

PRESS RELEASE
December 7, 2022

Until March 17, 2024, Gallery 201, third floor, admission free

The First Nations on the West Coast of Canada: the Exhibition *Ts'uu – Cedar. Of Trees and People* is open

Canada is the third-most forested country in the world by area: a habitat for plants, animals, and humans for thousands of years. But what happens when this highly developed ecosystem is thrown off balance? The relationship between people and the environment based on the example of the cedar is the subject of the temporary exhibition *Ts'uu – Cedar. Of Trees and People* in the Humboldt Forum, which has been developed in cooperation with the Haida Gwaii Museum at Kay Llnagaay in British Columbia, Canada. Eight chapters examine the relationships between coastal rainforests, First Nations, and Euro-Canadians, the impact of colonization on the habitat of the Indigenous peoples and their resurgence.

For millennia, people and land have been inextricably linked in Canada's coastal rainforests. This is exemplified by 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.

Taking the western red cedar and the yellow cedar as its starting point, *Ts'uu – Cedar: Of Trees and People* tells of the relationship between people and the environment. 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 at Kay Llnagaay 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 presentation are two cedar totem poles from the collection of the Ethnologisches Museum of the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin. The variety of the displayed objects and the transdisciplinary approach make it possible to explore the cedar-related topics and issues on several levels

Hartmut Dorgerloh, General Director of the Humboldt Forum: "*Ts'uu – Cedar* takes up a key issue that affects us all more than ever: the relationship between man and nature. Developed in partnership with the Haida people of British Columbia, the temporary exhibition is the result of years of collaboration. With its transdisciplinary approach and diverse perspectives on topics such as ecology, cultural practices, and colonialism and its impact, it contributes to the "forum" nature of the Humboldt Forum."

Isabelle Poupart, Chargée d'affaires of the Canadian embassy in Germany: "I am very happy that the North America exhibition rooms in the Humboldt Forum will foster greater awareness about Indigenous peoples and cultures in Canada, thus allowing a German and international audience to approach and access North American Indigenous cultures, including that of the Haida Nation, in ways that did not exist before and through the direct involvement of Indigenous representatives – as it should be."

Tina Brüderlin, Director of the Ethnologisches Museum, SMB/SPK: "For the Ethnologisches Museum of Berlin it has been an honor to work closely with partners from the Northwest Coast and particularly from Haida Gwaii on the newly inaugurated exhibition focusing on the Pacific Northwest in collaboration with the Humboldt Forum. We are thankful for the many years of active involvement in the research on and study of the historical collection from the Northwest Coast housed at the Ethnologisches Museum. It is through this joint work that the histories of the collection can be unraveled and reconnected to present day contexts. The personal commitment of our partners is key to the new presentation of this significant collection, and we are looking forward to continuing this collaboration."

Gid yakh'ii Sean Young, Curator and Head of Collections of the Haida Gwaii Museum at Kay Llnagaay: "Usually, museums doing exhibitions about First Nations culture in Canada or the USA only approach us at the very end, asking, for example, whether the accompanying texts are acceptable to us. Working with the Humboldt Forum has been different: we were involved right from the start and developed the exhibition together, meeting virtually every week. It was like a breath of fresh air. This is how it should always be!"

Daniela Kratzsch, curator: "The connection between man and landscape is universal, even if it manifests itself differently in different places in the world. Landscapes are witnesses and archives of history, they form the basis of all cultures. Protecting them should therefore also be a concern for us."

Ts'uu – Cedar. Of Trees and People is a temporary exhibition organized by the Humboldt Forum Foundation at the Berlin Palace in collaboration with the Haida Gwaii Museum at Kay Llnagaay in British Columbia, Canada. With expert advice provided by the Ethnologisches Museum der Staatlichen Museen zu Berlin – Preußischer Kulturbesitz.

Ts'uu – Cedar. Of Trees and People the last of currently six temporary exhibitions to open in the Humboldt Forum:

- *Ts'uu – Cedar. Of Trees and People* (gallery 201)
- *Against the Current. The Omaha, Francis La Flesche, and His Collection* (gallery 203)
- *Exhibiting Omissions. Objects from Tanzania and the Colonial Archive* (galleries 211 and 212)
- *Ansichtssachen(n)* (Raum 214)
- *Naga Land. Voices from Northeast India* (gallery 309)
- *Ancestors, Goddesses, and Heroes. Sculptures from Asia, Africa, and Europe* (gallery 312)

One building, four partners: 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 the Stadtmuseum Berlin for the Berlin exhibition.

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