### World Museums

### The British Museum (Great Britain)

London is a city rich in museums. There's museums full of toys, furniture, wax people, antique furniture, in fact, something for practically every taste. It's hard to see them all, even if you're here for a very long time, so picking which museums to see can sometimes be quite difficult. Still for most visitors, The British Museum always ranks as one of London's most popular.

The British Museum had it's origins back in 1753 when the government was given various collections by a famous physician, Sir Hans Soane. The museum's collections have grown through the years and the present building was erected in the early 1830s. Until last year, the British Museum shared it's location with The British Library, which among other important tasks, houses a copy of every book published in Britain since 1911 (required by law!), and the buildings of the former Library are in the process of being converted into a new visitor's centre for the Museum. The Museum is one of the few quality tourist sites in London that is also still free to the public. This may change in the very near future though, and any donations are gratefully accepted as you enter.

**The Louvre (France)**

The Louvre is situated between the rue de Rivoli and the Seine. It is the most important public building in Paris and one of the largest and most magnificent palaces in the world,the construction of which extended over three centuries. However, its great architectural and historical interest is sometimes overshadowed by the popularity of the art-collection which it contains. It became a national art gallery and museum since 1793.   
    Probably one of the most important painting that it contains is the Mona Lisa. Over four century old, it still fascinates hundreds of visitors. As Michelet wrote: "This canvas attracts me, calls me, invades me, absorbs me. I go to it in spite of myself, like a bird to a snake".

**The National Gallery of art (USA)**

The National Gallery of Art was created in 1937 for the people of the United States of America by a joint resolution of Congress, accepting the gift of financier and art collector Andrew W. Mellon. During the 1920s, Mr. Mellon began collecting with the intention of forming a gallery of art for the nation in Washington. In 1937, the year of his death, he promised his collection to the United States. Funds for the construction of the West Building were provided by The A. W. Mellon Educational and Charitable Trust. On March 17, 1941, President Franklin D. Roosevelt accepted the completed building and the collections on behalf of the people of the United States of America.

The paintings and works of sculpture given by Andrew Mellon have formed a nucleus of high quality around which the collections have grown. Mr. Mellon's hope that the newly created National Gallery would attract gifts from other collectors was soon realized in the form of major donations of art from Samuel H. Kress, Rush H. Kress, Joseph Widener, Chester Dale, Ailsa Mellon Bruce, Lessing J. Rosenwald, and Edgar William and Bernice Chrysler Garbisch as well as individual gifts from hundreds of other donors.

The Gallery's East Building, located on land set aside in the original Congressional resolution, was opened in 1978. It accommodates the Gallery's growing collections and expanded exhibition schedule and houses an advanced research center, administrative offices, a great library, and a burgeoning collection of drawings and prints. The building was accepted for the nation on June 1, 1978, by President Jimmy Carter. Funds for construction were given by Paul Mellon and the late Ailsa Mellon Bruce, the son and daughter of the founder, and by The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

The Collectors Committee, an advisory group of private citizens, has made it possible to acquire paintings and sculpture of the twentieth century. Key works of art have also come to the Gallery through the Patrons' Permanent Fund. In addition, members of the Circle of the National Gallery of Art have provided funds for many special programs and projects.

**The Vasa Museum (Sweden)**

The Vasa Museum is Scandinavia's most visited museum, located in Stockholm, capital of Sweden.

The Museum was inaugurated in 1990. In the large shiphall stands the warship Vasa - the only remaining, intact 17th century ship in the world. The lower rig has been rebuilt, complete with masts, stays and shrouds. Just like the Vasa would have looked like when set for winter in harbour. The wreck, salvaged in 1961, is now once again a complete ship.

Surrounding the ship are several permanent exhibitions, cinemas, a shop and a restaurant.

# The Hunterian Museum (Scotland)

The Hunterian Museum was built on the grounds of the University of Glasgow which lay then on Glasgow's High Street. Opened to the public in 1807, it is thus the oldest public museum in Scotland. In 1870 the Museum was transferred, along with the rest of the University, to its present home at Gilmorehill in the western suburbs of the city.

The collections have grown enormously since Hunter's time. At first they were all housed together, but gradually sections were dispersed to appropriate University teaching departments. In 1980 the art collection was transferred to a purpose-built Art Gallery.

**The Archaeological museum at Olympia (Greece)**

***O***ne of the most important archaeological museums in Greece. It hosts in its collection artefacts from the sanctuary of Olympian Zeus, in Olympia, where the ancient Olympic Games were born and hosted.   
The new museum was constructed in 1975, and eventually opened in 1982, re-exhibiting its treasures. The architect of the museum was Patrocolos Karadinos.

# Museo Del Prado (Spain)

The Prado Museum is a neo-Classical building by the Architect Juan de Villanueva, the construction of which began in the year 1785. It was conceived of as a museum and natural history room forming part of a building complex dedicated to the study of science, as planned under the reign of Charles III and within the scope of the urban reform that took place on the Paseo del Prado (previously named Salon del Prado), which also embellished with various monumental fountains (Cybele, Apollo and Neptune).

It was established in 1819 as the "Royal Museum of Painting and Sculpture" by King Ferdinand VII, with pieces from the royal collections amassed by earlier Spanish Monarchs, his forebears. At the end of the 19th century, the Museum -by then national in scope- received works from another museums, then called the Trinity, that were of a ecclesiastic nature and which had been expropriated under laws governing the depreciation of ecclesiastic assets. From the time of the creation and merger of the two museums many other works of art have been added to the Prado through donations, legacies and acquisitions.

Only a tenth of the museum's artistic holdings are actually on display in its two buildings, the Villanueva building and the Casуn del Buen Retiro. The remainder is held in other places, museums, institutions and Government buildings or in storage at specially conditioned sites within the two museum buildings.

The large museum collections fundamentally include paintings. However, there is a valuable collection of sculptures, drawings, furniture, luxury art, coins and medallions that cannot be permanently displayed due to the lack of space.

The painting collection (12th to 20th century) is displayed as followed: up to the 18th century and Goyas work is in the Villanueva building, and the 19th and 20th centuries' work in the nearby Casуn del Buen Retiro.

The fundamental painting collections belong to the Spanish schools -the best represented- and the Italian and Flemish schools. The French, Dutch and German schools, through numerically less represented, are not unworthy of mention vis-a-vis their quality. Two halls are expressly reserved for sculpture, but sculptural pieces are scattered throughout the different halls in both museum buildings. All decorative art is on display in what is known as the Dauphin's Treasure.

**Uffizi Gallery (Italy)**

The construction of the Uffizi palace began in 1560, when the Duke Cosimo I dei Medici decided to build a special seat for the offices (hence the name "uffizi") of the thirteen magistracies, that is for the administrative center of the Florentine State. Cosimo I commissioned the project of the building to Giorgio Vasari, painter and architect at the Medici court, who realized one of the most famous architectural masterwork of Florentine Mannerism. Stretching from the Signoria Palace to the river Arno the costruction posed difficult technical problems since the foundations were quite over the river; Vasari had to include into the building the ancient church of San Pier Scheraggio and the ancient Zecca (near the Orcagna Loggias). When in 1574 Vasari and Cosimo I died, the Uffizi were not yet completed: Francesco I, son of Cosimo I, succeeded his father, Bernardo Buontalenti succeeded Vasari in supervision of construction; in 1581 the building was terminated. Some years before at the first floor the offices of the thirteen magistracies had been installed: everyone of these had a beautiful entrance door in the portico at the ground floor. A man of peculiar intelligence, Francesco I (1541-1587) had a profound interest for science, alchemy and art; in 1581 he decided to give a nearly private arrangement to the second floor of the Uffizi. In the west wing he set laboratories where specialized artisans worked jewels and precious stones, perfumes were distilled, new medecines were experimented; in the east wing he placed ancient sculptures of medicean collection: shortly afterwards in this side of the building Buontalenti started to erect the Tribune. Francesco's successors increased more and more the medicean collection with new acquisitions of paintings, sculptures, precious and rare object in general; they were set not only at the Uffizi but also at Pitti Palace or in other medicean palaces. The continuing growth of the granducal collections in 17th century enriched the Uffizi: new rooms of the second floor were arranged to display masterworks as in a museum and in the meanwhile the Gallery could be visited on request by Florentine or foreign persons. For this the Uffizi can be considered the first kind of modern museum of the history. In 1737, with the death of Gian Gastone (born in 1671) the Medici dynasty ended and the family of Lorraine ascended the throne of Tuscany. The last descendant of Medici family, the Palatine Electrix Anna Maria Luisa, sister of Gian Gastone, made an important agreement that secured for ever the city of Florence all the medicean art treasures. It was so eliminated any risk of dispersion of this artistic patrimony unique in the world. The Lorraine family, from Pietro Leopoldo to Leopoldo II, enriched the whole collection, increasing it with important masterpieces: many paintings and several hundred of drawings were bought, many Florentine pictures were transferred to the Uffizi from Tuscan monastries, after suppression of religious orders during the 19th century. In 1860 at the formation of the Kingdom of Italy the Medici-Lorraine collections became public property to all effects and purposes. At the end of the 19th century a new arrangement of the Gallery caused the destruction of the wonderful Medici Theatre, to make way to the first rooms of the east corridor, before the Tribune  
. In 1989 the State Archive that occupied the first floor of the Uffizi, has been transferred in the new seat of Piazza Beccaria: the first floor will be indeed arranged to double the Gallery's area, as planned in the Nuovi Uffizi project. The first six rooms of this floor have beeen recently restored; all the other rooms soon will be added to them, to make way to the exhibition of many masterworks now conserved in the warehouses and realize new arrangements for all needs of a museum of such importance.

**The Museum of The Romanian Peasant**

The Museum of The Romanian Peasant is part of the large family of European Museums for Folk Arts and Traditions. It is a National Museum, functionning under patronage of the Ministry of Culture. Owner of an impressive collection of objects, even if otherwise poor - as far as the financial means necessary to capitalize this collection are minimum -, placed in a historical monument building, (new Romanian style), whose restauration costs exceed by far the budget allocated by the Ministry of Culture, The Museum of The Romanian Peasant in spite of all these, has managed to put in practice a special type of muzeology. The original poetics developped in relation to the object was certain one of the reason why the Museum was awarded the EMYA - European Museum of the Year Award. One of the other reasons, of equal importance, was the very assuming of the poverty; the personalized style of display in the halls has a certain number of extensions which sometime happen to go beyond the door of the Museum: that is, not only openings, concerts and conferences, but also publications and unconventional ideas, like the Missionary Museum or the Village School, for instance.

**The Hunt Museum**

The Hunt Collection is an internationally important collection of original works of art and antiquities. It is a personal one, formed by a couple who judged each piece that they collected according to the standard of its design, craftsmanship and artistic merit. These criteria they applied to objects of all ages - from the Neolithic to the twentieth century.

One of the strengths of the Hunt Collection is its medieval material. Its range covers objects commissioned and used by both ecclesiastical and lay patrons, and includes statues in stone, bronze and wood, crucifixes, panel paintings, metalwork, jewellery, enamels, ceramics and crystal. The importance of the collection is such that some items are currently on loan to the British Museum and the Victoria & Albert Museum in London, while others have been shown in international exhibitions.

The links between the Hunt collection and other museums can be illustrated by the fact that one fragment of the Beaufort, late 14th century armorial tapestry, is on display in the Hunt Museum in Limerick, while other fragments of the same tapestry are in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam; the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston and the Burrell Collection, Glasgow.

Besides the medieval, there is a wealth of other material ranging from Egyptian, Greek and Roman items through to the 19th century metalwork and ceramics. There is also an important collection of Irish archaeological material ranging from Neolithic flints, through Bronze Age gold, the unique 8th century Antrim Cross, hand pins, pennanular brooches, down to penal crucifixes of the 18th and 19th century. Irish decorative arts are represented too in a range of items including Irish delft, Belleek porcelain, 18th century Dublin tapestries as well as ecclesiastical and domestic silver.

**The Museum Jean Tinguely**Dedicated to the life and work of Swiss artist Jean Tinquely, who died in 1991, the Museum is located in Solitude Park, on the right bank of the Rhine. The Museum was erected as a gift to the city and region of Basel by F. Hoffmann-La Roche LTD to mark the company's 100th anniversary in 1996. It was designed and built by Swiss architect Mario Botta and has been open to the public since 3 Ocober 1996.   
  
The Museum's collection consists mainly of works generously donated by the artist's widow, Niki de Saint Phalle, and works from the holdings of F. Hoffmann-La Roche Ltd.

The Museum exhibits works spanning three and a half decades in the artist's life. Viewed in their broader context, they mirror artistic developments in the second half of this century.  
  
On the gallery level the Museum offers a chronological presentation of works from the 1950s, 60s, 70s and 80s. The contrasts between the various rooms-like those in the artist's life-are striking.  
  
In the 1950s Tinquely's works, often executed in black-and-white, possessed a stark, spare quality and were characterized by tremendous clarity. In 1959 his méta-matic drawing machines appeared, marking an important renewal.  
  
1960 was the year of Tinquely's huge international success with his self-destructing *Homage to New York*. But the artist's style was changing rapidly. He now began working with arc-welded scrap iron, and his sculptures became more provocative and comical.  
  
Following the completion of *Eureka* for the Expo 64 in Lausanne, his works became more 'sculpture-like' in the classical sense of the word. Works from this period are often all black and are apt to strike the viewer as abstract objects rather than as 'found' ones.  
  
The 1980s were characterized by large-scale projects, among others the large altars. The altar-piece *Lola*, characteristic of this period, can be seen in the Museum.  
  
The next two rooms contain the monumental work *Mengele - Dance of Death*, a reflection on the inevitability of death.  
  
In the large hall, monumental sculptures such as *Grosse Méta Maxi-Maxi Utopia*, *Fatamorgana* and *Agricultural Platform* are displayed.

# The National Palace Museum

In Taipei is the National Palace Museum, in which is preserved and enormous amount of art and artifact from all of China's 6,000-year history. The National Palace Museum collection was originally the Imperial collection until Chiang liberated it. It was then moved several times until finally the Communists started causing trouble; then the whole thing was shipped to Taiwan. This is probably a good thing, since otherwise it would have been destroyed in the cultural revolution.

**The Semitic Museum**

The Semitic Museum was founded in 1898, and moved into its present location in 1903. It originally was the home of the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations, a departmental library, a repository for research collections, a public educational institute, and a center for archaeological exploration. Among the Museum's early achievements are the first scientific excavations in the Holy Land (at Samaria in 1907-1912) and important excavations at Nuzi and the Sinai, where the earliest alphabet was found. During World War II, the Museum was taken over by the Navy and closed to the public.

In the 1970s, it resumed its academic activities, and today is again home to the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations and to the University's collections of Near Eastern archaeological artifacts. These artifacts comprise over 40,000 items, including pottery, cylinder seals, sculpture, coins and cuneiform tablets. Most are from museum-sponsored excavations in Iraq, Jordan, Israel, Egypt, Cyprus, and Tunisia. The Museum is dedicated to the use of these collections for teaching, research and publication of Near Eastern archaeology, history, and culture.

**Tareq Rajab Museum**

The Museum was built up and run privately by the Rajab family. It was opened to the general public in 1980. The Museum is divided into two main sections of Islamic Art:

# SECTION A

This Section deals with calligraphy, pottery, metalwork, glass, wood, ivory and jade carvings of the Islamic world. Early calligraphy is presented in a separate small room, showing pages from the Holy Qur'an, dating back to the first three centuries of the Islamic period. It also contains an early dated Qur'an written on parchment, dating to 393AH/AD1002. Later examples display calligraphic panels., inscriptions which were cut, or in brail script.  
A collection of Holy Qur'ans from small to large examples.  
A treatise of the 9th century scholar al-kindi on optics.  
A page fragment from the timurid Prince Baysunqur's Qur'an.  
  
**Pottery**  
The pottery section presents the full history of this art form, starting from pre-Islamic time up to the 19th century. So far the only known dated piece of this type of pottery. It is decorated with a beautiful written kuffic inscription, giving a quotation from the the Holy Qur'an. So far the earliest known ceramic object with a Quranic inscription.  
  
**Metal Work**  
The large selection of metalwork on display includes objects from the Umayyad period onward. Among them a 7th - 8th century AD bronze ewer, and an early incense burner. Seljuq, Ghaznavid and Ghurid period metalwork is well represented by ewers, flasks, oil-lamps and incense-burners. Of the later periods several bowls, ewers and trays are shown.  
  
**Glass Work**  
Islamic glass of the early periods are demonstrated by a number of vessels, including perfume flasks, medicine bottles and beakers. Some of these have cut, others applique or trailed decoration. The ivory carvings include an indian musical instrument, a so-called "Sarinda", pen-boxes and another musical instrument from ottoman Turkey, a Kemence.  
  
**Jade**  
The exhibited jades are all from Mughal India and date from the 17th and 18th centuries, including an extremely rare red and white jade as well.  
  
**Arms and Armour**  
The arms and armour is shown in several display cabinets and one room is specially dedicated to the swords and daggers of the Near and Middle East. There is also a special and extremely rare object, a ceremonial shield, carved out of buffalo hide, made at Ahmadabad in India during the 16th century.   
  
**Lacquer work**  
Islamic lacquerwork is presented in a special cabinet and it includes a 14h Mamluk box, a late 14th or early 15th century Qur'an stand, or Rahla, a signed and dated Kashmir mirror-case and many Qajar pen-boxes and mirror-cases.

# SECTION B

This part of the Museum deals with the costumes, textiles, embroideries and jewellery of the Islamic world, but also includes relevent objects from Tibet, Nepal and Bhutan.  
The objects are exhibited in the following order:  
The gulf countries: Kuwait, Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates, Oman and the Yemen.  
  
The exibited objects include jewellery, costumes and textiles of these countries. This is followed by a detailed display of folk jewellery of other near and Middle Eastern countries and also of India, Nepal, Tibet and Bhutan.  
  
The collection is particularly rich in Syrian and Palestinian costumes, while its folk jewellery is perhaps one of the richest and largest in the world.  
  
In both sections of the museum there are large numbers of swords, daggers, some old Islamic fire-arms and gun-powder holders.  
  
Likewise, an outstanding collection of musical instruments from almost every part of the Oriental world are exhibited.  
  
There is a special collection of jewellery, which once, so it is claimed, belonged to the last Emir of Bukhara.

#### The Living Art Museum

The Living Art Museum owns a very large collection of art and source material, donated by members of the Living Art Museum Association and others. When the museum was founded, a provision was incorporated in its Organization Charter, stipulating that its members would donate one work upon joining the Association and subsequently every few years. These provisions have not been strictly observed, as it soon became evident that storage space, as well as funds for the preservation and maintenance of the art collection were insufficient. Furthermore, one of the main objectives of the Living Art Museum, that of collecting contemporary art, has encouraged the official/state-owned art museums to pay more attention to contemporary art. Nevertheless, the Living Art Museum owns a fairly extensive art collection and has succeeded in preserving a unique part of Iceland's art history. For example, the Museum owns the largest artists books collection in the country, one of the world's largest collections of the work of German-Swiss artist Dieter Roth, as well as works by most members of the SÚM Group, Jón Gunnar Árnason, Magnús Pálsson, Hreinn Friðfinnsson, the brothers Sigurður Guðmundsson and Kristján Guðmundsson, Róska, Arnar Herbertsson, Magnús Tómasson, Gylfi GIacute;slason, Sigurjón Jóhannsson, Hildur Hákonardóttir and Guðbergur Bergsson.   
  
The Museum owns works by many of the nation's best-known younger artists and the collection is growing steadily. The collection also includes works by some 50 foreign artists, such as Joseph Beuys, Pieter Holstein, Richard Hamilton, Dorothy Iannone, Jan Voss, Wolf Vostell, Douwe Jan Bakker, Emmet Williams, Robert Filiou, Nini Tang, Peter Angermann, John Armleder, Geoffrey Hendriks, Jan Knap, Alan Johnston, Peter Mönning, Bengt Adlers and Franz Graf.   
  
All works of art in the Museum's possession are selected by the artists themselves and not by specialists of art institutions. A catalogue of the art collection of the Living Art Museum is accessible on a digital database.

**The Prince of Wales Museum of West India**

In the early years of the twentieth century, some prominent citizens of Bombay decided to set up a Museum with the help of the government to commemorate the visit of the Prince of Wales. One of the resolutions of the committee at its meeting on June 22, 1904 was, "The building should have a handsome and noble structure befitting the site selected, and in keeping with the best style of local architecture."

The committee spared no effort to realize this dream. On March 1, 1907, the then government of Bombay handed over to the museum committee a spot of land known as the "Crescent Site", situated at the southern end of the present Mahatma Gandhi Road. After an open competition for the design, George Wittet was commissioned to design the Museum building in 1909. George Wittet had collaborated with John Begg in the construction of the General Post Office building. His other works in Bombay include the Court of Small Causes and the magnificent Gateway of India.

**The National Museum of History (Brazil)**

**T**he National Museum of History, pertaining to the Ministry of Culture, created in 1922, is one of the most important museums in Brazil with 287.000 items that include the largest numismatic collection in Latin America.

**T**he architectural complex where the museum is situated had its origin in the Santiago Fort, located at the former Calaboose Point, one of the strategic points for the defense of the city of Rio de Janeiro.

**The National Gallery of Canada**

The National Gallery of Canada, a visual arts museum of international stature, holds its collections of art in trust for all Canadians. The mandate of the National gallery, as set out in the 1990 Museums Act is: to develop, maintain and make known, throughout Canada and internationally, a national collection of works of art, historic and contemporary, with special but not exclusive reference to Canada; and to further knowledge, understanding and enjoyment of art in general among all Canadians.

**The Museum of Moroccan Arts**

The imposing silhouette of the Dar el Makhzen dominates the Tangier kasbah.

Formerly the governor's palace, it was built in the XVIIth century and is laid out around a splendid patio decorated with enamelled faience.  
The Museum of Moroccan Arts is housed in the prince's apartments which are indeed princely: painted wooden ceilings, sculpted plaster work and mosaics, all of them exquisite.  
A worthy setting for works of art from all over Morocco, which are honoured as prestigious ambassadors of their regions.



The north is represented by firearms decorated with marquetry and its pottery bearing subtle motifs of flowers or feathers, while from Rabat come the shimmering carpets with their characteristic central medallion...  
the Fez room is quite dazzling... silks with their subtly shifting highlights, superbly bound illuminated manuscripts with the finest calligraphy, centuries-old dishes decorated in the most brilliant colours, from golden yellow right through the famous "Fez blue".  
From the miniscule to the monumental, the Moroccan Museum of Arts is an entire universe of beauty.

**Albany museum**

The Albany Museum is a provincial museum funded by the Department of Sport Art and Culture of the Eastern Cape and is an affiliated research institute of Rhodes University. The Museum today consists of a family of six buildings which includes the Natural Sciences Museum, the History Museum, the Observatory Museum, Fort Selwyn, the Old Provost military prison and the Drostdy Arch.

The Albany Museum, the second oldest museum in southern Africa, was founded on 11 September 1855, growing out of the Graham's Town Medical-Chirugical Society (later called the Literary, Scientific and Medical Society). Between 1859 and 1882 the Town Clerk of Grahamstown, Mr Glanville, served as the first Curator and he was succeeded by his daughter, Miss Mary Glanville until 1895 when Dr Selmar Schonland became the first director of the Museum. Initially the Museum was housed in several small facilities around Grahamstown, including the top floor of the City Hall, before moving to its permanent home in Somerset Street in 1902. This building now houses the core block of the present Natural Sciences Museum.

With Dr Schonland, came the historic ties which the Museum has with Rhodes University. In 1902 he addressed the Cape Parliament, speaking for the establishment of a university in Grahamstown, and persuaded the trustees of Cecil Rhodes's estate to pledge funds for the establishment of Rhodes University College. When the College was established in 1904 Dr Schonland became its first professor of Botany. In 1910 Dr Schonland was succeeded as director by Dr John Hewitt.

John Hewitt's research lay in the fields of vertebrate zoology and archaeology. He undertook archaeological excavations at the Wilton and Howison's Poort type sites. During this period Grahamstown's long-standing affair with fishes started. In 1930 Dr J.L.B. Smith, Senior Lecturer in Chemistry at Rhodes, identified and catalogued the Museum's marine fish collection. The following year Mr Rex Jubb sent the first small collection of freshwater fishes from Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) to the Museum.

On the 6th September 1941 the Museum suffered a devastating fire with a great loss of exhibited material. Fortunately the library and most of the research collections were saved. In 1952 the Museum's collection of fishes was loaned to the University's Department of Ichthyology. Three years later the Museum celebrated its centenary and, in 1957, its staff became Provincial employees.

Dr John Hewitt retired the following year, and was succeeded by Dr Tom H. Barry. During Dr Barry's tenure of five years the Hewitt and Rennie Wings were added to the Natural Sciences Museum and the 1820 Settlers Memorial Museum (now called the History Museum) was built.

The period between 1965 and 1977, the directorship of Mr C.F. Jacot Guillarmod, was one of consolidation. The National Collection of Freshwater Organisms was transferred from the CSIR to the Museum. The Early Stone Age site at Amanzi was excavated and re-excavations were done at Wilton and Howison's Poort. Fort Selwyn was restored by the Cape Provincial authority and handed over to the Museum in 1977.

In 1977 Mr Jacot Guillarmod was succeeded by Mr Brian Wilmot and it was at this time that the Museum entered a new period of growth. De Beers Consolidated Mines Limited purchased and restored the Observatory and the Priest's House and donated them to the Museum. The Old Provost military prison was restored by the Cape Province.

The freshwater fish collections of the Transvaal and Cape Nature Conservation authorities, the Natal Museum and the South African Museum were transferred to the Albany Museum (the latter two on loan) making it the largest collection in southern Africa. Museum staff started teaching short courses at the University and, in 1983, the Museum became an Affiliated Research Institute of Rhodes University. The close relationship with the University was expanded with the consolidation of the herbaria of the two institutions and the formation of the Selmar Schonland Herbarium, housed in the Natural Sciences Museum.