

That Shaggy Mutt? At Dog Museums, Our Drooling Companions Are the Stars

By LAURA M. HOLSON APRIL 22, 2018



A new museum in Passau, Germany, celebrates the dachshund, a beloved symbol of Bavaria, with hundreds of paintings, books, statues and porcelain wares dedicated to the breed. Credit Oliver Storz/Dackelmuseum

In the 1990s, the painter David Hockney was so enamored with his dachshunds, Stanley and Boogie, that he immortalized them in [paintings](#) and a [book](#). Starting this month, anyone who loves dachshunds as much as he does can visit what is being called the first museum to honor this favorite breed.

The [Dackelmuseum](#) opened in early April in Passau, Germany, a gallery of dachshund memorabilia with a collection of more than 4,500 paintings, books, statues and porcelain wares devoted to Bavaria's celebrated wiener dog. It is only one of several new museums celebrating man's — and woman's — best friend, including the Museum of Dog, which opened last month in North Adams, Mass. Early next year, the American Kennel Club Museum of the Dog will open in New York City, just in time for the Westminster Kennel Club Dog Show.

Like the Museum of Dog, the Dackelmuseum grew out of its founders' love of their canine companions. "No other dog in the world enjoys the same kind of recognition or popularity as the symbol of Bavaria," Seppi Küblbeck, one of the founders of the Dackelmuseum, [told Reuters](#).

No, it's not the Smithsonian, although hounds are [well represented in that institution's collections](#). Still, dogs have long had a place in the art world, from Cairo, where a [canine mummy](#) is on display at the Egyptian Museum, to Manhattan, where Jeff Koons's "Balloon Dog (Orange)" sold for \$58.4 million at Christie's in 2013. (It was [the most ever paid at auction for a work by a living artist](#).) In England, there's even something for the fashion crowd: Leeds Castle, in Kent, [has a collection of dog collars](#) dating to the 15th century.

Below are a few museums around the world devoted exclusively to our canine friends. At this rate, cats may start to wonder what's up.

[Dackelmuseum](#), Passau, Germany

Mr. Küblbeck and Oliver Storz have been collecting dachshund memorabilia for a quarter-century. But the bulk of the collection — about 3,500 items — was acquired from a Belgian musician who sold it because he was getting married, Mr. Storz said. An array of books, drawings and porcelain figurines are now crowded into overstuffed display cases.

One object of note: a Waldi, the first official Olympic mascot, created for the 1972 Olympic Games in Munich. ([It's a plush toy](#).) Dachshunds, which were bred in the Middle Ages to flush badgers out of their burrows, are the 13th most popular dog breed, [according to the American Kennel Club](#). Fans including Pablo Picasso and Albert Einstein.

[American Kennel Club Museum of the Dog](#), Queeny Park, Mo.

Just in case Park Avenue didn't already have enough dogs on display: Next year, the American Kennel Club Museum of the Dog is moving from its current home in suburban St. Louis to a ground floor gallery space in the Kalikow building, in Midtown Manhattan. The museum has more than 700 works of art, including paintings, porcelain figurines and sculptures, many donated to the museum by members of the club.

Alan Fausel, the club's director of cultural resources, said the new museum would focus more on education and children's programming. "We want to get the museum to a different audience," he said. "We want to tell the story of the dog, and we can do that through our collection."

[Barryland](#), Musée et Chiens du Saint-Bernard, Matigny, Switzerland

Where else would one find a museum to honor the St. Bernard? Matigny is situated at the Great St. Bernard Pass in the Pennine Alps, where for centuries travelers have been greeted by the loyal dogs, known for their prowess in avalanche rescues. Monks bred St. Bernards in the late 17th century for work and to aid travelers overwhelmed by harsh winter conditions.

The museum, founded in 2006, is next to a Roman amphitheater and houses portrayals of the creatures in literature, art and culture. The main attraction, though, might be the dogs themselves, which can be petted and observed in their kennels on the first floor.



Canines on display at the Museum of Dog in North Adams, Mass. It opened in March. CreditMuseum of Dog

[Dog Collar Museum](#), Leeds Castle, Kent, England

In 1977, Gertrude Hunt donated a collection of more than 60 dog collars to the Leeds Castle Foundation in memory of her husband, John Hunt, an antiques dealer and scholar of Irish history. They became the centerpiece of a collection that includes more than 130 rare collars from the late 15th to the 19th century. The oldest is a Spanish mastiff's iron collar, worn to protect dogs against bears and wolves that roamed the European countryside.

Collars from the medieval era are studded with spikes and barbed metal. Later, in the 1800s, canine neckwear became more ornate as more dogs moved indoors and became companions and pets. Pieces from the collection include an intricate gilded collar from the Baroque period, a set of engraved silver collars from the 19th century, and a display of neckwear with owners' markings. More modern collars are laden with beads and gemstones.

[Museum of Dog](#), North Adams, Mass.

David York loves pooches a lot. So much so, in fact, that he opened a dog museum last month in the Berkshires. For the Museum of Dog, situated in a historic building near the Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art, Mr. York has assembled more than 180 pieces of art, including works by Mary Engel, a sculptor from Athens, Ga., and William Wegman, whose popular photographs of his Weimaraners are in the collections of the Museum of Modern Art and the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York.

Metal dog collars are prized collectibles among dog lovers; Mr. York has two from the 1800s. Most of the museum's collection is owned by Mr. York, a rescue dog advocate. But he said the museum would also feature work by visiting artists. The first is [Jesse Freidin](#), a fine art photographer who takes pictures of — what else? — dogs.