Mathematical models in the permanent exhibition (courtesy University Museum Groningen)

A museum at a crossroads: the future of the University Museum Groningen (The Netherlands)

Arjen Dijkstra
Head of the University Museum Groningen

The relative small, but very attractive museum in the North of the Netherlands is at a crossroads. The collections cover a very broad spectrum of academic specializations. From scientific instruments, to large medical collections, and from a large collection of stones and many anatomical specimen, and countless ethnological objects from all over the world. It also holds the art collection of the University of Groningen and has a broad range of natural history artifacts. However over the past years the richness of the many collections has proofed to be holding the museum back. Visitor numbers have fallen, financial problems have arisen and the connection to its academic society seems to have gotten lost.

The question now is which road the museum will take in the near future. Will it close its doors, or will it be given the chance to reinvent itself?

Arjen Dijkstra studied history in Groningen and took his PhD in the history of science and mathematics at the University of Twente. His research focuses on the cultural side of the history of science. From 2018 he heads the University Museum Groningen.

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