



**PRESS RELEASE**

**Berlin, 25 May 2020**

## **Reconstruction of the dome of the Berlin Palace near completion**

**Information on the history of the building's development and the handling of symbols on  
[humboldtforum.org](http://humboldtforum.org)**

*Who placed which signs on the Berlin Palace and with which objective? And how is the Humboldt Forum now handling the historical building elements, inscriptions and symbols? The work on the dome of the Berlin Palace will soon be coming to a close: The components of the dome lantern are scheduled to be mounted at the end of May. Reconstruction of the Baroque façades of the Berlin Palace will then be largely completed. The Humboldt Forum is using the completion as grounds to discuss the topic with articles from different perspectives and encourages participation in an exchange of opinions with a debate forum.*

With the installation of the dome, accurately detailed reconstruction of the Baroque façades of the Berlin Palace is largely completed. The work on the copper cover of the dome is completed and the scaffolding will now be dismantled. Provided the wind conditions allow it, it is currently planned to place the lantern together with the cross on the tip of the dome in two lifts, early on 29 May.

The reconstruction of the building aimed to achieve a high degree of attention to historical detail. Thus, not only were monarchical and heraldic architectural sculpture symbols such as eagles, coats of arms and crowns reconstructed in their original form but also elements of Christian iconography such as the cross and the all-round scroll at the foot of the dome: "Only in him is there salvation: for of all the names in the world given to men, this is the only named Jesus to the glory of God the Father. That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth."

This text montage of two verses from the Bible (Acts of the Apostles, Chapter 4, Verse 12 and Philippians Chapter 2, Verse 10) should be understood in the context of their respective historical situation of their creation. They refer to the chequered history of the site and the circumstances in which the building was built. The stakeholders of the Humboldt Forum are therefore aware of the problems that arise from the restoration of the monarchical and Christian symbols on a building such as the Humboldt Forum with urban planning and building culture justification, but which nonetheless can be interpreted from a political and religious aspect.

General Director Hartmut Dorgerloh: "The Humboldt Forum is being built in a special place with a complex history of its creation that is not without its contradictions. It therefore goes without saying that we distance ourselves from any claims to authority, sole validity or even claims to power, which can be deduced from these symbols or inscriptions. Instead the structural ambiguity is part of the DNA of the Humboldt Forum. Especially in the debate on

the different perception of the historical reconstruction, we see a clear brief for a programme of a diversity of voices from different perspectives.”

In the direct conflict of different positions, cultures and value systems, new issues arise, which bring with them sensitised handling of history in extended, global contexts and thus bring them into the present. The Humboldt Forum therefore invites people to join in a debate on its new website under [humboldtforum.org](http://humboldtforum.org) from mid-May. In addition to an extensive online dossier on the reconstruction of historic symbols on the Humboldt Forum, the interested public will also be given an interactive forum in which the topic of the dome and cross can be discussed. A publication on the debate is in preparation and will be published by the Hanser Verlag in the spring of 2021.

In 2002, the German Bundestag approved the partial reconstruction of the Berlin Palace and the foundation of the Humboldt Forum. Specifically, the rebuilding of three Baroque façades on the north, south and west side and the Schlüterhof was to be planned. As part of the architecture competition held in 2008 by the Federal Ministry of Building, the reconstruction of the dome was also planned, which implemented the design of the Italian architect Prof Franco Stella as the competition winner. In 2007, the Bundestag had only earmarked funds for simplified cladding of the dome. Several individual donations then secured the historical reconstruction since 2017.

## **RECONSTRUCTION OF THE DOME**

**Historical architect** Friedrich August Stüler, 1844–1854 (incl. new palace chapel)

**Historical client** King Frederick William IV, of Prussia

### **Humboldt Forum architect**

Development of historical façades: Stuhlemmer Architekten (2003–2009);

Detail design and realisation: Franco Stella Projektgemeinschaft (2009–2019)

**Preproduction / Mounting of copper dome cover** Metallverarbeitung und Dachklempnerei Taubert, Greiz

**Sculptor** Andreas A. Hoferick, Berlin

**Production of the lantern** Fittkau Fittkau Metallgestaltung GmbH, Berlin

**Humboldt Forum client** Stiftung Humboldt Forum im Berliner Schloss

### **Press contacts**

Bernhard Wolter, Head of Press and PR

+49 151 14 00 11 99, [bernhard.wolter@humboldtforum.org](mailto:bernhard.wolter@humboldtforum.org)

Michael Mathis, Press Spokesperson +49 151 16 17 97 27,

[michael.mathis@humboldtforum.org](mailto:michael.mathis@humboldtforum.org)

[humboldtforum.org/presse](http://humboldtforum.org/presse)