

The German Toy Museum - English Guide through the Home of Toys

General Information about the Museum

The History of the German Toy Museum

The museum was founded in 1901 as *Museum of Industry and Trade* of the region Meininger Oberland which is the historical term of the district Sonneberg in the former Duchy of Saxe-Coburg. Since 1914 it is situated in the building of the previous industrial school of Sonneberg. From the moment of the foundation, the collecting of toys has been playing a prominent role. It has evolved into a specialised museum for dolls and toys since the 1920s. The German Toy Museum is considered as the oldest specialised collection of toys in Germany.

The Collection

The collection includes:

- Toys of all ages and from numerous countries
- Historical items of the living environment of toy manufacturers and their children from the region of Sonneberg
- Historical items documenting the history of the region, such as visual material (visual art, photographs)

The collection is mainly acquired through gifts and purchases.

The Exhibition

The permanent exhibition imparts knowledge about the historical development of toys and is divided into the following sections:

- History of technical toys
- Development of the play doll
- The living of the children of the toy manufacturers about 1900 / 1910

Beside the permanent exhibition, varying special exhibitions are shown throughout the year.

The Library of the Museum

Affiliated to the museum, the scientific specialised library comprises an extensive collection of toy literature as well as literature relating to the history of the region.

The Prominent Collection

The prominent collection contains exhibits such as:

- Cultural-historical valuable stock of toy pattern books from the 19th century
- Toys from Thuringia and the region of Sonneberg (industrial history)
- Toys from the former German Democratic Republic
- A small collection of ancient toys as well as toys from Japan and China

1st Floor: The History of Technical Toys

Exhibition Room 2

Miniatures of the Primeval Society

It cannot be clearly evidenced that the items produced in the primeval society were created to play. In fact, the midget replications of the equipment and weapons were intended to imitate the operations of the adults and were more likely working tools than toys. With these miniatures the children learned skills which were indispensable to life.

Items which were produced for cultic purposes, such as rattles, were also used by children to play.

(Surveys analysing the life of primitive people who live currently under similar conditions corroborate the above claimed knowledge which was gained out of archaeological finds.)

Toys of the Ancient World

Beside basic commodities, the ancient Egyptians, Greeks, and Romans also produced toys. Archaeological finds and written sources prove that the toys had a cultic meaning (e.g. temple-offering, talisman).

The play in the nature with balls, spinning tops, marbles, etc. has always been a popular amusement.

Toys in Medieval Times

Information about plays and playing in medieval times are scarce. Mostly produced in workshops by urban manufacturers, the toys were particularly aimed for noble children. Plays with knights and horses were one of the children's most favourite pastimes over centuries. Children of peasants were likely to play with self-made toys. Entertaining games of different kinds, such as board games and gambling games with dices, enjoyed great popularity in all social classes.

The Emergence of 'Landscapes of Toy Manufacturing'

Since the 14th/15th century regions which manufactured wooden toys emerged in Europe to different times, but under similar conditions: the richness of wood, a long-lasting winter, and the proximity to a trading route.

Such regions were:

- The Alps (especially Oberammergau, Berchtesgaden, Grödner Tal, and Salzburger Land)
- Ore Mountains (Saxony, Germany)
- Bohemia (Czech Republic)
- Region of Sonneberg (Thuringia, Germany)
- Region around Sergijev Possad (north of Moscow, Russia)

The wooden toys were produced through the division of handicraft labour within the family (cottage industry). The manufacturing of toys developed from a sideline basis to the main source of income for the population who lived almost under meagre living conditions. Merchants ordered the toys and distributed them and, therefore, had a strong impact on the pricing. Consequently, the families manufacturing the toys were overly dependent on the merchants.

The Trade with Toys

Nuremberg was the centre of trade with toys until the 17th century. Assumedly, it were merchants from Nuremberg who gave the crucial impulse for the growth of the toy industry in the region of Sonneberg, since Sonneberg lay along the important trade route between Nuremberg and Leipzig. After the end of the Thirty Years' War, the local merchants became increasingly influential in the toy manufacturing regions, thus also in Sonneberg. Through long-distance trade the merchants also affected the design and the motifs of toys. Thus, it is not surprising to find similarities between toys from different manufacturing regions. The most important raw material to manufacture toys was wood. Besides, also plastic compounds, such as clay, bread dough, papier mâché, and the natural gum *Traganth* as well as other materials were used.

Exhibition Room 3

Technology and Toys

At the beginning of the 19th century the Industrial Revolution started in Germany. Though, the for the Revolution typical displacement of manual labour through machine work became operative within the toy industry in the second half of the 19th century. Machine work was especially effective in the production of tin toys. In contrast, the manufacturing of wooden toys and dolls was still made in cottage industry and traded through distributors.

Plenty of technological innovations were reflected in the world of toys. Alone the technological marvel of the invention of the railway has been replicated countless times as toy models.

Construction Sets

The precursors of the contemporary construction sets were already known in the 18th century. They belonged to the cognitive toy and followed educational purposes which was of increasing interest in the 19th century.

Friedrich Fröbel (1782-1852), the founder of the kindergarten, attached high pedagogical value to the infantile play and the toys. He constructed a system of educational materials, known as the Fröbel Gifts. The gifts no. 3 till 6, cubes in several splits, were the basic geometric shapes of construction sets which are indispensable in every kid's room ever since.

The *Lilienthal* brothers, the world-famous pioneers of human aviation, were crucial for the further development of the construction set. They invented the stone compound about the year 1880 which was essential for the later Anchor Stone Building Set of the company *Richter* in Rudolstadt, Germany. Richter's Anchor Stone Building Sets enjoy great popularity until today. In 1888 Gustav Lilienthal created a wooden construction set which enabled various construction possibilities. His set was pathbreaking for the further development of construction sets.

Tin Toys

Since the middle of the 19th century the tin toy industry experienced a rapid boom. The implementation of the mechanical pressure-forming and colour tin printing (chromolithography) allowed a mass production on a hitherto unknown scale. Several companies were established:

- *Märklin* in Württemberg, founded 1859
- *Bing* and *E. Plank* around Nuremberg, founded 1863 and 1866
- *E.P. Lehmann* in Brandenburg/Havel, founded 1881

Beside the cheap mass production of tin toys, also high priced optical and acoustical toys as well as toys with model character were produced for the children of wealthier families. Within the traditional manufacturing centres of wooden toys the production went on as normal.

War Games

In connection with the policy of expansion of the German empire, military toys played an increasingly prominent role. Beside the military lead and tin figures which were soon mass-produced articles, manufactured in Mid-Franconian workshops - so called Offizin- more and more maritime toys enjoyed popularity at the end of the 19th century.

Exhibition Room 4

The Vulnerable Toy Industry

The German toy industry was leading the global market until the First World War with an annual turnover of 103,3 million mark till 1913, whereof 80 % resulted from the export. Due to the high export ratio the toy industry was more susceptible to risks. The First World War caused a loss of markets and a scarcity of raw materials as well as capital. The reduction of productivity culminated in the global economic crisis. During the two World Wars strong competitors emerged in the USA, England, France, Italy and Japan.

Miniatures and Technology

Caused by improved technologies, the toy industry could react quicker to the rapid development of engineering in the 20th century than in the previous century. Particularly innovations in traffic engineering were replicated in a huge diversity. Since the turn of the century a considerable trend towards scale model toys has been arisen.

Metal Construction Sets

Around 1901 the first metal construction set was designed in England which was first launched on the market in 1907 under the brand *Meccano*. It achieved rapid distribution and contributed to the further development of construction kits, also in Germany. The common reduction of the toy production had no impact on the manufacturing of metal construction sets. Such construction kits have an enormous pedagogical value, since they impart technical knowledge and encourage high creativity as well as handicraft skills. Special popularity earned the products of the companies *Walther & Co.*, *Märklin* and *Trix*. The product line was expanded to airplane and car construction sets in the 1930s.

Wooden Toys Change

The manufacturing of wooden toys still centred in the traditional production regions in the Ore Mountains, Saxony, and Thuringia. 42,9% of all labour working in the wooden toy production were located in the Ore mountains in 1907. Here, the toys were still manufactured in form of cottage industry. The miniature toys which were produced since the beginning of the 20th century in the region around Seiffen mirrored also the rapid development of the automobile industry. The wooden miniature toys were affordable for everybody and could be distributed as mass-produced articles all over the world.

The Era of the Model Railway starts

In the 1930s the production of true-to-detail scale model toys, particularly model cars and railways, reached the top. Regarding railway modelling, the trains powered by steam engines or clockwork engines were increasingly replaced by electric trains. The efforts to save raw material and to attract a wide range of customers led to a change of size: Model trains with wide track gauges were replaced by trains with narrow track gauges. The space-saving table railway was more and more offered with a huge variety of accessories to design the landscapes and locations individually.

The Second World War - Preparation and Consequences

Even more than before the First World War, a rising militarisation of the everyday life started with the takeover of the National Socialists in Germany. A massive range of military toys, especially from the companies Hausser, Lineol and Tipp & Co., ended up in children's hands. However, the increasing need to use the factories for the armament limited the toy production vehemently. In May 1943 the production of toys for the national distribution was completely prohibited.

Exhibition Room 5

Toys are Scarce Articles

During the first years after the Second World War the majority of German families suffered from hardship, destitution, and scarceness in everyday life. Also toys were rare and not affordable. Therefore, they were often self-made or crafted under primitive technical conditions during the postwar period. Despite of the serious economic difficulties, several German toy companies resumed their production

shortly after the end of the war. Toys of the postwar period equalled that of the prewar time in design and features, but was predominantly intended for the export.

Toy as an Article of Mass Consumption

The rapid development of the polymer technology after the Second World War influenced the production of toys decisively, and the amount of plastic toys has been steadily rising. Plastics are easily to form and enable a detailed design and fine shaping. Other advantages are the durability as well as the low-cost production.

The progressive technisation of the everyday life has been reflected in the world of toys. The most modern home appliances, vehicles, computers and innovations in aerospace engineering have been replicated in miniatures. Likewise, the most innovative technologies have been applied in the toy production which is attested by various modes of drive and numerous new functions of toys. Generally, toys evolved into articles of mass consumption.

Kids, Toys, and the Media

New game mechanics and innovative construction sets with numerous possibilities to play have addressed the pedagogical requirements of toys which have increased since the end of the 1960s.

Playing with these toys advances the complex development of the child and prepares the youngsters on their way into a highly technologised working environment. Besides, there are plenty of products on the toy market which are purely designed for the children's amusement. New media, such as TV and video games, have affected the children's everyday life more and more in last three decades. They do not only entertain the children, but they overwhelm them with a mass of information which are often beyond the children's ability to judge. Consequently, the impact of such media may not only be positive.

Exhibition Room 7

Tin Figures

Tin figures were already produced in the ancient world. It is traceable that they served a sacral purpose in medieval times. Since the 16th century they were used as toy figures.

Nuremberg evolved into the centre of the manufacturing of tin figures. The workshop (*Offizin* - Old German) of *Ernst Heinrichsen*, established 1893, was the leading manufacturer of tin figures around Nuremberg. The mass production of tin and lead soldiers at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century was, not least, aimed to boost the war enthusiasm through education and play. Already at the end of the 19th century the tin figures underwent a change from toy figures to collector's items.

Manufacturing of Tin Figures

Tin figures were produced at home, thus cottage industry, in which women and children were involved. Casting moulds made of slate were used to produce the figures.

2nd Floor: The History of Dolls

Exhibition Room 1

The Doll - The Evidence of History

Dolls varied in shape and form. Not all of them were and are intended to play. Lines between the doll as ritual object and as play doll are hardly to draw within the early stages of the development of dolls. Also contemporary art dolls are not produced for children.

Historical dolls document the history in which they were produced. They mirror the contemporary time with its state of technology as well as the prevailing taste, especially the ideal of beauty, fashion, and the contemporary ideal of education.

Fashion Dolls

Fashion dolls were manufactured by Parisian couturiers by order of the European high nobility. They were dressed to spread the French fashion trends. For the first time they were mentioned in the books of account of the French royal court in 1369. That way of spreading information of the current fashion continued until the end of the 18th century. Later, fashion journals adopted the role.

National Costume Dolls

Traditional costume dolls wear the for a certain population and occupational group typical garment. The miniature costumes are made in detailed needlework according to the original costume. Hence, they have an enormous cultural and historical value. The history of the national costume doll can be traced back till the 18th century. Nowadays, national costume dolls enjoy a huge popularity as souvenir dolls.

Craft Dolls

Now and then craft dolls could become an individual piece of art. Inspirations for the design originated not only from everyday life, but often came from fairy tales, myths, and stories. Important suggestions for the industrial toy production derived from the designs of craft dolls.

Self-made Dolls

Hand-made dolls made by children look not seldom like archaic dolls. Through creating an individual design and expression of the doll, the children satisfy their natural need to experience their environment in a playful way.

The Play with the Doll in the 19th Century

The dolls and their equipment of the 19th century reflect the social circumstances of that time. Playing with dolls was systematically used to educate the girls into good housewives and mothers. In particular the daughters of the wealthy bourgeoisie were well prepared to their role as landladies and socialite.

Exhibition room 2

Prototypes and Early Forms of Dolls

The existence of dolls within the primeval society is not transmitted. Finds of anthropomorphic figures from this time, such as the Venus of Willendorf, are seen as ritual objects. Already from the Middle Kingdom of Egypt the first simple dolls made of wood are bequeathed (about 2000 BC).

The oldest preserved dolls found in Greece are from the 8th century BC. Since the 6th century BC doll creators crafted ritual objects and toys.

In Roman times the creators and figurine makers crafted dolls. Beside simple dolls, made of wood or clay, also fine dolls were crafted from wax and ivory.

Generally, there was a strong connection between the doll as a ritual object and as an object of play in the ancient world.

Dolls and Toys from the Orient

In the multifarious doll culture from east and southeast Asia which roots deeply in the old traditions of the people, the dolls reflect a rich mythology and a world full of legends. Though, they also represent the strict hierarchy of the society in these countries. Since the 20th century dolls were no longer primarily designed according to traditional styles, but also according to European models.

China

Like other nations, also the Chinese originally attributed magical power to their dolls. They venerated the dolls as Gods of protection and kept them on their family altar.

The dolls were also seen as talismanic gifts. During the 5th century BC and the 14th century AC they were used as grave goods which were often created with high artistic mastery.

Japan

In the Japanese religion as well as Japan's customs and manners the doll had a great importance over centuries. It served as ritual object, talisman, gift of friendship, decoration object, and as toy. They were made of clay, wood, straw, papier mâché, but also bronze and porcelain.

Some of the ancient customs have been kept alive, such as the *Hinamatsuri* - The Girl's Doll Festival. Each year on the 3rd March, the girls of Japanese families celebrate the Girl's Doll Festival. The for that purpose used ornamental dolls have a thousand year old history. The Doll's Festival traces its origins to a Shintoistic custom in which the dolls are supposed to keep the body free from diseases and bad spirits. Originally, ritual dolls made of straw or paper were sent down a river on this particular day to take all the bad spirits with them. At the end of the 18th century the Japanese nobility developed a special way to honour the festival: They displayed a platform with several levels with a set of ornamental dolls which represented the Emperor, the Empress, the attendants, and the musicians of the traditional court. The precious ornamental dolls have been repacked when the festival was over and that way they have been passed on to the next generations.

Dolls and Toys during the Feudalism in Europe

From the early days of the feudalism in Europe, around 500 AC, little finds of toys passed on. The first known written reference to dolls was found in a list of superstitions from the 8th or 9th century.

The trade of clay figure makers according to Roman archetypes was assumedly kept alive until the 15th century. A special trade, the doll makers of peg wooden dolls (*Dockenmacher*), emerged in Nuremberg in the 15th century. Beside the urban artisans which produced dolls for the children of the nobility and the wealthy bourgeoisie, the toy industry in some rural areas of Europe was kept as sideline production. Supposedly, this form of sideline started in the region of Sonneberg in the 17th century.

Exhibition Room 3

Dolls from the 18th and 19th Century

Peg Wooden Dolls

Dolls and their equipment belong to the products which were crafted on a sideline basis in the homes of the families in the Alpine Valleys, the Ore Mountains, Bohemia, and the region of Sonneberg. They emerged under similar conditions as the other articles of the toy industry and can be hardly distinguished regarding their origin.

It is evidenced that the region of Sonneberg manufactured dolls since the second half of the 18th century. To the earliest dolls belong the peg wooden dolls, called *Docken*, which are hand-turned out of one piece of wood and had attached fixed or movable arms. Other early peg wooden dolls are *Wickelkinder*, swaddling clothed dolls, and *Klapper*, rattle dolls. The turned, carved, and painted dolls were distributed through the brisk trade of the merchants to many European countries.

Dolls Made of Bread Dough

Since the middle of the 18th century the region of Sonneberg used bread dough, this time called *Brottaig*, a compound made of rye flour and glue water. Through modelling the compound on a wooden core a fine shaping was possible. The *Bossierer*, the occupation group of the toy and doll manufacturers using bread dough, established a guild in 1781 and were the precursors of the modellers.

In the year 1789 the privilege to trade was granted to 30 merchants from the town and the region of Sonneberg. It protected the exclusive rights of the merchants to trade the dolls and toys and, consequently, prohibited the independent trade undertaken by toy manufacturers. Thus, the manufacturers of dolls and toys got into a complete economic dependence.

Dolls Made of Papier Mâché

Since 1805 papier mâché was used for the manufacturing of toys in the region of Sonneberg. The main components were paper, glue water, and chalk or other additives such as kaolin sand. The formulae were kept strictly confidential.

In the earlier days it was modelled with the hands. About 1820 papier mâché was formed with the help of plaster or brimstone moulds. In this way, the mass production of dolls and toys through non-skilled workers was enabled. The production process

was accurately divided in several suboperations which were manually manufactured in the workers' homes.

Dolls developed to the main product of Sonneberg's toy industry in the 19th century.

Exhibition Room 4

China Dolls

Porcelain belonged to one of the most important materials to produce dolls in the 19th century. Predominantly the dolls' heads were made of porcelain.

Different kinds of porcelain with varying characteristics were used:

- glazed white untinted porcelain, the so called glossy porcelain, used since 1830/40
- unglazed white untinted porcelain with a matte finish which gives a marmoreal appearance, the so called Parian, used since 1850
- unglazed, delicately tinted porcelain, so called bisque porcelain, used since 1870

The Thuringian doll manufacturers got the dolls' heads produced from local porcelain manufactories which were about hundred throughout Thuringia. Important ones were in Ohrdruf, Gräfenhein, Stutzhaus, Sonneberg, Königssee, Lichte, and Kloster Veilsdorf. Some manufacturers exclusively produced dolls' heads made of porcelain, such as *Simon & Halbig* in Gräfenhein, *Kestner & Comp.* in Ohrdruf, *Gebr. Heubach* in Lichte, and *Armand Marseille* in Sonneberg. The modellers of such porcelain manufactories formed the porcelain heads like fine pieces of art. To the products of the Thuringian porcelain manufacturers also belonged bathing dolls, limbs, miniature table ware, and miniature animals - all made of porcelain. The factories produced explicitly for the world-wide export.

Wax Dolls from the 19th Century

Figures made of wax were already produced in the ancient world, in medieval times, the Renaissance, and the baroque era.

The first Great Exhibition in London in the year 1851 gave the incitation for the revival of the material, since artistic wax figures by the London company *Montanari* were awarded with a prize.

The first known wax doll fabricated in Sonneberg was the so called *Gelenktäufeling*, a movable wax doll in the appearance of a baby. It was designed according to a doll originated from China or Japan which brought *Edmund Lindner*, a distributor and

merchant from Sonneberg, along with him from the Great Exhibition. The *Täufling* (child to be baptised) had a with wax coated papier mâché head. He was manufactured in the company of *Heinrich Stier*. Since 1870 the doll manufacturers around Sonneberg offered festively dressed wax dolls, the so called *Staatsdamen*.

The Design of the Dolls

The manufacturers of the 19th century made strong efforts regarding the design of the play dolls to let them look like humans as similar as possible. For this purpose they invented simple and complicated mechanisms, such as eating or sleeping dolls and the innovation of sleeping eyes.

Important ideas came from France. The motivation to use bisque porcelain and the innovation of ball-jointed dolls probably came from *Emile Jumeau*, the 'King of Dolls', about 1876.

The World's City of Toys

After the adoption of the freedom of trade in 1862, numerous toy and doll manufactories were established in Sonneberg. Due to the abolishment of the privileges to trade the manufacturers could sell their goods independently. Sonneberg developed to the World's City of Toys.

The dolls were still predominantly crafted by hand. The cottage industry remained as the major form of production. The general living conditions of the toy and doll makers were met with sharp criticism even from people of the bourgeoisie.

The Reformation of the Dolls

After the turn of the century the frilly doll ladies from the 19th century were replaced with childlike doll styles. In the year 1907 female artists, amongst others *Marion Kaulitz*, organised an exhibition of their hand-made dolls in the department store *Tietz* in Munich. These dolls were dolls designed like children. They have been making history as Munich Art Dolls.

In the year 1910 *Käthe Kruse* presented her baby dolls to the public. She enjoyed great popularity with her dolls far beyond the borders of Germany.

The design ideas initiated by the Munich doll reformists were first of all adopted by the company *Kämmer & Reinhardt* in Waltershausen, Thuringia. Since 1909 they have produced baby dolls with lifelike baby faces. In the following period also other well-known doll manufactories, such as *J. D. Kestner*, have produced baby dolls with

expressive features. The term *Character Doll* which was emanated from *Kämmer & Reinhardt* is still used nowadays.

Celluloid Dolls

About the turn of the century, celluloid developed to an important material in the doll production. It was break-proof, washable, colour-fast, and sanitary. The production as well as the working were only possible in factories. The first doll of this kind was produced in the *Rhenish Rubber and Celluloid Factory* in Mannheim / Neckarsau in the year 1896. The dolls of this company have worn a tortoise around their neck as branding and have enjoyed great popularity.

Casting Compounds and Cardboard

After the end of the First World War Sonneberg lost its standing as the World's City of Toys. In Sonneberg's doll industry, porcelain was more and more substituted with cheaper casting compounds which were, regarding their components, similar to papier mâché. Since 1920 cardboard was of relevance as material. It enabled the application of machines through embossing and, hence, a low-cost mass production.

Exhibition Room 5

From the Hard Beginning

After 1946 the manufacturers produced under hardest conditions. They had to use old casting moulds and materials, such as papier mâché, cardboard, porcelain-like compounds, and fabrics. After 1948 the nearby town Neustadt bei Coburg developed to an important German centre for the doll production.

Plastic Dolls

The history of doll manufacturing is shaped by the usage of synthetic plastics in the second half of the 20th century. American manufacturers launched the synthetic plastics technology into the doll industry in the 1940s. English, French, Italian, and German manufacturers followed soon. Polystyrene, polyethylene, rigid PVC, and since the mid 1950s also plasticised PVC replaced the other materials. It has many advantages: It is break-proof, washable, colour-fast, and sanitary, as well as cuddly, and, consequently, it is more suitable for children and their need to play.

The Variously Shaped and Colourful World of Dolls

The implementation of plastics had a lasting effect on the design of dolls. In a faster and faster, more detailed and more extensive way, the dolls reflect the life of the adults in their miniature world. In the 1960s the doll manufacturers have considered intensely psychological factors and the pedagogical value of the play with the doll. Natural body shapes and more baby-like faces have again gained in importance. Once again, also dressing dolls have been created since 1949.

Exhibition Room 6

Children's Dreams Made of Plush

The precursors of stuffed animals were industrially produced animals and toys whose bodies were sewed of fabric or leather and stuffed with a soft material. The idea to offer industrially produced non-breakable cuddly animals and dolls spread rapidly among toy manufacturers at the end of the 19th century and grew to an own special branch until the end of the 1920s. The centres in Germany were Giengen, Sonneberg, and Nuremberg. With the help of a new motif, the teddy bear, these kinds of toys have enjoyed increasing popularity since 1903 caused by the legends of their genesis. Not only animals, in particular baby animals, inspired the creators to their motifs, but also cartoons, fairy tales and stories, films and television.

Exhibition Room 7

The Puppet Show

The origin of the puppet show derives from cults and is already sourced back in ancient Greece. During the 16th and 18th century it enjoyed great popularity in all social classes on folk festivals. Since the second half of the 18th century puppet shows were the sole theatre pleasure of the simple folk. In the second half of the 19th century it was widely spread as toy in the shape of the paper theatre.

In the Basement

The Exhibition Scene of the 'Thüringer Kirmes'

The museum's most famous exhibit is the diorama *Thüringer Kirmes*, a Thuringian church fair. The *Thüringer Kirmes* with its 67 authentically appearing figures displays a typical rural fair, called *Kirchweih* or *Kirmes*, of the Thuringian-Franconian region about 1900. The lively goings-on take place on a gently inclined fairground in front of an idyllic scenery with Main-Franconian half-timbered houses and a Thuringian slate house. The fair guests from all social classes arrange themselves around the attractions of the festival, such as the shooting gallery, the carousel, and the fruit stall. The main attraction is a parade of carnies and circus folk who pass one of Sonneberg's typical doll workshops in order to promote their show. Important products of Sonneberg's toy industry, such as dolls, wooden toys, stuffed animals, but also Christmas tree balls, made in Lauscha, appear in the scenery of the Thuringian fair and are seemingly casually presented.

The reason to create the diorama was the Great Exhibition in Brussels in the year 1910 with the aim to popularise Sonneberg's toy industry all over the world. The draft was designed by the then director of the industrial school, professor *Reinhard Möller* (1855-1912). It was realised by 37 companies from Sonneberg as well as students of the industrial school, modellers and craftsmen. The diorama was awarded with a *Grand Prix* in Brussels. After the Great Exhibition it was possible to return the diorama to Sonneberg.

Museum on the Move

Supported by civic involvement, a project to restore the *Thüringer Kirmes* started in 2007. The aim of the project is the realignment of the diorama in a newly designed exhibition area with the theme '*Thüringer Kirmes* and the Great Exhibitions'. This project will be the beginning of a plan to renovate, expand, and redesign the German Toy Museum. The plan was initiated by Sonneberg's administration of the city as well as the district.

The Special Exhibition in the Cupola of the Museum

Art Dolls - Dolls' Artists.

The Munich Doll Reform Reflected in the Collection of the German Toy Museum

For the first time, a unique collection of the German Toy Museum is presented in this special exhibition. The collection is not only the largest in Germany, but it is also considered to be the most important collection of the Munich Art Dolls by *Marion Kaulitz*. Also original dolls which were shown at the Munich Exhibition in 1908 are displayed. They established the basis and the exemplary motif for the artistic doll reform.

The exhibition illustrates the development of the play doll, the genesis of the art dolls, and, in their further progression, of the character dolls. In addition, the epitomization of the play dolls suitable for children, the *Käthe Kruse* dolls, are shown. Exemplary dolls from the early stages which belong currently to the oldest and most valuable *Kruse* dolls can be seen in the exhibition.