Text: [*Gido Boere*](https://umployee.maastrichtuniversity.nl/tijdlijn/gido-boere/4579/profile) and [*Evert van Zoeren*](https://umployee.maastrichtuniversity.nl/tijdlijn/evert-van-zoeren/4382/profile)  
Photography: Joris Hilterman

# Hidden gems: the Turnzaal

Maastricht University takes care of many distinctive buildings that we all know. By giving them a new purpose, we preserve these icons and give them a new meaning, making them the vibrant heart of a bustling city.  
  
Did you know that these buildings also provide access to various special places and stories? Let yourself be surprised and join us in this series exploring the hidden gems of the university and the city of Maastricht.  
  
At Grote Gracht 90-92 in Maastricht’s Statenkwartier lies Tilly’s courtyard, or the ‘Hof van Tilly’. The Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences has been housed here since 2003.   
  
The building’s striking Turnzaal is the oldest gym hall in the Netherlands. It dates all the way back to 1880. Back then, the Hof van Tilly was a teacher training school with a hyper-modern gym.   
  
Before the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences took over the building, it was thoroughly renovated and refurbished. The Turnzaal became a multifunctional space. It was attempted to maintain the authentic character, visible in the craftsmanship comprising chalet-style elements. This was managed by choosing transparent acoustic materials, for instance.  
  
For a long time, the Turnzaal was used as Maastricht University orchestra’s rehearsal room. Today, it is mainly used as a lecture hall. The trusses on the ceiling of the hall are bedecked with a work of art by Tom Claassen. This artwork references the Venus of Willendorf, one of the first manifestations of artistic expression that stems from around 24,000 BCE. Because the art was installed in the gym, Claassen decided to depict the plump figures in gym poses.

More information?  
Do you have any questions, would you like to know more or do you want to take a look yourself? Please send an e-mail to: [webred-um@maastrichtuniversity.nl](mailto:webred-um@maastrichtuniversity.nl)