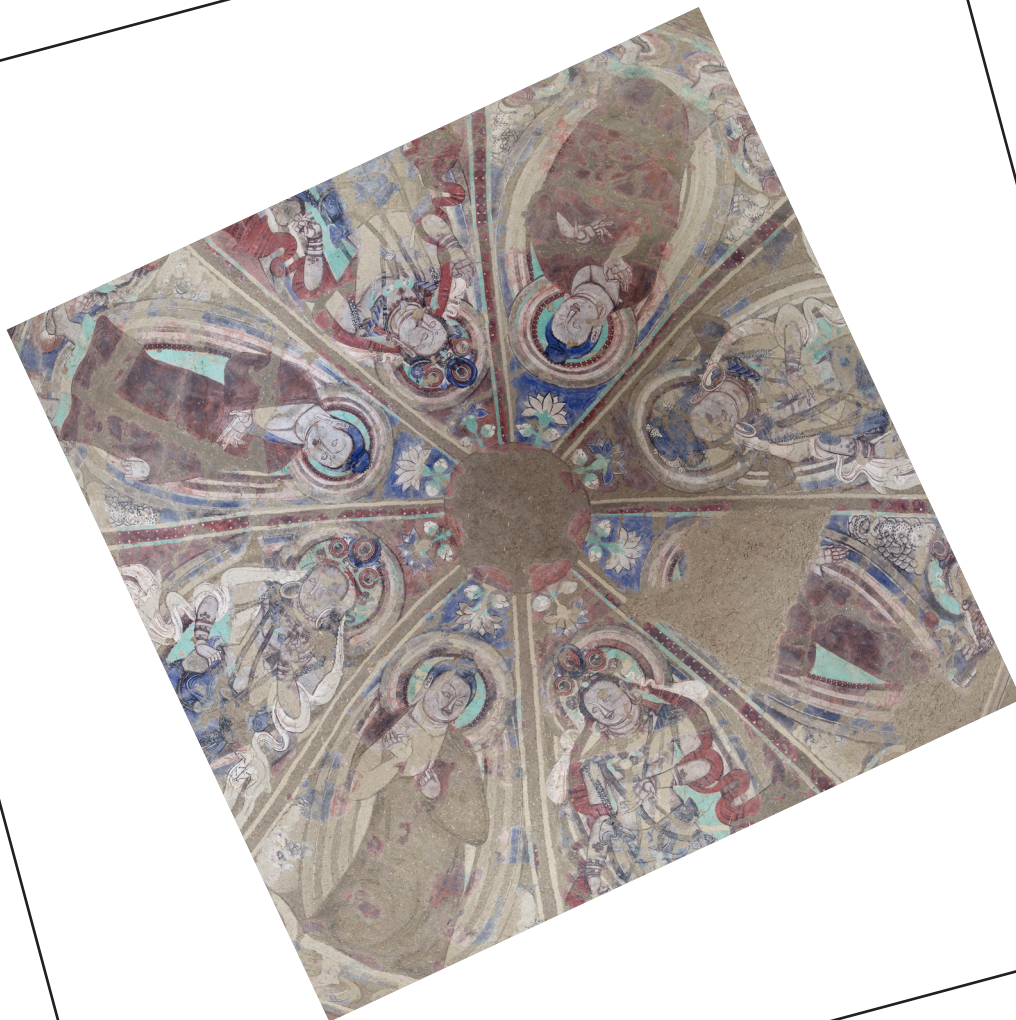


**HUMBOLDT
FORUM**

MUST SEES



OPENING OF THE EAST WING

**STIFTUNG
HUMBOLDT FORUM**
IM BERLINER SCHLOSS



Staatliche Museen zu Berlin
Preußischer Kulturbesitz



Memorial head of a king (Nigeria) in the exhibition space „The Benin Kingdom“ of the Ethnologisches Museum in the Humboldt © Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Ethnologisches Museum / Stiftung Humboldt Forum im Berliner Schloss, Photo: Alexander Schippel

REDESIGN OF THE BENIN ROOMS

DAS KÖNIGREICH BENIN,
BENIN-BRONZEN IN BERLIN (209, 210)

Outstanding art from Benin will be showcased in two rooms of the Humboldt Forum. Together with Nigerian partners, the Ethnologisches Museum has completely revised the originally planned presentation. The exhibition will tell the story of the Kingdom of Benin and its conquest, and, along with the historical objects, will also show works by contemporary artists, including films, textiles and bronze casts that are still produced today in traditional way.

The „Benin Bronzes“ hold a special position in the debate about the decolonisation of museums: In 1897 British troops conquered the Kingdom of Benin, sacked the royal palace and

exiled Oba Ovonramwen, the last independent king, to Calabar. After the invasion, thousands of objects were shipped to London as looted items and sold there. Many more of the looted objects initially remained in colonial Nigeria, but subsequently found their way to European and North American museums, including Berlin's Museum, through networks of European and African businessmen and traders.

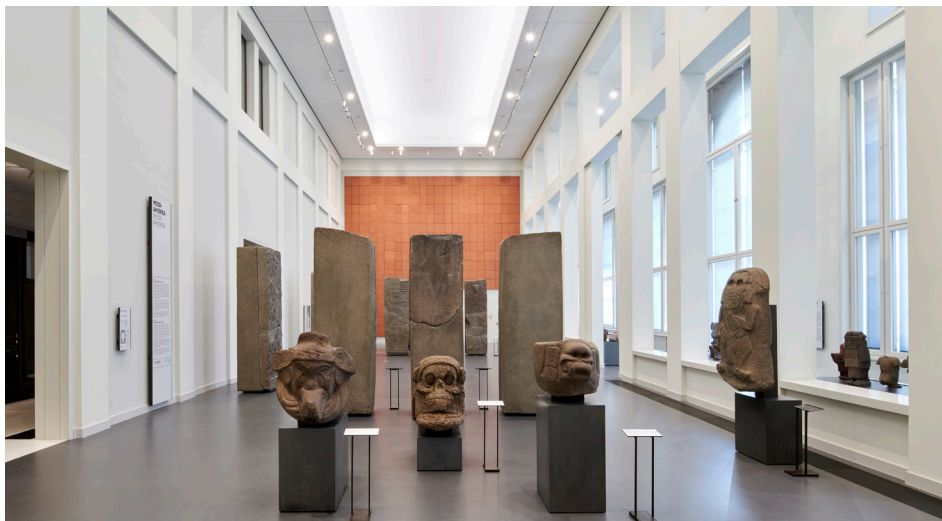
Since 2010, the Ethnologisches Museum has been a member of the Benin Dialogue Group, in which museums in Europe discuss the future of Benin objects in the collections of the participating institutions with Nigerian partners. These talks created the basis for the transfer of ownership of the more than 500 „Benin Bronzes“ from the collection of the Ethnologisches Museum of the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin – Preußischer Kulturbesitz to the state of Nigeria in August 2022. About a third of the transferred objects will remain on loan in Berlin for an initial period of ten years, and will be exhibited in the Humboldt Forum.

The recently redesigned Benin-exhibition in the Humboldt Forum takes these current processes into account: it refers to the debates about the restitution of the „Benin Bronzes“ and conveys the history of their collection and reception between Benin and Berlin. The few historical objects that are on display as loans are examined in terms of their artistic character and their central importance for global art history. On the other hand, the focus is on their respective

materiality as a carrier of memory and ritual inventory. A documentary section of the exhibition examines the significance of historical Benin objects for modern art in Nigeria and the aesthetics of decolonisation.

There are works of art by contemporary Nigerian artists and designers who have appropriated the imagery, techniques and content of Benin arts, and have translated them into new materials and reinterpreted them. In his work „The King, the Priest, the Chosen One“ (2022), Victor Ehikhamenor refers to the King of Benin in his double function as political ruler and most important priest. On a tapestry with net-like lace fabric, orange-red plastic rosaries frame the red-robed dignitary, and miniature bronzes also serve as material. The work deals with the aesthetic and content-related principles of historical works of art.

A large working table in the area offers space for discussion, encounters, joint research and curating with cooperation partners. The complexity and polyphony of the debate on the restitutions beyond the official negotiations will be reflected in video statements by German and Nigerian scientists, artists and representatives of museums and the royal family in Benin City. They explain the history and significance of the „Benin Bronzes“ and their views of the current debate, and look to the future from multiple perspectives.



View of the exhibition space „Mesoamerica. Ball Game, Pyramids, Gods“ of the Ethnologisches Museum in the Humboldt Forum © Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Ethnologisches Museum / Stiftung Humboldt Forum im Berliner Schloss, Photo: Alexander Schippel

CODEX HUMBOLDT FRAGMENT 1/ CODEX AZOYÚ REVERSO

ARTIST: MARIANA CASTILLO DEBALL
2ND FLOOR, ROOM 207

A CONTEMPORARY ELECTIVE AFFINITY

The term Mesoamerica is used to describe a region in North and Central America that was shaped by shared cultural traits. It covered an area now occupied by Mexico, Guatemala, Belize, and parts of Honduras, El Salvador, and Costa Rica. In pre-colonial times a large population lived there and various indigenous cultures emerged, including the Aztec, Huastec, Mixtec, Olmec, Zapotec, Maya, and Cotzumalhuapa cultures. Impressive reliefs as well as large, in-the-round stone sculptures of animal figures, mythical creatures, and deities are among the surviving artefacts from the Cotzumalhuapa culture.

Along with the eight mighty Cotzumalhuapa steles from 650-950 and other artefacts, a large-scale modern installation dominates the Mesoamerica gallery in the Humboldt Forum. Using 320 ceramic tiles, the Mexican artist

Mariana Castillo Deball created the largest contemporary artwork within the presentations of the Ethnologisches Museum and the Museum für Asiatische Kunst. Her installation “Codex Humboldt Fragment 1/Codex Azoyú Reverso” almost completely covers the two-storey high southern end of the hall and was made possible by a donation from the “Friends of the Ethnologisches Museum”. In this work, the Berlin-based artist refers to two pictographic documents, the “Codex Humboldt Fragment 1” and “Codex Azoyú Reverso”. These are records of tax payments from the Tlapa region in Guerrero to the Aztec conquerors and rulers from the sixteenth century. Alexander von Humboldt acquired the “Codex Humboldt Fragment 1” during his visit to New Spain at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Today, the fragment is in the collection of the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin (Berlin State Library). The Codex Azoyú Reverso was rediscovered in 1940 in Guerrero, Mexico.

LIENZO SELER II / COIXTLAHUACA II

2ND FLOOR, ROOM 205



The 383 cm x 442 cm [16 m²] cotton cloth Coixtlahuaca II [Mexico] in the exhibition space „Mesoamerica. Language, Writing, Calendar“ of the Ethnologisches Museum in the Humboldt Forum © Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Ethnologisches Museum / Stiftung Humboldt Forum im Berliner Schloss, Photo: Alexander Schippel

RICHLY ILLUSTRATED MANUSCRIPTS: LIENZO SELER II / COIXTLAHUACA II

One of the most impressive objects of the Ethnologisches Museum has found a new home: the “Lienzo Seler II / Coixtlahuaca II” is displayed in a wide table display case. The approximately sixteen-square-metre cotton cloth (383 cm x 442 cm) dates from the sixteenth century. Mixtec, Nahuatl, and Cocho artists produced the painted cloth with inscriptions in the Coixtlahuaca Valley, in what is now the Mexican state of Oaxaca. They recorded social events spanning a period of more than 500 years extending into the early Spanish colonial period after 1521, visualising their claim to power in the style of pre-Columbian illuminated manuscripts.

The historic cloth, which had hung untouched in a glass display case in the Ethnologisches Museum in Berlin-Dahlem for almost fifty years, was restored in preparation for its trans-

fer to the Humboldt Forum. To protect the light-sensitive fabric, the slightly angled table display case is equipped with a cover which opens at certain intervals to reveal the exhibit. The document is named after its collector, Eduard Seler, who brought it to Berlin in 1897. Later department director of the America collection at what was then the Völkerkundemuseum in Berlin, Seler studied the unknown characters in depth. In addition, the Lienzo bears the name of the main town and valley where it originated. With the colonization of Mesoamerica and the concomitant ban on hieroglyphic writing and destruction of most manuscripts and other written sources, knowledge of how to read the characters was lost. In 2017, the Lienzo was published in all its details for the first time and interpreted by ten international experts based on the latest scientific findings.



View of the exhibition space „Buildings from Oceania. More than a roof over your head“ of the Ethnologisches Museum in the Humboldt Forum, in the foreground a yam storehouse of the Abelam, behind it a cult house of the Abelam (Papua New Guinea) © Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Ethnologisches Museum / Stiftung Humboldt Forum im Berliner Schloss, Photo: Giuliani von Giese

BUILDINGS FROM OCEANIA

2ND AND 3RD FLOOR, ROOM 220

MORE THAN A ROOF OVER ONE'S HEAD

Traditional buildings and houses from various regions of Oceania are featured in the exhibition of the Ethnologisches Museum in the Humboldt Forum. They showcase the diverse techniques of construction, which vary depending on their source community, and the different social and spiritual uses. They served as abodes for people, ancestors, spirits or deities, and housed cult objects, valuable items, or food stores. They often stood on land that linked the inhabitants to their ancestors and that continues to form the basis of social identity to this day.

The gallery offers an impressive perspective of the houses of Palau and Papua New Guinea. The bai, the Palau meeting house, resembles the ones in Palau in many respects, despite its reduced scale. Villages in Palau used to have several meeting houses –for the council of chiefs and the clubs of men of the same age. The

women's clubs usually met in dwelling houses. Due to the drastic interventions in local power relations by the German and, later, Japanese colonial governments, the men's clubs lost their significance and power.

In 1907, the doctor and ethnologist Augustin Krämer came to Palau and had a bai built for the Ethnologisches Museum in Berlin. This house was first shown to the public in 1908. Sixty years later a floor and roof truss were added. In the summer of 2022, a team from Palau headed by Patrick Tellei put a new roof on the meeting house in the Humboldt Forum. The cult house of the Abelam in Papua New Guinea, an imposing addition to the group of magnificent buildings from Oceania in the Humboldt Forum, is a replica. With its impressive painted gable and its two initiation chambers, it provides insight into the architecture and significance of the Abelam cult houses, which are no longer built today.

FAMILY SPACE AMAZONIA

2ND FLOOR, ROOM 208

JUST HANG AROUND

Four exhibition areas are aimed at families with children aged six to twelve. Within the collection displays of the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin in the Humboldt Forum, the four family areas provide free spaces for playing, exploring, reading and listening. Hands-on elements and computer games specially conceived for children encourage active engagement with the themes of the exhibitions. Family spaces for Amazonia, Oceania, and Cameroon, respectively, are located on the second floor of the Humboldt Forum; the "1000 Worlds" family space on the third floor is still under construction. The focus of the Amazonia Family Space is on how children grow up in Amazonia, how they learn and understand the world. Two key elements

of traditional indigenous ways of life can be experienced here: learning through the telling of stories in the home environment, and experiences in and with nature. Children and their families can lie back in hammocks, immerse themselves in stories from Amazonia, and browse with others through children's books from the region. At the same time, a forest lies in front of them in the form of a room-size artistic installation. Through movement and interaction, they get a sense of how humans, animals, plants, and other beings are interconnected in this environment.



The „Cave of the ring-bearing doves“ [China] in the exhibition space „Religious Architecture of the Northern Silk Road“ of the Museum für Asiatische Kunst in the Humboldt Forum © Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Museum für Asiatische Kunst / Stiftung Humboldt Forum im Berliner Schloss, Photo: Alexander Schippel

CAVE OF THE RING-BEARING DOVES

3RD FLOOR, ROOM 315

AN UNPRECEDENTED CAVE TEMPLE RECONSTRUCTION

The breath-taking reconstruction of a Buddhist cave temple in a display-case-cum-gallery structure spanning two levels is an extraordinary sight to behold. The accessible cave is from Kizil, located near Kucha on the Northern Silk Road in what is now the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (China). When the cave temple was built around the sixth century, Kucha was the capital of a regional kingdom ruled by the Indo-European Tocharians. Scriptures, styles, and rituals were transmitted from Buddhist kingdoms in India and from Gandhara, today Pakistan and Afghanistan. The impact of Iranian culture was also important. Hundreds of caves, mostly with vaulted ceilings, were hewn out of the soft rock.

By contrast, Kizil Cave 123, known as the “Cave of the Ring-Bearing Doves”, has a square shape and is crowned by a dome, which is unusual. Its ceiling is decorated with stunning paintings of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, the latter being enlightened beings who remain in this world to help believers achieve better reincarnations and enlightenment. On the side walls two large identical Buddhas dominate.

The four German expeditions which brought the murals to Germany in the early 1900s arrived at an abandoned site and thought they were rescuing these paintings by removing them. But the cutting and transport caused damage. Some wall paintings from the Kizil Cave were tragically destroyed towards the end of World War II when the Völkermuseum in Berlin (which housed the first reconstruction of the cave temple) burned out during the bombings.

This reconstruction follows the measurements and details of the original cave temple as documented during a field trip to Kizil in 2017 as part of a cooperation with the Kucha Research Academy and during previous projects. The wall paintings that had been destroyed or that remain in situ in Kizil have been recreated in sand-coloured clay tones. Original fragments can be identified by their brighter colours. Clay sculptures from other sites are exhibited around the reconstructed cave in large display cases. At a media station – surrounded by archaeological wooden objects – visitors learn about the structure and pictorial program of the cave temples in Kizil. Historical photos and drawings serve to contextualize the history of the four expeditions (1902–1914) in interactive ways.



Patched cloak of a dervish [Iran] in the exhibition space „Aspects of Islam“ of the Ethnologisches Museum at the Humboldt Forum © Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Ethnologisches Museum / Stiftung Humboldt Forum im Berliner Schloss, Photo: Alexander Schippel

IRANIAN DERVISH ROBE

3RD FLOOR, 308

POLYPHONY OF A WORLD RELIGION

Like any living religion, Islam is not a one-dimensional, unified belief system. There is no such thing as one Islam; Islam comprises a variety of religious movements and manifestations which emphasize different aspects of faith – such as a turn to spirituality, which in Islam culminates in mysticism or Sufism. The term was probably derived from the Arabic word for wool, suf. The early mystics and ascetics as well as the prophet Mohammed are said to have worn a patchwork robe made of coarse woollen cloth.

A ROBE, A HAT, A BOWL ...

In the “Aspects of Islam” gallery, the modern-looking patchwork robe of an Iranian dervish catches the eye in the entrance area. The robe hangs spread out in a display case and was sewn from hundreds of differently sized, coloured scraps of cotton, felt, and fur. A coarsely knitted woollen hat, a blowing horn, and a beggar’s bowl complete the religious ensemble. Der-

vishes belong to Islamic Sufi communities committed to living for God and in voluntary poverty. Tears in the clothes were mended with patches. The robes of the masters were often cut into small pieces after their death, and the students then sewed the scraps of material into their own patchwork robes. The subject can be explored more in depth at a media station focusing on Sufi practices throughout the world. The exact circumstances under which the dervish robe displayed here was acquired in 1857 in the Iranian province of Yazd by Julius Heinrich Petermann, Professor of Oriental Philology at the University of Berlin, are not known. In the arrangement of their two display cases, the members of the Sufi Centre Rabbaniyya in Berlin draw a line to contemporary Sufi orders, in which only few still follow a strict ideal of poverty; they stress the importance of traditional dress, the remembrance of God, and the emphasis on the love of peace often characteristic of present-day Sufis.



View of the exhibition space „Crafts in Central Asia“ of the Ethnologisches Museum in the Humboldt Forum © Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Ethnologisches Museum / Stiftung Humboldt Forum im Berliner Schloss, Photo: Alexander Schippel

CENTRAL ASIA EXHIBITION ARCHITECTURE

3RD FLOOR, ROOM 305

ARTS AND CRAFTS IN CENTRAL ASIA

The exhibition looks at the relationship between arts and crafts, identity, materiality, and a state's political and structural organisation using the examples of Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, and the Xinjiang-based ethnic group of the Uyghurs. The different political and economic systems in the region since the mid-nineteenth century brought with them profound changes in the identities of Central Asian populations – from often local or religious identities to such associated with the new nation states. At the same time the significance of their material and immaterial culture changed – from artisan craftwork as a status symbol of wealthy classes to a national symbol. Under Soviet rule, for example, knowledge of traditional art was in danger of being partially lost or was commercialized, like in pre-independence Turkmenistan. Independent potters became workers who created mass-produced porcelain in factories. Still, arts and crafts workshops established themselves as well. During the emirate in what

is now Uzbekistan, gold-embroidered coats gave their wearers rank and status; the modern festive coats are part of a national costume and are still given as gifts on state visits today. In the gallery, the gorgeous textiles, carpets, and ceramics are presented by themselves on four undulant display platforms. Incorporated in the wave elements are large showcases for the display of clothes, such as a dark red velvet woman's coat with silver silk embroidery from West Turkestan, today Uzbekistan. The flat display cases featuring jewellery and headgear seem to literally hover above the low wave endings. The explanatory notes on the display cases and a media station address the transformations of the objects, their manufacturing conditions and meanings. Felt carpets and the kalpak, a men's hat made of the same material, are important symbols of Kyrgyz identity today. In 2012, the ala-kiyiz and shyrdak felt carpets, which are woven from sheep's wool and trace back to a nomadic tradition, were inscribed on the UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage List.

RELIGIOUS ART FROM ANCIENT SOUTH-EAST ASIA (CAMBODIA, MYANMAR, INDONESIA (JAVA), THAILAND)

3RD FLOOR, ROOM 311

YES, COPIES CAN - MONUMENTALITY FROM SOUTHEAST ASIA EXPERIENCED SPATIALLY

Angkor Wat in Cambodia is one of the largest sacred structures in the world. The temple complex is considered an expression in stone of the Khmer Empire's Hindu-influenced divine kingship. However, at the end of the twelfth century the last great king of Angkor adopted Mahayana Buddhism as state religion and had the city of Angkor Thom with the famous Bayon temple built.

On the third floor of the Humboldt Forum, painstakingly restored twenty-three-metre-long casts of Angkor Wat reliefs give visitors a sense of the monumental temple architecture of the World Heritage site. A model of Angkor Wat in reddish-coloured tropical wood, which was made on a scale of 1:50 by Cambodian craftsmen in 2007 for the exhibition "Angkor. Divine heritage of Cambodia" and then kept in storage at the Ethnologisches Museum in Berlin for ten years, gives an additional impression of the monumentality of the complex with its central temple towers and surrounding extended colonnades.

THE WHOLE COSMOS IN A BOOK - TRAIPHUM (THE THREE WORLDS") - A 33 M LONG PAINTED LEPORELLO FROM THONBURI, THAILAND (1767 A.D.)

A highlight of Buddhist imagery from Thailand is the illuminated royal Traiphum manuscript, the Book of the Three Worlds. King Taksin commissioned it in 1776 to assert his power after the destruction of the former capital, Ayutthaya. The 33-metre-long illustrated manuscript consists of paper painted on both sides with body colours and gold, and is folded like an accordion book. It represents the three-level Buddhist cosmos, where good or bad deeds determine in which part of the cosmic realm one is reborn. The exhibition shows one six-metre-long section of the illustrated manuscript at a time, which changes every few months.



View of the exhibition space „Religious art from south-east Asia“ © Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Ethnologisches Museum / Stiftung Humboldt Forum im Berliner Schloss, Photo: Alexander Schippel

UNTITLED TIM TRANTENROTH

STAIR HALL, 2ND + 3RD FLOOR



Untitled, Tim Trantenroth, 2020, acrylic paint / Tim Trantenroth, Photo: Bernd Borchardt

ART IN ARCHITECTURE: UNTITLED

Nothing lasts forever: after having been closed in 1990, the Palace of the Republic was demolished between 2006 and 2008. A few years and an interim use later, the Humboldt Forum was built on the same site. But though gone from the urban space, the Palace of the Republic, which had served as the seat of the GDR Volkskammer, or People's Chamber, and as a cultural centre from the mid-1970s, leaves its mark on this new building on a historic site: specifically in a large-scale wall painting in the stairwell above Portal 5 of the Humboldt Forum. At this location, the Berlin-based artist Tim Trantenroth gives centre stage, like an echo, to the facade of the GDR Palace with its bronze-mir-

rored windows. His mural spans the entire portal wall, creating a compact spatial impression. Including almost 200 different shades of colour, the abstract grid evokes the architectural shell of the GDR building. For this artwork, which reflects on loss, memory and dealing with history, Trantenroth was awarded first place in one of the competitions for the seven Art-in-Architecture locations in the Humboldt Forum. Having conceived the work as a provocation or joke, he was all the more stunned when he won the competition.

TEMPORARY EXHIBITIONS



1 View of the temporary exhibition „Against the Current. The Omaha, Francis La Flesche and his Collection“ © Staatliche Museen zu Berlin / Stiftung Humboldt Forum im Berliner Schloss, Photo: Alexander Schippel **2** View of the temporary exhibition „Ancestors, Goddesses and Heroes. Sculptures from Asia, Africa and Europe“ at the Humboldt Forum © Staatliche Museen zu Berlin / Stiftung Humboldt Forum im Berliner Schloss, Photo: Alexander Schippel

The temporary exhibitions were developed by the Stiftung Humboldt Forum im Berliner Schloss and the museums together with communities from regions throughout the world. They are the result of many years of cooperation. Bringing together different areas of knowledge and experience, they contribute greatly to the forum character of the Humboldt Forum. Objects from the North American Omaha and Haida, the Indian Naga, questions about objects from Tanzania as well as a presentation of sculptures from Africa, Asia and Europe provide insights into different societies and their cultural practices.

EXHIBITING.OMISSIONS. OBJECTS FROM TANZANIA AND THE COLONIAL ARCHIV (211, 212)

The collection of the Ethnologisches Museum Berlin includes some 10,000 objects which are attributed to the area of present-day Tanzania. Most of the objects were acquired – often in violent ways – during the period of German and British colonial rule. The workshop exhibition *Exhibiting.Omissions. Objects from Tanzania and the Colonial Archive* questions, remembers, and reconsiders the museum's objects and their stories: to whom and where did the objects now in the museum's depot belong? What stories do they have to tell that remain untold or ignored to this day? Should these objects still be on display in Berlin today? And what omissions do we encounter when reflecting on these issues, what remains hidden?

The objects' problematic colonial and racist past is addressed in several sections. For example, the exhibition includes four display cases in which original objects from the former colony of "German East Africa" are replaced with "surrogate objects" by contemporary artists, among others. Sensitive objects thus attain

visibility and are subject to a new, contemporary approach. Even omissions and gaps – in archives, in historiography – are made visible: their trail is marked by blank text boxes and pink-coloured fields.

This exhibition is a critical reflection by the Berlin curatorial team on sensitive objects from Tanzania. Conceived as a preparatory event for a collaborative project, this workshop exhibition is intended to culminate in a presentation curated jointly with the National Museum of Tanzania.

TEMPORARY EXHIBITIONS



Temporary Exhibition „Against the Current. The Omaha, Francis La Flesche, and His Collection“ © Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Ethnologisches Museum / Stiftung Humboldt Forum im Berliner Schloss, Photo: Alexander Schippel

ANCESTORS, GODDESSES, AND HEROES. SCULPTU- RES FROM ASIA, AFRICA, AND EUROPE

3RD FLOOR, ROOM 312

Since time immemorial, humans have created objects to which they attributed superhuman powers. Depictions of ancestors, goddesses, and heroes were helpful in overcoming personal or collective crises. Over thousands of years and across continents, a diversity of creativity emerged, which continues to fascinate to this day.

But can the powers of a figure survive in the exhibition space – divorced from their cultural, religious, and political contexts? What values and virtues do the objects reflect? And what links the different objects together?

Ancestors, Goddesses, and Heroes. Sculptures from Asia, Africa, and Europe explores these questions, while also addressing the definitory power of museums. Its starting point are the collections of the Ethnologisches Museum and the Skulpturensammlung as well as the Museum für Byzantinische Kunst of the Staatlichen Museen zu Berlin. Based on forty-five selected objects from the fourth

AGAINST THE CURRENT. THE OMAHA, FRANCIS LA FLESCHÉ, AND HIS COLLECTION

2ND FLOOR, ROOM 203

The name Umo^{ho} (Omaha) means “against the current” and stands for overcoming obstacles and doing things differently. At the same time, it describes an important historical moment preceding the colonization of the American Midwest, when the Umo^{ho} split from the Osage, Quapaw, Kansa, and Ponca and moved upriver.#

Between 1894 and 1898, Francis La Flesche compiled a collection of around 60 objects from his “own” culture, that of the Umo^{ho}, on behalf of the Ethnologisches Museum in Berlin. Their provenance is well-documented. La Flesche purchased the items over the course of four years on the reservation. If things weren’t available, he had new ones made. The collection was assembled at a time when the political, economic, and cultural independence of Indigenous nations in the United States was being drastically curtailed. Their lives were marked by land loss, racism, and violence. La Flesche hoped to preserve at least part of the Umo^{ho} culture by collec-

to the nineteenth centuries, the show demonstrates how museological ordering systems and ways of presentation contribute significantly to how the works are perceived and evaluated.

While some objects were elevated to the status of artworks, other pieces shown in this exhibition were considered ritual objects. Colonial ways of thinking were responsible for the hierarchisation of cultures, and the ordering systems of museums provided rigid classifications. Such categorisations obscured the view of cultural connections and contexts.

The exhibition seeks to break up those forms of ordering, highlight similarities, and reveal the original contexts of meaning. The violence of colonial appropriations is reflected in the still incomplete provenances of some works – these gaps are being made visible in the presentation.

ting objects. He straddled two worlds: as an umo^{ho} (Omaha) he fought for the rights of his community, and as an ethnologist he studied his own culture. He lived at a time when life for the Umo^{ho} was changing radically.

Today the collection is a link between past and present. It is the historical starting point for a new chapter in the relationship between the Umo^{ho} and the Ethnologisches Museum. Organised in cooperation with teachers and students of the Nebraska Indian Community College, descendants of Francis La Flesche, and representatives of the Umo^{ho} and the Ethnologisches Museum, the exhibition at the Humboldt Forum addresses current political and social issues.

The collection in Berlin is of particular importance in this context because it bears witness to the resistance against colonialism. For today’s Umo^{ho}, it offers an opportunity to tell their own story. Their message is: “We are still here!”

TEMPORARY EXHIBITIONS

NAGA LAND. VOICES FROM NORTHEAST INDIA 3RD FLOOR, ROOM 309

All over the world, minorities are fighting for cultural self-determination or political autonomy. One such minority is the Naga – an umbrella term for more than thirty different tribal groups which, despite many similarities, differ in their culture and language and in the way they see themselves. The majority of the approximately three million people now live in the state of Nagaland in north-eastern India.

Since the end of British colonial rule, the Naga have been fighting for autonomy from mainland India and for cultural self-determination. It was only during this period that the desire for a common identity emerged. Christianity is the main religion in Nagaland and has greatly influenced the culture.

So what does it mean to be a Naga today? The exhibition *Naga Land. Voices from Northeast India* looks at different aspects of contemporary Naga society and its cultural identity. It brings together the historical Naga collection of the Ethnologisches Museum with contemporary photography, fashion, and visual arts from the region. The Naga have been an important research focus for European scholars since as early as the nineteenth century.

The Naga artist Zubeni Lotha is part of the interdisciplinary curatorial team behind this collaborative exhibition organized by the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, the Humboldt Forum, and the Berlin Botanical Museum, and critically examines the constructed image of the Naga in historical Western photography. I will not weep, a new sound installation by Naga artist Senti Toy Threadgill in the Humboldt Forum's listening room also reflects on contemporary Nagaland, its colonial past, and current political situation.



Temporary Exhibition „Naga Land. Voices from Northeast India“ © Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Stiftung Humboldt Forum im Berliner Schloss, Photo: Alexander Schippel

TS'UU – CEDAR. OF TREES AND PEOPLE 2ND FLOOR, ROOM 201

“...when the trees are gone, we'll just be like everybody else.” - Gidansda Guujaaw, artist and former president of the Haida Nation

For millennia, people and land have been inextricably linked in Canada's coastal rainforests. An example of this is the special importance cedar trees hold for the First Nations living there: cedars provide the raw material for a wide range of everyday objects and ceremonial objects. They play a central role in handed-down stories, traditions, and ceremonies.

Based on the “giant tree of life” (western red cedar) and the “Nootka cypress” (yellow cedar), the exhibition tells of the relationship between humans and the environment. Eight chapters highlight the connections between coastal rainforests, First Nations peoples, and Euro-Canadians, the effects of colonisation, and the resurgence of First Nations culture and language in Canada. One focus is on recent history: colonization by Europeans from the eighteenth century led to the systematic displacement of the First Nations and curtailment of

their rights. At the same time, large parts of the coastal rainforest habitat were destroyed by the development of industrial forestry. Both had, and continue to have, far-reaching effects on First Nations cultures and their relationship to cedar. For this reason, the cedar plays a special role today in the resurgence of the First Nations and the way they see themselves: be it in the anti-forestry movements; in land and resource use based on traditional ecological knowledge; or in the reappropriation of cultural practices and traditions.

The exhibition, developed in cooperation with the Haida Gwaii Museum in British Columbia, presents over 130 exhibits, including tools for working the wood, media installations, cultural, historical and natural history exhibits as well as contemporary artworks. An additional integral part of the exhibition are two cedar totem poles from the collection of the Ethnologisches Museum. The variety of the displayed objects and the transdisciplinary approach make it possible to explore the cedar-related topics and issue on several levels.



1 Temporary Exhibition „Matter(s) of Perspective“ © Stiftung Humboldt Forum im Berliner Schloss, Photo: Alexander Schippel 2 Temporary Exhibition „Matter(s) of Perspective“ © Stiftung Humboldt Forum im Berliner Schloss, Photo: Alexander Schippel

MATTER(S) OF PERSPECTIVE

In recent years, ethnological collections in European museums have come under strong criticism. The Humboldt Forum is also working to address this issue. A temporary exhibition entitled *Matter(s) of Perspective. A Prelude* examines some radical perspectives that expose colonialism as a macrosocial occurrence. The installation is specifically dedicated to the traces left by colonisation in the former German colonial territories of Cameroon, Namibia and Oceania and presents interconnections that reach right into the present day.

Photographs and school books, sculptures and interviews form a starting point for reflection on the views of colonisers and formerly colonised societies. These views are typified by the distinction between Us and Them – the Othering of German society with regard to Cameroonian, Namibian and Oceanic societies, and their view of German society.

In order to focus on the points of view themselves, and in the spirit of the current discussion on restitution, the installation works less with museum exhibits, choosing instead to rely on reproductions. Additional artistic works raise awareness of cultural and institutional

perspectives: using biographies of Namibians who spent part of their childhood in the GDR from 1979 onwards, a selection of films and images on the theme of intersectionality reflect the effects of colonial cultural contact.

The exhibition is located in Exhibition Area 214, adjacent to the presentation of collections from the Ethnologisches Museum focussing on Namibia, Cameroon and the Pacific area. It is the prelude to a further five temporary exhibitions from the Stiftung Humboldt Forum im Berliner Schloss to go on display on the 2nd and 3rd floors, beginning in spring 2022. The presentations bring together different fields of knowledge, people and communities, both in their development and implementation as well as in their communication to the public, creating a strong influence on the character of the Forum. Developed by interdisciplinary teams of curators, they are created in close cooperation with social and community representatives whose history and identity is linked to the objects on display. Further presentations still at the preparation stage include exhibitions on Francis La Flesche and the Omaha Tribe, as well as the Naga people in North East India.