



**PRESS RELEASE**

**14 September 2023**

**Concerts, Readings, Films, Discussions**

**7- 8 October 2023**

**Concerts 12 / 6 Euro, Readings 8 / 4 Euro. All other events are free of charge.**

## **Themed weekend Post/Socialist Palaces: Bucuresti, Київ, Прага, Софія, Warszawa**

**Cultural and popular palaces played an important role in Eastern Europe. As places of politics and entertainment in the capitals, they shaped the political and cultural self-image during the period of state socialism. And today? What role did the buildings play before and after 1989? How much utopia is still in these monumental buildings? During this themed weekend at the Humboldt Forum, artists and academics from Bucharest, Kyiv, Prague, Sofia and Warsaw will take a closer look at the palaces in their home cities: with literature and video art created especially for the weekend, discussion events, indie pop from Bulgaria and hip-hop from Ukraine.**

Cultural and people's palaces were and are state-controlled symbols of power and at the same time places with a certain amount of freedom. As places of entertainment and politics in the capitals, they shaped the political and cultural self-image during the period of state socialism. The Palace of the Republic was one such cultural palace in Berlin - where the Humboldt Forum stands today.

And today? The handling of the architectural and cultural heritage of the palaces is as diverse as the societies of Central, Eastern and South-Eastern Europe. Using Berlin, Bucharest, Kyiv, Prague, Sofia and Warsaw as examples, artists and academics will trace the processes of social and political change during this themed weekend. It is about the socialist idea of the palaces of culture, debates in urban space, political protests, state power and shrinking spaces for culture.

Documentary films and video installations, a series of talks by the Federal Agency for Civic Education, the Palast-Treff, concerts and readings broaden the view beyond Berlin and German-German issues and show connections to comparable politically charged places of transformation in cities in Central, Eastern and Southeastern Europe.

The themed weekend *Post/Socialist Palaces - Bucuresti, Київ, Praha, София, Warszawa* is part of the Humboldt Forum Foundation's programme focus *The Palace of the Republic is Present*. The programme is based on the cooperation of the various actors at the Humboldt Forum, the exchange with experts, interviews with contemporary witnesses, research and a special exhibition in 2024.

A project funded by the Bundesstiftung zur Aufarbeitung der SED-Diktatur. Partners: Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, Goethe-Institut, Ukrainian Institute, Tschechisches Zentrum Berlin

### **Programme (extract)**

#### **VIDEO INSTALLATION**

##### **Culture - Power – Commerce**

##### **Continuously, except during events in hall 1**

The palaces of culture in Bucharest, Kyiv, Prague, Sofia and Warsaw have shaped urban space for decades. After the turnaround at the beginning of the 1990s, the use and acceptance of these large buildings changed massively. With their works, the video artists Dora Huiban (Bucharest), Yarema Malashchuk and Roman Khimei (Kyiv), Haruna Honcoop (Prague), Voin de Voin (Sofia) and Karolina Pawelczyk (Warsaw) show their personal view of the palaces of culture in their cities. Today, many palaces are used commercially for events, as places for art and culture or as seats of parliament, and are thus used in a completely different way than their builders intended. [Read more](#)

#### **FILM**

**7 October, 10:30–14:00. 8 October, 10:30 – 16:00, Hall 2**

##### **Documentary – Palaces for the People. Belgrade, Bucharest and Sofia**

Boris Missirkov, Georgi Bogdanov, D/BG/RO, 2017, German

The documentaries “Palaces for the People” tell the eventful history of three gigantic socialist people’s palaces. Three of the four episodes, each lasting about 26min, are shown in continuous loop. [Read more](#)

## DISCUSSIONS

### **Palaces for the People. Palaces of Culture in Eastern Europe before and after 1989**

**Curated by the Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung**

**7 October, 10:00–17:00, Mechanical Arena in the Foyer**

Palaces of culture played a central role in the educational and cultural policies of socialist states: as places of encounter and education, culture and sport, they were part of state social engineering. At the same time, they were architectural icons of many Eastern, Central and Southern European capitals. Palaces of culture were not only to be found in the metropolises - houses of culture were also systematically built in small towns and on the peripheries, where the population could take advantage of educational, cultural and sporting opportunities. In five panel discussions, visitors to the Humboldt Forum will look at Warsaw, Kyiv, Belgrade and Minsk together with guests from the respective countries. [Read more](#)

## LITERATURE

### **Palace Stories**

**7 October, 17:00–19:00. 8 October, 11:00–13:00, Hall 1**

Five writing tandems set out this summer to explore the palaces in Bucharest, Kyiv, Prague, Sofia and Warsaw. With different backgrounds and perspectives and one task: to write a literary text together.

In stories or poems ranging from essayistic to autobiographical, Thomas Perle and Elise Wilk, Volker Sielaff and Tomáš Kafka, Lisa Weeda and Mima Simić, Joshua Groß and Angel Igov as well as Uljana Wolf and Joanna Mueller tell of upheavals. The texts will be presented for the first time on 7 October, read by the actors Almut Zilcher and Joshua Seelenbinder and introduced in conversations with the authors. [Read more](#)

## DISCUSSION

### **Palace Rendezvous**

**7 and 8 October, 14:00–15:30, Hall 1**

Many Berliners and others remember the Palace of the Republic as an important building of the socialist state of the GDR. Cultural palaces also played a central role in many other socialist states. In Palast-Treff Vol. 4, we ask about the function, significance and handling of these other palaces that continue to stand. At other tables, everything revolves around the developments in 1989 and the following years - what did the collapse of state socialism look like in Bulgaria or Romania? What aspirations were there? How did freedom of the press develop and what did the struggle for civil rights look like? [Read more](#)

## CONCERT

**Bulgarian Cartrader**

**Motor Songs Live 2023**

**8 October, 19:00–20:30, Hall 2**

His debut album *Motor Songs* came out of nowhere to delight both critics and fans in the indie bubbles worldwide: Musikexpress gave it 5 stars ("Pop, very very clever pop"), at FM4 the single *LAB* landed at #1 and at radioeins Golden Rope made it into the annual top 10 of the 2022 listeners' charts. At the latest after the shows at the L.A. School Night, at ESNS in the Netherlands and in Paris, BCT has made a name for himself internationally. From feel-good indie earworms, singalong parts, jazz influences to spoken word introspections, BCT steers a versatile test drive that invites you to dance, sing, dream and laugh. [Read more](#)

**Informations and Tickets:** [humboldtforum.org/post-socialist-palaces](https://humboldtforum.org/post-socialist-palaces)

**Press images:** [humboldtforum.org/en/press](https://humboldtforum.org/en/press)

One building, four partners: This 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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