

PRESS RELEASE**14. February 2022****Series of performance lectures – where art and science meet****The Humboldt Experiment**

Humboldt research meets contemporary art: In this new lecture series, entitled *The Humboldt Experiment*, Brazilian director Mirah Laline will stage a series of performance lectures centred around the life and work of Alexander von Humboldt. In these six evening events, a number of artists will come together with researchers from the Berlin-Brandenburgische Akademie der Wissenschaften to make Alexander von Humboldt's scientific legacy a truly sensory experience. The opening event will be presented on 17 March by media artist Nelson Vergara and Humboldt expert Tobias Kraft. The focus of this performance encounter is Alexander von Humboldt's ascent of the highest mountain in Ecuador: Chimborazo.

The life and work of Alexander von Humboldt – one of the men for whom the Humboldt Forum is named – are multifaceted, and have connections to global questions that extend all the way to the present day. His name is associated with a new understanding of nature, with a study of languages and cultures, but also with the debate over oppression and slavery.

The Humboldt Experiment, a new six-part performance lecture series, turns Humboldt's scientific legacy and continuing topicality into a multimedia sensory experience. Each performance lecture, staged by Brazilian director Mirah Laline, will be dedicated to a particular theme, and will offer its own surprising and unique aesthetic. Each evening will bring together a Humboldt researcher from the Berlin-Brandenburgische Akademie der Wissenschaften (BBAW) and an artist, to create an interactive discussion using lecture, video art, dance, theatre or music.

Episode 1, *The Humboldt Experiment. Climbing Chimborazo*, taking place on 17 March, will be presented by Humboldt expert Tobias Kraft from the BBAW, and Nelson Vergara from the Escuela de Artes Plásticas at the Universidad Nacional de Colombia in Bogotá. The focus of this performance encounter is Alexander von Humboldt's ascent of the highest mountain in Ecuador: Chimborazo.

The attempted ascent of Chimborazo in 1802 was the most spectacular moment of Alexander von Humboldt's South American journey. Even though the weather prevented him from ever reaching the summit, for some years he became the European who had

come closest to the sun. At that time, Europeans regarded the 6,263m high volcano as the highest mountain in the world.

Episode 1: *The Humboldt Experiment. Climbing Chimborazo:* 17 March 2022, 7-8.30Pm, Hall 1, €9/€4.50

Episode 2: *The Humboldt Experiment. On Slavery:* 19 May 2022, 7-8.30pm, Hall 1, €9/€4.50

The Humboldt Experiment is an event series created by the Stiftung Humboldt Forum im Berliner Schloss in collaboration with the Berlin-Brandenburgische Akademie der Wissenschaft.

Biographies

Nelson Vergara (*1968 in Villavicencio, Columbia) is a professor at the Escuela de Artes Plásticas at the Universidad Nacional de Colombia. He studied Visual Arts at the Universidad Nacional de Colombia, Art and Media at the Universität der Künste Berlin, and Audiovisual Media at the Kunsthochschule für Medien in Cologne. He completed his doctorate in art research at the Kunst-Universität Linz, Austria, with '1802: The Ascent of Chimborazo. An Artistic Cartography'.

In his artistic work, he explores the poetic possibilities of knowledge generation and media constructions, with a focus on the subjective relationship between body-territory-technical medium. His art projects are presented as media and artistic cartographies, expanded documentary, and as reactive and generative installations. Nelson Vergara has participated in more than 60 exhibitions, video and art festivals in China, Croatia, Germany, Spain, USA, Israel, Argentina, Canada and Colombia.

Tobias Kraft (*1978 in Köln, Germany) holds a PhD in Romance Languages and has worked at the Berlin-Brandenburgischen Akademie der Wissenschaften since 2015. Together with his team, he has developed the *edition humboldt*, a digital and print edition of Humboldt's travel manuscripts and estate archive documenting his great voyages of exploration in America and Asia. Since 2019, he has also acted as director of 'Proyecto Humboldt Digital (ProHD)', an international collaboration located in Berlin and Havana, for digital cultural research and training in the digital social sciences.

Mirah Laline (*1988 in Belém, northern Brazil) studied Theatre Directing at the Federal University in Porto Alegre (southern Brazil). In 2013, she completed her bachelor's

degree with the essay *Theatre as a Poetic Guerilla Struggle* and a site-specific street theatre production entitled *Transpiro!* A DAAD scholarship in 2015 brought her to Berlin to study Theatre Directing at the Hochschule für Schauspielkunst Ernst Busch Berlin.

In 2011 she founded the ATO CIA.CÊNICA theatre group, and won several awards for her productions of *Der Hässliche* by Marius von Mayenburg, the Brazilian premiere of Sasha Marianna Salzmann's *Muttersprache. Mameloschn* as well as *Pátria Estrangeira / Fremde Heimat*. *Pátria Estrangeira / Fremde Heimat* was created as a co-production of the Badisches Staatstheater Karlsruhe, the Goethe-Institut Porto Alegre and ATO CIA.CÊNICA; the production was also sponsored by the German Federal Cultural Foundation.

In 2021, Mirah Laline worked as actress, dramaturge and director to develop the *Juntos/ Bî Hevra* theatre project at the Galerie im Körnerpark (Berlin). The theatre production is an atmospheric piece centring on a Kurdish-Brazilian wedding celebration, and weaves together a web of stories on family and migration. From March 2022, she will be staging six encounters between science and art for the *Humboldt Experiment* series.

Downloadable press images: humboldtforum.org/presse

One building, four partners: our diversity is founded on the collaboration of our partner institutions. The Humboldt Forum is a collaboration between the Stiftung Humboldt Forum im Berliner Schloss; the Stiftung Preussischer Kulturbesitz for collections from the Ethnologisches Museum and the Museum für Asiatische Kunst of the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin; the Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin for the Humboldt Lab; and Kulturprojekte Berlin with the Stadtmuseum Berlin for the Berlin exhibition.

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