

PRESS RELEASE**24 July 2025****Annual focus 2025–26 at the Humboldt Forum****3 October 2025 to 12 July 2026****Exhibitions, theme days, events, educational programme, publications**

Family Matters

(Almost) everyone has a family – and it goes without saying that each one is different. But only if we look more closely do we see just how diverse family life can be. For this year's programme, *Family Matters*, which begins on 3 October 2025, all four of the Humboldt Forum partners, working together with international contributors, have for the first time put together exhibits on a single theme for the entire building. Comprising an exhibition, contemporary positions, and artistic interventions in the collections, *Family Matters* surveys networks of family relations in the past, present, and even the future. Numerous events, including performances, discussions, workshops, guided tours, as well as an accompanying publication, will enable visitors to learn just how many different constellations family and relationships can encompass as well as what is important to them – in Berlin, Germany, and around the world.

Love or a burden? Tradition or trauma? Stability or turmoil? What does it mean to be related? What is it that binds us together? Who belongs and who does not? Family is not a universal concept. It creates a sense of belonging – but it also excludes. It transmits knowledge, culture, and values – but it can also resort to violence as it seeks to establish power relationships and property rights. *Family Matters* will examine how relationship structures shape society, how they offer protection and care, how they deal with conflict, and how they develop their own ways of communicating. It will also delve into how we regulate closeness and distance, how we perceive ourselves and others, into gender relationships, technological developments, political and economic dynamics, migration, and transnational connections.

The *Family Matters* programme begins on 3 October 2025 with the exhibition opening and a themed long weekend. The *Family Matters* exhibition will run through all the permanent

exhibitions and collection presentations at the Humboldt Forum and will enable visitors to experience family in all its diversity. It begins with the *Family Matters* station on the ground floor. Ten modules – some of them interactive – ranging from family constellations, shared meals, and pet names to global family histories, conflicts and compromises, and key personal moments, invite visitors to question their own understanding of family and perhaps even rethink it.

Selected objects and artistic interventions in the Ethnologisches Museum and Museum für Asiatische Kunst, in the Humboldt Lab and in BERLIN GLOBAL, as well as in the Museum Knoblauchhaus in the neighbouring Nikolai Quarter illustrate the extent to which power structures encroach on family biographies. And they also show how in some cases personal family histories have marked the beginnings of ruling dynasties or religions.

Temporary exhibitions will be devoted to the preservation of endangered languages all over the world as well as how knowledge is transferred from one generation to the next. They also present contemporary positions of international artists, including Haegue Yang, Judith Raum, Meryl McMaster, Cara Romero, George Demir, Jaewon Kim, Su-Ran Sichling, and Sunil Gupta, who focus on the family realities of queer and migrant experiences.

Care and Chaos. Theme days 3–5 October

Over the course of three theme days the Humboldt Forum will focus on key issues associated with caring for one another – the care and mutual acts of consideration that form the basis for everything else. The concept of family is reimaged in artistic interventions, performances, readings, and discussions, such as the workshop *In the Dreamhouse*, the dance intervention in the permanent exhibition, a cake buffet with healing flowers, and African Street Games for the entire family. Contributors include author and musician Christiane Rösinger, the Resident Music Collective, feminist author Sophie Lewis, director Daniel Abma with his film *Im Prinzip Familie* (Family in Principle), and many others. Drop-in events in the workshops invite visitors to participate, make things, and explore. Finally, the *Picture Book Cinema* brings impressive stories to the big screen.

Two additional theme days focusing on family secrets and alternative forms of living together are planned for 2026.

Events, guided tours, and workshops,

Numerous events for adults and children are included in the programme: this year the *Transkontinentale* festival brings family stories from Africa, South America, and Asia to Berlin, and the Namibian-German musical theatre production *People of Song* will be performed in Europe for the first time. An additional highlight in late October is *Diá de Muertos*, the second time the festival will be celebrated at the Humboldt Forum. A rally for families will enable them to explore the building. The guided tour *Tanzende Generationen* (Dancing Generations) will offer an inspiring journey through the diverse world of Asian art while a story-telling salon will provide an opportunity to exchange family stories. Discovery tours and workshops will also be available for kindergarten and school groups

Laura Goldenbaum, curatorial director of this year's programme: "As a repository of knowledge and a place of encounter with many voices, the Humboldt Forum offers special opportunities to explore the theme of interpersonal relationships – across different generations, social backgrounds, and cultural contexts. Family as a form of togetherness engenders social connections and allows us to view the past, the present, and the future with different eyes."

Hartmut Dorgerloh, General Director of the Humboldt Forum: "With *Family Matters*, we are for the first time using a shared central theme to connect the entire Humboldt Forum, showing just what potential the Humboldt Forum partners can release. We invite visitors to explore this theme in their own individual ways. The exhibitions and events will illustrate how supposedly private issues are always socially and culturally anchored. This will engender new dialogues that transcend disciplines, spaces, and lifeworlds."

Book publication

Which family themes influence experiences and local debates around the world? The book accompanying the *Family Matters* programme includes contributions from the

worlds of art, the sciences, journalism, and family archives, which open up different perspectives on the theme of family. Personal accounts, photographs, and literary texts deal with the pressure exerted by social norms and with issues such as security, loss, and family responsibility. The book also presents alternative forms of intimacy and belonging – from queer networks to Indigenous concepts.

With drawings by Nando von Arb (*Drei Väter, Fürchten lernen*) and contributions by Sophie Lewis, Janet Carsten, Aparecida Vilaça, Catalina Ruiz-Navarro, Tatjana Thelen, and others.

The programme and exhibition were curated jointly by all four Humboldt Forum partners: the Stiftung Humboldt Forum im Berliner Schloss, the Stiftung Preußischer Kulturbesitz with the collections of the Ethnologisches Museum and the Museum für Asiatische Kunst of the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, the Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin with the Humboldt Lab, the Stadtmuseum Berlin with its Berlin Ausstellung, and the Museum Knoblauchhaus in the Nikolai Quarter.

For detailed information on the individual programmes please visit:

humboldtforum.org/family-matters

Press images: humboldtforum.org/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 the Stadtmuseum Berlin for the BERLIN GLOBAL exhibition.

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