



PRESS RELEASE

10 September 2024

Themed days running from 3 to 6 October 2024 to accompany this year's feature exhibition *Blown Away: The Palace of the Republic* with Steffen Mau, Dirk Oschmann, Katja Hoyer, Corinna Harfouch, Marion Brasch, Albrecht Schuch, Gala Gogow, Thomas Putensen and his Beat-Ensemble, Esther Dischereit, Stephan Krawczyk, and others (free entrance to many events)

Exhibition opening on 2 October, 6 pm: *Beyond Borders: Artistic Internationalism in GDR*. The exhibition will run from 3 October.

Thirty-five years since the fall of the Berlin Wall: The themed days *Transform!* and the opening of the exhibition *Beyond Borders*

From 3 to 6 October the Humboldt Forum will focus on the process of transformation that took place in the months and years before and after 1989 with a series of events titled *Transform!* Between 3 October, German Unity Day, and 6 October the Humboldt Forum will become a venue for debates, readings, performances, and concerts, in which audiences will have a chance to see and hear prominent guests. The focus will be on concepts like change, demand and overload, and participation/inclusion as well as the question: What will happen to a Germany that is reunited yet still seemingly divided? The themed days will be prefaced by the opening of the exhibition *Beyond Borders: Artistic Internationalism in East Germany* on 2 October at 6 pm in the space for temporary exhibitions.

The year spanning 1989/90 was a major turning point in recent German history. The East German state collapsed and its citizens found themselves in a new political and social system. This ushered in years of change: government privatizations and closures administered by the Treuhandanstalt agency, the restoration of Berlin as the German capital, unemployment, the demolition of the Palace of the Republic. The merger of the two countries was painful; it was a feat that entailed manifold challenges for society and policymakers. The themed days address this process. On the preceding evening, on 2 October 2024 at 6 pm, the exhibition *Beyond Borders: Artistic Internationalism in East Germany* will open with all the participating artists in attendance and will feature a performance by Minh Duc Pham. The subject of the exhibition is East Germany's

relationships with friendly socialist states in the spheres of international politics, cultural policy, and the arts and the enduring impact of these relationships on the present.

SELECTED EVENTS FROM THE PROGRAMME:

DISCUSSIONS

One Hour of History Live: 1949 – 1989 – 2024. Germany writes its constitution

3 October, 7–9 pm, Saal 1, 12/6 euros

This year, Germany marks the seventy-fifth anniversary of its adoption of the Basic Law in 1949 – the same year that the two now-reunited German states – the Federal Republic of Germany and the German Democratic Republic – were founded. *One Hour of History Live* illuminates the path trodden by the Germans from the founding of the two states in 1949 to German reunification in 1990. Sabine Böhne-Di Leo, Dierk Hoffmann, Hedwig Richter, and Andreas Rödder discuss this historical process, from the division of the country to its reunification, together with the two moderators Steffi Orbach and Markus Dichmann, the co-moderator Matthias von Hellfeld, and the singer-songwriter and East German dissident Stephan Krawczyk.

Discussion series: Talking about discontinuities

In five discussions, voices from East and West Germany address the years of transformation and their reappraisal and ask: What characterized the East and the West? And what is this thing called Germany?

Everything remains different. The continuing impact of 1989

5 October 2024, 2–3.15 pm, Mechanische Arena, free admission

With Dirk Oschmann, Frank Trentmann, Katharina Warda. Moderation: Markus Dichmann

For many people in East Germany the peaceful revolution turned their world upside down. In the years after 1989, people in the East managed to adapt in remarkable ways: many showed courage in setting up businesses and learning new professions, while others were unable to keep pace with the changes and became the losers of history. That's how it was, wasn't it? Or is there a different story to tell? How do we remember 1989? And who are "we", thirty-five years on?

Just a new coat of paint? How the East German provinces have changed

5 October 2024, 4–5.15 pm, Mechanische Arena, free admission

With Uta Bretschneider and Gregor Sander. Moderation: Markus Dichmann

Everything outside Berlin is provincial? The real transformation in East Germany took place across broad swathes of the country. Uta Bretschneider has been travelling around the country, tracing the decline and resurgence of the East, while Gregor Sander turns the tables and looks in the other direction, from East to West, focusing on Gelsenkirchen.

Born in Schwerin, Sander spent several months in Gelsenkirchen researching a novel and experienced the poor side of the West in a region where coal and steel have long since been consigned to history.

1989. The sun rises in the East

6 October 2024, 1–2.15 pm, Mechanische Arena, free admission

With Zsuzsa Breier, Katja Hoyer, Magdalena Saryusz-Wolska. Moderation: Markus Dichmann

Just as they did in East Germany, the events of 1989 also led to far-reaching transformations in Eastern Europe. Each of the countries there responded to the collapse of the Soviet Union in a very different way. The panel discusses the Hungarian and Polish emancipation movements with respect to the freedom and upheavals that came after 1989.

We are here. On arriving and staying in East and West

6 October 2024, 3–4.15 pm, Mechanische Arena, free admission

With Esther Dischereit, David Macou, Angelika Nguyen, Julia Oelkers. Moderation: Insa Wilke

With the collapse of East Germany in 1989/90 many contract workers from Vietnam, Mozambique, and Angola lost their source of income and most of them had to leave Germany. They are still feeling the consequences today, as the example of the “Madgermanes”, as they are known in Mozambique, shows. For those who stayed, their dominant experience of the “baseball bat years” was exclusion, violence, and hatred. This experience culminated in the attacks in Hoyerswerda in the East and Solingen in the West. These rarely told stories form the subject of some of the artworks in the exhibition *Beyond Borders* on the 3rd floor.

Wow, this is really hard work! Democracy in East and West

6 October 2024, 5–6.15 pm, Mechanische Arena, free admission

With Steffen Mau, Juliane Stückrad, Stephan Anpalagan. Moderation: Insa Wilke

Learning how democracy works? While those living in the state ruled by the Socialist Unity Party (SED) were for the most part denied any opportunity for democratic co-determination, in the West there were more possibilities for political participation. What influence did these different socializations have on people's views of the political system today and on their perception of themselves as citizens?

THEATRE & READING

Heiner Müller – *Quartett*. Material

Looking back with Corinna Harfouch, Oscar Olivo, and others

5 and 6 October 2024, 6–7.15 pm, Saal 2, 16/8 euros

Heiner Müller's *Quartett* (1981) premiered in Bochum in 1982 in a production directed by B. K. Tragelehn. Since then, it has become Müller's most performed and best-known play, both in Germany and abroad. The text is based on Choderlos de Laclos's epistolary novel *Les liaisons dangereuses* (1782). The play was not performed in East Germany until April 1989 at the theater im palast (tip), where it was directed by Bernd Peschke. Six months later Heiner Müller found himself standing on the "tip" stage and reading the role of Valmont, because by then both the director and the lead actor had left East Germany for the West via Hungary.

I want to stay... An evening with Marion Brasch and Albrecht Schuch

5 October 2024, 7.30–9 pm, Saal 1, 16/8 euros

"I want to stay where I've never been": this is the last line of one of Thomas Brasch's most famous poems. In her debut novel *Ab jetzt ist Ruhe*, Marion Brasch tells the story of her family, with a focus on her elder brother, Thomas. What did he long for and what did he find grating? What drove him away from his family and ultimately from his country? In a collage of text, scenes, and film she has woven these questions together into a story, which she has staged together with Albrecht Schuch, who played Thomas Brasch in the film *Lieber Thomas*.

CONCERTS

Stephan Krawczyk: Through the door out into the open

Literary concert

3 October 2024, 9-10 pm, Mechanische Arena, free admission

Stephan Krawczyk accompanies himself on the guitar, Jew's harp, and a 117-year-old bandoneon in his concert reading *Through the door out into the open*. His haunting voice and eclectic music draw the audience to share in stories of everyday life, both major and minor. Krawczyk, a figure symbolizing the civil rights movement in East Germany, enthralled audiences with his language, at times brassy, at times critical, but always committed to telling the truth.

Thomas Putensen and his Beat Ensemble

Songs by Krug, Biege, and Putensen

4 October 2024, 7–9 pm, Saal 1, 16/8 euros

Thomas Putensen and his Beat Ensemble perform songs by Holger Biege and Manfred Krug along with his own compositions at the Humboldt Forum – an unusual and rarely heard combination of music. Putensen gives his audience repeated opportunities to sing along.

Gala Gogow

6 October 2024, 5–7 pm, Saal 1, 16/8 euros

Since the 1970s Frank "GALA" Gahler and Georgie "Joro" Gogow have been two of the best-known musicians on the East German music scene. They were key initiators of the legendary groups NO55 and Amiga Blues Band. In January 1983, NO 55 performed at the Rock for Peace festival in the Palace of the Republic. At the Humboldt Forum they share their memories of the Palace as a former music venue and play recent songs.

TEMPORARY EXHIBITION

Beyond Borders: Artistic Internationalism in GDR

The opening on 2 October 2024 at 6 pm will be attended by all participating artists and will feature a performance by Minh Duc Pham.

3rd floor, rooms 304 and 306 (Maithu Bui)

The exhibition will run from 3 October 2024. Free admission.

The temporary exhibition *Beyond Borders* explores East Germany's relationships with friendly socialist states in the spheres of international politics, cultural policy, and the

arts and looks at the enduring impact of these relationships on the present. To complement *Blown Away: The Palace of the Republic*, this year's feature exhibition at the Humboldt Forum, the temporary exhibition *Beyond Borders* – conceived by the curator for modern and contemporary art at the Museum für Asiatische Kunst and the Ethnologisches Museum of the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin – will present a variety of artistic positions and archive materials that offer a broad, nuanced perspective. The exhibition's scope ranges from official East German cultural policy vis-à-vis other socialist states and liberation movements in Asia, Africa, and the Americas to the visual policy informing the international graphics exhibition *Intergrafik*, while also encompassing migration (hi)stories, (post) migration remembrance cultures, and the changes that took place after 1989. The music of the socialist international is represented by GDR Radio and the Festival of the Political Song and is based on the research project *Second World Music: Latin America, East Germany, and the Sonic Circuitry of Socialism* currently being conducted at Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin.

The exhibition features works by Maithu Bùì, Seiichi Furuya, Mio Okido, Minh Duc Pham, and Su-Ran Sichling that convey both individual experience and collective history.

Curator: Kerstin Pinther, curator for modern and contemporary art in a global context at the Museum für Asiatische Kunst and the Ethnologisches Museum

A temporary exhibition of the Stiftung Humboldt Forum im Berliner Schloss and the Ethnologisches Museum and the Museum für Asiatische Kunst of the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin – Preußischer Kulturbesitz in cooperation with the artists Maithu Bùì, Seiichi Furuya, Mio Okido, Minh Duc Pham, and Su-Ran Sichling as well as Sydney Hutchinson (Humboldt-Universität).

An exhibition brochure will be available online as a PDF from 2 October.

The Palace of the Republic was built fifty years ago on the site where the Humboldt Forum now stands. The Stiftung Humboldt Forum im Berliner Schloss is therefore devoting a special exhibition and programme to the demolished building, *Blown Away: The Palace of the Republic*. The exhibition will run until 16 February 2025.

You can find the complete programme of the **themed days** at:

humboldtforum.org/themed-day/transform

Tickets and information on visiting the special exhibition at:

humboldtforum.org/blown-away

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