

Contemporary art and architecture at the Humboldt Forum

1. Ralph Appelbaum Associates: the exhibition designers

The designs for the permanent exhibition areas of the Ethnologisches Museum (Ethnological Museum) and the Museum für Asiatische Kunst (Asian Art Museum) at the Humboldt Forum were conceived and developed by Ralph Appelbaum Associates (RAA) and its partner malsyteufel over the course of several years in close collaboration with the museum managements and the Stiftung Preussischer Kulturbesitz (Prussian Cultural Heritage Foundation), which has ultimate oversight over these institutions through its group of Staatliche Museen zu Berlin (National Museums in Berlin). After the design was completed in 2015, RAA carried out the construction planning on its own.

Statement from Ralph Appelbaum Associates and malsyteufel about the exhibition design

“The collections of the Ethnologisches Museum and the Museum für Asiatische Kunst take up over half of the entire interior of the Humboldt Forum and form the heart of this new institution. The design of the exhibition spaces for the roughly 24,000 historic objects involved goes far beyond a purely aesthetic presentation – it was conceived as a dynamic platform for intercultural discourse regarding historical and contemporary events and ideas.

These guiding principles posed numerous challenges for the planning and implementation of the exhibition design. From the beginning, it was clear that no single perspective or point of view should exclusively determine how the exhibitions at the Humboldt Forum were to be interpreted. Instead, there are natural history and cultural history; there are expressions of both European and non-European systems of belief and knowledge; “source communities,” historians and contemporary artists are all given a platform. We were aware that these voices would always make themselves heard, and that it would always have to be possible to include them if the project were to be successful over the long term.

Although our task was first and foremost to design the initial presentation, our design also deliberately laid the groundwork for changes in order to accommodate future exhibitions, interventions, and public programs. As a result, the exhibition installation is not an iconic structure but instead forms a framework for an ongoing process. A process-driven exhibition

space will facilitate the future operation of the Humboldt Forum. For a designer, this represents a huge challenge: a design whose end result is deliberately left open-ended.

The exhibitions are arranged according to continents and geographic regions, which is primarily intended to give visitors a general sense of where they are. Within these regions, however, the exhibitions are curated by theme – there are forty different exhibitions, each with its own curatorial concept. As a whole, therefore, the exhibition is decidedly multilayered – not encyclopedic but also not linear.

In addition to the forty different thematic modules, we have developed a series of recurring elements that offer a structure and common points of reference. Specially designed meeting points provide areas where groups can gather. These can also accommodate scheduled events like small performances or informal talks. In addition, special areas are reserved for non-permanent interventions by contemporary artists and guest curators. And lastly, with regard to outreach, there are junior museums and activity areas embedded into the exhibition that take up individual themes with age-appropriate presentations of content and target-group-specific activities. This is in line with a new approach to educational outreach in exhibitions, in which the discursive space is embedded, rather than being transferred to less visible areas.

The objects in the collections consist of a large variety of materials with various conservational needs. This required us to design over 530 special display cases – some of them as small as a mailbox, and others as large as a two-story building.

On the one hand, our display cases were designed to meet conservation needs and to help visitors appreciate the beauty of the collections. But they were also intended to be flexible and to allow curators to change the presentation of the objects at frequent intervals. We designed more than twelve thousand object holders and mounting fixtures that can be adapted to the specific presentation requirements of the individual objects. The visible areas of the study collections are equipped with large, flexible display cases to show the great quantity and extent of the collections, as well as media stations for in-depth information. To sum up, our strategy was to create iconic installations, visual highlights, and eye-catching attractions while integrating deliberate pauses and interruptions, quiet spots for reflection, and places where visitors can delve further into the subject matter, along with an intrinsic flexibility that allows spontaneity and reactions to current events – and overall, a wide variety of interwoven and varied visitor experiences that enable multiple points of entry.

We believe that the Humboldt Forum has become an international seismograph for intercultural dialog and is consequently giving this cultural legacy new relevance in our

contemporary discourse, including the complex topics of provenance, heritage, and responsibility. The courageous integration of diverse and sometimes even conflicting cultural perspectives as well as the inclusion of multinational curatorial and artistic partnerships reflect the complexity of the world in which we live and provide us with a convincing mirror of our society and its elements. Although often difficult, it is nevertheless essential to make the effort to reassess our history if we are to understand ourselves and develop common visions for the future. We hope that we have created a space in which this process can flourish and bring people together in the heart of Berlin.”

Ralph Appelbaum Associates, Inc.

Ralph Appelbaum Associates, Inc. (RAA) plan and design award-winning museums, exhibitions, and visitor centers worldwide. Their subjects include the history of art and culture, natural history, social and corporate history as well as sports and music. RAA was founded in 1978 in New York and is currently the world's largest practice for museum design. It has offices in New York, London, Berlin, Beijing, Moscow, and Dubai.

For more information, see www.raai.com

teufel design (formerly malsyteufel)

From 1985 to 2004, Philipp Teufel designed numerous exhibitions and museums in Frankfurt am Main (notably the German Architecture Museum, German Film Museum, Museum Judengasse, Museum of Pre- and Early History, and the Money Museum). From then until 2007, he designed a large number of museums and exhibitions in conjunction with the studio collective nowakteufelknyrim, and until 2017, he headed the museum and exhibition department at the malsyteufel studio. From 2010 to 2015, he was artistic consultant for the exhibition design at the Humboldt Forum in the Berliner Schloss (Berlin Palace) in cooperation with Ralph Appelbaum Associates, Inc. (RAA). He is currently a member of the art advisory council of the Federal Ministry of Finance. For over twenty-five years, Teufel has been an instructor and researcher in the field of museum and exhibition design at the Hochschule Düsseldorf (Düsseldorf University of Applied Sciences). He has been artistic director of the Gartenmuseum (Garden Museum) in Lennestadt since 2020. Currently, Teufel is curating and arranging exhibitions and museums on the topic of the Anthropocene and green urban living.

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2. The Japanese tea house by Jun Ura

A contemporary interpretation of a Japanese tea house offers a room-in-a-room experience tailor-made for the exhibition module on art from Japan. Visitors can experience the special pleasures of the Japanese “way of tea” firsthand in a sculptural structure designed by architect Jun Ura.

The tea house combines tradition and modernity as well as references to Japanese and German culture. The form and materials of the tea house make subtle local allusions: the roof and outer walls echo the octagonal ground plan of the ruined tower of Berlin’s Kaiser-Wilhelm-Gedächtniskirche, which was largely destroyed in World War II; the remnants now serve as a peace memorial for the city. The inner walls of the main room, each of a size equivalent to eight traditional Kyoto rice straw mats, have been produced in part with European clay.

Overall, the tea house consists of the main tea room, as well as a smaller preparation room. The tea room is furnished with a ro, a traditional Japanese sunken hearth, as well as an alcove, known as a tokonoma. With its exceptional works of painting and graphic art, as well as ceramic and lacquer works, the tea house allows visitors to experience the culture of the traditional Japanese tea ceremony, known as the “way of tea.” In addition to traditional materials like Japanese paper or lacquered wood, the tea house primarily uses modern construction materials, such as the reddish-brown Corten steel that makes up the roof and outer walls.

Although the room is generally kept dim for conservation reasons, there is a large, naturally lit zone in front of the tea house which serves as a meeting point and area for special activities. Objects related to the tea ceremony will be presented here, along with a film on the topic and a media kiosk that engages visitors through the senses of touch and smell. They can also linger on a seating element with a surface made of tatami mats.

The Japanese tea ceremony is presented here in an architecturally appropriate space: the practice of preparing and communally drinking tea, formalized since the sixteenth century, is a living tradition that combines many functions in a unified work of art. It promotes the experience of community, culture and identity, etiquette training and, for many practitioners, the forming of the conscious mind in the spirit of Zen Buddhism. In addition to the interaction and communication of the participants, it especially facilitates the presentation, contemplation, and haptic experience of objects.

The name of the new tea house at the Humboldt Forum, Bôki-an, is based on a quote from the Chinese poet Li Bai and signifies a "private retreat for leaving everyday life behind." The name is also a reference to Berlin-Dahlem, where visitors at the Museum für Asiatische Kunst had the opportunity to take part in a tea ceremony at the tea room Bôki. This popular tradition is now being continued at the Humboldt Forum.

A team from Kanazawa led by the architect Jun Ura and Ura Architects, the tea master Sôkyû Nara, and including the artists Syouitsu (Shôitsu) Nishimura III (lacquer), Takuo Nakamura (ceramics) and Naoki Sakai (metal), has developed and produced the contemporary tea room in close coordination with the Chadô Urasenke Teeweg-Verein Berlin e.V.

3. China Court Art Hall by Wang Shu

"I want to design a space that visitors won't forget." Wang Shu

The hall dedicated to Chinese imperial court art has been designed by Chinese architect and Pritzker Prize winner Wang Shu 王澍 as a unified work of art; it covers 560 square meters. It is completely different from the adjacent exhibition spaces in its composition, material qualities, and appearance. The centerpiece is an imperial throne and accompanying screen crafted in an imperial workshop around the year 1700. The screen is made of rosewood with inlays of mother-of-pearl, gold and silver leaf, colored lacquer and gilt. The floor of black natural stone is surrounded by clay-plastered wall surfaces and a niche set in stainless steel, which houses the imposing mural entitled "Buddha Sermon" by the court painter Ding Guangpeng from 1770. The display cases, too, have been specially created for this unified work of art. In terms of design, the room's most important feature is the huge wooden roof, which almost seems to float under the ceiling of the hall and dominates the overall picture. Its construction is based on those found in Chinese pagodas. Wang Shu often uses this form for the load-bearing structure of the roof in his architectural designs. The use of mortised joints in combination with diagonal struts results in a structure that appears to be very lightweight but is extremely sturdy. The roof developed for this hall is made of poplar wood

and consists of 1,300 parts, connected at 1,500 screw joints. Each of its eleven trusses has a total length of seventeen meters and a height of four meters. The structure as a whole weighs around sixteen tonnes and is suspended from the ceiling at 176 points, with four anchors at each. The construction work was done by a carpentry business in Thuringia, using only material from that region.

The highlight objects in the Wang Shu hall are the throne and the accompanying screen, magnificently inlaid with mother-of-pearl, which are placed on a pedestal in the middle of the room, and the monumental image of the "Buddha sermon" mural (5.43 x 10.15 m) on the south wall, and the Tea House by contemporary Chinese artist Ai Weiwei. Another contemporary work in this space is a short film by artist Lin Haizhong commissioned by the Museum für Asiatische Kunst and funded by the Kuratorium Preußischer Kulturbesitz (Foundation Board of Trustees of the Prussian Cultural Heritage Foundation). While "Buddha Sermon" is obscured (the original painting will only be seen briefly a few times per day for conservation reasons), Lin's digital resonance to the monumental image of the Qing-era court artist is projected onto the obscuring. Also on display are battle scenes on copper plates, copper engravings and lacquer carvings, as well as portraits of officers made by European Jesuit painters employed at the Manchu court, and impressive examples of silk workmanship, such as the so-called dragon robe. In the two showcases facing each other on the north wall, works of landscape and bamboo painting from the Ming (1368-1644) and Qing (1644-1911) dynasties will be on display. Furthermore, a remarkable tapestry from the Stiftung Preußischer Kulturbesitz Schlösser und Gärten (Prussian Cultural Heritage Foundation Palaces and Gardens) from a Berlin manufactory (340 x 269 cm) testifies to the great fascination of Europeans for the distant "exotic" empire of China.

With this arrangement of elements, the Wang Shu hall serves to illuminate the reciprocal artistic influences between China and Europe. Special attention is given to three topics in particular: 1. Art as document and plunder. 2. Influences of European art on Chinese imperial court art. 3. Chinese-inspired European art in the eighteenth century. The focus here is on art between the poles of war and peace.

Wang Shu wanted visitors to perceive the room as "Chinese," but he wanted to accomplish that using a contemporary design language, without borrowing directly and without copying elements of classic imperial Chinese architecture. The key to this is the nature of the materials used: "The latent memory of cultural traditions lies in the materials themselves, and I want to awaken this memory and make it appear as something fresh and alive," says Wang Shu, a Pritzker Prize laureate. He is trying to bring about a change of perspective; he is inviting visitors to look at the "normal" East Asian rooms again with different eyes. "The most important thing is the immediate impression that's intended: how do visitors get a

feeling for the exhibition, a feeling that allows them to overcome the boundary between the Old World and the New World?"

The Wang Shu hall was made possible through financial assistance from the Prussian Cultural Heritage Board of Trustees.

Wang Shu was born in 1963 in Ürümqi, the capital of the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region in China. He completed his architectural studies in 1988 in Nanjing, traditionally a center of research into village and town architecture, under renowned experts such as Liu Dunzhen (1897–1968) and Guo Husheng (1931–2008). He is a member of the younger generation of architects who are developing an alternative style of building in deliberate contrast to the high-rise mainstream as represented by the Shanghai business district of Pudong. To that end, he founded his own practice in 1997 with his wife, Lu Wenyu: the Amateur Architects Studio in Hangzhou. Another representative of this trend is Ai Weiwei, in his capacity as an architect. The two men know each other well and have worked together in the past. In fact, Wang Shu designed one of the seventeen structures in the Architecture Park of the city of Jinhua, which was laid out by Ai Weiwei in 2002.

The Amateur Architects Studio favors a spontaneous, unspectacular, and sustainable style of architecture. Wang Shu and his wife stress the value of traditional materials and techniques of craftsmanship; they are fond of using gray bricks and roof tiles, often reused from old, demolished buildings. Other preferred materials include untreated wood and walls of rammed earth, or with earthen plasterwork. Among his best-known large-scale projects are the Ningbo Historic Museum (2008) and the Xiangshan campus of the China Academy of Art in Hangzhou (2007–2013). These buildings are rather atypical for him, however. He prefers to build smaller-scale structures in villages. In 2006, he designed the "Tiled Garden" for the Venice Biennale of Architecture, and in 2012, he contributed to the exhibition "Between Walls and Windows" at the House of World Cultures in Berlin. In the same year, he became the first Chinese citizen to win the Pritzker Architecture Prize. To date, the only work that Wang Shu has realized in Europe is a bus shelter in Krumbach, a village in the Austrian state of Vorarlberg. It is a small, poetic sculpture of wood.

4. The "Township Wall" of António Ole

The presentation of the Africa collections of the Ethnologisches Museum on the second floor starts off with the contemporary artwork Township Wall by the contemporary artist António Ole. The twelve-meter-long installation is large, colorful, and spatial, possessing a strong aesthetic presence. It consists of over 100 individual pieces – found objects collected by the artist in Berlin. While the following module, Africa Showcase, shows how everyday African

objects and other things become “ethnographica,” here visitors can see the process of transforming everyday Berlin objects into a contemporary work of art that evokes an African township and challenges visitors’ preconceptions.

António Ole has created a number of “Township Walls” in various cities around the globe. He has always used local materials that were viewed as bulk trash, scrap, or garbage. The “Township Wall” describes experiences that can be transferred from Ole’s hometown Luanda in Angola to Chicago in the USA and to Berlin in Germany. Who owns the city? And what shapes it? The firmly cemented inner cities or the ever-changing architecture in the niches and on the edges of the city? Isn’t it the “margins” where creativity, innovation and freedom can be found?

Ole created the first wall for his work *Margem da zona limite* (Edge of the Forbidden Zone; 1994). The title is an allusion to the civil war in Angola (1974–2002), when many people sought refuge in the capital, Luanda, and the outskirts of the city formed the border to the “zone” of deadly wartime dangers. At the same time, the Portuguese title of the installation opens up a wider range of associations, including the metaphysically laden, forbidden Zone in Andrei Tarkovsky’s film *Stalker* (1979), whose light shimmers through the windows. This zone is a projection space for human longings and nurtures the hope of redemption. The artist compares his work on Township Wall to an act of exorcism, in the course of which he frees himself from the aforementioned experiences by transforming them into a work of art and simultaneously making them the object of a communicative process.

The version of Township Wall presented at the Ethnologisches Museum is a reworking of the one shown in the 2001 exhibition “The Short Century” at the Gropius-Bau. Ole pieced the wall together from objects he found at waste recycling centers around Berlin, so the installation is also a reflection of the city to some extent, which is apparent from a number of windows of the kind typically seen in Berlin’s old buildings.

The installation was later shown in Dahlem and, most recently, in the special exhibition “Hello World” at the Hamburger Bahnhof – Museum für Gegenwart. Now it has a new home at the Humboldt Forum. In 2018, Ole donated the wall to the Ethnologisches Museum and modified it for the exhibition at the Humboldt Forum. The reconstruction was recorded on film along with an interview of the artist. The film presents a personal portrait of António Ole and his extensive output and offers a glimpse of areas of the museum that are not accessible to the public. It will be shown for the first time at the Humboldt Forum.

António Ole (born in 1951 in Luanda, Angola) is one of the most important artists from the African continent. His work, shown at many international exhibitions, covers a wide spectrum including painting, sculpture, installation, photography, and film. In 2017, he represented Angola at the Venice Biennale.

5. Cynthia Schimming

In addition to the objects from the collections, the public storage area devoted to Africa presents new projects and perspectives that take a critical view of colonial history and the role of the ethnological collections in Berlin. It is an appropriate spot for an artwork by Namibian artist Cynthia Schimming, who addresses the genocide perpetrated on the Herero and Nama peoples by the German colonial rulers. The work was created as part of the project “Confronting Colonial Pasts, Envisioning Creative Futures,” during which artists, experts, and scholars from Namibia visited Berlin and took an in-depth look at the collections of the Ethnologisches Museum.

Schimming's work is a reinterpretation of what is today considered “traditional” Herero dress. The pattern is modeled on Victorian dresses, with puffed sleeves and a wide underskirt, and became common among the Herero as a result of the missionary work of the nineteenth and early twentieth century. The head covering imitates the shape of cow horns, a reference to the proud precolonial history of the Herero as cattle breeders. The hem of the skirt is adorned with the image of an ekori, a headdress made of leather and embellished with iron beads, which was worn by Herero women before the time of German colonization. Cynthia Schimming, a Herero herself, first saw these ekori in the storage rooms of the Ethnologisches Museum in Berlin. Following extensive research, they inspired her to make the Herero dress.

“The contact with missionaries in the late nineteenth century changed this type of clothing. They introduced Victorian-style dresses and forbade women from wearing leather on pastoral ground. Missionaries also considered the form of the ekori, which symbolized the horns of cows (the main source of wealth of the people) as a symbol of the devil and rejected it. The genocide perpetrated on the Ovaherero and Nama from 1904 to 1908 by the Germans meant that the knowledge of a whole generation of craftspeople and artists was not passed on to the next generation. The survivors of the genocide often sought refuge near mission stations and slowly but steadily they created a new form of traditional dress: the dress that we as Ovaherero wear today. Despite these ruptures in the social fabric of the people, the Ovaherero have found new ways of connecting with their history and expressing their artistry, pride, and identity via their dress,” says Schimming.

A second part of the installation focuses on another key object in the collection: a leather patchwork quilt made by Nama artists that came into the museum's collection from the estate of Gustav Nachtigal in 1886. Two years earlier, Nachtigal had visited Angra Pequena (today: !Namiñûs or Lüderitz) on the Namibian coast as "Imperial Commissioner for West Africa" and concluded a so-called "Protection Treaty" between Nama Captein Joseph Frederiks von Bethanien and the German Kaiser. It is very likely that Nachtigal acquired the blanket on this occasion. The German colonial claim was based on a fraudulent land acquisition. Nachtigal reported the fraud to the German government by submitting a note of protest from Kaptein Frederiks and his councilors. This was ignored in Berlin. The land acquisition and the "Schutzvertrag" formed the basis for the German colonization of Namibia.

Cynthia Schimming has transferred the pattern of the Leachtwork ceiling to a fabric panel over six meters long and printed it with historical photographs from the collection of the Ethnologisches Museum. The fabric web takes on the stylized form of a landscape in the Humboldt Forum.

"In the photographs of the colonial period, especially after the genocide of the Herero and Nama, the Namibian landscape was often depicted empty, without people, to advertise the settlement of the colony. My installation does the opposite. It shows all those people who shaped Namibia at that time and still do today: Nama, Herero, Damara, Ovambo, San and Germans." Schimming comments on her work.

In Berlin, visitors can admire this multilayered artwork when the Ethnologisches Museum opens its exhibition at the Humboldt Forum. In the meantime, Cynthia Schimming has taken her inspirations back to Namibia and applied them to her fashion designs. Her work with the collections in Berlin demonstrates the importance of joint provenance research. At the same time, it shows how colonial collections can help people in former colonies develop new perspectives and visions of the future.

Cynthia Schimming is an internationally renowned fashion designer and expert on clothing technology from Namibia. She studied fashion and clothing technology in Namibia, South Africa, and Germany. Until recently, she taught at the College of the Arts in Windhoek. She has contributed her expertise in historical clothing from Namibia to films and theatrical productions such as Namibia. A Struggle for Liberation (2007), Oshi-Deutsch. The GDR Children Of Namibia (2007) and Hereroland. Eine deutsch-namibische Geschichte (2020).

6. Indignation by Justine Gaga

Another contemporary artwork in the exhibition rooms "Africa" is Indignation by the artist Justine Gaga. The installation addresses the repercussions of the colonial era in the present. It consists of eighteen pillars anchored in the floor. They are actually gas canisters, and painted on them are various terms which, in the artist's view, suggest the political, economic, and social consequences of colonialism: from "Fundamentalism" and "Violence" to "Corruption" and "Border," for example. All of them are standing upright, except for the one with the label "Election," which lies horizontally, as though it has fallen down.

In 2014, Justine Gaga won the Second Prize for Indignation at the Dakar Biennale.

Justine Gaga was born in 1974 in Douala, Cameroon. She is an interdisciplinary artist who works with a variety of media, from sculpture and installations to painting, performance, and video. Gaga's works are shown around the world: in Mali, Senegal, South Africa, Colombia, France, the Netherlands, Germany, and elsewhere. She considers herself a critical observer of the world she lives in. In her works, she treats social and political problems, analyzes the global art system and reflects on her role in it as an artist.

7. Gardens in the Sky by Alexander Gorlizki

At the Courtly India Gallery, British artist Alexander Gorlizki, who works in New York and India, has created a space-consuming video and sound installation that enters into direct dialogue with the Mughal-era masterpieces on display. The moving images projected into the sky of an abstracted canopy immerse visitors in Gorlizki's fantastic visual worlds, which draw on the rich tradition of Mughal painting but also pay homage to Surrealism. Set pieces from over twenty years of artistic creation, which Gorlizki realized over a period of three years in collaboration with filmmaker and musician Richard Coldman and curator Raffael Gadebusch, make the video work a retrospective masterpiece. The restrained sound installation for Gorlizki's canopy, predominantly composed of nature sounds accompanying the 24-hour rhythm of the imagined subtropical garden, was composed by Richard Coldman. Alexander Gorlizki's work, positioned in the central axis of the gallery, playfully picks up on the common thread of the exhibition - the ubiquitous motif of the Indo-Persian garden of the Mughals and its influence on all art-making of that era. At the same time, a special place of contemplation has been created here, where visitors can linger and at the same time dive into the exhibition's theme intuitively, without any didactic ballast.

Alexander Gorlizki was born in London in 1967 and studied at the Slade School of Arts, among other places. His extensive travels through China, but above all through Central Asia, Afghanistan and India have had a decisive influence on Gorlizki's work. Characteristic of

Gorlizki's projects is his usually close cooperation with curators, filmmakers as well as other artists. Particularly noteworthy is his long-term collaboration (since 1996) with the traditional Indian painter Ziyas Uddin from Jaipur. Gorlizki has lived and worked in the US since 2002 and has studios in Brooklyn NYC and in Jaipur, India. His work is in numerous private and public collections in Asia, Europe and the US, including the Victoria & Albert Museum and the Denver Art Museum.

8. Art in Architecture: Statue of Limitations from Kang Sunkoo

2020 · Bronze · 2.75 m x 2.30 m x 11 m (lower half)

2021 · Bronze · 2.00 m x 1.40 m x 11 m (upper half)

Lower half in the Humboldt Forum, 2nd and 3rd floor, Stair Hall

Upper half in Nachtigalplatz in the African Quarter, Berlin-Wedding (Installation planned by end of 2021)

This bronze sculpture towers over several storeys in the stair hall. It represents a flagpole with a flag of mourning at half-mast. However, only the lower half can be seen in the Humboldt Forum – the flagpole metaphorically pierces the ceiling, emerging from the ground somewhere else entirely.

In accordance with the artist's suggestion, the upper half will initially be installed in Nachtigalplatz, in an area known as the African Quarter in Berlin-Wedding (Installation planned by end of 2021). At the start of the 20th century, an "ethnological exposition" was planned in Rehberge, the nearby public park, in which people and animals from the German colonies were going to be exhibited. The outbreak of the First World War meant that the plan did not come to fruition. Streets and squares in this area still have colonial names that have for years been subject to much dispute and efforts to rename them. The artist plans to install the piece at a third location at a later date.

The presence of this installation – a flag at half-mast – at the Humboldt Forum, also makes a contribution to the debate around this new building; in particular, the Ethnologisches Museum (Ethnological Museum) and the Museum für Asiatische Kunst (Asian Art Museum) within the Humboldt Forum. The context in which their items were collected, during the era of German colonialism, has come to the forefront of public consciousness in recent years.

The title of the piece is a play on words on the legal term 'Statute of Limitations'. The UN Convention on the Non-Applicability of Statutory Limitations to War Crimes and Crimes

Against Humanity of 1968 stipulates that there is no statute of limitations for the prosecution of genocide. The artist is using the title to reference the colonial crimes committed by the German Reich, for example, its actions in what is now the Republic of Namibia between 1904 and 1908.

Statue of Limitations is a critical commentary on Germany's handling of the crimes committed during its colonial past – crimes it is only now beginning to address.