Press release
26 November 2026

28 November 2026 – 30 June 2027
Temporary exhibition space on the ground floor. Tickets: 9 euros
An exhibition about water, knowledge, and resistance

Agua. The Art and Cosmologies of Water

Water as the basis for life, a spiritual force, and a source of political conflict: the exhibition Agua. The Art and Cosmologies of Water brings together twenty works of art from Brazil, Chile, and Colombia. It shows how communities are connected to rivers, seas, and rain cycles and how they view water as the source of knowledge, spirituality, and cultural identity. It also addresses current conflicts about the environment, resources, and participation in society. The exhibition has been co-created in close collaboration with Indigenous and traditional communities, linking art, sound, video, and immersive installations to create a sensory experience for visitors. This show has been developed in cooperation with the Goethe-Institut offices in Bogotá, Rio de Janeiro, Santiago de Chile, and São Paulo as part of the Mine. Yours. Ours!? programming focus on property and inheritance.

How does water shape the way that people coexist? The works presented here are about communities in Brazil, Chile, and Colombia that live alongside water and depend on it for their livelihoods: on Guanabara Bay, where fishing has played a formative role, along a river flowing through the Atacama Desert, in the Andean highlands with their numerous lakes and springs, and amidst the swamps and tributaries of the Amazon.

In these twenty works of art, water is presented not merely as part of a landscape but as a repository of knowledge, traditions, and spiritual significance. Rather than presenting fixed worldviews, Cosmologies of Water describes a shifting field of daily practices around rivers, lakes, seas, rain, and coastal landscapes. But the exhibition also poses a core question of our era: Who does water belong to? Some of the works illustrate the contradictions between capitalist concepts of ownership and local ideas about the approach to water. They show how rivers, lakes, seas, and coastal regions are increasingly coming under pressure – from the exploitation of raw materials, infrastructural projects, environmental destruction, and the consequences of colonial power structures.

Years of research in Brazil, Chile, and Colombia

The exhibition builds on years of research in various parts of Brazil, Chile, and Colombia, where curators, artists, and communities have developed the projects together. The result is a multi-sensory immersive exhibition layout that presents multiple points of view through a blend of art, first-hand knowledge, and current debates about environmental justice. Video works, sound installations, objects, photographs, and interactive elements create an atmosphere that enables visitors to experience water with all their senses.

Visitors will find artworks that relate stories of memory, loss, resistance, and hope. In exploring the five independent complexes of artworks, which are linked by sounds, materials, and spatial arrangements, they will be able to directly encounter people and places where lives, identities, and communal bonds are shaped by water.

This exhibition is a collaboration between the Stiftung Humboldt Forum im Berliner Schloss, the Ethnologisches Museum Berlin – Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, and the Goethe-Institut offices in Bogotá, Rio de Janeiro, Santiago de Chile, and São Paulo.

Participating artists:

Gabriela Bandeira, Marcela Cavallini, Laura Ceballos, Ana Emerich, Mikko Gaestel, Xadalu Tupã Jekupé , Ana Clara Mattoso, Sebastián Melo, Rosario Montero, Sofia Mussolin, Jhanuby Loaiza Osorio, Keyla Palikur, Paula Salas, Alejandro Salcedo, Natália Tupi, Leonel Vásquez

Curatorial team:

Anne Bechstedt, Sandra Benites, Rodrigo Duarte, Stephanie Maiwald, Natalia Pavía, Walmeri Ribeiro, Andrea Scholz, Juliana Steiner, Gabriela Urrutia

We would be happy to send you a complete list of artworks on request.