Welcome to the new public library of Oslo, Norway – Deichman Bjørvika

The library of the future is finally ready to open for the public of Oslo and all visitors to the Norwegian capital. Located between Oslo Central Station and the Oslo Opera House, Deichman Bjørvika is an extension of the 235 year history of the public library of Oslo. It will also be an exploration of what a library can be.

Stretching over six floors and 13,500 square meters (approx. 1,4 million square feet) you will find books – 450,000 of them – but also other offers and activities. You can visit the children’s section with all its playful hiding places, watch movies with your friends, make podcasts, learn to play the piano, sew a dress, use the 3D printers, enjoy the view of the Oslo Fjord or just admire the architecture by Lundhagem Architects and Atelier Oslo.

The original plan was to open Deichman Bjørvika to the public on March 28th 2020. However, Covid-19 and the national lockdown in March put a stop to that. In a week’s time, on June 18, Library Director Knut Skansen can finally let patrons and visitors into the new main library.

“We are looking forward to letting this house fill with people. Opening a building such as this in Oslo is a great event. Finally the people of Oslo and visitors can come to us and start using the library. We are looking forward to show people this building which we are so proud of. I think people will be proud themselves because this is after all their building”, says Skansen.

Two million visitors

Deichman Bjørvika’s ambition is to host two million visitors each year, in a Covid- free situation. Among the safety measures in regards to infection control is a limit on the number of visitors who can be present in the library at the same time: 1,000, compared to the usual limit of 3,000. This limit has been set in consultation with local infection control authorities.

Increased loans and number of visits

Whoever finds libraries old-fashioned will have to think again. People enjoy libraries. From 2015 to 2019 Deichman experienced a 43 percent increase of the number of visitors. The reasons for these percentages are extended opening hours, upgraded and modernized facilities and a wide range of activities.

“It’s great to be here in this library that we have worked so hard for. I am proud of how the City Government of Oslo and the City of Oslo can offer this. The new main library is an addition to the other new and upgraded libraries in the city. We want Deichman Bjørvika to make literature, love of reading, and knowledge available to more people. With that we want to strengthen democracy and cultural heritage, and to even out social differences in our society”, says Vice Mayor for Culture and Sport, Rina Mariann Hansen.
Opening June 18th

Deichman Bjørvika opens Thursday June 18th at 5PM. The opening ceremony is a short, closed event with 200 guests, but it will be livestreamed on Deichman Bjørvika's Facebook page. After the ceremony the library will be open to the public. Confirmed guests to the ceremony are H.R.H. Crown Prince Haakon of Norway, Mayor of Oslo Marianne Borgen, Governing Mayor of Oslo Raymond Johansen and Vice Mayor for Culture and Sport Rina Mariann Hansen. Authors Camara Joof and Lars Saabye Christensen will be reading a prologue to the library. Musical performances will be given by Maria Lotus and Lars Lillo-Stenberg and the Norwegian National Opera Children's Chorus.

Opening hours for Deichman Bjørvika:
- Monday to Friday: 8AM to 10PM
- Weekends: 10AM to 6PM
- June 18th: 5PM to midnight (open for the public after the ceremony, which will be streamed)
**Facts about Deichman Bjørvika**

- Oslo’s new main public library, centrally located between Oslo Central Station and the Opera House.
- Opens June 18, 2020
- Deichman Bjørvika is headed by Department Director Merete Lie
- Address: Anne-Cath. Vestlys plass 1, 0150 Oslo, Norway
- Here you will find six floors containing literature, reading and study areas, stages, a movie theatre and workshops – for young and old:
  - First floor: square, restaurant, café, newspapers, magazines, books for short-term borrowing.
  - Second floor: fiction, history of literature, children’s section.
  - Third floor: music, movies, comics, games, speculative fiction, workshops, recording studios, mini cinema, gaming rooms, movie screening stations, stage.
  - Fourth floor: class rooms, reading rooms, books on art, architecture, health, technology, and science.
  - Fifth floor: social sciences, history, psychology, philosophy, religion, literature about Oslo, the original Deichman collection, study desks, reading rooms, the art project Future Library.
- 450,000 books and other media.
- Gross floor area: 19,600 square meters. Net floor area: 13,560 square meters.
- Architects: Lundhagem and Atelier Oslo.
- Client: The City of Oslo by The Municipal Undertaking of Cultural and Sports Facilities.
- Important dates:
  - September 3, 2008: The City Council adopted a resolution to locate the library in Bjørvika.
  - March 27, 2009: Lund Hagem and Atelier Oslo’s entry “Diagonale” won the architecture competition, ahead of 18 other entrants.
  - March 6, 2013: The City Council secured financing and adopted a resolution to build a new main library in Bjørvika.
  - February 3, 2017: Laying of the foundation stone with students from Oslo’s Smestad and Karlsrud schools.
  - June 18, 2020: Opening of Deichman Bjørvika.
- Website: [http://deichman.no/bjørvika](http://deichman.no/bjørvika)
- Facebook: [http://facebook.com/deichman.bjorvika](http://facebook.com/deichman.bjorvika)
- Instagram: [http://instagram.com/deichman.bjorvika](http://instagram.com/deichman.bjorvika)
Facts about Deichman

Deichman Public Library is the agency for the public libraries in the City of Oslo.
Deichman wants to contribute to a society where everyone has a sense of belonging, ownership and commitment – towards both the community and their own lives. No matter why you come here, you will leave with something.

See an overview of all our libraries here: https://deichman.no/bibliotekene

▸ Oslo’s public library, owned and funded by the City of Oslo.
▸ Consists of one main library (Deichman Bjørvika) and 22 branch libraries.
▸ Established in 1785, when the City of Christiania received Carl Deichman’s collection of books as a legacy.
▸ Library Director: Knut Skansen.
▸ Number of employees: 248 full-time equivalents/337 employees (121 full-time equivalents/140 employees of whom will work at Deichman Bjørvika).
Oslo’s City Council adopts the location of the area A8 in Bjørvika.

Lundhagem and Atelier Oslo win the open architectural competition with their contribution “Diagonale”.

MARCH 27

Oslo’s City Council secures the funding and decides that the new main library will be built in Bjørvika.

MARCH 6

Oslo’s City Council adopts the location of the area A8 in Bjørvika.

SEPTEMBER 3

JANUARY 29

Construction start for Deichman Bjørvika.

JANUARY 29

The Mayor of Oslo Marianne Borgen laid the foundation stone with school children from Smestad and Karlsrud.

FEBRUARY 3

2008

2009

2013

2014

2017

2020

2009

2014

2017

2020

JUNE 18

Official opening of Oslo’s new public library Deichman Bjørvika.

JUNE 18
Brainstorm
(neon installation, Lars Ø Ramberg, Norway)

*Brainstorm* is a site-specific installation inside Deichman Bjørvika, Oslo’s new main public library. It consists of 400 meters of handcrafted neon tubes in white and yellow glass that seem to coincide at random and are interconnected – a seemingly beautiful chaos that changes shape as one moves around the building. The artwork, which hangs centrally in the library, between the ceiling and the floor, visualizes connections between people, between thoughts, between places and between cultures. Light and information. Cables and neurons. Communication. Information. Themes reflecting what the library of the future is about.

The artwork is commissioned by the City of Oslo Art Programme to coincide with the opening of the new main public library.
Lars Ø Ramberg (born 1964 in Oslo) is one of Norway’s most acclaimed contemporary artists, best known for large-scale public installations such as Liberté (three public toilets painted blue, white and red) in Oslo and Palast des Zweifels (the Palace of Doubt) in Berlin. His work has been shown around the world, including at the Venezia and São Paulo biennales. Ramberg is represented in many public collections and museums.

More about Lars Ramberg here: www.studioramberg.net

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Creature from Iddefjord
(large outdoor sculpture, Martin Puryear, USA)

American artist Martin Puryear is a Washington-born contemporary artist best known for his large abstract organic sculptures inspired by traditional craft. His work has been represented in several prestigious museums, including MOMA and Whitney Museum of American Art in New York City.

Puryear’s Creature from Iddefjord, which will stand near the water mirror on the forecourt outside the new public library, is a 7-meters high sculpture with an archaic form, a creature one can both look at and walk through. The sculpture is made out of grey granite from the Iddefjord on the border between Norway and Sweden. This is the same stone that was used by Gustav Vigeland for his Monolith in the Vigeland Park. The sculpture is a gift from the DNB Savings Bank Foundation to The City of Oslo, Norway.

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Other art projects

Various temporary artworks are planned indoors on all floors of the library.
Did you know?

- Neon production is a demanding craft. It takes seven years to learn.

- 1.8 km of cables in Ramberg’s *Brainstorm* disappear into the library roof and meet in the floor above in a separate room where they receive power from 75 high voltage transformers. These convert 220 volts AC to high voltage DC of 8000 volts. The voltage produces a stream of electrons that affect the atoms of the neon gas and release energy so that it starts to glow.

- Martin Puryear’s largest temporary public sculpture to date, first exhibited in New York’s Madison Square Park, was called Big Bling, and *Creature from Iddefjord* was inspired by it.

- *Brainstorm* and *Creature from Iddefjord* will both be part of the City of Oslo’s art collection.

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