

PRESS RELEASE

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Humboldt Forum Digital Preview: Berlin's newest landmark welcomes visitors virtually to its new home

The Humboldt Forum, the largest cultural development in Europe and the most ambitious in Germany this century, celebrates the completion of construction with a livestreamed Digital Preview of the new cultural quarter at **7pm CET today, Wednesday 16 December 2020**, at www.humboldtforum.org.

Visitors will get their first glimpses of the Humboldt Forum online this evening, via an hour-long, live and interactive programme that enables participants to explore the new venue for culture and science via a digital format.

Host, Mitri Sirin, will take viewers on a tour of the building, which will feature interviews and greetings from Minister of State Monika Grütters, General Director Hartmut Dorgerloh, archaeologist George Abungu, author Andrea Wulf, as well as from artists Kang Sunkoo and Tim Trantenroth. Contemporary witnesses, curators and historians will offer an overview of the exhibitions *BERLIN GLOBAL*, *After Nature*, *Insights. The Humboldt Brothers*, the collections of the Ethnologisches Museum (Ethnological Museum) and the Museum für Asiatische Kunst (Asian Art Museum), as well as the *History of the Site*. A live connection to the Forum's 25-metre high media tower, the Cosmograph, will also turn the Foyer into an interactive space for dialogue. Musical accompaniment to the digital opening will be provided by the Resident Music Collective.

Parallel to the livestream, three additional video channels will provide alternative perspectives of the building, its history and the core themes of the Humboldt Forum:

- **Locked In and Out**: Having recently accepted German citizenship, writer and activist Priya Basil explores the Humboldt Forum from a deeply personal perspective through a short-form film essay. She delves into the question of what such a building, such a project, means for an understanding of the past and for belonging in the present.
- **360° – Open to all**: 360° video formats create a unique spatial experience and convey a first impression of the Humboldt Forum – all the way from the Schlüterhof courtyard to the roof with a view over Berlin. Curators will discuss the architecture and establish a relationship between the Humboldt brothers and the building.

- Let's take a look-see...: A special behind-the-scenes tour led by stand-up comedian Stefan Danziger, revealing some unusual and sometimes secret places – from underground corridors and the engine room, through to the escape routes, stairs and exhibition rooms, and right up to the roof and beneath the dome.

In light of Germany's COVID-19 restrictions, the Humboldt Forum will not be able to open its doors to the public on 17 December as planned. Details of the public opening will be announced in early 2021.

Minister of State for Culture, Monika Grütters, said: "The Humboldt brothers' legacy of observing the world with their own eyes, of encountering the unfamiliar face-to-face without repelling or disparaging it, is today more pertinent than ever. All the more reason to breathe new life into this legacy with the Humboldt Forum, set right at the heart of the German capital. In particular, the Humboldt Forum aims to be a benchmark and role model for all of Germany for the handling of cultural assets from colonial contexts.

And even though it may only currently be possible in a virtual space, we want to show the public what has been achieved over these past years. Because, just like Alexander von Humboldt's expeditions, the path from the Bundestag's 2002 resolution to reconstruct the Berlin Palace, all the way to its completion, has required stamina, tireless commitment and visionary strength, not to mention a touch of daring. So for that I would like to offer my heartfelt thanks, especially to the many trades who have created true masterpieces of craftsmanship and sculpture in this place."

Michael Müller, governing mayor of Berlin, said: "The Humboldt Forum is an impressive addition to the cultural landscape here in the centre of Berlin, both for its architecture and its content. Its collections and exhibits aim to bring the world to our capital's centre, while this building will stand as a symbol of cosmopolitan open-mindedness true to the spirit of the Humboldts and of Berlin. Thirty years after reunification, the Humboldt Forum and the Palace façade carry huge symbolism for Berliners. The face of Berlin has received a new, yet simultaneously historical feature – a gift to the city. I particularly wish to thank the many donors who have made this possible."

General director, Hartmut Dorgerloh, said: "I am very grateful for this new venue for culture and science, and the tremendous opportunities it offers. From today, the Humboldt Forum is one among many cultural institutions hoping to be able to greet their guests as soon as is possible and reasonable. Only when we are able to open our Portals permanently to our public without restriction will it be possible for us, together with all our partners, to be a vibrant venue filled with diverse voices and cultural encounters. For the present, we are delighted to offer a first impression of the building with our own exclusive artistic programme – livestreamed and online."

The Humboldt Forum, developed over the last decade on a key historic site at the heart of Berlin, and occupying a floor area of 40,000 square metres, is conceived as a space that brings together the arts and sciences in a contemporary dialogue, the first of its kind in Europe. Inspired and informed by the spirit of Alexander and Wilhelm von Humboldt, perhaps Germany's greatest thinkers on education, culture, science and nature, it will be home to four partners working together, each offering a unique experience to the visitor.

The partners are the Stiftung Preußischer Kulturbesitz (Prussian Cultural Heritage Foundation) responsible for the Ethnologisches Museum (Ethnological Museum) and the Museum für Asiatische Kunst (Asian Art Museum) of the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin (Berlin State Museums); Kulturprojekte Berlin (Cultural Projects Berlin); the Stadtmuseum Berlin (City Museum Berlin); and Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin (Humboldt University), working with the building's owner and operator, the Stiftung Humboldt Forum (Humboldt Forum Foundation).

Humboldt Forum

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MEDIA MATERIALS

Press materials available to download via: <http://bit.ly/HumboldtForumPress>

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