



Germany: Hamburg's Altona museum opens a permanent exhibition about Hamburg Jewish history, incorporating a Jewish component in a mainstream museum

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February 6, 2026 - Hamburg's Altona Museum, one of the largest regional museums in Germany, has opened a permanent exhibition about 400 years of local Jewish history, incorporating a Jewish component in a mainstream museum.

The exhibit, [Landmarks of Jewish History: A project space for Hamburg](#), opened February 4. Curated by Anne Kunhardt and Jonas Stier, it is based on 14 chronologically arranged dates, from 1611 to 2020, which anchor the narrative.

These "landmarks" encompass built heritage such as the important Sephardic and Ashkenazic Jewish cemeteries, as well as events and personalities – what the museum calls selected "places, biographies, and discourses [that] trace the development of the Jewish congregations and communities – from their beginnings in the sixteenth century to the present day."

Exhibited objects "include a model of the synagogue built in 1788 on Elbstraße, a lion sculpture from the fountain in the Jewish cemetery in Altona [founded in 1611], commemorative medals from the Israelite Hospital, and silver objects stolen by the Nazis," a report on the [Institute for the History of German Jews web site](#) says.

Audio stations tell the stories behind selected objects and explore the complex paths that led to their inclusion in museum collections, as well as the questions of ownership, responsibility and historical reappraisal that they raise.

Finally, a digital city map from the Institute for the History of German Jews shows where Jewish history and life can be experienced in Hamburg today.

The 14 landmark dates begin with 1611, and the founding in Altona of the Portuguese Sephardic and adjacent Ashkenazic Jewish cemeteries. This anchors a discussion of the origin and early history of the Jewish presence in Hamburg.

The exhibit around the landmark year 1817 anchors a discussion of the emergence and development of the Reform Jewish movement in Hamburg, up to the construction of the Poolstrasse synagogue in 1844, which featured a common entrance for men and women and a built-in organ. The city of Hamburg purchased the site in 2020. Research on it has been carried out but so far restoration has not begun.

It concludes with 2020, and ongoing discussions of plans to rebuild the monumental Bornplatz synagogue, which was damaged but not destroyed on Kristallnacht, November 1938, then demolished in 1939, with the Jewish community forced to bear the costs.

[Click here to see the Exhibition Page](#)

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Source: [Jewish Heritage Europe](#).