

In the  
Amsterdam  
Museum



AMSTERDAM  
MUSEUM

THE GOLDEN  
COACH

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Top: The Golden Coach in the courtyard of the Royal Stables; Photo: Arthur van der Vlies

Bottom: Details side panel Tribute from the Kingdom; Photo: René Gerritsen





# THE GOLDEN COACH

The Golden Coach is on display at the Amsterdam Museum! This exhibition is the first time the public will see the coach since major restoration began in 2015. Amsterdam residents gifted the Golden Coach to young Queen Wilhelmina for her inauguration in 1898. Now it's returning to Amsterdam, the city where it all began. From 18 June 2021 to 27 February 2022.

This exhibit explores the rich history of the Golden Coach. Opinions on the coach have always been wide-ranging, even before it was built, and that's still true today. Some people see it as a beautiful piece of craftsmanship, while others have criticised it. This exhibition creates space for the full spectrum of opinions on the coach and its history. The Golden Coach is the centrepiece of this extensive, multi-faceted exhibition. We'll take a look at all sides of the coach - literally and figuratively - so it's an exhibition everyone can enjoy.

The museum has also put together a comprehensive public programme, an educational programme, and a research project around the coach.

# THE EXHIBITION

The **Golden Coach** will be put on display in the **spacious courtyard**. The coach had to be hoisted over the building to get it in place.

In six spacious halls in the Amsterdam Museum, we'll dive into **different stories** from **different perspectives**: rich, but also painful stories, stories of nostalgia and craftsmanship, stories about the restoration, symbolism, and perceptions surrounding the coach. Where did the idea for this gift come from? Who made the coach? What memories do Dutch people have of the Golden Coach? There's also room for criticism, often directed at the colonial scenes on one of the panels. Who painted the panel? How should we understand and interpret those images?

An extra special aspect of the exhibition is that each of the large windows in the halls provides visitors with a unique view of the Golden Coach in the courtyard. Visitors can also venture out into the courtyard for a closer look – **a unique opportunity**.

A multidisciplinary research team compiled the exhibition, supported by a sounding board group. The Amsterdam Museum brought together a wide range of specialists, all with different backgrounds and areas of expertise, to ensure that the diverse storylines and voices could be properly translated to a wider audience.

## WHAT IS THERE TO SEE?

The exhibition explores how the Golden Coach was made. We'll take a detailed look at both the **interior and exterior**, with photos of the coach's construction by the Spijker brothers and explanations of the symbolism behind the ornamental sculptures and paintings. The curators will talk about their work, the techniques they used, and the craftsmanship that went into creating the coach.

Large-scale projections take visitors through how the coach has been used over the years. Visitors can take a walk through history and experience major milestones in the coach's more than 120-year journey. We see the coach in pride of place on festive occasions, such as Queen Wilhelmina's wedding to Prince Hendrik in 1901, other royal weddings and baptisms, and of course, on Prinsjesdag.



Photo of the construction of the Golden Coach in the Spijker brothers factory, Stadhouderskade 114. Amsterdam City Archive

But we'll also learn more about how the Golden Coach has been **the target of protests** since its very inception. Opponents of the monarchy threw smoke, paint, and water bombs at the coach in the last century. Today, criticism of the Golden Coach is primarily levelled at its depictions of colonialism. For many, that is symbolism that doesn't belong in celebrations meant for all Dutch people to enjoy.

The **criticism** surrounds paintings by Nicolaas van der Waay that are featured on the left side panel of the coach. The exhibition includes several other works by Van der Waay, including the preliminary sketches for the paintings on the coach. This section of the exhibition explores both the symbolism of the panels and their role as a propaganda piece. The exhibition also gives the current discussion around the panel an important place in the narrative.



Designs of panel paintings panel by Nicolaas van der Waay 1898. Photo's: Amsterdam City Archive.

Part of that exploration includes *Colonies* (2017, Amsterdam Museum collection), a work by Indonesian artist Iswanto Hartono. This piece is a **contemporary interpretation of and commentary** on the Golden Coach. In it, Hartono literally and figuratively illustrates the dark shadow of our colonial history.

In other rooms, paintings and objects highlight the history of the Golden Coach and Queen Wilhelmina's inauguration, when she saw it for the first time. Visitors also get an idea of how the colonies were seen in the Netherlands at the end of the 19th century. A look into the

1883 International Colonial and Export Exhibition in Amsterdam gives us greater insight into that 19th-century perspective. Van der Waay, the painter, and Spyker, the coach builder, both were present at the 1883 exhibition.

The Amsterdam Museum asked several **contemporary artists** to create pieces reflecting on the Golden Coach. Some of those works have been included in the exhibition. The rest are on display in the Amsterdam Gallery, which is dedicated entirely to the Golden Coach.



'Colonies', Iswanto Hartono, 2017. Collection: Amsterdam Museum.

# PUBLIC PROGRAMME

The museum has developed a colourful **public programme** to accompany the exhibition. The engaging, critical, and playful programmes help us start the conversation about what we see when we look at the Golden Coach - and what we don't see. Those two pathways provide a platform for constructive dialogue about society, history, and cultural identity.

There are also **lectures** scheduled throughout the exhibition, where curators, restorers, and exhibition designers will discuss the various chapters in the coach's storied life. There will be a **symposium** on the restoration for professionals and culture connoisseurs.

Every fortnight, a live broadcast of the **online talk show AM LIVE** will be recorded in the reading room. The broadcasts are an opportunity to discuss highlights, encounters, and insights from the previous week. It's an engaging way to keep the public up to date on developments around the exhibition.

# RESEARCH

The Amsterdam Museum is organising a large-scale **public survey** about the Golden Coach. We'll be asking people across the Netherlands about their views of the coach.

We'll also be asking visitors and other Dutch people for their own stories, perspectives, or memories of the Golden Coach. What does the Golden Coach symbolise? What does the visibility of the colonial past mean? The museum knows how important it is to talk and listen. It may not be an easy conversation, and there will be painful points, but we believe that will ultimately lead to more connection and greater understanding.

In the run-up to the exhibition, the museum has set up a **public research room**, where the research team is working on different aspects of the programme and discussions are held with visitors and invited guests, including members of the sounding board group. The research room features a large table with documents and literature, and a wall where people can offer up their own ideas.

We will also be conducting extensive public research outside the museum, in the city and across the country. The museum will be touring the Netherlands with an interactive **mobile installation**. We'll be asking people what they know about the coach and inviting them to share the associations, memories, emotions, and thoughts that these images evoke. We'll allow them to react to different perspectives on the Golden Coach. Every month, the museum will visit one of the country's 12 provinces.

The **public programme** also serves as a **study** of the state of the debate today. There is a dedicated room in the exhibition for perspectives, memories, and stories from people all over the country. It offers a unique opportunity for the Dutch public to share their experiences and opinions on the Golden Coach with a wider audience.

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## STAY UP TO DATE

The exhibition opens on 18 June 2021. Would you like to stay up to date with new developments? Be sure to visit [www.goudenkoets.nl](http://www.goudenkoets.nl), follow us on social media, subscribe to the newsletter, or catch an episode of AM LIVE.

Postcard of the Golden Coach from 1901.  
Collection: Dutch National Library





## AMSTERDAM MUSEUM

Address Kalverstraat 92, Amsterdam  
Open 10am to 5pm. (365 days a year)

## ACCESSIBILITY

- Train** The Amsterdam Museum is approx. 15 minutes walk from Central Station
- Tram** 2, 11 and 12 (stop Spui), 4, 14 and 24 (stop Rokin)
- Metro** 52 (stop Rokin)
- Car** The nearest parking garage is on Rokin



## PRICES

Adults	€ 20,00
Children up to and including 17 years	Free
Student card / CJP pass	€ 17,50
Museum card	€ 5,00
BankGiro Loterij VIP CARD	Free

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