



## **VIKINGS: BEYOND THE LEGEND**

### **The Experience**

#### **Outside the Exhibition**

The Eik Sande is a detailed replica of a boat found with three ships in the burial mound of a Viking chieftain Gokstad, Norway. The reconstruction comes from the Viking Ship Museum in Denmark.

#### **Meet the Vikings**

The people who lived across Scandinavia during the Viking Age (750 – 1100 CE) were not a unified group nor did they call themselves Vikings. They used the term “viking” to describe a trade expedition or a raid. New archaeological evidence and scientific techniques are laying to rest many long-held misconceptions about the Vikings. Although these people had many things in common, their societies were multifaceted and influenced by outside cultures as their presence spread across Europe and beyond. Highlights:

- objects — such as Thor’s hammer, brooches and “objects from afar” — as well as maps and graphics that set the stage for the experience
- a video introduction to the complexities of Viking life

#### **Homes-Colorful and Bustling**

Domestic life was anything but colorless and harsh. The Vikings wore elaborate ornamentation and were fastidious about grooming. Textile fragments show not only wool but also silk and linen were available, generally dyed with plant materials. Highlights:

- displays reflecting a traditional long house with environmental sounds to enhance the feeling of life in a Viking home
- everyday objects, such as combs, knives, keys, musical instruments and ice skates
- a spelling challenge using the rune alphabet
- exploration station with touchable objects representing everyday life

#### **Family Community**

Owning land determined social position, and an individual’s status was dependent on his or her position within the family collective. The greatest divide was between those who were free and those in servitude. Women and men also had distinct roles depending on their status. Highlights:

- objects such as spindles, beads and clothing remnants
- interactive exhibit that explores dress and social status

PRESS CONTACT: MAURA O’NEAL  
maura.oneal@dmns.org  
303.370.6407

The exhibition is a joint venture between and produced by The Swedish History Museum in Sweden and MuseumsPartner in Austria.



MARCH 10 – AUGUST 13, 2017  
DENVER MUSEUM OF  
**NATURE & SCIENCE**  
2001 COLORADO BOULEVARD, DENVER, COLORADO 80202

- the Museum’s historical enactors portraying warriors, farmers, weavers and enslaved workers whose everyday lives are set within Norse culture

### **More than Just Worship**

During most of the Viking Age, people in Scandinavia were aware of two very different religious systems: the domestic Old Norse tradition, dedicated to many male and female gods, and burgeoning Christianity. Ancient Norse practices included many special rituals and activities that varied across the region. By the end of the Viking Age, Christianity dominated in Scandinavia, and by 1100 CE it was the only official religion. Highlights:

- bronze figures and jewelry representing Norse gods, and the oldest known Scandinavian crucifix, illustrating the transition of religious practices
- Norse mythology stories told by historical enactors
- interactive exhibit about how the days of the week we still use today were inspired by Vikings
- historical enactors telling traditional Viking stories

### **The Living and the Dead**

The dead continued to “live on,” so cemeteries near the family settlement were used for many purposes other than burial. Old Norse mentality centered on the collective: you could count on a good life in the hereafter if during your life you embraced values that benefited your family, kinship or the warriors. For the warrior aristocracy, an honorable death on the battlefield was glorious, and a natural death on the farm was anything but. Highlights:

- “Ghost ship” sculpture of 219 hanging iron rivets from an authentic aristocratic burial ship. All the wood from the boat disintegrated, leaving only the rivets
- interactive touch table exploring an ancient boat burial, uncovering layer by layer a buried skeleton along with weapons, gaming pieces, household tools, animals and more
- replica of a large picture stone dating from 700 – 800 CE

### **Norse Craftsmanship**

Viking craftspeople had great skill for working with a variety of materials — iron, steel, wood, bone, leather, glass and clay. Their methods were based on ancient learning and traditions. Metal craft in particular had metaphysical and mythological significance. The gods themselves were regarded as craftspeople, and refinement of metal was viewed as a way of changing the world. Highlights:

- activity to pick up an accurately rendered Viking sword to experience its weight
- weapons, tools and spectacular jewelry

### **Away on Business**

Contact with the rest of the continent expanded considerably during the Viking Age, widening the scope for new cultural influences. Riches and luxury items such as silver, wax, fur, glass and beads flowed into Scandinavia. It is not clear how many of these items were acquired from trade and how many were the result of plundering. Highlights:

- weapons, weights and trade items

PRESS CONTACT: MAURA O’NEAL  
maura.oneal@dmns.org  
303.370.6407

**VIKINGS**  
BEYOND THE LEGEND

MARCH 10 – AUGUST 13, 2017  
DENVER MUSEUM OF  
**NATURE & SCIENCE**  
2001 COLORADO BOULEVARD, DENVER, COLORADO 80202

- interactive exhibit about how the trading hubs worked
- exploration station with examples of items Vikings needed for trade
- *Arby*, a meticulously re-created boat, constructed using processes and materials of the time

### **Over the Sea**

The Vikings would not be who they are in the absence of their ship-building technology and sailing prowess. Their ships were designed to sail the open seas, go up and down rivers, and carry over land with relative ease. Vikings were capable of navigating the seas without instruments and calculations. Instead, they used knowledge about winds, tidal currents, weather phenomena and traveling times accumulated by many generations of ancestors. Highlights:

- interactive exhibit about ship building where guests collect the necessary resources, such as quantities of trees for wood, iron for thousands of rivets and wool for the sail
- touchable rope replica made of lime bark, leather, and horse hair, and an interactive exhibit about how to tie a traditional knot
- three replica rune stones that would have been painted bright colors and positioned to be clearly visible in a landscape
- interactive quiz to test your newfound Viking knowledge

### **Conclusion**

The experience ends with a chance to play Hnefatafl, a Viking board game, and a free souvenir to remember your visit.

###

PRESS CONTACT: MAURA O'NEAL  
maura.oneal@dmns.org  
303.370.6407

VIKINGS  
BEYOND THE LEGEND

MARCH 10 – AUGUST 13, 2017  
DENVER MUSEUM OF  
NATURE & SCIENCE  
2001 COLORADO BOULEVARD, DENVER, COLORADO 80202