

PRESS RELEASE**25 March 2022****CALL FOR CRITICAL EXAMINATION OF COLONIAL HISTORY****Art in Architecture at the Humboldt Forum:
Statue of Limitations erected in Nachtigalplatz**

As of today, the *Statue of Limitations* by Kang Sunkoo has a temporary home in Nachtigalplatz, located in the so-called Afrikanisches Viertel (African Quarter) in Berlin Wedding. The work, which resulted from an international Art in Architecture competition for the Humboldt Forum, is a two-piece, black patinated bronze sculpture in the form of a flag at half-mast. It connects two symbolically charged locations: the Humboldt Forum, where the lower half of the *Statue of Limitations* can be seen in the Stair Hall and Nachtigalplatz, where its complementary upper half can be now found, initially for a six-month period.

The form of the two-piece bronze sculpture is the result of Kang Sunkoo's artistic examination of colonial history and of the Humboldt Forum's history. Its title 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 title references for example the colonial crimes committed by the German Reich 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.

Divided into two pieces, only the lower half of the *Statue of Limitations* is visible in the Stair Hall of the Humboldt Forum; metaphorically, the flagpole pierces the ceiling. The upper half can now, for a limited time, be seen emerging from the ground in Nachtigalplatz in Berlin-Wedding. The work connects two symbolically charged locations: the Humboldt Forum in the Berlin Palace, with the collections of the Ethnologisches Museum (Ethnological Museum) and the Museum für Asiatische Kunst (Asian Art Museum) – collections which have been in the public eye due to the circumstances in which their items were assembled during German colonialism – and Nachtigalplatz, in the so-called Afrikanisches Viertel (African Quarter) in Berlin Wedding.

Kang Sunkoo: "The Statue of Limitations is an expression of resistance to colonialism and racism, traditions which were and continue to be manifested in Berlin's urban environment in the Afrikanisches Viertel and in the reconstructed Palace of the German Reich. The work is an expression of condolence and mourning for the victims of these traditions, past and present. It is an unmasked memorial to those who were not supposed to be remembered."

Mayor and Senator for Culture and Europe, Klaus Lederer: "Artworks that are installed in public spaces say a lot about the society in which they are exhibited. They are no fig leaf, but rather a public impetus to move people to reflect, to pose questions, and to examine situations. We now have a physical reminder, in the form of this sculpture by Kang Sunkoo in Nachtigalplatz and the Humboldt Forum, that there is no statute of limitations on the genocide waged against the Herero and Nama peoples."

At the beginning of the 20th century, an 'ethnological exhibition' was planned in Rehberge, the nearby public park, in which people and animals from the German colonies were due to be exhibited. The outbreak of World War I thwarted these plans, but the street names had already been chosen. Even today, there are streets and squares in this quarter named after former colonies and colonists. Discussions over renaming them have been ongoing for years.

Nachtigalplatz, named after Reichskommissar for German West Africa Gustav Nachtigal, is also a subject of debate: He played a central role in establishing German rule in the colonies of Togo, Cameroon and German South-West Africa (now Namibia).

The architectural context at both locations is characterised by symmetry. The lower half of the artwork stands on an axis of symmetry in the Humboldt Forum, aligned with the cupola and the cross. The upper half of the flagpole in Nachtigalplatz, marks an axis of reflection in the urban space aligned with Petersallee.

Kang Sunkoo was awarded first prize for his work submitted for the Art in Architecture competition in 2018. The design brief for this second in a total of five competitions for the Humboldt Forum in the Berlin Palace was to create a piece for the Stair Hall adjoining the collections from the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin on the 2nd and 3rd floors.

Art in Architecture

A total of five Art in Architecture competitions were instigated by the Stiftung Humboldt Forum im Berliner Schloss, as a result of which, seven works were awarded prizes for the new Humboldt Forum. Each prizewinning design, in its own individual fashion, reflects the history of the site or references with its artistry the content of the Humboldt Forum and the brothers who gave it their name.

Kang Sunkoo

Kang Sunkoo is a visual artist, who lives and works in Basel. *Statue of Limitations*, Kang's entry in the Art in Architecture competition for the Humboldt Forum's Stair Hall, was awarded first prize in 2018. His piece *Heimat, Heimat* went on to win first prize in the Art in Architecture competition for the extension building at the Federal Ministry of the Interior, Building and Home Affairs in Berlin in 2019. In 2020, his entry *Urhütte* won first prize in the Art in Architecture competition for the new building housing the Federal Office for Radiation Protection in Berlin.

Facts and figures

Material	Black patinated bronze	
Location	Lower half (permanent)	Stair Hall, Humboldt Forum in the Berlin Palace, Berlin Mitte
	Upper half (temporary, approx. 6 months)	Nachtigalplatz, African Quarter, Berlin Wedding (Subsequent location currently under discussion)
Dimensions	Lower half (Humboldt Forum)	2.75m x 2.29m x 11.02m (height) (visible) ø 30cm - 18cm (pole)
	Upper half (Nachtigalplatz)	2.05m x 1.43 m x 11.02 m (height) ø 18cm - 6cm (pole)
Weight	Lower half (Humboldt Forum)	approx. 1,700kg (suspended)
	Upper half (Nachtigalplatz)	approx. 1,000kg (supported)
Installation date	Lower half (Humboldt Forum)	May 2020
	Upper half (Nachtigalplatz)	March 2022
Competition	Winner of the first prize in an anonymised, open, international, dual-phase competition awarded by the Federal Office for Building and Regional Planning 2017-2018	
Commissioned by	Stiftung Humboldt Forum im Berliner Schloss	
Manufacture	Bildgießerei Hermann Noack, Berlin	

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 GLOBAL exhibition.

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