



**HUMBOLDT
FORUM**

HAVE A SEAT!

PRESS KIT



**AN EXHIBITION FOR CHILDREN
AGED 3 TO 10 YEARS**

DURATION:

20.07.2021–27.03.2022

**STIFTUNG
HUMBOLDT FORUM**
IM BERLINER SCHLOSS

Have a seat! is the first special exhibition in the Humboldt Forum – and is intended as a warm welcome to all young guests and the adults accompanying them. It's a sign that the Humboldt Forum opens its gates to everyone and reserves a very special place for cultural education – for all age groups.

The *Have a seat!* interactive exhibition invites all children to grapple with the multifaceted theme of “sitting and having a seat” in the 400m² exhibition area and a small foyer in a specially designed seat landscape. *Have a seat!* targets a theme that symbolises belonging: Anyone who has a seat, belongs.

In many societies, the status or role of individual people is expressed through the seating order and the seating accommodation. An empty seat makes us aware of a person's absence. A special chair is ready for an honoured guest. And many types of seating accommodation are suitable only for particular purposes: a cushion, for example, a saddle, a loom or a sled. The children's exhibition also approaches the theme with humour and playfully invites participants to take up all kinds of sitting postures.

Have a seat! sets itself the task of making sitting understandable in the most exciting way possible in the truest sense of the word. In four sections, the exhibition invites participants to see original objects and listen to their stories, to sit down themselves – and to test different types of seating accommodation, to consider their own favourite places and think about what sitting means in idioms and proverbs. A specially designed experimentation and experience space has been prepared for children who are only familiar with chairs: Holes and heights can also be discovered, while sitting – but also while standing, creeping, crawling, climbing and lying down.

THE THEMES OF THE EXHIBITION



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1 WHO HAS A SEAT HERE?

In the beginning, the exhibition draws attention to and recounts – in brief – the story of the Palace that the Humboldt Forum once was. Who had a seat here before? Who has a seat today?

The entrance to the exhibition leads directly to the original objects, which are displayed behind glass – and specially showcased. They denote the role and status of people for whom special types of seating accommodation are intended: Every visitor can listen to their stories at audio points. Each type of seating accommodation in the exhibition explains its provenance from a first-person perspective. You can discover objects from everyday life in Berlin (a seat from a BVG bus), old chairs (a judge's chair from the 17th century) and seating accommodation from other countries (a Zen master's chair from Japan). The latter tells its life story as follows:

I am a Japanese honourable chair. Teachers and masters from a Buddhist community sat on me. When the master seated himself on me, just a few men sat around him on the floor. They listened well when he spoke or read their books when he was silent. Buddhism is a world religion to which many people in Southeast Asia belong – in Thailand, Tibet and China, for example. Whoever built me 200 years ago, took pains in doing so. Do you see the shiny lacquer, the beautiful wood, the metal trims and gold embellishments? You can sense straightaway that I, the folding chair, must have been someone's very special object. The Ethnologisches Museum in Berlin purchased me nearly 60 years ago.

Another area of the exhibition shows representations of sitting. These are representations and drawings of important personalities. – Whose got a seat on your coin?



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2 SIT WITH US!

Belonging is the theme of the second section of the exhibition – social conventions are discussed: Who belongs to it? How do we sit together?

A little house invites us to explore the rituals connected with this drink while sitting down with a bowl of tea. At this point, a comic book tells stories from different countries.

In addition, a large laid table invites visitors to take a seat and to think about who sits where. Because: Meals bring people together! In short phrases, the exhibition informs visitors at this point about table customs in other countries, casting an eye over Mexico, Korea and Poland. The children can allocate seats with name cards. This is about the environment of the visitors and the questions which each person can answer for themselves: Who do you like to sit next to most of all? And who sits at the head of the table

in your house? Who would be invited to your birthday party?

You can also take a seat at an Indian or Pakistani charpoy table, help yourself to paper and pens and create a picture of your own world. The exhibition continues to grow – and collects all the pictures, visions and stories that the young visitors leave behind here on the wall.

Anyone who has once sat around a camp fire knows: This is a very special place where people have many stories to tell. The children's exhibition picks up this tradition and relates exciting sagas, stories and fairy tales in which sitting plays a big part: King Arthur's Round Table, for example. An example from recent history is given by Rosa Parks who devoted herself in the 1950s to taking action for the right of people of all skin colours to choose freely their seats on public buses.



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3 A SEAT FOR...

... playing, working, peeing, riding, cutting hair... Certain activities require certain places that were created just for them. At this point, the young audience can try out lots of things: they can climb a three-story tree house or try out the hairdresser's chair. Where is your favourite place?

Many types of seating accommodation were created especially for travelling. The fact that the seats on the road were far less comfortable than they are today is easy to understand in view of the exhibition: The children can explore carrying and being carried on a replica of a simple chair-shaped sedan chair. In the "Travel Vitrine" there are also originals that have locomotion as a theme, like a rickshaw or horses, for example.

4 SIT STILL OR CHILL!

School benches from the early to late 20th century show that posture and cognitive education have been regarded right up until today as related subjects: Children first learn to talk and walk – and then to be quiet and sit still, as the caustic joke goes. But the last stage of *Have a seat!* asks if that is so sensible and calls on all children to think about the posture they like best and learn best with – and how they like best to have a good time. Included is a school bench that is around 100 years old – the clear opposite of the classrooms with ergonomic "movable furniture" as they are designed and built today.

Squatting, crouching, kneeling, sitting – sitting posture can mean a lot. At the end of the exhibition, all visitors can try out special sitting postures that require no chair at all. The cross legged sitting position, for example. Original figures from various countries of the earth in various sitting

postures serve as models for you. The Aztec Corn Goddess from Mexico or a Buddha from China sitting in the lotus position.

The special exhibition finishes with an excursion into the world of language with all its idioms. The young exhibition audience can experience through play how often sitting plays a role and what language wants to express with this. Where would you prefer to sit: on hot coals or between two stools?

5 A SEAT TO DESIGN

In the centre of the exhibition, a seat landscape offers the opportunity to sit together, take part in workshops or have follow-up conversations. White tables and benches can be used and moved around, as required – an exit space that can be designed by the visitors themselves.

CULTURAL EDUCATION



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DESIGN OF THE *HAVE A SEAT!* EXHIBITION

In this exhibition, children are discoverers and explorers, using all their senses. The seat landscape speaks directly to them, inviting them to experience the space sensually: crawling, climbing, sitting, feeling, hearing and playing. On a discovery tour through the space, the children take up various poses by themselves.

Lockers are provided in the foyer where you can leave your belongings so you are free to explore the exhibition free of baggage. Benches facilitate arrivals and breaks. Most importantly, there are socks laid out in the foyer: because shoes may not be worn in the exhibition.

CULTURAL EDUCATION IN THE HUMBOLDT FORUM

A multilingual and international mediator team supports the *Have a seat!* exhibition throughout the entire opening times. Art and cultural mediators, along with theatre, dance and movement teachers, who have a wide range of mediation skills and native languages, a wealth of experience and who really enjoy working with children and families, make a visit to the exhibition a special educational experience with their historical, ethnological, cultural and sociological expertise. As on-site mediators, they welcome visitors, explain the contents of the exhibition, support

the exhibition with installations, lead creative activities and enter into dialogue with adults and children. Adventure tours, workshops and drop-ins – interactive workshops – are included.

Designed to raise the profile of the Forum, the opening exhibition accentuates the significance of cultural education and mediation in the Humboldt Forum as a whole and in the work of the Academy, the programme division for education, mediation and science of the Stiftung Humboldt Forum im Berliner Schloss.

Cultural education puts visitors with their requirements and expectations at the heart of things. Understood as the creation of spaces where people can take part in cultural activities, it is a central concern of the entire work of the Foundation. The aim is to present socially relevant themes accessibly. It is shown in interdisciplinary dovetailing of the course work from the choice of theme through design to implementation and in intensive collaboration with people involved in the Humboldt Forum and external partnerships.

THE CURATORS

As a culture agency headquartered in Schwaz and Vienna, Lisa Noggler and Maria Prantl plan and manage projects on the cultural scene for museums, exhibition centres, industry and tourism. The exhibition-makers design the content of exhibition projects, mediation activities and external thematic tours. Together, they were and are employed by the Technisches Museum Wien, the vorarlberg museum, the Archäologischer Park Cambodunum, the Schallaburg, the Jüdisches Museum Wien, the Museum der Moderne Salzburg, the Besucher-campus Jungfrau Aletsch and the Gedenkort Hall in Tirol, among others. Lisa Noggler is Curator for Music in the Wien Museum and directs the Museum der Völker in Schwaz.

They acquired their expertise in the sphere of children's and family exhibitions through projects with the Kindermuseum Zoom (Lisa Noggler directed exhibitions there for three years), the Schallaburg, the Technisches Museum Wien and many other collaboration partners. In addition, they have created mediation activities in various formats for children and teenagers for a large number of institutions.

ACCESSIBILITY

Have a seat! primarily invites its visitors to try things out and make discoveries. The accessible exhibition provides a variety of activities for different senses: It is designed without much text and with a typeface that is easy to read and is also equipped with age-appropriate descriptions.

In the entrance hall to the exhibition, there is an information video in German sign language (GDS). In addition, a DGS guide can be downloaded via an app to experience the content of audio stories in the exhibition.

Within the exhibition, there are navigable ramps, furniture that can be navigated from below and wheelchair-friendly turning circles. In addition, visitors are invited to taste and test many objects in the exhibitions. Hands on!

HAVE A SEAT!

Dates and information

Location	Humboldt Forum (Erdgeschoss, Sonderausstellungsfläche 2)
Duration	20 July 2021–27 March 2022
Opening times	Wednesday to Monday 10 am–6 pm
Entrance	Registration and booking of online tickets from 13 July 2021 via humboldtforum.org . Children, free entrance, Adults 10 euros/ concessions 5 euros
Information	Humboldt Forum Schlossplatz 1 Tel: +49 30 99 211 89 89 www.humboldtforum.org
Project management	Isabel Meixner
Curators	Lisa Noggler and Maria Prantl, the exhibition makers, Vienna
Curator for education and mediation	Gesine Klintworth
Exhibition design	Celia di Pauli, Eric Sidoroff, SID_architekten, Innsbruck collaborating with Rupert Asanger, Stefan Maier, Xotil Natke, Carol Kofler
Loans	Ethnologisches Museum – Staatliche Museen zu Berlin Museum Europäischer Kulturen – Staatliche Museen zu Berlin Münzkabinett – Staatliche Museen zu Berlin Vorderasiatisches Museum – Staatliche Museen zu Berlin Preußische Schlösser und Stiftung Gärten Berlin-Brandenburg Stiftung Stadtmuseum Berlin and private lenders who wish to remain anonymous