

**PRESS RELEASE**

**15 April 2026**

## **Art in Architecture: *Südpfeil* (South Arrow) by Jürgen Mayer H. installed at the Humboldt Forum**

**As of today, *Südpfeil*, a bronze-coloured sculpture by Berlin artist and architect Jürgen Mayer H. that is almost four metres in length, is gracing the exterior facade of the Humboldt Forum at its northern gable end. Inspired by the phenomenon of “arrow storks” – migratory birds pierced by African arrows who provided the first ever visible evidence of global avian migration paths – *Südpfeil* touches upon cultural and colonial themes. This work of art is the eighth and final “Art in Architecture” project at the Humboldt Forum.**

*Südpfeil*, a bronze-coloured arrow of almost four metres in length puncturing the northern facade of the Humboldt Forum, is an intervention by the award-winning Berlin architect and artist Jürgen Mayer H. that immediately catches the eye and raises questions. He was inspired by a find from the past: In 1822, a stork landed in northern Germany which had been pierced by an African arrow. This “arrow stork” sparked the first ever research into the movements of migratory birds between continents; to date over twenty-five comparable finds have been documented. This Art in Architecture piece underscores the long history of global interconnectedness and shows that migration has always been an important aspect of our culture. The final design was created in collaboration with Hans Schneider, Andre Santer, and Jonas Schwarz.

Jürgen Mayer H.: “*Südpfeil* shifts the focus to the Humboldt Forum and its collections while emphasizing new contexts of meaning relating to migration research, cultural practices, and climate change. We view this intervention as being rather like acupuncture – providing targeted inspiration at the heart of a multi-layered debate.”

Hartmut Dorgerloh, the general director of the Humboldt Forum: “*Südpfeil* is an art intervention that consciously disconcerts the viewer and encourages them to reflect. It is precisely thanks to its quiet presence that the work has such a powerful impact: It offers us new ways of thinking about global relationships, colonial continuities, and our

responsible approach to cultural heritage. We regard this intervention at one of the most prominent positions on the building as making a vital contribution to the Humboldt Forum's critical positioning of itself."

The jury particularly praised the work's minimalist simplicity and subtlety in contrast to the sheer solidity and significance of the Humboldt Forum building. The arrow can be interpreted as symbolizing attack and vulnerability alike, while also offering a critique of the Humboldt Forum's architecture and associated debates on colonial history, restitution, and representation. As a visible "wound" it recalls the controversial disputes that accompanied the construction of the building itself.

The south-facing arrow inverts our common perspective on the world and symbolizes past and present-day conflicts between the Global North and South. At the same time, borrowing from Greek mythology, it can be understood as a symbol of reconciliation and hope. According to Jürgen Mayer H., "It refers to tensions between industrialized nations and the former colonies of the Global South, which continue to have economic, cultural, and political repercussions to this day. As well as standing for historical injustices, it also represents current challenges to global inequality and the need for fair-minded reconciliation."

### **Jürgen Mayer H.**

Jürgen Mayer H. is a German artist and architect. He founded his Berlin-based studio J. MAYER H. in 1996 and has been running it together with his business partners Andre Santer and Hans Schneider since 2014. Operating at the intersection of space, communication, and new technologies, the studio has received numerous awards for its work. It received international recognition above all for its project *Metropol Parasol* in Seville.

Jürgen Mayer H. studied at the University of Stuttgart, the Cooper Union, and Princeton University. His works have been published and exhibited around the world and are included in numerous collections such as the MoMA in New York, the Art Institute of Chicago, the Vitra Design Museum Collection, and the Kunstbibliothek belonging to the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin.

### **Art in Architecture as part of the construction measures instituted by the Federal Office for Building and Regional Planning (BBR)**

This eighth and final Art in Architecture project was all about using artistic means to engage with the Humboldt Forum's architecture and programming. A total of 130 artists submitted anonymous entries to the open competition organized and run by the Stiftung Humboldt Forum im Berliner Schloss (SHF) as part of the construction measures instituted by the Federal Office for Building and Regional Planning (BBR). Following close consultation with the Humboldt Forum's main architect Franco Stella, the contemporary facade at the building's northern gable end was chosen as the site of this Art in Architecture project.

### **Works of Art in Architecture at the Humboldt Forum**

From the moment it was founded, the SHF has been tasked with addressing the history and architecture of the site and ensuring that everyone can engage with it. The SHF and the institutional partners involved in the Humboldt Forum are continuing and consolidating this process of reflection in a manner that is also visible in public space in the form of exhibitions, events, artistic interventions, and works of Art in Architecture.

Previous Art in Architecture competitions have focused on creating works for seven prominent spots at the Humboldt Forum. They explore the history of the site, its future use as an exhibition venue, event space, and setting for education and scholarship in line with Humboldtian ideas, as well as the building's external appearance.

### **Dellbrügge & de Moll, *The Architects* (foyer, ground floor)**

A frieze of capital letters composed of concrete and recycled rubble from the Palace of the Republic recalls the architects and master builders who have been active here over the centuries.

### **Kang Sunkoo, *Statue of Limitations* (central staircase hall)**

The two-part bronze sculpture of a flagpole at half mast stands as a critical examination of German colonial history and links the Humboldt Forum with Manga-Bell-Platz, which is located in the Berlin district of Wedding, in an area known as the Afrikanisches Viertel (African Quarter).

### **Stefan Sous, *Time Machine* (foyer, first floor)**

This installation comprising sixty-six wall clocks refers to the era before the

introduction of standardized time zones in 1884, thereby visualizing historical ideas about time and the world order.

**Tim Trantenroth, Untitled (Portal 5)**

With its colourful abstract grid, this large mural recalls the facade of the former Palace of the Republic and addresses themes of loss and memory as well as the way we deal with history.

**An Seebach / Christiane Stegat, GLOBAL BAROCC – CCORAB LABOLG (Portal 1)**

This mural draws attention to the Berlin Palace's Baroque architectural elements and links them with selected exhibits from the Humboldt Forum's collections, which are shown as outlines.

**Emeka Ogboh, Cosmos – Things Fall Apart (roof terrace)**

This multi-channel sound installation is based on an Igbo folk song and references to Chinua Achebe's novel *Things Fall Apart*, reflecting colonial interventions in cultural systems.

**Antje Schiffers / Thomas Sprenger, Insurgentes Sur (roof terrace)**

This gold leaf mural depicts an abstract panorama of Mexico City, in reference to Alexander von Humboldt's travels on the one hand, and global relationships and their connection to raw materials and power on the other.

**More information:** [humboldtforum.org/kunst-am-bau](https://humboldtforum.org/kunst-am-bau)

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

The multiplicity of voices inherent in the Humboldt Forum's programme is reflected in its institutional collaborations. The Humboldt Forum represents a partnership between the Stiftung Humboldt Forum im Berliner Schloss, the Stiftung Preußischer Kulturbesitz with the collections of the Ethnologisches Museum and the Museum für Asiatische Kunst (part of Staatliche Museen zu Berlin), the Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin with the Humboldt Labor, and Stadtmuseum Berlin with its *Berlin Global* exhibition.

## **PRESS CONTACTS**

### **Stiftung Humboldt Forum im Berliner Schloss**

Nina Mayrhofer, Spokesperson

+49 30 265 950 525, [nina.mayrhofer@humboldtforum.org](mailto:nina.mayrhofer@humboldtforum.org)

Andrea Brandis, Press Officer

+49 30 265 950 237, [andrea.brandis@humboldtforum.org](mailto:andrea.brandis@humboldtforum.org)

Mirko Nowak, Head of Communications

+49 30 265 950-520, [mirko.nowak@humboldtforum.org](mailto:mirko.nowak@humboldtforum.org)