

PRESS PACK
18 January 2024

2023 in review

Visitors in total	1.7 million
Exhibition visitors	631,000
Roof terrace	251,000 visitors
Tours and workshops	60,000 participants
Number of events	Around 300 events with a total of 100,000 participants
Visitor composition	35 % of visitors interviewed come from Berlin, while 65% of the guests are tourists, 23% of whom come from other countries. Around 52% are younger than 50.

Programme for 2024 (excerpt)

As of: 18 January 2024

The Palace of the Republic Is Present

17 May 2024 – 16 February 2025

The Humboldt Forum's main theme this year is *Blown Away: The Palace of the Republic Is Present*. Dedicated to this now vanished building, the programme reflects on the existence of the Humboldt Forum and the prior history of the site as well as the publically debated issue of why the Palace was demolished and the Humboldt Forum built in its place. The programme comprises a major temporary exhibition, a theatre production, themed days, concerts, discussion events, workshops, tours, and digital activities as well as a comprehensive accompanying publication.

Blown Away: The Palace of the Republic Is Present

Special exhibition, 17 May 2024 – 16 February 2025

The exhibition *Blown Away: The Palace of the Republic Is Present* will be installed in a space covering 1,300 square metres, allowing visitors to experience the past and present of the palace. The exhibits will include objects from and connected with the palace, along with drawings, photos and posters, audio and video interviews from the project "Remembrance work in the Humboldt Forum", and hands-on activities.

The exhibition is dedicated to the various phases of the building: from its planning and construction (1973–1976) to its use as a multi-purpose political and cultural building in East Germany, its significance as the seat of the first freely elected People's Chamber, its interim use as a cultural venue, and its demolition, completed by 2008, in the Federal Republic of Germany. Numerous works of art, designs, and furnishings from the Palace of the Republic will illustrate the assorted functions of the building, including fragments of the sculpture *Gläserne Blume* (Glass Flower) and the painting *Die Rote Fahne* (The Red Flag) by Willi Sitte.

The starting point for the exhibition will be the way people experience a place that has now completely vanished – one that many people still see as a powerful symbol of the end of the German Democratic Republic, as East Germany was more formally known. For many people, the demolition of the palace stands for the way West Germany dealt with the legacy of the GDR and its people, who experience a sense of loss as well as the devaluation and invalidation of their own lives. Others view the demolition as an act of liberation from the dictatorial government of the GDR – and then there are those who are simply indifferent to the building’s destruction. The exhibition will feature numerous interviews to present the views of people who worked in the palace, as well as those who visited or consciously avoided it. Some famous voices will have their say, alongside others who have never been heard before. [More](#)

With Timpani and Palaces

Concert

28, 30, 31 March, 13–15 December, 7–9 pm

The Resident Music Collective’s new concert programme is all about the exhibition *Blown Away – The Palace of the Republic Is Present*. Music played a major role in the Palace of the Republic, from the laying of the cornerstone through to the final “interim use” phase. The Hanns Eisler School of Music is now located in the Marstall building, where the palace’s administration – and surveillance centre – was once based. Inspired by this background, several students and instruments from the music school will be part of the ensemble as it takes a polyphonic approach to the phenomenon of the “Palace of Culture”.

Bau auf! Bau ab! (Put Up! Take Down!)

Theatrical spectacle about the Palace of the Republic

17–31 May, 7–9 pm

This object of East German prestige stood for around thirty years – and this period is the main focus of a theatrical journey through time that brings the history of the “people’s palace” to life. The theatrical spectacle will underscore the building’s importance as a cultural and political venue that generated a sense of identity. With the help of a

hundred Berliners, the audience will be able to experience the Palace of the Republic once more in its historic location. A cast comprising members of the public, contemporary witnesses, and choirs are set to come together with the Ernst Busch Academy of Dramatic Arts and the Hanns Eisler School of Music to resurrect the building in a theatrical happening for all the senses, which reveals the traces of the past that are inscribed in this now-vanished place. [More](#)

Exhibitions

Loot. 10 Stories

21 March 2024 – 26 January 2025

In the temporary exhibition *Loot. 10 Stories*, ten case studies will immerse viewers in the complex topic of looted art over three different periods: the colonial era, the Napoleonic conquests in the 18th century, and the “Third Reich” between 1933 and 1945. The objects from the collections of the Mauritshuis (The Hague, Netherlands), three Berlin museums, (the Ethnologisches Museum, City Museum, and Gipsformerei), and the Musée des Beaux-Arts de Rennes will be presented both as originals and as replicas. Visitors will find exhibits such as the horse’s head from the Quadriga, a self-portrait by Rembrandt, a magic staff from Surinam, and replicas and moulds of the Benin Bronzes. Virtual reality apps will let visitors experience the story of selected objects and encourage them to consider a number of questions: What were the contexts in which these objects were looted? How do museums deal with looted art today? And what else should be done in the future?

The exhibition will be taken over from the Mauritshuis in The Hague as part of an international collaboration. The Stiftung Humboldt Forum im Berliner Schloss, Stadtmuseum Berlin, the Ethnologisches Museum, and the Museum für Asiatische Kunst (the latter two both belonging to Staatliche Museen zu Berlin – Preußischer Kulturbesitz) have cooperated in realizing the project. Jongsma + O’Neill produced the overall design concept.

True Stories (that you were not told because of colonialism) (working title)

Starting October 2024

This collaborative exhibition between the National Museum of Tanzania, the Ethnologisches Museum Berlin (Staatliche Museen Berlin – Stiftung Preußischer Kulturbesitz), and the Stiftung Humboldt Forum im Berliner Schloss will highlight the volatile and complex history of the territory of present-day Tanzania. A wide range of narratives, perspectives, and cultural belongings will reveal centuries of complex interrelationships in the region, with a particular focus on the period of colonial repression and exploitation. The exhibition will, among other things, critically reflect on national narratives while also questioning racist ascriptions.

City research is an international project for school students that is planned as an integral aspect of the exhibition. Two groups of school students – one in Berlin, the other in Dar es Salaam – will undertake an investigation of their home town, looking at surviving traces of colonialism in their surroundings, such as monuments and street names. The results of the workshop are to be presented in the exhibition at the Humboldt Forum and the National Museum of Tanzania, revealing young people's perspectives on exploring coloniality and colonial history.

In addition to the exhibition, the dance performance *Litti Kidanka* will have its European premiere in Berlin from 5 to 8 December. Ian Mwaisunga, the artistic director of the cultural project *Muda Africa*, is choreographing an evening of dance inspired by the legend of Queen Litti Kidanka, who resisted the Germans with her army of bees during the Maji Maji war.

Ethnologisches Museum and Museum für Asiatische Kunst

In 2024, the Museum für Asiatische Kunst of the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin will also be presenting a number of changing, seasonal, and thematic exhibitions in selected galleries on the third floor, showcasing exhibits from its own collections. In the Ethnologisches Museum, the Benin exhibition will be enlarged at the end of April to include various aspects of the complex debate concerning the repatriation of the Benin Bronzes. The Ethnologisches Museum is planning a one-day conference on the issue with guests from Nigeria, the United Kingdom, Sweden, and the USA.

BERLIN GLOBAL

BERLIN GLOBAL is an exhibition covering around 4,000 square metres in the Humboldt Forum that shows how the city and its people are connected with the world. Constant change is the norm for BERLIN GLOBAL: in spring 2024 the sixth Open Space will welcome visitors, focusing on the relationship between Poland and Germany. The Open Spaces are three areas of the Berlin exhibition that can be used for shows by organizations and independent groups. In the summer of 2024, a new sub-room all about punks in East Berlin will be unveiled in the Free Space section.

Humboldt Lab

Once again in 2024, the Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin's Humboldt Lab will be all about communicating science. The exhibition *After Nature* deals with the ways in which natural and societal crises are interlinked, presenting current research alongside insights into the history of science. There are talks by scholars – with the *Meet the Scientist* series, for example – as well as regular interactive and artistic events in the Lab's exhibition space: now in its third year, the monthly editions of *Logoskop* present two poets who comment on the *After Nature* exhibition. In June, the Humboldt Lab will be collaborating once more with Neuköllner Oper, this time for a series on happiness that links science and music. The *Call a Scientist* series gives visitors a regular chance to video chat with researchers who are undertaking unusual research. And the Humboldt Lab is joining in with the Humboldt Forum's theme of the year – *The Palace of the Republic Is Present* – with a new type of event in October about the Humboldt-Universität around the time when the Berlin Wall fell.

Events

Micro Concerts by the Rundfunk-Sinfonieorchester Berlin

4 February, 3 March, 7 April, 2 June 2023, 2 to 4 pm

In the 100th anniversary season of the Rundfunk-Sinfonieorchester Berlin, chamber music ensembles from the RSB will perform at the Humboldt Forum for the very first time. The musicians will be returning to the historic site where the RSB previously performed several times in the past, when the Palace of the Republic was still standing.

Inspired by the collections and exhibitions, the micro concerts will be performed on five Museum Sundays between January and June 2024.

The performances by RSB members will take place during the Forum's opening hours, and admission is free of charge.

[More](#)

Star Dust Music

The Resident Music Collective plays music between life and death

Back by popular demand: 3–4 February, 7–9 pm

In the summer of 2021, the Resident Music Collective was founded to mark the opening of the Humboldt Forum by musicians from Berlin's diverse urban communities – and now it regularly invites its audience to participate in a journey of musical discovery that goes beyond tradition. Inspired by the exhibition *in_finite. Living with Death*, fifteen multicultural Berlin artists have now interpreted the themes of the exhibition: palliative nurse Lydia Röder gives the audience a close-up of the body tambura, while West African balafon musician Aly Keïta sends out rhythms of hope, and musical director Clemens Rynkowski plays the evocative theremin, an instrument that requires no physical contact. The programme can now be experienced once again, back by popular demand.

[More](#)

In Our Own Images

Short films by children from Cameroon, Venezuela, Papua New Guinea, and Peru

Monthly starting 10 February

Children from Cameroon, Papua New Guinea, Venezuela, and Peru first learned how to make films in workshops and then documented their everyday lives with a camera. They show us how food is made, how games are played, and how local traditions and craftsmanship are practised in their home towns. One weekend each month, the Humboldt Forum is showing three to five short films by children for children, each concentrating on a particular theme: crafts and construction, the environment and natural world, making food, fire and artisanal skills. [More](#)

WeSearch

World languages – language worlds

21 February, 31 October, 28 November

A language presents a unique view of the world, communicating unique insights and knowledge. *WeSearch* is a series of discussions throughout 2024 and 2025, presented in cooperation with the Endangered Languages Archive and Documentation Programme. Addressing the link between language(s) and knowledge, the series focuses above all on endangered languages in regions that include the places of origin for objects and cultural belongings in the Humboldt Forum's exhibitions, such as the Tukano languages in the Amazon, the Naga languages in Nagaland, and Haida, the language of the Haida Gwaii.

Humboldtting!

Unit 5: Break it! Make it! Fake it!

23–24 February

In this edition of *Humboldtting!*, school students at Thomas Mann Gymnasium look at the value of things. What is the value of an object, a museum exhibit? Who assigns this value to it, and can its value change? What is the significance of restoration and reconfiguring? Together with the Australian artists Ivy and Rhian Hinkley, the school students will experiment with breaking things apart as creatively as possible in order to put them together again. Whether – and how – the emotional, cultural, or monetary value of these things changes as a consequence will be the theme of this live multimedia video performance.

Musical Belongings III

lautten compagney BERLIN meets classical Chinese music: Guzheng and Viola da Gamba

12–14 April, 7–8.30 pm

The lautten compagney BERLIN is coming together with the classical guzheng player Xu Fengxia and other musicians from China to play Baroque music from Venice in combination with classical Chinese music written specifically for the guzheng. A

conversation after the concert will address issues such as the projections of China during the European Renaissance as reflected in Marco Polo's travelogues. [More](#)

Ethnofilm day: Slices of Life – Evoking Memories

13 May, 10 am – 10 pm

For the second time, the Ethnologisches Museum and Stiftung Humboldt Forum in conjunction with the International Ethnographic Film Festival will be screening seven films from countries such as Cameroon, Mexico, Papua New Guinea, India, and Italy. What these ethnographic films have in common is a collaborative creative process between the people in front of and behind the camera, dissolving the strict demarcation between the filmmakers and those being filmed. The contributors and visitors will discuss the films after each showing and at an evening symposium. With the kind support of the HMKW University of Applied Sciences for Media, Communication and Management.

Airing Out – Open Air in the Schlüterhof

Festival

18 July – 10 August 2024. 7 pm – midnight

The highly successful Airing Out festival will welcome guests to the Schlüterhof courtyard once more in 2024, for four weekends of international live concerts and DJ sets. This year the programme has been expanded to include bands and acts that refer in some way to the Palace of the Republic and the socialist “sister states” – from Warsaw to Havana, and from Addis Ababa to Ho Chi Minh City. Framed by the Baroque facades of the reconstructed Schlüterhof, the Airing Out festival invites Berlin's music lovers (of all ages) and night owls to experience some extraordinary concerts under the night sky of the capital city. Admission is free of charge.

Box Office Around the World

Film festival

16–31 August 2024

Unlike Hollywood productions that are designed for the global market, box office hits from other regions of the world often give us surprising insights into what people in Lagos, Rio or Bangkok are currently moved by. In August, the *Box Office Around the World* festival presents six contemporary cinematic productions that have proved a hit with audiences in their countries of origin, but have not yet been seen on the silver screen in Germany. Representatives of Berlin's communities from Thailand, Vietnam, Brazil, Argentina, Nigeria, and India have selected the films and devised an accompanying programme together with the curator Dorothee Wenner. Before each of the open-air screenings, there will be an exploration of the themes and the film's star-studded line-up.

Musical Belongings IV

lautten compagney BERLIN meets Caribbean punta music: Punta versus Polly. How to decolonize the Beggar's Opera?

13–15 September, 7–8.30 pm

The ballad opera *Polly* by Johann Christoph Pepusch and John Gay was written in 1729, transporting a colourful London society to the Caribbean, to what were popularly known as the West Indies. In contrast to the opera's exotic projections, this programme features original music from the Caribbean that has been arranged for old European instruments and typical Punta percussion instruments (turtle bells, Garifuna drums, shekere, and congas). The new composition by a composer from the Caribbean seeks to address the colonial gaze of the opera *Polly* and react to it with contemporary means. [More](#)

Let's Code Again! Hands-On festival for Code Week

12 October

Following on from 2022 and 2023, the Stiftung Humboldt Forum is celebrating the Europe-wide Code Week this year again with a festival where people can get actively

involved – and it's entirely free of charge. On Saturday, 12 October, the workshops and other spaces in the Humboldt Forum will be inviting everyone to join in: tinkering around, hacking and coding together. In addition to parts of the programme organised by the SHF, it is anticipated that the event will once more be coordinated in conjunction with VÖBB (the Association of Public Libraries in Berlin), and other initiatives will also provide hands-on activities.

Objects talk back

International authors select an object to speak about, through, and with

24 October

In this project, international authors are invited to explore the collections in the Humboldt Forum, then select an object and write about it – in whatever way they wish to do so. Their task is to work creatively with gaps, omissions, and (un)truths about the objects in order to expand narrative and imaginative landscapes that have for too long been patrolled and limited by the museum system. Maori author Whiti Hereaka as well as Meena Kandasamy, Leonora Miano, Madeleine Thien, Rawi Hage, and Maaza Mengiste are all part of the line-up in this series curated by Priya Basil. They will undertake their research trip to investigate an object this June.

99 Questions: Textiles Semillas

South–South: A Meeting on African and Afro-diasporic Technologies

Gathering and presentation

25 October – 3 November

The 99 Questions series examines current ideas about curatorial practice and jointly develops new approaches for decolonial cooperation with communities around the globe by means of research projects, gatherings, workshops, and an online journal. In 2024, the projects *Textiles Semillas* and *South–South* will concern intersectional perspectives on cultural techniques and technologies. *Textiles Semillas* brings together weaving collectives, artists, and activists from Argentina and creates a space for exchanging information about traditional weaving techniques, art, and artisanship. An association of weavers, artists, and artisans in northern Argentina called *La Unión de las Tejedoras, Artistas y*

Activistas del Norte de Argentina was set up at the meetings. *South–South: A Meeting on African and Afro-diasporic Technologies* is a project about a transatlantic exchange within the Global South between Bahia de Salvador in Brazil and Lubumbashi in the Democratic Republic of Congo. This project connects a wide spectrum of artists, thinkers, and community workers, creating a shared platform for researching the intersections between technology, art, and cosmologies.

Other facilities

Ort der Wärme: a warm space

The Ort der Wärme has now opened its doors as a warm space in the Humboldt Forum for the second winter, going through until March 2024. This inclusive space operated by the Johanniter charity in cooperation with the Stiftung Humboldt Forum, retail operator MUSON, Café Lebenswelten, and the Berliner Tafel foodbank, is accessible for all Berliners, with a particular emphasis on those who are vulnerable. In addition to numerous unhoused people, there are many guests who do have a home, but are suffering from the high energy prices, as well as regular museum visitors who are lonely and looking for regular company. It all means that, this year, the warm space remains a highly unusual but popular place for people to meet up that promotes social and cultural inclusion. This includes special features such as the *mensch_sein (being_human)* portrait exhibition, a chess workshop, and a language café. [More](#)

Workshops

Whether you're alone or with a group, with your grandchildren or even the whole school class: the workshops provide an inviting setting for exploring and finding things out. An inspirational activity area for education, knowledge, and discussions is centrally positioned at the heart of Humboldt Forum. Spread out over 1,000 square metres, this multifunctional, flexibly designed, and well-equipped space is a core venue for educational work at the Humboldt Forum.

In addition to a selection of books for further exploring the themes presented in the Humboldt Forum, the space includes facilities for children, freely available workspaces, and insights into the educational work undertaken by the Academy, which is responsible

for educational and scholarly programming at the Stiftung Humboldt Forum. Why not come by and have a chat?

First floor, open on Mon, Wed–Sat 10.30 am – 6.30 pm

Permanent exhibitions

- Ethnological collections and Asian art
- BERLIN GLOBAL
- After Nature
- History of the Site: Palace Cellar, Sculpture Hall, Video Panorama, Traces
- Insights: The Humboldt brothers

Temporary exhibitions

- Ari-Arirang. Korea – Fascination Hermit Kingdom
- Kimsooja – (Un)Folding Bottari
- Against the Current. The Omaha, Francis La Flesche, and His Collection
- Naga Land. Voices from Northeast India
- Exhibiting.Omissions. Objects from Tanzania and the Colonial Archive
- Ts'uu – Cedar. Of Trees and People
- Matter(s)of Perspective

Opening times

Wed–Mon: 10:30 am – 6.30 pm.

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