

Press release

Berlin, 15 May 2020

Art in Architecture: Statue of Limitations erected in the Humboldt Forum

Call for permanent critical examination of colonial history

The part intended for the Humboldt Forum of the bronze sculpture “Statue of Limitations” of the artist Kang Sunkoo has been erected. With it, the first half of the two-piece work has been completed successfully. Visitors will be able to see the work in the central stair hall, which leads to the collections of the Ethnological Museum and the Museums for Asian Art on the 2nd and 3rd floor of the west wing, presumably from the spring of 2021. From then, the other half is also to be installed temporarily on Nachtigalplatz in the so-called African Quarter in Berlin-Wedding.

The black patinated bronze sculpture in the form of a flag at half-mast is the result of Kang Sunkoo’s artistic examination of colonial history and the Humboldt Forum. Its title is a play on the legal term “Statute of Limitations”. Split in the middle, the work connects two symbolically charged locations in Berlin and their history: the Humboldt Forum in the Berlin Palace and Nachtigalplatz, in the so-called African Quarter.

The building context in both sites is characterised by a symmetrical layout. The lower half of the work stands on the symmetry axis of the Humboldt Forum, in the middle between the two flights of stairs that connect the second floor to the third. On Nachtigalplatz, the upper half of the flagpole marks the mirror axis of the urban space. Due to the split, only one half is ever visible to the viewer. The image of the flagpole in its entirety can only be completed in the imagination.

The Humboldt Forum in the building volume of the partly reconstructed Berlin Palace is the central starting point of the work. Kang Sunkoo in [his video statement](#): “The Humboldt Forum is the cultural manifestation of a contemporary society dealing with its past and the reflection of both, its own self-perception and its world view.”

General Director **Hartmut Dorgerloh**: “The Statue of Limitations is an emblem which illustrates the different positions and perspectives in dealing with colonial history. We have no authority to interpret the collections here - no interpretational sovereignty. Our aim is rather to work together to present their many voices in various forms and from these different perspectives. That is why cooperating with our partners in Germany and abroad, especially with source communities in the United States, Brazil, Tanzania or Australia, is essential for the Humboldt Forum.”

In March 2018, Kang Sunkoo was awarded the first prize for his work submitted for the art in architecture competition. The design brief for this second of five competitions for the Humboldt Forum in the Berliner Schloss concerned the stair hall, which accesses the collections of the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin on the 2nd and 3rd floor. Chief Technology Officer **Hans-Dieter Hegner**: “Art in architecture is an important part of building culture, which the Stiftung Humboldt Forum im Berliner Schloss values very highly. It is an important contribution to the aesthetic quality of built spaces and adds its own interpretational level to architecture. The work by Kang Sunkoo is an extremely felicitous idea, which scrutinises and expounds the problems of colonisation as well as its consequences up to the present. Its effect and the impetus for a critical analysis extend far beyond the Humboldt Forum site. Although the art object is divided, the sculpture installed in the Humboldt Forum intrinsically embodies a fragmentary whole, whose elegance and use of material fits effortlessly into the architecture and the place.”

Four **art in architecture competitions** were held on behalf of the Stiftung Humboldt Forum im Berliner Schloss, from which five works of art were produced for the new Humboldt Forum. All winning designs reflect the history of the site in an individual way or establish artistic references to the contents of the Humboldt Forum and the Humboldt brothers from which it derives its name. The jury session for the fifth and final art in architecture competition for the roof terrace will take place on 19th May.

Kang Sunkoo studied architecture at the RWTH Aachen. After working for the architectural firms Herzog & de Meuron, Schmachtenberg Kang Architects and Silvia Gmür Reto Gmür Architects, his last work as an architect was the conversion of Ai Weiwei’s studio in Berlin. Kang Sunkoo then worked on several art projects for the artist Ai Weiwei and taught the class as teaching assistant during Ai’s Einstein guest professorship at the UdK Berlin. In 2018, Kang’s entry *Statue of Limitations* was awarded the first prize of the art in architecture competition for the stair hall of the Humboldt Forum in the Berlin Palace. In 2019, his entry *Heimat Heimat* won first prize for the art in architecture competition for the extension of the Federal Ministry of the Interior, Building and Community (Bundesministerium des Innern, Bau und Heimat) in Berlin.

Facts and figures

Material	Bronze, black patinated	
Location	Lower half (permanent)	Stair hall, Humboldt Forum in the Berlin Palace, Berlin-Mitte
	Upper half (temporary, approx. 6 months, subsequent location tbc by the artist)	Nachtigalplatz, African Quarter, Berlin-Wedding
Dimensions	Lower half (Humboldt Forum)	2.75 m * 2.29 m * 11.02 m (height), ø 30 cm - 18 cm (pole)
	Upper half (Nachtigalplatz)	2.05 m * 1.43 m * 11.02 m (height), ø 18 cm - 6 cm (pole)
Weight	Lower half (Humboldt Forum)	approx. 1700 kg (suspended)
	Upper half (Nachtigalplatz)	approx. 1000 kg (standing)
Installation	Lower half (Humboldt Forum)	May 2020
	Upper half (Nachtigalplatz)	At the same time as the opening of the 2nd and 3rd floor of the Humboldt Forum
Competition	1st prize in the open international, two-phase competition in anonymous procedure, held by the Federal Office for Building and Regional Planning (Bundesamt für Bauwesen und Raumordnung) 2017–2018	
Client	Stiftung Humboldt Forum im Berliner Schloss	

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