

## Quotations

**Hartmut Dorgerloh**, General Director of the Humboldt Forum: “More than 20,000 objects are on display in the exhibitions of the Ethnologisches Museum, the Museum für Asiatische Kunst, and the Stadtmuseum Berlin at the Humboldt Forum, with numerous other artefacts in storage depots. The question of how these artefacts were collected, acquired, or in some cases unlawfully appropriated, and how to handle them in a way that is in keeping with our times is a central theme for all Humboldt Forum’s institutions. After its huge success at the Mauritshuis in The Hague, we are delighted to be able to present the *Loot. 10 Stories* exhibition in Berlin. It is particularly important to make the various aspects of provenance research and restitution issues more visible.”

**Sheila Reda**, Curator of the Mauritshuis: “By highlighting three distinct historical periods, we aim to emphasize that looted art spans throughout history. Simultaneously, we intend to raise awareness that not every situation is the same. Each case requires its own approach, and as such, there is no one-size-fits-all solution for looted art in museum collections worldwide.”

**Paul Spies**, Director of the Stadtmuseum Berlin: “The Stadtmuseum Berlin undertakes continuous and systematic provenance research, checking for the legal status of acquisitions in our collections. We are now able to present various parts of our collections in this context in the exhibition *Loot*, showing the complexity of provenance. Experience has shown that research into provenance is always bringing new results to light.”

**Lars-Christian Koch**, Director of the Ethnologisches Museum and the Museum für Asiatische Kunst at Staatliche Museen zu Berlin: “Large parts of the collections of the Ethnologisches Museum were acquired during the colonial period in a context of asymmetrical power structures: via swaps, purchases, gifts, and in many cases violent appropriation. A key feature of the museum’s work is thus a critical assessment of the history of our own collection. In recent years, this has been increasingly undertaken in collaborative projects with representatives of the artefacts’ so-called societies of origin.

We present the results of this work in the form of highlighted provenance trails in our permanent exhibition. With the artefacts from the Ethnologisches Museum included in the exhibition *Loot: 10 Stories* as key examples, we are able to show that in many cases the stories of these objects are both global and pan-European. Two of the objects, for example, took convoluted paths to the Berlin collections via the Netherlands. It is thus all the more gratifying that thanks to the initial contact between the guest curators and a direct descendant of the original owners, the first results of the resulting collaboration can now be presented in this exhibition.”

**Eline Jongma and Kel O’Neill**, Guest Curators and Creative Directors: „Loot is both a collection of contested objects, and a vision of a possible future. In this vision, museums openly confront the topics of theft and restitution. All aspects of the discussion—from the impact of retaining looted works in museum collections to the philosophical and ethical quandaries unleashed by creating and displaying digital replicas— are addressed fearlessly and in public. The museum we long for acknowledges that looting erases the histories of its victims, and employs cutting-edge storytelling and cross-cultural collaboration to reflect on what has been lost. Form and content are inseparable, and justice and beauty both receive their due.“