

Strategy 2022 – 2025

Vision

Through encounters with art, SMK paves the way for experiences and bold conversations with more people – and with more different kinds of people. SMK wishes to build and strengthen communities where we can all, as fellow human beings, reflect on ourselves, each other and the world of which we are all a part.

The art of making connections

The art museum is a space of potential. It has been so ever since the first public museums saw the light of day more than 200 years ago. Today, more than ever before, the art museum has an opportunity to expand its role as a space for learning, enjoyment, exploration and immersion, becoming a setting for a wide-ranging and engaging debate on important and difficult issues of our times – always with art as the key source of inspiration and constant focal point. Seizing and utilising this historic opportunity to strengthen the museum's societal role by following its vocation is central to the vision for the coming years and will be one of the biggest overall strategic tasks for the SMK of the future.

SMK opens doors. SMK has welcomed guests from Denmark and abroad since 1896. Taking its extensive collection of art ranging from the late Middle Ages up to our own time, the museum opens doors to a world of sensory delights and new knowledge, historical insight and unpredictable encounters. Recent decades have taught us that museums are increasingly used as meeting places and gathering points where conversations and other exchanges between people can take place in inspiring, safe and hospitable spaces. Here, important topics can be debated while taking an approach different from the ones typical of public debates in other media: the museum promotes deliberate slowness, genuine responsiveness and reflection. In the coming years, SMK will develop its role as a meeting place for even more – and even more different – users. SMK wants to be a place where visitors from an even wider demographic than today can feel welcomed, seen and heard. It should be a place where visitors can strengthen their human social bonds and perhaps form new ones, but also a place where users can feel connected to history, art and the physical world – perhaps in surprising ways.

SMK forges connections. The many connections made at the museum are first and foremost created by the art which SMK presents and takes care of. Hosting many meetings between a wide and diverse group of users, the museum lets poetic experiences, perceptions and knowledge of art join all the connections that art creates in itself. Those connections inform the many conversations we humans can engage in about the world we inhabit, our history and future. It is SMK's wish that even more – and even more different – people should genuinely feel that SMK is their museum, their meeting place, their place to make connections.

Regulatory framework and political objectives

The political objectives for SMK in the period 2022–2025 centre on the following tasks:

- Registering works in The Royal Collection of Graphic Art
- Fully launching SMK Thy as an active contribution to a more unified and balanced Denmark
- Appealing to a wider user demographic
- Promoting greater geographical reach

The expected drop in foreign tourists as a result of COVID-19, especially in 2022 and 2023, and the resulting drop in admission fee revenues has a significant adverse impact on the museum's financial situation. To this we must add the effect of any potential closures, social distancing requirements and other restrictions that may be imposed on the museum during the strategy period as part of general infection control measures. At the same time, the museum must allocate a larger share of its grant than has previously been the case to the registration of works in the Royal Collection of Graphic Art, a task which must be completed by the end of 2026. In the years ahead, SMK will work to restore its visitor numbers, admission fee revenues etc. in the wake of the COVID-19 situation, but up until 2024 the museum expects the financial situation to substantially impair – compared to previous years – the museum's performance of its core tasks and our capacity to meet all political objectives in the area.

SMK's main challenges and development potentials 2022–2025

As Denmark's main museum of art, SMK is tasked with making accessible, preserving and conducting research on our shared cultural heritage, and creating learning and interpretation for all audiences. The discharge of these core tasks is generally on a firm footing, but certain challenges and development potentials will be the main focus of this strategy period.

The previous strategy period saw the museum increasing its visitor numbers, thanks partly to successful exhibitions such as *The Danish Golden Age* and *Anna Ancher* as well as to a high number of international tourists who made a visit to the National Gallery of Denmark a priority. However, COVID-19 put a spanner in the works, halting this favourable development. Reflecting this, expectations for visitor numbers in the years ahead have been revised, especially as regards the number of international tourists. Until now, tourists from abroad have accounted for 50% of the total number of visitors to SMK – a figure which is expected to grow significantly lower in the coming years: analyses conducted by the tourism agency Wonderful Copenhagen do not expect a return to 2019 levels for international tourism in the capital area until the beginning of 2024. A key focus area in the upcoming strategy period concerns efforts to attract more Danish tourists – a segment with which SMK has not previously worked strategically, but which will receive focused attention going forward. The desire to increase diversity in the museum's user demographic, for example by reaching new user groups, remains a focus area – including the wish to attract more visitors without extensive higher education. Achieving a greater geographical reach is a main priority, and SMK Thy will be an important spearhead in this effort. The goal is for SMK Thy to attract 35,000 visitors annually when this satellite branch of SMK has completed its major renovation and redevelopment in 2024.

In other challenges, no less than 100,000 works in the Royal Collection of Graphic Art must be digitally registered in the period 2022–2026. Achieving this requires reallocating staff resources, taking on extra staff and ensuring very efficient project management.

Finally, SMK must find a new storage solution for external storage of works. At the same time, the storage facilities in-house must also be optimised to make better use of the space available and to ensure excellent storage conditions for the works.

SMK's core tasks

Making art accessible

A 21st century museum is a museum that takes an active interest in its surroundings, engages in meaningful and bold conversations with its users and is genuinely interested in contributing to the lives of individual people by moving the museum to the very place where art and culture merges with people's everyday life. With 700 years of art as its starting point, SMK is excellently placed to show how art can be used to understand the past while also connecting it directly to our present and the way we exist in the world today. SMK want to be a museum that not only *collects* and *preserves* culture, but also *changes* culture by taking an open, inquisitive and research-based approach to history and the present. As an active agent in society, SMK has a special obligation to invite audiences in, share the many different angles on history encompassed by the collection, and at the same time home in on the issues that concern us as human beings right now – all while using art as an exuberant, enriching and insightful means of storytelling. The museum must be a meeting place where reflections and dilemmas can find expression, a venue with plenty of scope for curious, investigative conversations and thoughts both big and small. A place where everyone feels welcome and everyone feels they have a voice. In order to carry out SMK's democratic tasks as a national gallery, it is crucial for the museum to be – and become – relevant to a greater section of Denmark's population. The planned path towards reaching this goal is outlined below. The 2025 objective is to reach 500,000 visitors to the museum in Sølvgade and 35,000 visitors to SMK Thy.

SMK for more and more different people

SMK wishes to develop the traditional museum space to make it even more social in scope; creating a space that supports dialogue and conversation. One that feels relevant, meaningful and relatable to more than just a small segment of the population, appealing to many. Taking its point of departure in art, SMK can offer new, meaningful communities. Special attention will be directed towards establishing new partnerships to promote further diversity in the user demographic and create fertile soil for even more – and even more different – people regarding SMK as 'their' national gallery. This goal is to be achieved through a strengthened focus on activities and courses aimed at special target groups. SMK will, among other things, enter into partnerships to promote social inclusion by means of cultural activities. The aim of these partnerships is not only to achieve greater diversity, but also to enter into alliances that can attract non-users. Cooperation with other cultural institutions aimed at attracting a larger proportion of visitors without higher education is also a focus area. For example, the strategy period will see SMK focusing on its written art communication/written interpretation and developing new text formats that strengthen and enhance the art experience for visitors who are new to museums.

An important focus area in the effort to ensure greater diversity concerns the museum's activities outside the museum building in Sølvgade. SMK wants to have a more diverse demographic interact with the museum and its collections and will achieve this by strengthening its initiatives to bring its art and collections into play in new contexts. Examples include making the SMK collections available in other parts of the country, arranging deposits, collaborative exhibitions, loans and partnerships that help bring the art from Sølvgade physically closer to the entire population. Overall, the ambition is for the demographic profile of SMK's visitors to more accurately reflect Denmark's population. This will require several things: awareness and knowledge of the museum must be increased outside the Greater Copenhagen area, the museum must become relevant and interesting to a larger part of the population, and a visit to SMK must rank high on the list of the many experiences that Copenhagen has to offer. In other words, Danish tourists are very interesting to SMK – not only because the number of foreign tourists in Copenhagen is not expected to return to normal levels until 2024, but also to avoid geographical bias within Denmark. Based on awareness surveys, surveys among users and non-users, other data

and segmented marketing efforts, SMK is specifically working to attract Danish tourists to Sølvgade. As an important supplement to this, the museum will place increased emphasis on its digital presence: new online lecture formats, communication initiatives and creative workshops will enable SMK to reach the entire nation. SMK Open, the online portal makes large parts of the collection immediately accessible and available for unrestricted use regardless of where you are, is another key resource in achieving this goal.

SMK Thy

SMK Thy is an art experience arising out of a vision of creating a new branch of SMK far away from the museum in Copenhagen. A generous donation has made it possible to transform Doverodde Købmandsgård in Hurup Thy into a fully-fledged museum building that meets every requirement in terms of security, climate control, etc., and a permanent grant for SMK Thy was introduced in the Danish state budget as of 2022. Together, these factors will allow the dream to materialize. The establishment of a permanent branch in Thy is part of SMK's strategy to bring art and the collection into play for people who do not live in the Greater Copenhagen area. The project is based on an overarching goal of making art accessible and relevant to the entire population of Denmark and ensuring that it becomes a catalyst for meaningful conversations between people, regardless of where they happen to live.

SMK has arranged exhibitions and interpretation and learning activities in Thy since 2018, and in the years ahead the museum will continue to produce exhibitions, organise activities and establish collaborations with local actors and users of Doverodde Købmandsgård leading up to the opening of the new branch in the fully converted warehouse in 2024. During the strategy period, the museum will establish partnerships with local and regional actors within the tourism sector, the education sector and the business community. These partnerships will contribute to raising visitor numbers, extending the museum's reach and anchoring it firmly in the local area. The goal is to have 35,000 visitors experience the remodelled SMK Thy annually as of 2024. A large proportion of this figure is expected to be school children, who will now have access to the National Gallery of Denmark in their local area.

SMK online

SMK's digital efforts support the goal of making art accessible and relevant to far more people – and to more different people – by framing art as a resource and tool you can incorporate and use in your own life. The key lever in this work is SMK Open, which makes the museum's collection available for unlimited, digital use. Everyone, regardless of geographical location, has the opportunity to pave their own way into the world of art and draw information from SMK's vast collection of knowledge and material. With SMK Open, the collection is directly accessible in digital form, offering a huge resource of building blocks to be used as you please. In the years ahead, SMK Open will be expanded with works from the Royal Collection of Graphic Art; this will coincide with the ongoing registration task.

The use of digital communication formats gained momentum during the COVID-19 pandemic, and important lessons were learned. SMK will build on these experiences while creating more online lectures, guided tours, workshops, etc. Digital communication offers a way of reaching every corner of the country, and we have seen that this also stimulates the general desire to visit the museum in real life, whether in Copenhagen or Thy.

Children and young people in education

SMK's educational activities for children and young people are an important lever in the efforts to promote diversity among the museum's visitors: through teaching collaborations and by acting as a resource for the Danish education system, the museum comes into contact with children and young people from all over Denmark and from all walks of life. During the strategy period, SMK will focus on longer-term teaching courses and partnership agreements under the Open School scheme, where SMK is the setting for encounters with art and artistic practices in surroundings that are not necessarily already familiar to all students. The goal is for pupils and students to feel at home in their national gallery.

During the strategy period, SMK also wants to establish an educational platform, SMK Connect, which provides access to learning resources to help make cultural heritage come alive in classrooms throughout Denmark, thereby contributing to cultural co-ownership, citizenship and the formation of critical, creative, co-creative students. The goal is to create a digital learning environment that connects directly with established curriculums in inspiring and accessible ways. SMK Connect will support the goal of making the collection accessible and relevant to all schoolchildren in the country. The scope of the project will depend on the extent to which external funding can be raised to realise it.

Research

As Denmark's national gallery and main museum, SMK has a special obligation to carry out research, and SMK is an absolutely crucial resource for knowledge about Danish and international art in Denmark.

SMK conducts wide-ranging research within the field of Danish and international art, and the research activities are inextricably linked with conservation, interpretation and learning, communication, museology and digital museum practice. The museum's research can be divided into three main research areas: Art research, research on materiality and conservation, and museological research (including research on interpretation and learning). All three involve strong national and international engagements. Research is crucial for SMK's ability to expand the museum's collection, imbue its art with topicality and make it relevant to the museum's users and to society as such. Research also forms the basis for the museum's work with collection management, special exhibitions and publications.

Research at SMK has art and the encounter with art as its focal point and the public as its recipient. This means that SMK's research should not only present and clarify historical perspectives that allow us to understand the past – it should also contextualise the past, thereby giving it topical relevance to museum users today.

The research area is on a firm footing at SMK, harbouring several large research projects and a stable production of peer-reviewed articles. SMK will continue to launch research collaborations – including collaborations that cut across institutions – and work purposefully to attract external research funding from foundations and public funds in Denmark and abroad. External funding is crucial for SMK's ability to develop research activities in an attractive, open research environment consisting of the museum's own scholars as well as external researchers with a particular interest in the SMK collection.

During the strategy period, the museum will lower its quantitative targets as regards the number of research publications created in order to place increased emphasis on the dissemination of its research, thereby increasing interest in the museum and the imprint the museum makes – not only on Danish and international research, but on the wider Danish public. The SMK Academy is a main vehicle for wide-ranging dissemination of SMK's research efforts, and the frequency of knowledge sharing in this format will be intensified in the coming years – both in Sølvgade, in Thy and online. Concurrently with this, the coming

years will see SMK look for qualitative methods for measuring the impact of its research, specifically what this research gives back to society and the wider public.

Collecting activities

In 2020, SMK completed its work on a new, revised collecting strategy aimed at increasing diversity – in terms of ethnicity, geographical origins, gender and media – among the works acquired for the collection. The collecting strategy is accompanied by action plans that are reviewed and revised on a regular basis. Within the last two years, SMK has significantly expanded its representation of different work types and the proportion of works by female artists in the collection through major new acquisitions of works by Danish contemporary artists. Likewise, gender is now a search parameter in the museum's online collection, SMK Open. The collecting area is doing well, but its day-to-day operation is directly linked to the current financial framework, which means that in the years ahead, the museum's opportunities for making acquisitions will be even more dependent on external funding.

Conservation and registration

The museum's collections do not only belong to those living today. They belong to future generations, too. In order for users to be able to enjoy SMK's art now and in the future, it must be preserved and accessible.

In the years ahead, SMK will focus on optimising conservation of the collection. The museum will also direct even greater attention to the digital registration of works, which is part of the basis for the collections being accessible to everyone. A major project to be undertaken during the framework agreement period concerns relocating works from existing external warehouses to new locations as well as optimising the museum's existing storage facilities.

Better facilities and new knowledge

SMK will take steps towards optimal conservation of the nation's artistic heritage by optimising space management at its in-house storage facilities at Sølvgade, allowing the largest possible share of the collection to be stored here. The museum will also identify the possibilities for new external storage solutions, especially for the museum's sculptures and installation works, so that the entire collection can be stored in a climate-controlled atmosphere in future. As part of this work, SMK will also explore various options as regards using more affordable and sustainable solutions, for example in the form of shared storage facilities and/or storage facilities operated in accordance with a passive climate control principle.

Investigating how art can best be preserved and how the museum can ensure optimal storage conditions for the collections is an ongoing and central task for SMK. To this end, SMK closely follows recent research on museum climate control and applies further climate requirements (Bizot Interim Guidelines) to support improved energy consumption and mutual loan activity – a practice SMK will continue in the future. In the years ahead, SMK will continue research to further promote understanding of the degradation processes that have been observed in connection with the use of lead white in works on paper. On this basis, SMK expects to be able to draw up recommendations for better storage conditions for paper works containing lead white.

Registration of the collections

The overall goal of the increased digitisation of works in the SMK collection is linked to a desire to improve accessibility to the museum's works and their metadata, which will strengthen knowledge of and use of the art, thereby also promoting knowledge of the museum. What is more, digital registration of the collections is also essential for security purposes.

In the years ahead, SMK will improve the accessibility of works in the Royal Collections of Graphic Art by significantly increasing the speed of the digital registration efforts so that the collection is digitally registered by the end of 2026. A total of 100,000 works must be registered digitally, corresponding to digital registration of 20,000 works per year. An action plan has been launched to help achieve this goal. The effort is carried out by a project group in the Department of Collections and Research in close and ongoing dialogue with the museum's management and with quarterly reports submitted to the Danish Ministry of Culture. The museum's annual report also reports on the progress of the project. As part of the registration project, SMK will continuously investigate whether the registration work can be optimised by improving the user interface and input practices of the national museum register SARA. The museum's registration practices are also evaluated regularly.

SMK as Denmark's main museum

SMK is Denmark's main museum of visual arts, meaning that it holds a key position in the development of the museum area in Denmark. As the leading museum, SMK has an obligation to advise other art museums, take part in the development of strategies within the museum area, and initiate collaborations with art museums in Denmark and abroad.

The area is on a firm footing, and SMK will continue to contribute to enhancing the quality of the core tasks performed by fellow art museums while staying within the financial framework available to SMK.