

BUNDESKUNSTHALLE



A BRIEF HISTORY OF HUMANKIND

100 000 Years of Cultural History

22 November 2016 to 26 March 2017

Media Conference: 21 November 2016, 11 a.m.

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Amtsgericht Bonn
Umsatzsteuer ID Nr. DE811386971

Konto 3 177 177 00
Deutsche Bank Bonn
BLZ 380 700 59
IBAN DE03 3807 0059 0317 7177 00
BIC DEUTDE33080



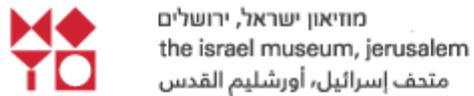
Exhibition Dates

Exhibition	22 November 2016 to 26 March 2017
Director	Rein Wolfs
Managing Director	Bernhard Spies
Curator	Tania Coen-Uzzielli
Exhibition Manager	Agnieszka Lulińska
Exhibition Architecture	Chanan de Lange, de Lange Design, Tel Aviv
Head of Corporate Communications / Press Officer	Sven Bergmann
Publication / Press Copy	€ 19.95 / € 10
Opening Hours	Tuesday and Wednesday: 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. Thursday to Sunday: 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. Public Holidays: 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. Closed on Mondays
Admission Exhibition (including Audioguide) standard / reduced / family ticket	€ 10 / € 6.50 / € 16
Happy Hour-Ticket	€ 7 Tuesday and Wednesday: 7 to 9 p.m. Thursday to Sunday: 5 to 7 p.m. (for individuals only)
Guided Group Tours information and registration	T +49 228 9171-243 F +49 228 9171-244 kunstvermittlung@bundeskunsthalle.de
Public Transport	Underground lines 16, 63, 66 and bus lines 610, 611 and 630 to Heussallee / Museumsmeile.
Parking	There is a car and coach park on Emil- Nolde-Straße behind the Bundeskunsthalle. Navigation: Emil-Nolde-Straße 11, 53113 Bonn

Press Information (German / English) www.bundeskunsthalle.de
For press files follow 'press'.

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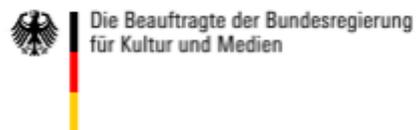
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Information on the Exhibition

A Brief History of Humankind from the Collections of The Israel Museum, Jerusalem

This exhibition, inspired by Yuval Noah Harari's bestseller *Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind*, invites the public to a journey exploring some of the crucial moments in the history of humankind through pivotal objects from the Museum's encyclopedic collections. Spanning a timeline of hundreds of thousands of years, the items on view include archaeological objects dating to the dawn of civilization shown side-by-side with cutting-edge works of contemporary art.

The exhibition's narrative, articulated here as three major chapters, revolves on three significant turning points in the evolution of human civilization: the Cognitive Revolution – the advent of language and communication, which enabled *Homo sapiens* to survive and form complex societies; the Agricultural Revolution – humanity's first steps towards the evolution of settled civilization, laying the foundations for modern society; and the Industrial Revolution – a time of rapid scientific and technological developments that ushered in the contemporary era. Within this framework, the exhibition touches on some critical existential questions, such as: Why did *Homo sapiens* survive and gain mastery of the world? Why do we need laws? How did the Industrial-Revolution influence our concepts of time and space? And what does the future hold in store for humankind? The scientific revolution set in motion a process that radically improved the living conditions of the human species, but what will the archaeologists of tomorrow find and think about our present?

The objects on view bear vivid testimony to the most important phases in the evolution of humanity, their unique qualities shedding light on universal phenomena. The objects' significance is amplified, emphasized, and reinterpreted by their juxtaposition with contemporary artworks, creating new, thought-provoking connections that invite us to reflect on our past in the hope of gaining a better understanding of our present and our future.



The Israel Museum, Jerusalem

The Israel Museum is the largest cultural institution in the State of Israel and is ranked among the leading art and archaeology museums in the world. Founded in 1965, the Museum houses encyclopedic collections ranging from prehistory through contemporary art and includes the most extensive holdings of Biblical and Holy Land archaeology in the world, among them the Dead Sea Scrolls. Over its first 50 years, the Museum has built a far-ranging collection of more than 500,000 objects through an unparalleled legacy of gifts and support from its circle of patrons worldwide.

The Museum's 20-acre campus, which underwent a comprehensive renewal in 2010 designed by James Carpenter Design Associates and Efrat Kowalsky Architects, features the Billy Rose Art Garden, the Shrine of the Book, and more than 225,000 square feet of collection, gallery, and temporary exhibition space. The Museum also organizes programming at its off-site locations in Jerusalem at the Rockefeller Archaeological Museum, where it presents archaeological artifacts from the ancient Land of Israel; and at its historic Ticho House, a venue for exhibitions of contemporary Israeli art.



Wall Quotations

Fire

The earliest evidence of the use of fire, some 1.5 million years ago, was unearthed in prehistoric sites in East Africa. The ability to use and to control fire – to ward off predators, produce light and warmth, or cook food – represents a turning point in the evolution of humankind that propelled us all the way to the top of the food chain. With it, the human species took its first step towards subjugating nature: from this moment on human survival no longer depended on our physical powers but rather on our power of invention.

The central role of fire in rituals and social gatherings brought humans together and fostered the creation of societies, and some attribute the growth in size of the prehistoric human's brain to the rapid digestion of cooked food – yet another byproduct of the discovery of fire.

In time fire became an object of devotion, perceived as something sacred, the essence of life and a metaphor for metaphysical light, while also identified as a dangerous element endowed with threatening and destructive powers. It is on this tightrope between life and death – between evolution and destruction, between flames and ashes – that human civilization has been advancing ever since the discovery of fire.

Survival and Extinction

Who survives in nature and who becomes extinct? Why did *Homo sapiens* survive when all the other human species vanished from the face of the earth?

In the Stone Age, there were two human species populating the Middle East: *Homo sapiens* and Neanderthals. Modern humans – our forefathers – evolved in Africa some 200,000 years ago, migrating from there to this region, whereas Neanderthals came from Europe. Evidence shows that the two species actually co-existed, sharing the same land, hunting the same animals, struggling to meet the same challenges in nature. Why, then, did one species survive and not the other? Some scientists believe that the two interbred and merged, and they therefore consider the Middle East as the melting pot of humankind. Others are convinced that the Neanderthal species became extinct. Many large animals were also driven to extinction – and that only exacerbates the question of why our own species survived.

The process of survival and extinction has not yet ended. The future is not looking too bright for many of the planet's biological species, and a growing number are facing extinction as a result of the behavior of modern humans, whose struggle to conquer nature often leaves destruction in its path.

Family

Unlike animals, whose young can stand on their feet and take care of their basic needs merely hours or days after being born, humans are utterly helpless at birth. The family unit is therefore essential to the survival of the species, providing safety, food, a caring environment, and all the necessary tools for the infant to grow into an independent adult who can contribute to society.

Evidence from the Neolithic age – some 9,000 years ago, when humankind made



the transition from a nomadic to a settled way of life shows that ancestors were buried at home in a ceremonial funeral, attesting to the supremacy of the family. These ceremonies served not only to honor the dead, but also to indicate that the family owned the house and surrounding fields with their crops. Establishing this right was crucial in a society whose economy was entirely based on agriculture.

Today, we are witnessing changes in the traditional family unit, both in terms of gender role and in terms of its structure. Whatever its character, however, the family – nuclear or extended – ensures the continuity of identity, tradition, customs, and culture.

The Cognitive Revolution

Many forms of life can be said to have a language that enables them to communicate. Animals can share information connected to their immediate reality – about sources of food, reproduction, or danger – which allows them to survive. Human language, however, is more than a functional tool with survival value: it incorporates symbols and rules, allowing us to share abstract ideas and concepts.

The origin of the development of human language – which eventually brought about what is known as the Cognitive Revolution – remains a controversial subject that raises more questions than it provides answers. It is generally accepted that the ability to speak was shared already some 100,000 years ago by *Homo sapiens* and Neanderthals, and that it is probably an innate, built-in ability. Evidence of this ability has not only been found in the shape and structure of the mouth and throat as well as in the brain of both species, but also in archaeological remains indicating that early *Homo sapiens* engaged in cult and art – activities that derive directly from this capability.

Among the enormous benefits of human language are the possibility to discuss things that do not exist or cannot be seen, such as the past or the future; to teach and pass on symbols and ideas related to a specific culture; to speak about other people and build complex social structures; to weave myths, tell stories, record events, and form an individual and a collective memory. Human language has enabled us to create a “fictive reality” – an imagined realm that makes it possible for very large numbers of people (who do not necessarily inhabit the same time or space) to cooperate and to share common ideas. This is the basic condition that allowed for the shaping of religions and the creation of beliefs. The ability to talk turned *Homo sapiens* into a ruler of the Universe. The rest is history...

The Agricultural Revolution

The domestication of plants and animals marked a crucial turning point in the history of humankind that revolutionized human behavior. Also known as the Neolithic Revolution, it transformed nomadic groups foraging for food into sedentary communities cultivating the land and living from its produce. The land also provided the materials to build homes that offered protection and a place to stock food surplus. This in turn accelerated population growth and promoted the creation of larger societies.

Similar processes took place in several parts of the world within a couple of



thousand years. In the Fertile Crescent (of which the Land of Israel was a part), it occurred some 9,500 years ago. Farmers built homes in which they lived for generations, crystallizing into organized societies characterized by a centralized administration, social hierarchy, complex economy, and technological progress. They also formed ties with other villages, creating a common cultural realm that extended from Lake Van in Anatolia to ancient Jericho.

Thus, the creators of the grinding bowl (such as the one displayed here) can be seen as the creators of civilization – the precursors of the social structures and cultural institutions that still characterize our way of life today.

City and House

The process of urbanization revolutionized society, leading to the consolidation of religion, the institutionalization of government, the flourishing of the arts, and the prospering of the commerce. This process was rooted in changes caused by the village life: With the growth in population, not everybody was called to work in agriculture, and social classes were formed. As the chasm between the classes widened and the administrative system grew increasingly complex, conditions ripened for the creation of urban culture.

The earliest cities were carefully planned units whose rule extended to the surrounding agricultural settlements and lands. They were built on the banks of important rivers in Mesopotamia and Egypt in the second half of the 4th millennium BCE. Shortly thereafter cities also began to emerge in the Land of Israel – among them Bet Yerah, Megiddo, Ai, Tel Erani, and Arad.

The city offered protection against enemies and the forces of nature. There the individual could build houses – units that contributed to the urban fabric while providing privacy, and a warm dwelling. With the development of civilization and the emergence of big cities around the globe, the tension between the individual and society increased, and the sense of protection offered by the city was replaced by a sense of alienation. Even the home – the private cell where the individual can feel perfectly safe – has become a place where we sometimes feel marginalized and isolated.

Writing

Although humans have had the ability to speak for dozens of thousands of years, writing only appeared some 5,500 years ago. Developed by the Sumerians in southern Mesopotamia (modern Iraq), it was at first a partial system that was meant to document the transfer of goods – usually to temples. Temple officials needed to keep track of what came in, what was in store, and what came out, and because of the vast quantities and wide variety of supplies and their constant flow, human memory was insufficient to do so. With the invention of writing, they could make one type of marks to represent numerals and another to represent what they wanted to count – people, animals, crops, merchandise – by making impressions on tablets of damp clay with sharpened bamboo reeds. This early system of writing is known as cuneiform script.

Within a few hundred years, the Sumerians discovered that they could also use script to do many other things – record the King's activities, draw up contracts, tell tales about their gods – and this eventually led to the development of full-



fledged writing. Following the Sumerians, many other peoples, including the Chinese, the Egyptians, and the Canaanites, developed their own script, often based on earlier forms of writing. Thus, both the ancient Hebrew and the ancient Greek alphabets belong to the family of Proto-Canaanite script.

Law

It's hard to imagine our life without laws to regulate our behavior. But was this always the case?

It is generally accepted that before the advent of organized society there were no laws, and human beings only took care of their own basic needs. With the establishment of society and settled communities, conflicts emerged between people about land ownership and property. To save human society from a state of total anarchy where "man is a wolf to man" laws were made to enforce accepted values and normative behavior. Human beings began to formulate social contracts, which eventually laid the foundation for the laws created by governments and states.

Among the oldest codes of law known to us are the *Hammurabi Codex* (written almost 4,000 years ago by the King of Babylon) and the Ten Commandments. Hammurabi's edicts are civil laws, addressing issues of human relationships, punishment, and criminal justice. The Ten Commandments (and other biblical laws) add laws pertaining to the relationship between human beings and God. Laws are essentially relative, reflecting the norms and values of the culture that creates them. In this context, the fundamental challenge is to find the balance between laws that protect individual liberty and those that protect communal life, and this often raises the question: Are we really all equal before the law?

Money

From the time human societies were formed and people began to exchange commodities, the problem arose of how to determine the worth of specific goods (how many tomatoes equal one goat?). Initially, the solution was to use as medium of exchange a variety of items – dried tea leaves, salt, beads, fur – that were valuable to all. With the expansion of trade beyond the borders of a specific society, however, this too became problematic as not every culture held these items in the same regard. The solution came with the emergence of coins, and later banknotes, which set fixed standards for all and thus enabled different countries to carry out economic transactions.

Coins as we know them first appeared in Asia Minor around the 7th century BCE. Made of electrum – an alloy of gold and silver – they were issued by a recognized authority that strictly controlled their weights to guarantee that they would correspond to agreed standards. The idea of minting coins spread to the Greek islands and in parallel and quite independently, China and India also developed coinage as a system of exchange in the 6th century BCE.

Today, even though it consists mostly of electronic currency rather than physical entity, money as a convention still rules supreme and everybody yearns for it.



The Industrial Revolution

The period between the middle of the 18th century and the end of the 19th century is known as the Industrial Revolution: machines were invented that could replace human beings in manufacturing processes, saving great amounts of time and money and enabling the transportation of merchandise across vast distances. The impact of the industrial revolution, however, went far beyond the economy: it brought about social mobility, with villagers thronging to the city as a result of increased opportunities for employment.

The development of the steam engine in England propelled humankind into the modern age. It was originally invented to solve problems in the coal mines, but in 1774 it became clear that it could be put to a wide variety of uses.

Revolutionizing our notions of time and space, the steam engine made it possible to move at unprecedented velocities and across previously unthinkable distances, prompting radical innovations in industry and transportation. The first commercial railway was inaugurated in 1825 – also in England – and it symbolizes perhaps more than anything the Industrial Revolution, contributing much to its progress. These and other technological advances had a profound influence on the economy, which became increasingly based on industrial mass production, as well as having major demographic and cultural repercussions. If the steam engine was the hero of the first stage of the industrial revolution, the invention of electricity in the middle of the 19th century is most identified with the second. Liberating us from the dependence on daylight, it revolutionized our lifestyle.

Globalization

The rapid pace of technological advances in recent decades brought with it a change in the rules of the game worldwide. Borders can no longer stop merchandise, information, or people, and the resulting global market affects international relations on a political, cultural, and economic level, as well as touching the lives of each and every one of us.

Although the term “global village” was only coined in the second half of the 20th century, the roots of globalization go as far back as the end of the 15th century, with the discovery of the “new world”. Based on the activities of local explorers, the Portuguese started to create a network of trade links reaching all the way to Africa, Asia, and Brazil. With the establishment of European colonies in Africa, international trade became even more widespread, involving the exchange of gold and spices, plants and foods, and even populations (including slaves) and cultures.

At about the same time another major revolution took place – the invention of the printing press by Johannes Gutenberg. After the Gutenberg Bible – the first book to be printed – the way was paved for the mass production and circulation of printed books. As a result, knowledge became widely available and no longer the sole privilege of a small social elite.

Today there are nations closing in on themselves to preserve their own culture, but in most of the world the differences between cultures are being blurred. A good example is that of “Americanization”. Big American corporations – fast food chains, soft drink companies etc. – have infiltrated almost every single



market in the world, and American brands can be found even in the farthest corners of the globe.

The Scientific Revolution

The Scientific Revolution has completely changed the life of the human being and its effects are still on process.

The rapid advances in different fields like astronomy, biology and medicine that occurred in Europe in the 16th -17th centuries, are usually described as the beginning of the Scientific Revolution, but it is during the 20th century that the Scientific Revolution took its second step, when discoveries in technology and sciences had dramatically changed, expanded their boundaries and provided humanity with accesses to power that was not in its possession, prior to it.

Albert Einstein's theory of relativity and the subsequent invention of the atomic bomb mark the moment when humankind was not only able to change history but to terminate it. Since then men have crossed the boundaries of space, traveled to the moon and back, cloned animals, change the nature of their body, in a continuous struggle to seek eternity.

Future

Thinkers have always gazed into the future, and history is replete with groundbreaking scientists who revolutionized the world. At this very moment, innovators from various disciplines – scientists, programmers, entrepreneurs – are busy engineering our future, using cutting-edge tools such as nano- and bio-technology, synthetic biology, artificial intelligence, and virtual reality. Social and economic institutions as we know them are about to change. The digital generation, part of a growing global phenomenon, is “connected” to its smartphones and developing new ways of thinking, interacting, working, and socializing.

Genetic engineering and technology are progressing at breakneck speed – but are they a double-edged sword? Will the yearning for eternal life affect the evolution of the human species? Can the ability to clone animals and plants, make physiological changes in our bodies, and revive extinct species usher in a better world?

When we become able to create a more intelligent species, society will have to define the limits. Will our own creative power, like the legendary golem, spell doom or redemption?



Quotes of Yuval Noah Harari

FIRE OPENED UP FOR
HUMANS COUNTLESS
NEW SHELVES IN THE
SUPERMARKET OF
NATURE.

THERE ARE MANY
DIFFERENT SPECIES
OF BEARS, FOXES,
AND DOLPHINS ON
EARTH – WHY
ONLY ONE HUMAN
SPECIES?

WERE
ANIMALS THE
MAIN VICTIMS
OF HISTORY?

HUMANKIND
RULES THE WORLD
BECAUSE IT IS THE
ONLY ANIMAL
THAT BELIEVES IN
FICTION.

WHEAT
DOMESTICATED
HUMANS.

WRITING
APPEARED IN
ORDER TO STORE
INFORMATION THAT
HUMANS COULD NOT
STORE IN THEIR
MIND.

THE HOUSE IS AN
ARTIFICIAL ISLAND
THAT NATURE IS
NOT ALLOWED TO
ENTER.



BIOLOGY
EABLES, CULTURE
FORBIDS.

MONEY IS
THE ONLY
THING IN THE
WORLD THAT
EVERYBODY
TRUSTS.

THERE ARE NO
INDEPENDENT
COUNTRIES OR
AUTHENTIC
CULTURES ANY
MORE.

WHEN YOU USE
RAW MATERIALS
AND ENERGY, YOU
HAVE LESS OF
THEM; WHEN YOU
USE KNOWLEDGE,
YOU HAVE MORE
OF IT.

AFTER FOUR BILLION
YEARS OF EVOLUTION,
HUMANS ARE THE ONLY
ANIMALS WHO HAVE
BROKEN THROUGH THE
BOUNDARIES OF THE
PLANET.

Publication



Eine kurze Geschichte der Menschheit 100 000 Jahre Kulturgeschichte

German edition

Bundeskunsthalle

148 Pages

Publisher: Prestel, Munic

ISBN: 978-3-7913-8351-4

Price: € 19.95



Current and Upcoming Exhibitions

THE RHINE

**The Biography of a European River
until 22 January 2017**

The Rhine is one of the world's busiest rivers. For thousands of years it has carried not only coal, building material and people, but also luxury goods and art treasures, weapons, ideas, fairytales and myths through the western half of Europe. Its course is lined by imposing cities, monasteries and cathedrals as well as by conurbations and industrial zones. Dividing line and nexus in equal measure, it continues to mark the people who have settled on its banks. It has been regulated, straightened, polluted, fought over, conquered and occupied. The European Union was founded in Strasbourg on the Rhine, and the exhibition heeds its cultural and political imperative of cross-border cooperation between the riparian states of Switzerland, Liechtenstein, Austria, Germany, France and the Netherlands.

Following the course of the Rhine from its sources to the Rhine-Meuse-Schelde delta, the exhibition sheds light on many of the momentous and often dramatic events that punctuate more than 2000 years of cultural history.

An exhibition of the Bundeskunsthalle in cooperation with the LVR-LandesMuseum Bonn

Concurrently, the LVR-LandesMuseum Bonn presents the exhibition *bilderstrom – Der Rhein und die Fotografie 2016–1853*

TOUCHDOWN

**An Exhibition with and about People with Down's Syndrome
until 12 March 2017**

The exhibition with and about people with Down's syndrome is the first exhibition of its kind to take visitors on an experimental and culture historical journey through our past and present. It tells the story of a complex relationship. It describes how people lived, live and want to live – people with and without Down's syndrome.

Conceived in cooperation with people with Down's syndrome, the exhibition presents scientific and artistic artefacts from the realms of archaeology, contemporary history, genetics, medicine, sociology, literature, film, theatre and the fine arts. In its conceptual depth and dynamic diversity of voices, the exhibition does not set out to provide pat ready answers but to engage in a sustainable and better informed debate about social diversity and participation.

A cooperation with the research project TOUCHDOWN 21

GREGOR SCHNEIDER

Wall Before Wall

2 December 2016 to 19 February 2017

Gregor Schneider, born in 1969, is an internationally renowned radical artist whose work frequently gives rise to heated debate. Working in different media, he has developed a complex and self-referential oeuvre that crosses recent German history with the dystopian places of personal existence. In the mid-



1980s the artist began building complete rooms inside of existing rooms, the new room replicating the space that houses it. Since then he has created a large body of spatial constructions that divests everyday places of their familiarity. In 2001 he won the Golden Lion of the Venice Biennale for his installation *Haus u r* in the German Pavilion. The installation consisted of a total of twenty-four rooms of his childhood home in Rheydt, which has been central to his creative practice since 1985 and which he has gradually developed in different directions. For the Bundeskunsthalle the artist is designing a display that traces the course of his career in key works: a selection of paintings (1982–1985) and the documentation of early works (1984–1985) are followed by complete rooms from *Haus u r* as well as recent works involving culturally and historically important buildings. Films, duplicate sculptures and staged situations with actors complete the presentation.

Subject to change!