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One pavilion is dedicated to the discovery of the scrolls.



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The Dead Sea Scrolls by Kossmann.dejong

An Exhibition Takes Visitors 2000 Years Back in Time

Kossmann.dejong designed the exhibition The Dead Sea Scrolls which is on show at the Drents Museum in Assen, the Netherlands. Creating narratives is the business of the Amsterdam-based exhibition architects and there is much to tell about these archaeological finds.

Discovered in eleven caves near Qumran, Israel, between 1947 and 1956, the scrolls are over 2000 years old. Sixteen of the scrolls are on display, complemented by over 400 archaeological objects from the caves' surroundings, that place the writings in the cultural and historical context of the Greek-Roman era.

Visitors to the exhibition are taken on a journey back to the time in which the manuscripts were produced and collected. Thematic displays show aspects of daily life, such as the importance of cleanliness and water, the writing and burial culture. Also visualised is the uprising of the Jews against the Romans, and the subsequent war and destruction of the temple in 70 AD which led to the flight of the Jewish people. Everyday objects, scrolls of writings, but also a robe in which a deceased child was wrapped, are dramatic proof of this flight.

A central square immerses the visitor in an abstract desert. A strong light source casts long shadows of the visitors present, while a mysterious soundscape enhances the sense of being in a desert. From here, the visitor can access three pavilions.

The 'Research Lab' dissects the Dead Sea Scrolls and gives translations of the texts. To protect the valuable manuscripts, they are not directly illuminated. When visitors want to take a closer look, they will need to switch on the light manually. The 'Three Abrahamic Religions' pavilion displays an old Bible, Quran and Torah. In 'The Discovery' pavilion, a film and some objects, tell the unusual story surrounding the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls and the journey the manuscripts have undertaken since then.

The exhibition will be open to the public until 5 January 2014.

Photography by Thijs Wolzak.

To see more exhibitions by Kossmann.dejong, take a look at the book we published about their work [here](#). The print edition is out of stock, but the digital edition is available through [Zinio](#).

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Text by Sarah de Boer-Schultz

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