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The new History of Physics Museum in Padua - Exploring the potentialities of a university physics collection

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The Museum of the History of Physics holds thousands of scientific instruments that were used for physics research and teaching in Padua from the 18th century onwards. It was founded in 1995. We have just developed a project to renovate the Museum, with the aim of shedding new light on the potentialities of Padua university physics collection.

The paper will discuss some of the main peculiarities of the new display, which actually brings the public into Padua's Cabinet of Physics and shows how physics was taught and studied in Padua from the 18th century onwards. We will see how connections with the global developments of physics emerge throughout the visit, as well as links with other disciplines, such as art and architecture. Stories of successes and failures come to light, often connected to the political, social and economic context, and we will see how instruments themselves offer food for thought on current issues in science and society.

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