to clarify the Nordic American experience by region:

- The East Coast
- The Midwest and West
- The Pacific Northwest

A large central platform, divided into three sections houses an installation packed with many treasured objects from the Museum’s own collection. Dedicated, thematic installations tell the story of the immigrant experience, the history of the logging and mining industries, and the importance of maritime innovations in the Pacific Northwest.

- **Nordic Perspectives Forum**

In this final gallery of *Nordic Journeys*, visitors explore contemporary Nordic life through a variety of formats. A large media wall in the center of the gallery is programmed to present a series of programs in short chapters. Recalling the core Nordic values that visitors first encountered in the Nordic Orientation Gallery, topics include: social integration and gender equality, politics, sustainability, immigration, science and technology, health care, labor issues, education, design, etc. Interactive stations invite visitor participation and feedback through on-screen prompts, creating the potential for virtual discussions. A wall display equipped with color-coded comment cards provides an analog alternative for those visitors who prefer to share handwritten remarks.

Northern Exposure: Contemporary Nordic Arts Revealed | May 5–September 16, 2018

Northern Exposure: Contemporary Nordic Arts Revealed represents a survey of contemporary arts from Iceland, Norway, Finland, Sweden, Denmark, and the autonomous regions of Greenland, the Faroe Islands, and Åland. Conceived as an aesthetic study of how the Nordic character continues to redefine itself within an evolving global context, this exhibition challenges perceptions of form, gender, identity, nature, and technology, and features works by internationally acclaimed artists including Olafur Eliasson, Bjarne Melgaard, Jesper Just, Kim Simonsson, and Cajsa von Zeipel. *Northern Exposure* has been organized by the Nordic Museum in cooperation with The Phillips Collection in Washington, D.C., and lenders from institutions and private collections throughout the Nordic region.

Fridtjof Nansen | May 5–August 5, 2018

A biographical narrative of the Norwegian explorer and humanitarian, *Fridtjof Nansen* studies a purposeful life of scientific learning and exploration, political travails, and humanitarian devotion. Famous for many accomplishments, Nansen is principally known for his efforts in aiding scores of refugees during the 1920s, using what has come to be known as “The Nansen Passport.”