

PRESS RELEASE

19 July 2021

Open at last! The Humboldt Forum is opening its doors to the public

Free entry to the exhibitions for the first 100 days

The Humboldt Forum is opening to the public tomorrow, 20 July. Our inaugural opening comprises six exhibitions. From the Palace Cellar up to the first floor, visitors are invited to discover presentations on the history of the site and the Humboldt brothers, and spend time in our special exhibitions entitled *Terrible Beauty. Elephant – Human – Ivory* and *Have a Seat! An Exhibition for Children*, and to experience our inaugural exhibitions *After Nature* and *BERLIN GLOBAL*. Entry to all exhibitions, including the special exhibitions, is free of charge for the first 100 days.

Open at last! The Humboldt Forum's programme of exhibitions and events begins on 20 July. Minister of State for Culture Monika Grütters, Mayor of Berlin Michael Müller, and General Director Hartmut Dorgerloh, together with numerous project stakeholders and guests from Berlin's urban communities, will declare the Humboldt Forum open in an official ceremony at 2pm on the north side of the building. In a community participation performance, artist katrinem, together with 60 participants from Berlin, will transform the worldwide cultural practice of sweeping into a choreographed composition. Street music, food trucks and the BERLIN GLOBAL Bar in the Schlüter Courtyard will also add to the festive atmosphere of the day.

The exhibitions presented by the Stiftung Humboldt Forum im Berliner Schloss, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, Kulturprojekte Berlin and Stadtmuseum Berlin will then open to the public from 4.30pm onwards. An extensive programme of exhibitions and cultural events will follow in the coming months, including the collections from the Ethnologisches Museum and the Museum für Asiatische Kunst. Central to all the Humboldt Forum's events will be its three core themes: the history and architecture of the site, the Humboldt brothers, and colonialism and coloniality.

Terrible Beauty: Elephant. Human. Ivory

A critical examination of the relationship between man and the global trade in ivory. As far back as 40,000 years ago, human beings used tusks to create the oldest known art objects. At the same time, ivory is today synonymous with injustice and violence, slavery and colonial exploitation. The programme – developed in collaboration with the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, the Museum für Naturkunde and the National Museums of Kenya – aims to bring this

complex history to life with a special exhibition, education and outreach programmes and artistic events.

Humboldt Lab: After Nature

Presented by Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin (Humboldt University)

The Humboldt Lab's inaugural exhibition After Nature deals with the interdependencies of climate change and the loss of biodiversity and with worldwide challenges to democratic principles of order. The crisis of nature is closely interlinked with societal crises. The liberal model of society, for example, with its promises of progress and prosperity has brought about enormous changes in people-environment systems. The exhibition puts together in the form of a modern cabinet of curiosities an entire range of research approaches to these and other current issues and relates them to positions from the history of science.

BERLIN GLOBAL

Presented by Kulturprojekte Berlin (Cultural Projects Berlin); the Stadtmuseum Berlin (City Museum Berlin)

Spread over an area of 4,000 square metres, Berlin Global has been developed by and with the communities of Berlin to reflect the true character of the city. This permanent exhibition explores the story of the city through thematic displays incorporating a plethora of music, sounds, installations, art commissions, graphics, photographs and objects, that together create a powerful multi-layered experience. Berlin Global is the first of a new generation of city museums – the first to be about Berlin itself. Saturated with interactive technology, the exhibition will take the public on an exciting cultural journey through the city, with topics ranging from revolution and war to entertainment and fashion. Booking starting on

Impressions: The Humboldt Brothers

The name Humboldt is synonymous worldwide with education and science. Alexander von Humboldt, born in 1769, collected and documented everything he got his hands on — from plants and rocks to animals and human bones. Wilhelm von Humboldt, two years older, was the social scientist, specialising in the philosophy of language, political theory and the philosophy of history. Together, their lives and work have inspired countless publications. Their way of connected thinking, their curiosity and cosmopolitanism are the inspiration for the artistic and scientific programme of the Humboldt Forum. The exhibition Impressions. The Humboldt Brothers highlights their work, the circumstances of their time, and creates links to the principles of the Humboldt Forum.

Have a Seat!

When, where, why and how do we sit? How do we express conventions, status or gestures of welcome? And who actually takes which place in groups and societies? This exhibition for children offers our youngest visitors aged three to ten – and their accompanying adults – the space to explore, play and learn about sitting in different cultures.

The history of the Humboldt Forum site

Three different permanent displays free to visit help the visitor to understand the long and fascinating history of the site of the Humboldt Forum will also be open.

1. Palace Cellar

Taking visitors down to the historic wall remains of the original Berlin Palace. The archaeological cellar, the only surviving part of the original Berlin Palace, takes you on a tour from the middle ages to the present day, with the surviving sections of the medieval Dominican monastery as well as the foundations of the Berlin Palace, which were excavated in 2008.

2. Sculpture Hall

The dimensions of the Sculpture Hall, designed by Italian architect Franco Stella, corresponds closely those of the Berlin Palace's large Baroque staircase hall that once stood on this site. On display here are fragments of the Palace from several centuries. Many of them were part of the Baroque facade decoration designed by the palace architect Andreas Schlüter (1634–1714), who came from Danzig (now Gdańsk in Poland).

3. Video Panorama

Depicting 800 years of the history of the site of the Humboldt Forum, this is a spectacular multi-media presentation shows its prestige, symbolically charged and often controversial history as a centre of power over centuries, alluding to the fact that the site has always been a work in progress in the service of power.

Public Programmes

Across the summer, an extensive range of programmes will take place across the Humboldt Forum – from art installations and projections to guided tours, lectures and discussions to artistic interventions, dance and film. These include an open-air festival with pop-up architecture and concerts in August, and cultural education programmes in the large-scale workshop spaces. Almost 40 Berlin dance artists in residence will be Moving the Forum, using their bodies and positions to locate themselves not only in the architecture, but also to history and the content of the exhibitions.

Ethnologisches Museum and Asian Art Museum

On 22 September 2021, the Stiftung Preußischer Kulturbesitz (Prussian Cultural Heritage Foundation), presents the West Wing of the Ethnologisches Museum (Ethnological Museum) and the Museum für Asiatische Kunst (Asian Art Museum) of the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin (Berlin State Museums), followed by the East Wing in Late 2021/Early 2022. The museums will feature over 20,000 exhibits from Africa, Asia, Oceania and the Americas on the second and third floors of the Humboldt Forum.

Tickets will be available online at www.humboldtforum.org