

IIVING WITH DEATH





PROLOGUE | COSMOS

ACT1 | THE HEREAFTER Imaginative realms of death

ACT 2 DYING SCENE 1 Deathbeds **SCENE 2** Death conference

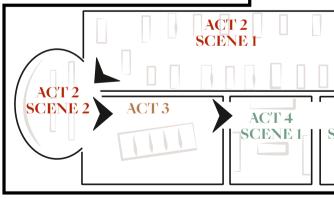
ACT 3 | DEATH The Final Moment

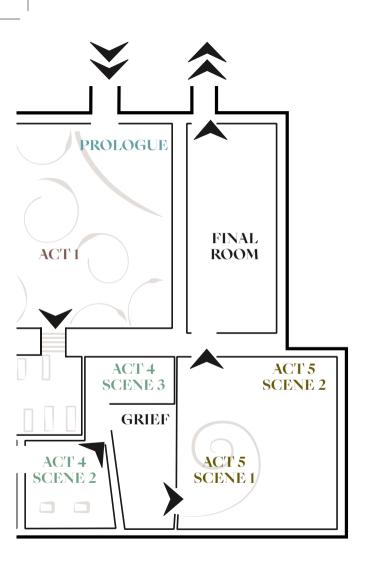
ACT 4 | THE MORTUARY SCENE 1 | Corpse care SCENE 2 | Autopsy of the conditions of death across the globe SCENE 3 | The names behind the numbers

PASSAGE | GRIEF

ACT 5 | OPEN END **SCENE 1** | Spiral of extinct animals **SCENE 2** Cosmos biosphere











"This is the paradox: [Humankind] is out of nature and hopelessly in it."

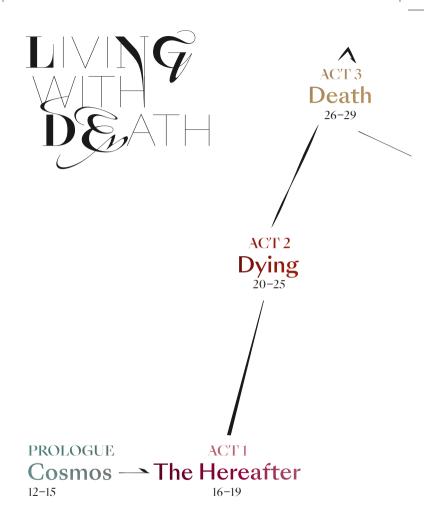
Ernest Becker, The Denial of Death, 1973

Humans are presumably the only animals that know they are going to die.

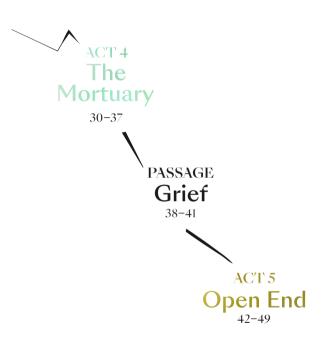
The knowledge of death has shaped the course of human history and individual lives, has given rise to culture, civilization, science, and diverse world views.

The knowledge of the transience and vulnerability of our own lives and that of all living things confronts us humans with existential, as well as ethical and moral questions.

The tour "Living with Death" is structured as a drama in five acts. On different stages, you will encounter diverse notions of death and explore scenes of death that remain hidden behind the curtain of everyday life.



A drama in five acts.



PROLOGUE



In the End, We Are All Stardust

Where do we come from

"When we tell the story of the universe within a timespan of twenty-four hours, Homo sapiens appears only in the final second."

COSMOS In the End, We Are All Stardust

"Living with Death" begins with a view from the outside onto the Earth, place of origin and home of all known living beings.

According to scientific calculations, the universe is 13.8 billion years old.

The Earth came into being approximately 4.6 billion years ago. First traces of life existed 3.5 billion years ago in the form of bacteria-like single-celled organisms. 2.4 billion years ago, so-called cyanobacteria brought oxygen into the atmosphere and thus created the basis for higher life forms. *Homo sapiens* have been verifiably living on the Earth for some 300,000 years.

Cast

Stars, the Milky Way, the Sun, the Earth, the Moon, water, ribonucleic acid (RNA), deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA), cyanobacteria, oxygen, eukaryotes, fish, amphibians, reptiles, mammals, dinosaurs, plants, *Homo sapiens*, and others



Imaginative Realms of Death

Is there life after death

The certainty of death unites people throughout all cultures and times.

And yet there is nothing we know less about than existence after death.

Since time immemorial, we have filled this void with images, symbols, and stories.

1

ACT 1

THE HEREAFTER Imaginative Realms of Death

Is death the end of our existence? Or will we live on in some form or another after death? Do we have an immortal soul? What is the relationship between the living and the dead?

In many cultures, death was not and is not understood as the complete end of human existence, but rather as a transition into another form of existence.

In the seven rooms, you will encounter different notions of life with and after death.

Cast

Vilwanathan Krishnamurthy, Co-founder of the Sri Ganesha Hindu Temple Berlin

Esther Hirsch, Cantor, Sukkat Schalom Synagogue, Berlin

Félix Ayoh'Omidire, Professor for the Yoruba-Diaspora, fellow at the Humboldt University of Berlin Kadir Sanci,

Imam and co-initiator of the House of One, Berlin

Jasmin El-Manhy, Pastor, Gethsemane Protestant Church in Berlin-Friedrichshain

Emil Kendziorra, Managing Director, Tomorrow Biostasis GmbH, Berlin

Mark Benecke, Forensic biologist, Cologne



Listen to the audio features, and additionally

Pir Hasan Doğan, Member of the Spiritual Council of the Alevi Community in Germany

For further reading in the exhibition catalogue

- Essay by the philosopher Stephen Cave: "Four Ways to Live Forever"
- > Contemporary notions of the hereafter: Recorded conversations with twelve representatives of different religious communities from Berlin's urban society
- > Photo series by Klaus Bo: Dead and Alive

ACT 2

DYING

On the Threshold to Death

W hat is a good death

Dying is a universal experience. Yet the process of dying is shaped locally, culturally, and historically, as well as individually. 21

ACT 2

DEATHBEDS How Do You Feel about Dying and Death?

Here, you can lie down and answer questions about your personal relationship to dying and death.

23

Cast

Here, it is all about you and your own ideas and attitudes towards dying and death.

DEATH CONFERENCE

What Counts during the Last Days, Hours, and Minutes before Death?

What are the signs of approaching death? What is particularly important in the care of the dying? What role do religion and worldview play at the end of life? What are the last wishes and words on the deathbed?

Twelve individuals from different continents, with different beliefs and cultural backgrounds, share their experiential knowledge gained from accompanying the dying. The conversations took place as video calls and were subsequently brought together for the video installation.

Cast

Rafael Ernesto Mamanché González, *Muisca community leader, Sesquile, Columbia*

Noreen Chan, Doctor in palliative care, Singapore

Kodjo Senah, Family Head, Accra, Ghana

Aysel Erki, Volunteer end-of-life caregiver, Diyarbakir, Turkey

Anurag Hari Shukla, End-of-life caregiver, Varanasi. India

Myriam Rios, Spiritual end-of-life caregiver in a hospice, Guatemala City, Guatemala Mike Kelly,

Shxw'ōwhámél Elder, Hope, British Columbia, Canada

Hadley Vlahos,

Hospice nurse, New Orleans, Louisiana, USA

Louisiana, OSA

Bukelwa Sigila, Sangoma (traditional healer among the Xhosa and Zulu),

Cape Town, South Africa

Rachel Ettun,

Spiritual companion for the dying, Jerusalem, Israel

Patrice Dwyer,

Death Doula, Kingston,

lamaica

Thích Thiên Nguyên, Buddhist Monk, Dong Dap, Vietnam

For further reading in the exhibition catalogue

> Transcriptions of the conversations with end-of-life caregivers

> Essay by Helaine Selin and Robert M. Rakoff: "Death and Dying in Non-Western Cultures"



The Final Moment

Is there light at the end of the tunnel?

W bat bappens at the moment of (brain) death on the level of consciousness is a mystery. There are, bowever, insights into what bappens in the brain during the last moments of life.

27

ACT 3

DEATH The Final Moment

What happens in the final stage of dying?

In the cubicle, a voice, accompanied by light and sound, tells you what happens in the body and brain at the threshold of death.

Stand on the white dot and wait until the spotlight selects you. Then enter through the illuminated door.

If you want to skip this scene please go right past the booths into the next room.

Cast

Nerve cells, norepinephrine, serotonin, dopamine, and others

For further reading in the exhibition catalogue

- > Interview with Jens Dreier, experimental neurologist at the Charité Berlin: "The last wave of electrical discharge before death is an enormous event."

29



Examination Room of Death

W bat does buman dignity mean beyond deatb?

In society's treatment of the dead, questions arise about human dignity, responsibility, and justice. In the mortuary, you look at the relationship of the living to the dead from three different perspectives in three scenes.

31

ACT 4

CORPSE CARE What Happens to a Corpse?

Death triggers a double crisis for the bereaved: A social life is lost—and there is a dead body.

Human dignity exists beyond death. The corpse is the object of care for the dead—from the last washing and the funeral garment to the burial. What does dignified care of the deceased look like?

The model room provides insight into the practice of corpse care.

The infographic shows exemplary paths of the corpse in different cultural contexts of Berlin's urban society: from the pronouncement of death to burial.

The video projection documents two forms of corpse care. You see a corpse washing in the context of hygienic care of the deceased as well as a ritual Islamic washing.

Cast

Schwester Iman (Nadine Eichner), corpse washer, TAHA Bestattung, Berlin, Islamic corpse washing Sophie Deichert & Saša Milojević, thanatopractitioner & mortician, Gustav Schöne OHG, corpse care in the context of thanatopraxy

33

AUTOPSY OF THE CONDITIONS OF DEATH ACROSS THE GLOBE

Are we all equal in the face of death?

"If we don't count the dead, we will miss the opportunity to be better prepared for the next time."

Samira Asma, Data Department of the World Health Organisation (WHO)

No one is so privileged as to escape death. And yet we are not all equal in the face of death: Death statistics reflect unequal life chances. The ten infographics in this room shed light on selected aspects of the conditions of death across the globe. On the one hand, they tell a human success story in the fight against death: Average life expectancy worldwide is higher than ever before. On the other hand, the graphics make clear that not everyone benefits equally from this development.

Global inequality is also reflected in the data. In poorer regions of the world, statistical data on the number and causes of deaths are not available in the same way as in rich countries.

THE NAMES BEHIND THE NUMBERS

A purse, a toothbrush, a picture of a saint, a mobile phone, and a small bag of soil from the homeland—personal things as evidence of a past life. The owners of these objects were victims of a dramatic maritime disaster in the Mediterranean Sea in the night of the 18th to the 19th of April 2015.

In accordance with international humanitarian law, the dead must be identified and buried. Nevertheless, most people who have died while fleeing across the Mediterranean remain nameless. The forensic anthropologist Cristina Cattaneo is head of the Milan-based LABANOF Institute and works with her

team to ensure that these drowned people are also identified and thus regain a piece of human dignity.

The personal belongings are crucial when it comes to identifying the dead. They are also used to show them to people searching for their loved ones.

Excerpts from the documentary #387 are shown here.

Cast

Cristina Cattaneo, Forensic scientist and Director of the Laboratory of Anthropology and Forensic Odontology (LABANOF) in Milan Nameless victims of the maritime disaster of 18/19 April 2015

For further reading in the exhibition catalogue

> Interview with Cristina Cattaneo: "It is unworthy to let people die this way."



How
do we
find
solace

GRIEF

"Grief is the price we pay for love", the psychiatrist Colin Murray Parkes wrote. Grief is a sign of commiseration, an expression of connectedness after the loss of an emotional relationship.

Religious and cultural mourning rituals can help to cope emotionally with a loss. You will hear selected songs and chants of mourning from representatives of different faiths from Berlin's diverse urban society.

Cast

Sevid Doğan (Alevism):

"Katre idim ummanlara

karıstım"

Mario Vázquez

(Mexican Cult of the Dead):

"La Horona"

Esther Hirsch (Judaism):

"Schuwi nafschi"

Levent Kılıçoğlu (Islam):

"ارًبق نارفحی نیصخش تیأر" "Gördüm iki kisi mezar esiyor"

Bhai Kushmar (Sikh):

"Ab ki bar bakhas bande kao,

bahur na bhaojal fera"

Jasmin El-Manhy (Christianity):

"Du, Herr der Welten"

Nimish Sawant (Hinduism):

"Om Sarv Pitru

Devataabhyo Namah" and "Om Namo Nārāyanāya"

Adébáyo Fátoki (Yorùbá):

"Òyèkú Gorósùn" and

"Òyèkú logbè"

For further reading in the exhibition catalogue

> Interview with the psychotherapist and grief counsellor Julia Samuel: "Grief is a messy, painful affair."



The proliferation of Homo sapiens is also a story of the domination and destruction of nature. Humans have become a decisive factor that negatively influences the development of the Earth's ecosystem and thus its natural basis of life. Does the current, sixth species extinction threaten the self-extinction of our species?

43

ACT S

SPIRAL OF EXTINCTION

"What we are currently doing is tantamount to an attack by the present on the rest of time. For we humans are destroying the products of the evolution of the past, without which the habitats of the Earth will have no future. It would be the end of evolution as we know it. Life will no doubt take other paths, but then very probably without us."

Matthias Glaubrecht, Evolutionary biologist

According to calculations by the World Biodiversity Council IPBES, up to one million larger animal and plant species will disappear by the middle of the twenty-first century. Species extinction caused by the human way of life also potentially threatens the survival of *Homo sapiens*.

Cast

A selection of extinct and endangered species from

the Museum für Naturkunde Berlin:

Dark flying fox Pteropus subniger

New Zealand greater short-tailed bat

Mvstacina robusta

Sunda pangolin Manis javanica

European mink

Mustela lutreola

Schomburgk's deer Rucervus schomburgki Saudi gazelle Gazella saudiya

Japanese wolf

Canis lupus japonicus

Thylacine

Thylacinus cynocephalus

Quagga

Equus quagga quagga

Western gorilla Gorilla gorilla

ACT 5 | SCENE 1

Eastern gorilla Gorilla beringei

Black-and-white ruffed lemur *Varecia variegata*

Van der Decken's sifaka *Propithecus deckenii*

Cotton-headed Tamarin Saguinus oedipus

Pig-tailed snub-nosed langur Simias concolor

Red-tailed sportive lemur Lepilemur ruficaudatus

Red ruffed lemur *Varecia rubra*

Pied tamarin Saguinus bicolor

Buff-headed Capuchin Sapajus xanthosternos

White-nosed shrub frog *Pseudophilautus leucorhinus*

Yunnan lake newt Cynops wolterstorffi Jamaican giant galliwasp

Celestus occiduus

Saint Croix racer

Borikenophis sanctaecrucis

Kihansi spray toad

Nectophrynoides asperginis

Peru stubfoot toad *Atelopus peruensis*

Floreana giant tortoise *Chelonoides niger*

Round Island burrowing boa Bolyeria multocarinata

Species of freshwater snail *Tylomelania towutica*

Fan mussel *Pinna nobilis*

Freshwater pearl mussel Margaritifera margaritifera

Fat Guam partula Partula gibba

European sturgeon *Acipenser sturio*

Chinese paddlefish Psephurus gladius	Earwig species <i>Anechura bipunctata</i>
Maraene Coregonus maraena	Cullum's bumblebee Bombus cullumanus
Coconut crab Birgus latro	La Crocise comédienne Thyreus histrionicus
Great raft spider Dolomedes plantarius	Digger wasp species Argogorytes fargeii
Wolf spider Arctosa cinerea	Heath sand wasp Ammophila pubescens
Burrowing tarantula species Brachypelma albiceps	Black palaearctic carpenter ant species
Cretan spectre Boyeria cretensis	Camponotus vagus Violet copper
Golden-eyed stick insect	Lycaena helle

Danube clouded yellow *Colias myrmidone*

Peruphasma schultei

COSMOS BIOSPHERE Symphony of Becoming and Perishing

"The fact that we are connected through space and time shows that life is a unitary phenomenon, no matter how we express that fact. We are not one living organism, but we constitute asingle ecosystem with many differentiated parts. I don't see this as acontradiction, because parts and wholes are nested in each other."

Lynn Margulis, Evolutionary biologist

The species *Homo sapiens* affects nature and is at the same time a part of it. The fate of humankind is closely interwoven with the

surrounding non-human living environment. The Earth's biosphere, the basis of human and non-human life, is a thin shell that extends from approximately five kilometres below to roughly sixty kilometres above the Farth's surface

Many processes of growth and decay that are vital to human life are beyond our perception. For example, microorganisms or microbes, which are invisible to the naked eye, make up 70 per cent of life on earth.

Cast

An ensemble of non-human organisms from the terrestrial biosphere, consisting of mould, bacteria, amoebae, larvae, protozoa, algae, nematodes, rotifers, plankton, and others.

For further reading in the exhibition catalogue

- > Robin Wall Kimmerer: "The Democracy of Species"
- > Interview with the historian Dipesh Chakrabarty: "In the age of the Anthropocene, the distinction between human history and natural history is no longer tenable."

SOURCES AND PROFESSIONAL ADVICE

PROLOGUE

Professional advice

Ben Moore, astrophysicist, University of Zurich

Sources

Introductory text: Carl Sagan (1997): Pale Blue Dot is the title of the photograph taken of Earth by NASA's Voyager 1 spacecraft in 1990. It is still the image of the Earth taken from the greatest distance—from a distance of around six billion kilometres. The image inspired astronomer Carl Sagan to reflect on the position of humans in the universe

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Images used: Earthrise: NASA's Apollo 8 Mission, NASA/Goddard Space Flight Center Scientific Visualization Studio; Blue Marble: Earth in Full View From Apollo 17, NASA; Pale Blue Dot Revisited (2020), NASA/JPL-Caltech

ACT 3 | DEATH

Professional advice

Jens Dreier, experimental neurologist, Charité, Berlin

The narration is based on conversations with Jens Dreier and the book *So sterben wir* by Roland Schulz, published by Piper Verlag.

ACT 4 | THE MORTUARY SCENE 11 CORPSE CARE

Professional advice

Isıkali Karavel, Markaz Islamische Bestattungen, Berlin Felix Moshe Berul, Chewra Kadischa, Potsdam Sophie Deichert, Schøntod, Thanatopraxie, Berlin Dharma Rai Bhusal, Dong Ban Ia Intercultural Hospice Care, Berlin Dominik Kleinen and René Menzel, Grieneisen Bestattungen, Berlin Uller Gscheidel, Charon Bestattungen, Berlin Yüksel Özdemir, Alevitische Gemeinde zu Berlin e.V. / Berlin Alevi Toplumu Regina Pröpper, Berlin Senate, Funeral Services Eric Haußmann, St. Marienkirche-Friedrichswerder, Berlin

SCENE 2 | AUTOPSY OF THE CONDITIONS OF DEATH ACROSS THE GLOBE

Sources info graphics

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Most Common Causes of Death: World Health Organization (WHO) projections of causes of death at different ages in various countries in 2019. Population figures used to calculate case rates per 100,000 inhabitants are based on data from the World Bank.

who.int/data/gho/data/themes/mortality-and-global-health-estimates/ ghe-leading-causes-of-death data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.TOTL

Dangerous Viral and Infectious Diseases: Period of observation of all four diseases: January 2018 to the end of October 2022. Only those years from which case numbers are available were included in the calculation of the average annual death rates per 100,000 inhabitants. Statistics on tuberculosis victims, for example, existed in October 2022 for the years 2018, 2019, 2020, and 2021. The total number calculated was thus extrapolated down to four years and to 100,000 inhabitants.

Covid 19: World Health Organisation, WHO Coronavirus (Covid 19) Dashboard, latest reported counts of cases and deaths (as of 26.10.2022) covid19who.int/WHO-COVID-19-global-data.csv

HIV: World Health Organisation, The Global Health Observatory, Number of people dying from HIV-related causes www.who.int/data/gho/data/indicators/indicator-details/GHO/number-of-deaths-due-to-hiv-aids

The case numbers in Germany were determined on the basis of the annual updates of the Robert Koch Institute.

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Malaria: World Health Organisation, The Global Health Observatory, Estimated number of malaria deaths

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Population figures used to calculate the number of cases per 100,000 inhabitants are based on data from the World Bank. data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.TOTL

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Fatal Encounters with Animals: Data on deaths caused by animals are collected in a very fragmentary manner. This infographic therefore represents only a sample. From the available studies and statistics, the years from 2010 onwards with particularly high numbers of cases were selected.

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Crocodiles: Brandon Sideleau, CrocBITE – Worldwide Crocodilian Attack Database, Charles Darwin University, Palmerston, Australia crocodile-attack.info/

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War Casualties in the 21st century: Uppsala Data Conflict Program led by Uppsala University and the Peace Research Institute Oslo ucdp.uu.se/exploratory

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Death During Migration: Missing Migrants Project, documentation by the United Nations International Organization for Migration since 2014 on the number of people who have died or gone missing worldwide during migration. Due to the difficulty of collecting information on this, it can be assumed that the actual number of victims is higher.

missingmigrants.iom.int/

SCENE 3 THE NAMES BEHIND THE NUMBERS.

Professional advice

 $Cristina\ Cattaneo, for ensic anthropologist, Director\ of\ LABANOF,\ Milan$

Sources

Film: Excerpts from the documentary film #387

France 2019 I Director: ©Little Big Story _ ARTE France - RTBF - Stenola Productions - Graffiti DOC / 2019. Distribution: IAVA Films

Photos: Labanof, Università degli Studi di Milano

ACT 5 | OPEN END SCENE 1 | SPIRAL OF EXTINCTION

Professional advice

Museum für Naturkunde Berlin

Frank Tillack, Peter Bartsch, Charles Oliver Coleman, Birgit Jaenicke. Stefanie Krause, Stefan Graf, Christine Zorn, Parm Viktor von Oheimb, Katharina von Oheimb, Théo Leger, Viola Richter, Jason A.Dunlop, Christiane Funk, Frieder Maver

Senckenberg Forschungsinstitut und Naturmuseum Frankfurt/Main

Torben Riehl, Bianca Trautwein, Moritz Sonnewald, Julia D. Sigwart, Sigrid Hof, Gunther Köhler, Linda Mogk, Peter Jäger, Dorte Janussen, Saskia Dimter, Joachim Scholz, Irina Ruf, Katrin Krohmann

Senckenberg Deutsches Entomologisches Institut Müncheberg Thomas Schmitt

Zoologische Staatssammlung München Anneke H.van Heteren, Frank Glaw, Markus Unsöld

SCENE 2 | COSMOS BIOSPHERE

Citation of Lynn Margulis: Talking on the Water: Conversations about Nature and Creativity by Jonathan White, Trinity University Press (2016): pp.57-77

EXHIBITION IN_FINITE. LIVING WITH DEATH 31/3/2023-26/11/2023

A Temporary Exhibition by the Stiftung Humboldt Forum im Berliner Schloss (SHF)

Curatorial Team Exhibition: Detlef Vögeli — Lead Curator Gesine Last, Jan Zappe — Co-Curators Kathrin Haase, Lydia Heller, Yvonne Zindel - Curatorial Assistance and Research Sibylle Kußmaul (until 11/2022), Marc Wrasse (from 11/2022) -Curators of Education and Outreach. SHF Project Team Exhibition: David Blankenstein -Project Management Frank Meißner — Project Assistance With the collaboration of: Isabel Meixner. Arseniy Khudyakov, Sarah Lindemann, Franziska Lukas Maria Mazgai — Technical Production Support Noelle von Galen, Bryn Veditz -Registrars Johanna Kapp, Maike Voelkel -

Conservation

Barbara Martinkat — Rights

Julia Kuhnert — Curator Digital Media

Project Team Media:

Grusche Gregor, André Moritz, Aditya Sah Exbibition Design: Tom Piper/Alan Farlie Lighting Design: Studio ZNA
Media Planning: Framegrabber
Media Productions: Prologue: xkopp,
Berlin; Act 1: SHF; Act 2.1: Framegrabber
Medien GmbH; Act 22: Torero Film,
Rouven Rech & Teresa Renn; Act 3: Lynx
Media Systems GmbH; Act 4.1: SHF;
Passage: Idee und Klang Audio Design/
SHF; Act 5.2: Georg Lendorff/Gareth Fry;
speakers: Birte Schnöink, Dulcie Smart
Coordination Realisation:

Andreas König, Daniela Prochaska -

Multimedia Content Creation and

Katharina Kepplinger — Curator

Sebastian Schlootz, Sandra Tietze

Production Education and Outreach:

Production Programme: Fränze Czaja,

Sander von Lingelsheim, Kathrin Müller,

Curatorial Team Programme:

Management

4blaueHUFe GmbH

Exhibition Graphics and Booklet: BOK+Gärtner GmbH

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Humboldt Forum im Berliner Schloss engaged in the project; your commitment made it happen.

General Director Humboldt Forum: Hartmut Dorgerloh

Board SHF: Hartmut Dorgerloh, Christine Rieffel-Braune. Hans-Dieter Hegner

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Head of Facility Management: Thomas Herrmann

Head of Event Technology: David Hornschuh

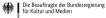
Head of Digital Department: Norman Mähler

Head of Visitor Services: Ute Behrmann

March 2023











W ho would
I like
to have
been