

Press release

Berlin, 14 November 2019

A Tea House for the Humboldt Forum

Japanese artisans are constructing the sculptural building from Corten steel, wood and clay

The **exhibition module on Japanese art** is set to open its own **tea house**, in which visitors to **Humboldt Forum im Berliner Schloss** will be able to experience **tea ceremonies**. The **sculptural architecture** of the new tea house, to be constructed by Japanese artisans, will be made of Corten steel, wood and clay according to a design by competition winner **URA Architects** from **Kanazawa** and will combine **tradition and modernity** as well as references to **Japanese and German culture** on an equal footing.

The word *Bôki* literally means “to forget the affairs of daily life”. It served as the motto – and also as the name – of a tea room installed in the Museum für ostasiatische Kunst in Dahlem in October of the year 2000. From 2005 onwards, tea ceremonies were held regularly at *Bôki*. The tea ceremonies gave people the opportunity to come together and forget their everyday cares by just concentrating on the ritual preparation and subsequent enjoyment of the tea, as well as to appreciate the practical and highly aesthetic utensils and room decoration.

This tradition of tea ceremonies finds its continuation in the collection of the Museum für Asiatische Kunst in the exhibition module on Japanese art on the third floor of the Humboldt Forum’s west wing. The winning competition design by URA Architects from Kanazawa is currently being implemented by artisans from Japan.

The form and materials of the tea house will be used to sensitively create local references. The roof and external walls of Corten steel echo the octagonal form of the ruins of the tower of Berlin’s Kaiser-Wilhelm-Gedächtniskirche, which was destroyed in World War II; the ruined tower serves as a peace memorial for the city. The interior walls of the main room, the size of which correspond to eight traditional Kyoto rice straw mats, will be partially realized with European clay. Overall, the tea house consists of the main tea room, as well as a smaller preparation room. The tea room will be equipped with a *ro*, a traditional Japanese

sunken fireplace, as well as a niche, known as a *tokonama*. With its exceptional works of Japanese painting and graphic art, as well as ceramic and lacquer works, the tea house will allow visitors to experience the culture of the traditional Japanese Way of Tea.

Hans-Dieter Hegner, construction director at the Stiftung Humboldt Forum im Berliner Schloss and member of the competition jury, had the following to say about the project: “I am happy that the traditional tea ceremony will once again be performed at this new location for the Museum für Asiatische Kunst. The plans for the new tea house, which the Stiftung Humboldt Forum im Berliner Schloss has purchased from Japan for the exhibition, were drawn up by Jun Ura and his team of URA Architects from Kanazawa. He was awarded first prize in a competition held among Japanese architects and artists. His design idea is a seemingly effortless marriage of old traditions and modernity. On the one hand, it complies with the strict demands of the tea ceremony. On the other, it also incorporates concepts from modern sculptural architecture. In addition to traditional materials such as Japanese paper and lacquered wood, modern materials such as steel are also very much in evidence. Both visitors to the exhibition and the Japanese Tea Association will certainly derive great pleasure from this very special exhibit.”

The completion of the **Humboldt Forum** at the end of 2020 will mark the creation of a new cultural quarter in the heart of Berlin. By bringing together outstanding collections with important exhibits, including spiritual objects and works of art from Asia, Africa, America, and by hosting a wide range of events, the Humboldt Forum aims to provide impulses for new insights into the world of yesterday, today and tomorrow. Participating institutions in the Humboldt Forum are the Stiftung Preußischer Kulturbesitz with the Ethnologisches Museum and the Museum für Asiatische Kunst of the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Kulturprojekte Berlin with Stadtmuseum Berlin, and the Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, with the Stiftung Humboldt Forum im Berliner Schloss at the helm.

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Commissioning Organisation

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Architects

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Press photographs are available for download at humboldtforum.com/presse

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