



Helsinki City Museum to open their new flagship museum on 13 May 2016 in the historic Tori Quarters

- **Half a block of the oldest area in Helsinki joined together to create new museum**
 - **Immersive displays take visitors back in time to the 1800s - 1990s**
 - ***Museum of Broken Relationships* comes to Finland for the first time**

Helsinki City Museum will open their new flagship museum on 13 May 2016 following an 18 month redevelopment project which has transformed five buildings in the Tori Quarters; a historic part of the city that connects the Senate Square with Market Square on the seafront. Taking over five buildings including the Sederholm House – the oldest building in Helsinki – and benefitting from three landscaped inner courtyards, the new Helsinki City Museum will open up spaces which have previously never been accessible to the public.

The opening programme of the new Helsinki City Museum has been designed to bring history to life and create the feeling for visitors of walking back through time. Working with the interior design firm Kakadu Oy, the museum curators have created a number of immersive spaces and interactive displays. Each of the themed spaces will be filled with historically accurate material, including furniture, technology, crockery, that visitors will be able to interact with and in some cases use – transforming the traditional museum experience.

A dramatic lounge in the new lobby will present seating areas inspired by interior design from the 1950s to 1990s. The celebrated museum *Children's Town* will reopen in the Sederholm House, where children can play in boutiques and workshops from 18th-century Helsinki, sit at a school desk in a 1930s primary school class and visit a 'grandma's home' from the 1970s, complete with volunteer Grandmas on the weekends. Some of the museum's themed rooms will also be available for hire, including an atelier or artist's studio inspired by the memory of Finnish artist Severin Falkman (1831 -1889), and a 1980s themed meeting room/ events space on the ground floor.

Showcasing the museum's extensive collection of photographs and everyday items, the opening exhibition *Helsinki Bites* will tell the story of the city's history through personal stories. Exploring new ways to engage with history, Helsinki City Museum have partnered with leading software firm, Futurice to create an experience called *The Time Machine*, which will allow visitors to enter into a previous world. Virtual reality technology, animation and sound will bring the founding collection of photographs by Signe Brander to life. On entering the 'time machine', the viewer will become a part of the frame, suddenly finding themselves walking through cobbled streets in a historic Helsinki, surrounded by people who lived in the city over a hundred years ago.

Inspired by the nostalgia associated with the past, the museum's temporary programme will revolve around the emotional relationship with memory. The 2016 programme launches with *The Museum of Broken Relationships*, on show in Finland for the first time. Conceptualized in Croatia by the artists Olinka Vištica and Dražen Grubišić following their break-up, the museum offers the chance to overcome an emotional collapse through creation; by contributing objects to the museum's collection. Simultaneously uplifting, heart-breaking and humorous, the museum's collection offers an insight into how people cope with the end of a relationship. An open call, launching today in Helsinki, invites the public to donate objects and stories that will together create a unique portrait of past relationships and emotional histories from Helsinki.

In addition to exhibitions, multiple spaces throughout the museum - including the courtyards, cafes and new lounge areas - will be open to the public for free to enjoy throughout the day and evening, with the aim of creating a new cultural hub in the Tori Quarters.

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Notes to Editors

Helsinki City Museum

Founded in 1906 by the Helsinki City Council's Board of Antiquities, Helsinki City Museum is one of the city's longest-standing museums. The museum was established with the collection of almost 1000 photographs by the leading female photographer Signe Brander, who was commissioned to capture a portrait of the city between 1907-1913 as it underwent rapid industrial and social change. Since then, the museum's collection has grown to encompass over 1 million photographs, 450,000 historical objects and 6,000 works of art, which together tell a compelling story about the history of the city. The programme combines international touring exhibitions with immersive and interactive displays of historic objects.

The museum, which has been free of charge since 2008, includes a collection centre and five museums: Hakasalmi Villa, built in 1843, which housed the first ever exhibition by the Helsinki City Museum; The Tram Museum in Töölö at the Korjaamo Culture Factory; Museum of Worker Housing, focusing on the history of everyday life in Finland; Burgher's House, the oldest surviving wooden building in the city dating back to 1818; and the flagship Helsinki City Museum, due to open in May 2016.

The new Helsinki City Museum will open in the Tori Quarters. Almost half a block of the oldest area of Helsinki will be joined together to create the museum, which lies in a unique location joining the capital's iconic Senate Square with the Market Square on the waterfront.

The renovation of the museum buildings have been designed by Arkkitehdit Davidsson Tarkela; the interior of the museum has been designed by Kakadu Oy; and design agency Werklig have designed the new visual identity.

Aleksanterinkatu 16, Helsinki - +358 9 310 36630 / www.helsinkicitymuseum.fi

Opening hours and entrance from 13 May 2016: Mon–Fri 11:00–19:00, Sat–Sun 11:00–17:00; Groups of children and students also 9:00–11:00 on weekdays; Entrance to the city museum is always free of charge.

Premises:

First floor

Lobby, Café, Museum shop, *The Time Machine*, Kasari meeting room, Picture Browsersy, *Children's Town*, Multi-functional spaces Falkman Wing and Falkman Corner, Courtyards: Sederholm Courtyard, Govinius Courtyard and Falkman Courtyard

Second floor

Falkman Atelier, *Children's Town*, *Helsinki Bites*

Fourth floor

The Museum of Broken Relationships

Tori Quarters

Tori Quarters are the historical centre of Helsinki, where the heart of the old town meets the new buzz of the city. Located right next to the sea, between the Market Square and Senate Square, Tori Quarters enable encounters between old and new; travellers and locals; east and west as well as city administration and the local citizens. The historical buildings of Tori quarters, used for administration offices for over 40 years, are now being renovated, opening up new spaces for new businesses and Helsinki-dwellers and travellers alike. To keep the quarters vivid, the Tori Quarters project also produces events, rents out empty spaces to interesting pop-up events and acts as a setting and an enabler for new urban culture. <http://www.torikorttelit.fi/en>