



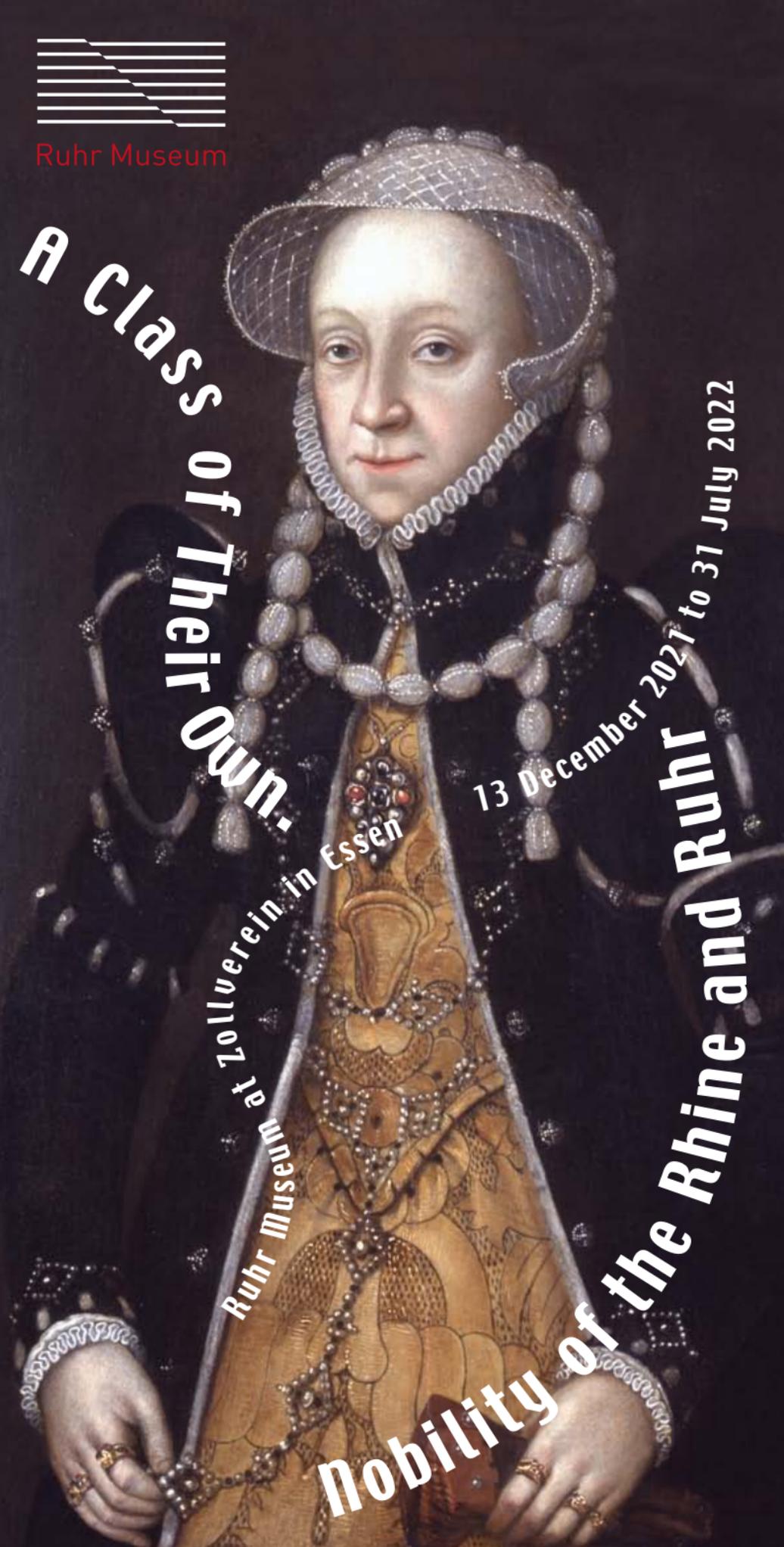
Ruhr Museum

**A Class of Their Own.**

Ruhr Museum at Zollverein in Essen

13 December 2021 to 31 July 2022

**Nobility of the Rhine and Ruhr**



**The Ruhr area and the nobility?** These two worlds appear irreconcilable from an industrial history perspective. However, the Ruhr area also has a rich pre-industrial past that once allowed it to become one of the regions of Europe with the most castles. Majestic moated castles and manors developed from many fortified buildings. Today, there are a total number of more than 400 noble residences; around 200 of them have been preserved, if often only in ruins. The exhibition "A Class of Their Own" does not only focus on the structures of noble culture, but is also dedicated to the nobility and its role in the history of this region. Which families lived here, what networks did they form, what did their everyday lives and their festivities look like, on what foundations was their power based, what rituals and symbols existed? The exhibition also examines the question of how this group, which understood itself as the elite, was able to survive despite the abrogation of its privileges and the related loss of political significance. And how does the nobility live today, what changes resulted from this permanent process of transformation?



Ceremonial armour of William V,  
Duke of Jülich-Kleve-Berg, ca. 1555,  
Kunsthistorisches Museum Wien –  
Museumsverband, Imperial Armoury,  
© KHM-Museumsverband



Gold agraffe with enamel ring, blossom  
and crowns from the Essen Abbey,  
ca. 1400, Cathedral Treasury Essen,  
photo: Christian Diehl, Dortmund,  
© Domschatz Essen

**The Rhine-Ruhr area** was never the cohesive dominion of one powerful ruler. It was always characterised by a large number of small principalities, which, besides duchies and counties, also included ecclesiastical territories and cities. Inside, the exhibition tells the thousand-year history of the nobility. During the Early Middle Ages, nobles promoted the formation of the medieval feudal system as founders of monasteries and abbeys. Castles and wars bear witness to power structures, rivalries and alliances. The representative demands of the nobility dominated in the Early Modern Period: the residences of notable families became castles with a luxurious court culture and magnificent gardens. Many privileges of the nobility disappeared with the French Revolution. The Prussian state heavily regimented them, but also opened up new fields of activity, especially in administration and the military. Nobles were increasingly active as entrepreneurs, while middle-class people were ennobled as "Schlotbarone" (smokestack barons). After the world wars, a reorientation resulted in a return to aristocratic traditions and to an increased sense of responsibility for the preservation of cultural heritage.



Double herm from the Renaissance castle Horst, 1560/70, City of Gelsenkirchen, photo: Christoph Sebastian, © Ruhr Museum



Portrait head of Emperor Frederick I (Barbarossa) from the Premonstratensian Cappenberg Abbey, 1156/71 (replica), Catholic Ministry of St. John the Evangelist, Cappenberg Castle, Selm, photo: Claus Gerdel, © LigarMedia EK, Claus Gerdel

**The exhibition's exterior rooms** look at the world of the nobility in more detail in themes spanning different periods. The tradition and self-representation of the aristocratic families are illustrated with coats of arms and genealogical tables. Graphic works and photos show the imposing noble residences of this region, while the transformation of garden design is visible in plans and paintings. Pieces of furniture and Gobelin tapestries provide insights into the noble living culture, and the noble collections are shown with books, paintings and precious items. Uniforms stand proxy for the male and female servants who were employed by the nobility over centuries. The objects in the "Childhood and upbringing" room document the provisions for education befitting of one's social status, which was linked with a deliberate marriage policy and networking in the highest circles. Court festivities as social highlights are presented with paintings and music instruments, high hunting as a noble privilege on the basis of weapons and antler rack trophies. In the "Death and Burial" room, you will find death notices alongside imposing grave monuments, and the last area, "The Fascination for the Nobility", focuses on the prevailing interest of our middle-class society in the world of the nobility.



Wilhelm of Westerholt and Gysenberg with hobby-horse and whip, 1846, private collection, photo: Christoph Sebastian, © Ruhr Museum



Sovereign Military Order of Malta (Collar of the Knight of Honour and Devotion), ca. 1880/1900, Archive of Hugenpoet Castle, Essen, photo: Christoph Sebastian, © Ruhr Museum

**The exhibition objects.** The exhibition encompasses more than 800 objects from around 160 museums, archives, libraries and private collections. Many noble families have provided exhibits that have never been shown before: portraits of their ancestors and other paintings, precious silver and porcelain tableware, as well as glass goblets and collector pieces that have remained in the family to the present day. Illustrated books from aristocratic libraries, some of which date back to the 16th century, documents and family trees provide insights into their former lifeworlds. Highlights of the exhibition are the ceremonial armour of William V, Duke of Jülich-Kleve-Berg, from the Kunsthistorisches Museum Vienna, important endowments of aristocratic women from the Essen Cathedral Treasury, the portrait of Princess-Abbess Franziska Christina of Essen, valuable tapestries and a lion hide from the former lion park of the Count of Westerholt in Gelsenkirchen. The range of exhibits extends from the Middle Ages to the present and encompasses the entire spectrum of the history of art and culture. The exhibition was designed by the Vienna-based architect Bernhard Denking.



Gala livery of the House of Fürstenberg-Herdringen, ca. 1820, Archive of the Baron (Freiherr) of Fürstenberg-Herdringen, Arnsberg, photo: Christoph Sebastian, © Ruhr Museum



Armorial box of Mechtild of Mechelen, Countess of Kleve (1324–1384), mid-14th century, Kunstpalast, Düsseldorf, © Kunstpalast – Horst Kolberg – ARTOTHEK

**All events in German.  
Unless indicated otherwise, the  
meeting point is the 24 m. level.**

### Lectures

Coking coal bunker; free; 2 hours

Tue 18 Jan\_6pm

**Dr Stefan Leenen/Heike Schimansky  
The Isenberg in Hattingen and its  
virtual reconstruction in 3D**

The archaeologist and the graphic designer provide insights into how the appearance of the Isenberg Castle in Hattingen could be reconstructed and visualised in 3D on the basis of archaeological excavations and through comparisons with castles of the same era.

Tue 25 Jan\_6pm

**Dr Claudia Kauertz  
Aristocratic lifeworlds between  
Ruhr and Lippe reflected in written  
tradition**

With a view to the regional nobility, the lecture presents fundamental aspects of the noble lifeworld and its traditions on the basis of the written records, which are now in the privately owned archives of the nobility.

Tue 1 Feb\_6pm

**Dr Gerd Dethlefs  
Church, marriage, army and court.  
Family policy and noble careers in the  
Ruhr area of the Early Modern Period**

Aristocratic families were bound to their estates, but were part of regional and transregional networks. The nodes of this network were the children, with which family and political connections were established, as is shown with examples of typical careers.

Tue 8 Feb\_6pm

**Prof. Gudrun Gersmann  
In the shadow of the French Revolution. Aristocratic lifeworlds in the Rhineland and in Westphalia "around 1800"**

For the nobility, the French Revolution meant a transformation process in terms of politics, economics and the history of mentalities. What changes

and upheavals were the nobility of the Rhineland and Westphalia confronted with?

### Discussion

Coking coal bunker; free; 2 hours

Tue 15 Feb\_6pm

**Maximilian Freiherr von Fürstenberg/  
Prof. Heinrich Theodor Grütter  
Tradition and modernity in the nobility**

A discussion evening on present-day noble society. What challenges does the nobility face, for example, when the conservation of castles and forests are concerned?

### Film evening

Hall 6 at Zollverein; free; 3 hours

Tue 22 Feb\_6pm

**Nobility in the Rhineland and in  
Westphalia: Film documents**

In cooperation with WDR, the Kinemathek im Ruhrgebiet and Paul Hofmann

The film evening allows visitors to look behind the scenes. Who still lives in a castle today? What does this mean in the context of everyday life? Noble families are introduced by means of selected examples.

### Excursions

Ruhr Museum, Fritz-Schupp-Allee/  
bus stop bay; €39 incl. lunch without  
beverages; 8 hours

Sun 13 Mar, 20 Mar, 27 Mar\_10am

**The noble residences of the region**

In cooperation with zeitsprung  
Lembeck Castle, Vischering Castle and  
Herdringen Castle: These and other  
noble residences will be visited in  
three full-day excursions accompanied  
by a tour guide. The excursions start  
and finish at the Zollverein and are not  
wheelchair accessible.

Dates and destinations

13 Mar\_Lembeck Castle – Vischering  
Castle – Horst Castle

20 Mar\_Strünkede Castle – Schel-  
lenberg Castle – Hugenpoet Castle –  
Landsberg Castle

27 Mar\_Altena Castle – Herdringen  
Castle

## Workshop for adults

Sat 23 Apr\_2pm (4 hours), €15

### Well equipped!

In the workshop, participants first visit the exhibition and find out how a coat of chain mail is produced. They then apply the technique they have learned to produce little pendants of chain mail.

## Events for teachers

Free; registration:

besucherdienst@ruhrmuseum.de

Mon 13 Dec\_3pm

### Introduction for teachers

Recommended for all school types and grades (2.5 hours)

Meeting point: Coking coal bunker

The director of the Ruhr Museum will present the concept and the themes of the exhibition. The curators will then guide visitors through the exhibition.

Thu 13 Jan\_3pm

### Tour for teachers

Recommended for all school types and grades (1.5 hours)

In the course of a tour, the curators explain themes and the conception of the exhibition. Guided tour offers for school classes are also introduced.

## Guided tours for school classes

€50 per group (max. 15 participants); free admission; 1.5 hours

### City, country, castle and monastery

School classes, grades 5–8

The activity-oriented tour brings the noble life of the Rhine and Ruhr to life with the help of selected objects.

### Noblesse oblige

For school classes as of grade 9

Selected objects inspire the pupils to grasp and explore life at the time of the estates-based society.

## For families and children

### Quiz for families

ENG

Free plus admission for adults; in German and English; daily  
For families with children from 6 years of age

The quiz leads through the exhibition with puzzles and questions.

### Family guided tour

Adults €3 plus admission/children €1

Sun 9 Jan, 10 Apr\_3pm

### Life in the palace and castle

What is a coat of arms actually used for? Who lives in a castle? The everyday life in castles and palaces comes alive during the tour on the basis of cultural treasures. (1.5 hours)

## Workshops for children

€5; 3 hours

Sat 19 Dec\_2pm

### Knights, armour, chain mail

From 9 years of age

How did a knight go into battle? After we explain the equipment, we show the children how to make a coat of chain mail. They then directly apply what they have learned to make a pendant of chain links.

Sun 20 Feb\_2pm

### What a coat of arms reveals

From 9 years of age

Many cities, countries and families have a coat of arms as a symbol of recognition. The children discover the different types in the exhibition. They can take home their own coat of arms at the end of the day.

## Family day

Admission for adults

Sun 27 Feb\_11am–5pm

### Knight meets princess

Those who want to get to the bottom of the history of knights and princesses of the Rhine and Ruhr can learn a lot about the two figures in exciting hands-on activities in the museum. More on this from January 2022 at [www.ruhrmuseum.de](http://www.ruhrmuseum.de) (6 hours)



# Ruhr Museum

## Guided tours

Unless indicated otherwise:

Ruhr Museum,

Counter 24 metre level;

€3 plus admission for adults,

1.5 hours, in German

## New: Audio guide app **ENG**

Ruhr Museum, Counter 24 metre level;

free; 1 hour; in German and English

The app guides visitors through the

history of the nobility of the Rhine

and Ruhr and to the highlights of the

exhibition. Information at

[www.ruhrmuseum.de](http://www.ruhrmuseum.de)

## Public guided tours

Thu and Sat\_11am, Sun\_1pm

## Guided theme tour

Sun 27 Feb\_11am

Knights and princesses of the

Rhine and Ruhr (1 hour)

## Curator's guide

Tue 18 Jan, 15 Feb, 15 Mar\_11am

## Guided tour for seniors

Tue 21 Dec, 19 Apr\_11am

## Guided tours in sign language

Sat 15 Jan, Sun 3 Apr\_12pm

## Guided group tours **ENG**

€70 plus €4 admission per person,

groups of pupils and students €50

with free admission; in German,

English and Dutch. All of the guided

tours listed here can be booked as

guided group tours.

## Address Ruhr Museum

in the Coal Washing Plant

UNESCO World Heritage Site

Zollverein

Gelsenkirchener Straße 181

D-45309 Essen

## Opening hours

Mon–Sun 10am–6pm

Closed on 24, 25 and 31 Dec

## Admission

€7, reduced €4, children and young people under 18, as well as pupils and students under 25, free admission.

[www.tickets-ruhrmuseum.de](http://www.tickets-ruhrmuseum.de)

## How to get there

### Tram line 107

From Essen central station in the

direction of Gelsenkirchen or from

Gelsenkirchen central station in the

direction of Essen until

“Zollverein” stop

## Address

Parking lots A1 and A2

Fritz-Schupp-Allee, 45141 Essen

## Information and reservations

Ruhr Museum visitor service

[besucherdienst@ruhrmuseum.de](mailto:besucherdienst@ruhrmuseum.de)

Mon–Fri 9am–4pm

Phone: +49 (0)201 24681 444

[www.ruhrmuseum.de](http://www.ruhrmuseum.de)



## Catalogue

380 pages, more than

400 illustrations, in German

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## Information regarding COVID-19

Please inform yourself about the

currently applicable rules prior

to your visit to the Ruhr Museum

under [www.ruhrmuseum.de](http://www.ruhrmuseum.de) or at

the Ruhr Museum visitor service.

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