

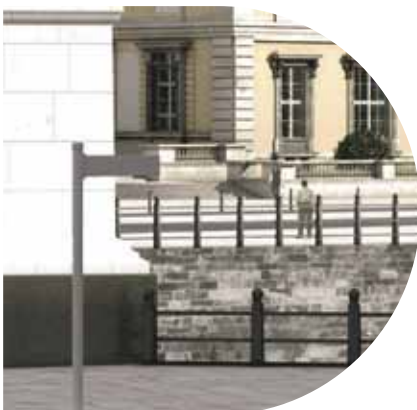
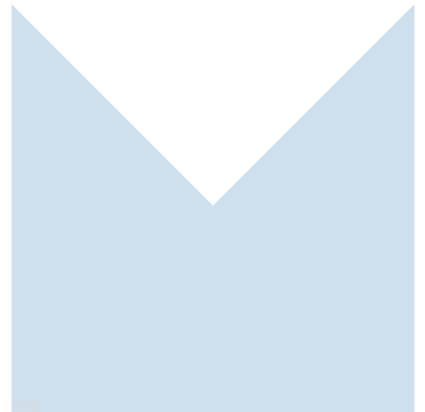
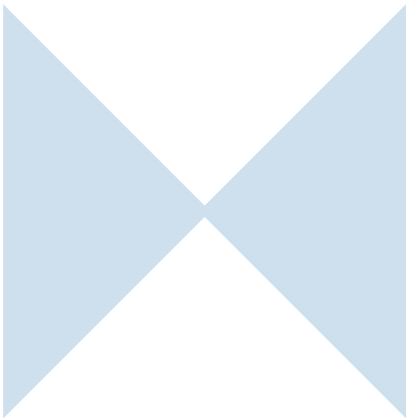
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# THE HUMBOLDT FORUM

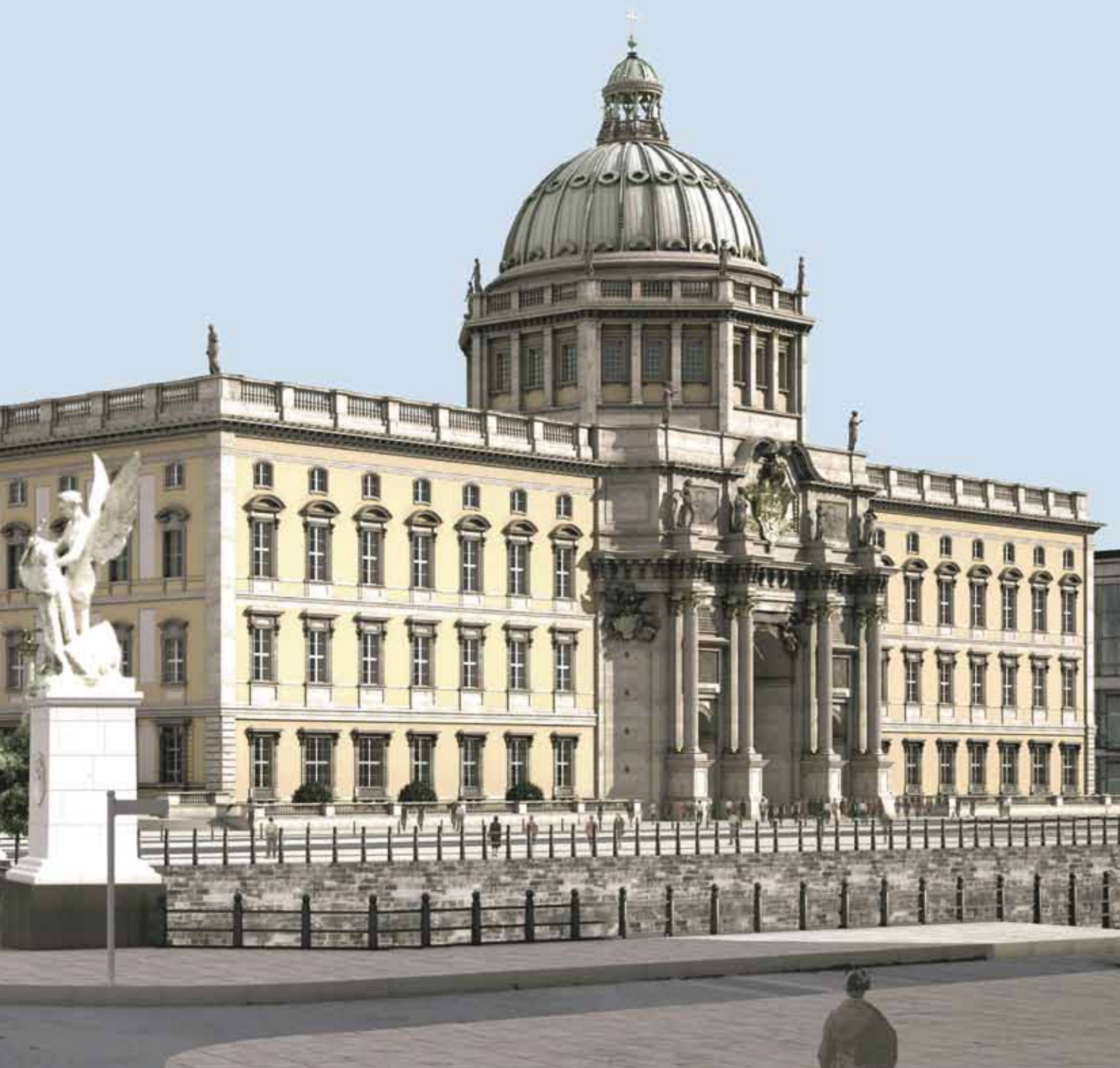
## *“TO BE IN TOUCH WITH AS MUCH OF THE WORLD AS POSSIBLE”*

The Goal and Significance of Germany’s Most Important Cultural Project  
at the Beginning of the 21st Century

Hermann Parzinger











# THE HUMBOLDT FORUM

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at the Beginning of the 21st Century

Hermann Parzinger  
President of the Prussian Cultural Heritage Foundation  
  
Published by the Berlin Palace–Humboldtforum Foundation

# CULTURE DEFINES MAJOR CITIES

Within the next few years the Humboldt Forum, a site of world culture, will be a cultural center of national and international distinction in Berlin. We observe worldwide that cultural projects—realized with great enthusiasm and considerable financial effort—promote the renown of major cities and even have a defining influence on national self-image and identity. Museums frequently play an especially important part, and the strategy to accomplish these goals often symbolically combines cultural heritage with forward-looking concepts. Its broadest expression is demonstrated by grand architectural gestures.

Paris began this process in the 1980s with its glass pyramids in the courtyard of the Musée du Louvre, both a new source of light and a larger visitor entrance; the latest development in Paris, for the time being, is the Musée du quai Branly, opened in 2006 as an outstanding site for non-European art and culture. In Madrid, a new entrance and an expansion lend entirely new spatial dimensions to the Prado. In London, the British Museum devised a completely novel museum experience by building a roof over its interior courtyard and employing modern concepts to utilize the space; there, too, non-European art is now confidently shown next to early European and ancient Near Eastern art.

Even in countries that have experienced persistent political upheaval that has ushered in dramatic change, major cultural ventures play a determining role in defining their identity. The 2014 master plan for the State Hermitage Museum in St. Petersburg, for example, includes an expansion

of the neighboring administrative building, in conjunction with modern museum strategies and methods of presentation. A laboratory for a universal museum of the 21st century is planned here, and the ground floor will open as a forum toward the city. The Pushkin Museum in Moscow is also preparing for the 21st century. By including green spaces, pedestrian zones, and subterranean galleries in surrounding villas and new buildings, an exceptional cultural complex is being created. It will contain not only exhibition spaces but a library and concert hall comparable to those of large museums around the world.

The National Museum in Beijing is undergoing an impressive expansion to become the world's largest museum building, and hundreds of additional museums are being constructed throughout China. Economic prosperity in the Gulf region has enabled cities there to create a growing cultural foundation with the help of futuristic museum architecture and imported museum knowledge, reflecting the desire for a modern worldview.

All these examples show one thing: major cities around the world develop a powerful attraction when they foster culture; they blossom when their centers breathe culture. Nothing defines a country's image in the world more than its cultural sites.

The **MUSÉE DU QUAI BRANLY** in Paris opened in 2006 on the initiative of President Jacques Chirac and is considered the national museum of non-European art and culture in France. Housed in a magnificent new building by Jean Nouvel at the quai Branly near the Eiffel Tower, it combines the ethnological collection of the Musée de l'Homme with the former Musée national des arts d'Afrique et d'Océanie.

The **STATE HERMITAGE MUSEUM** in the heart of St. Petersburg is one of the largest museums in the world. Founded by the Russian empress Catherine the Great, it contains more than three million works of art and artifacts today. More than 60,000 objects, including one of the world's foremost collections of European art, are exhibited in more than 350 halls. The museum covers a historical complex of buildings whose core is the Winter Palace, the former residence of the czars.

The **NATIONAL MUSEUM OF CHINA** in Beijing houses the Museum of Chinese History and the Museum of the Chinese Revolution, combined in 2003. The museum is currently being remodeled by the Hamburg architectural firm Gerkan, Marg, and Partners. After its reopening, the history and art of one of the oldest cultures on earth will be displayed in an area of nearly 200,000 square meters (2,152,782 square feet). Centrally located on Tiananmen Square, the museum reflects China's growing international importance.





**BERLIN  
HAS A UNIQUE  
OPPORTUNITY**



The fortunate reunification of Berlin after having been divided for decades creates the great opportunity to reshape the historical center of the city, building on the cultural achievements of Prussia in the 19th century. Exceptional cultural and artistic treasures from the Western world have been gathered here over the course of centuries, and from here emanated academic curiosity for what is foreign and different around the globe. This urban core must become an intellectual center for the city of Berlin.

After German reunification, the immense complex of collections of European and Near Eastern art and culture on the Museum Island experienced a boost in popularity that keeps growing year after year. Previously separated museum holdings were brought together again, and under the guidelines of a master plan, the buildings are being renovated and expanded. The Humboldt Forum in the Berlin Palace located on the other side of the Pleasure Gardens (Lustgarten) and now to be partly reconstructed, will become an outstanding location for the art and culture of Asia, Africa, America, Australia, and Oceania. This constellation of museums will make Berlin a leading cultural and museum city around the world. No other city combines a wealth of international collections in a single institution: the National Museums of the Prussian Cultural Heritage Foundation (Staatliche Museen der Stiftung Preussischer Kulturbesitz).

Only in Berlin is it possible to create a site for world culture that is as impressive and meaningful as that comprising the Museum Island and the Humboldt Forum. For here, as the result of the conflicting ideologies of fateful history, the necessary space is still available in the heart of a major city. Even more important, we demonstrate the intellectual readiness of our country to shape the geographic core of our capital not with self-interest in mind, but with a focus on curiosity and openness to the world. The site will also be able to contribute to self-realization in a globally connected world.

The Museum Island, declared a World Heritage Site by UNESCO in 1999, contains the treasures of European and Near Eastern art and culture from antiquity to the 19th century. The high temple of art, the Old National Gallery (Alte Nationalgalerie), was renovated to its former glory in 2001. The Bode Museum, built in the style of the neo-Renaissance, was lovingly restored and reopened in 2006.

The New Museum (Neues Museum) was added in 2009, rising from the ashes like a phoenix after decades in ruin. It delights visitors and tells three stories simultaneously: the history of the building, the history of museum presentation, and the history of the objects on view there. When the buildings are compared with one another, none is alike—each has its own history. It is precisely this diversity that fascinates visitors from all over the world.

The new entrance building currently under construction, the James-Simon-Galerie, represents the continuing building efforts on the Museum Island in the 21st century. Special exhibition spaces, information areas, a restaurant, and a museum shop will be included there, all of which are lacking in other buildings and are urgently needed. The entrance building will lead from the south into the Pergamon Museum, to which a fourth wing along the Kupfergraben will be added in the course of its renovation, thus offering a compelling walk through the architectural history of antiquity, from ancient Egypt and the Greco-Roman world to early Islam. The master plan for the Museum Island will conclude with the so-called Archaeological Promenade, a system of subterranean galleries connecting the interior courtyards of the buildings, which are located one story below ground. An extended, interdisciplinary exhibition space will address subjects from a wide range of times and places.

The **MUSEUM ISLAND** is the core of the Berlin museum landscape and one of the most important museum complexes in the world. Its five museums—Old Museum, New Museum, Old National Gallery, Bode Museum, and Pergamon Museum—represent 6,000 years of art and cultural history, from the stone age to the 19th century. The buildings were constructed between 1830 and 1930 as individual entities; in combination, they make an incomparable ensemble.

The **PRUSSIAN CULTURAL HERITAGE FOUNDATION** (Stiftung Preussischer Kulturbesitz) is among the world's largest cultural and academic institutions and derives from the collections and archives of the former Prussian state. Founded in 1957, today it combines the National Museums in Berlin, the National Library in Berlin, the Secret State Archives of Prussian Cultural Heritage, the Ibero-American Institute, and the State Institute for Music Research.

After reunification of the previously separated collections, a **MASTER PLAN FOR THE MUSEUM ISLAND** was instituted in 1999, by which all five buildings on the island would be restored, modernized, and further developed. By 2001 the Old National Gallery had already reopened, in 2006 the Bode Museum followed, and in 2009 the reconstructed New Museum. Future additions include the James-Simon-Galerie as the central entrance and the Archaeological Promenade, which will connect the individual buildings underground.









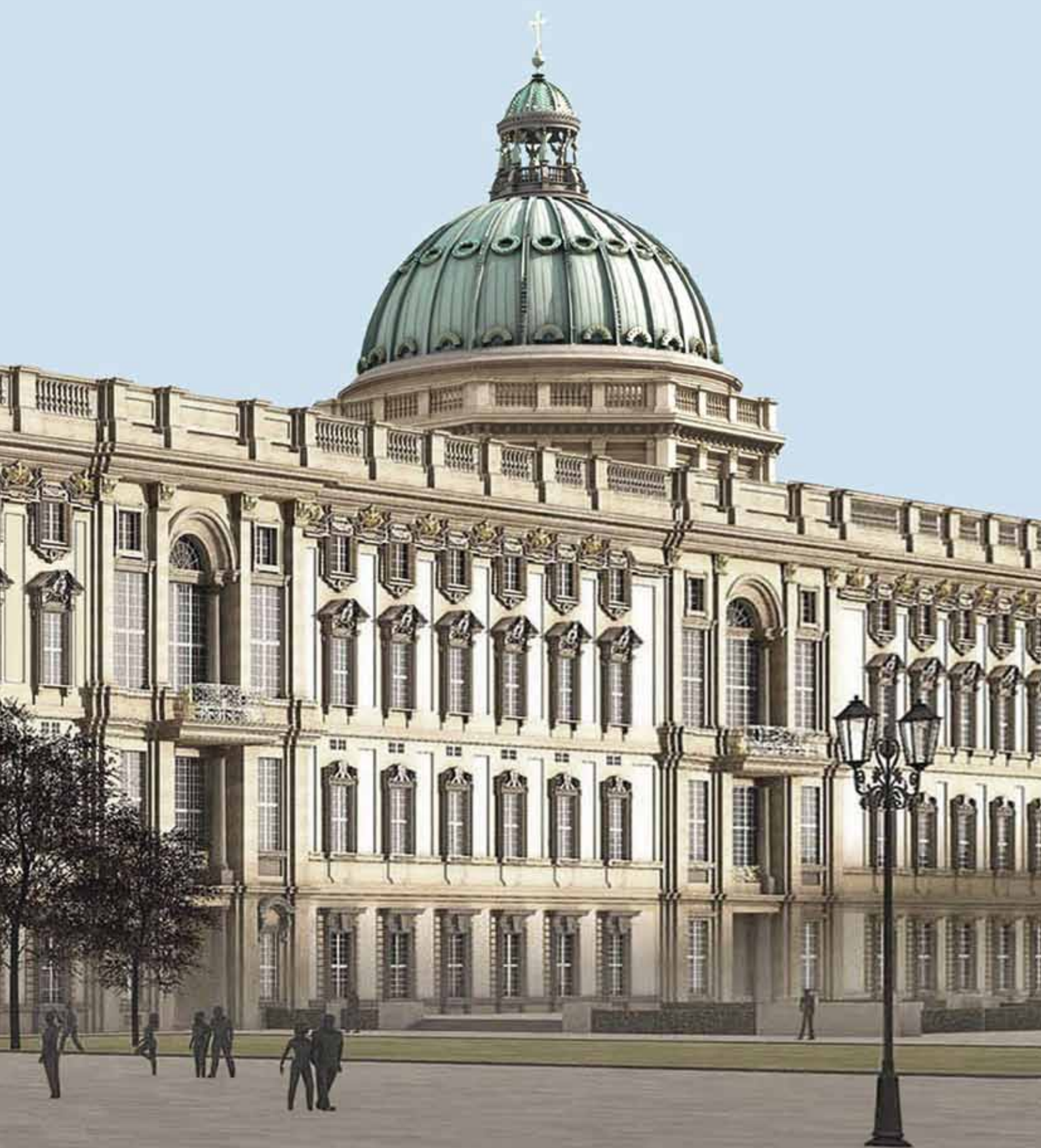


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*THE CULTURES OF THE WORLD  
BECOME PARTICIPANTS IN THE  
MOST DISTINGUISHED SQUARE  
IN GERMANY*







# A SPACE FOR REFLECTION IN A WORLD OF GLOBAL INTEGRATION

The medieval residence of the Brandenburg margraves was the core of the **BERLIN PALACE**. Over the centuries the structure has been rebuilt and expanded several times. Andreas Schlüter gave the building its defining form by expanding it into a baroque palace at the beginning of the 18th century. The construction of the dome followed between 1845 and 1853. The palace was severely damaged in World War II, but the external walls stayed relatively intact. Under orders of the East German government, the remains were demolished by detonation in 1950.

Since 1992 the nonprofit association **FRIENDS OF THE BERLIN PALACE** (Förderverein Berliner Schloss e.V.) has campaigned to rebuild the palace. In 1993 it was on the association's initiative that a full-scale canvas model of the edifice was erected on scaffolding on the Palace Square, inspiring public debate about the reconstruction. Since 2004 the association has been collecting donations for the reconstruction of the historical palace façades.

The **BERLIN PALACE-HUMBOLDT-FORUM FOUNDATION**, established in 2009, is a nonprofit organization. It takes on the role of commissioning client for the Humboldt Forum on the premises of the Berlin Palace and will fund the reconstruction of the baroque façades and the dome with the help of public donations or through privately generated support.

The **PALACE OF THE REPUBLIC** was erected between 1973 and 1976 on the Palace Square (then Marx-Engels Platz). It housed the East German national assembly chamber and also served as a public cultural center for concerts, plays, and exhibitions. After the fall of the Berlin Wall, the building was closed in 1990 and its asbestos contamination cleaned up. After an interim use for cultural purposes, it was demolished step by step from 2006 to 2008.

The Humboldt Forum in the Berlin Palace presents an ideal opportunity to shape this location in the capital, a site of significant historical importance, architectural prominence, and international appeal—not only as an urban public space designed according to the highest standards but also for the pursuit of a compelling purpose. Here world cultures become participants in the most distinguished location in Germany. Berlin and the entire country can effectively take on a challenge of international significance. Hardly any other city offers better credentials to accomplish this than Berlin, where the Humboldt brothers were once active.

The Humboldt Forum in the Berlin Palace will become a new center for experiencing art and culture. Its name recalls the legacy of the brothers Wilhelm and Alexander von Humboldt, whose groundbreaking research on foreign cultures at the beginning of the 19th century contributed to global understanding. The Humboldt Forum will add non-European collections to the artistic and cultural treasures that have been gathered so far on the Museum Island, and it will connect the institutions of museum, library, and university in new ways while establishing bridges between the historical collections and urgent concerns of our time.

The Humboldt Forum will facilitate the experience of non-European art and culture, and thereby knowledge about the world, making possible intercultural exchange and encouraging curiosity and enthusiasm about unfamiliar realms. Finding sustainable ways to relate to what is foreign and different is a matter of positive coexistence at a time when cultures of the world encounter each other with unprecedented frequency, speed, and complexity. Understanding cultural diversity and a preparedness for dialogue are significant conditions for shaping our future.

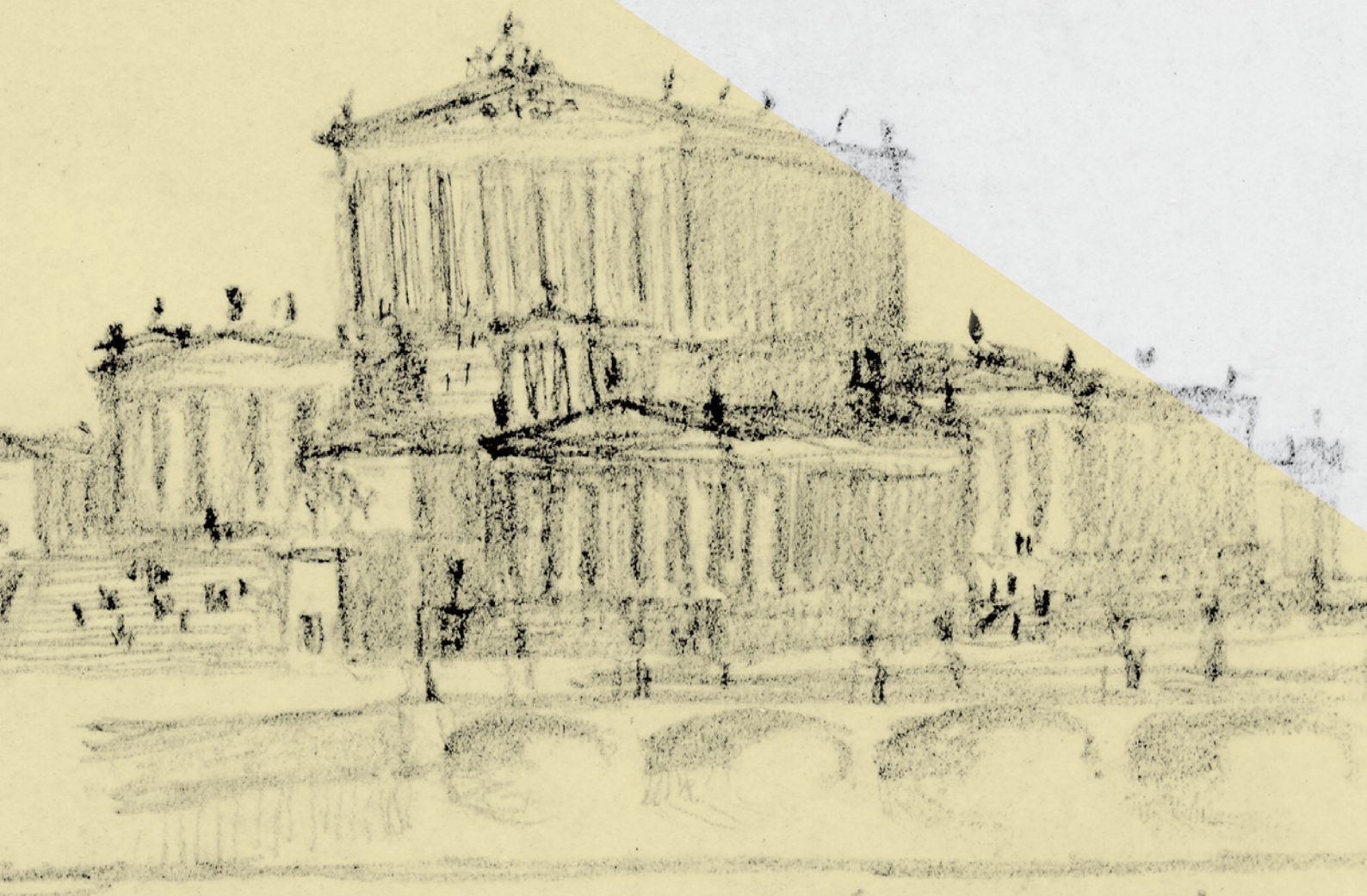
The Humboldt Forum is vital, because Germany needs a place for the exchange of the views, goals, and experiences of other cultures and societies. The center of the German capital will offer such a place in the form of the Humboldt Forum, something that does not yet exist anywhere else in the world. The Humboldt Forum therefore not only concerns Berlin and Germany, but it can also be relevant to the world.

The Palace Square in the historical center of Berlin is a location with special meaning. Now that the Palace of the Republic has been torn down (which itself replaced the Hohenzollern Palace demolished in 1950), this square, symbolic of the reunited Germany, can be newly designed. The current empty space cannot stand for our approach to our history, and it cannot symbolize our attitude toward the present and the future.

The square on which electors and kings once resided, where museums and academia were located after 1918, where the national assembly convened and society celebrated at the time of the German Democratic Republic, must have a public function in keeping with its history and a view to the future. It must become a public place that reflects cultural policy and ambition and that has a strong influence on the city. Only the Humboldt Forum can achieve this objective. For this reason, resolutions passed by the German parliament in 2002 and 2003 have paved the way for the most important cultural project in Germany at the beginning of the 21st century.

The transformation of the demolished Hohenzollern Palace into a site for global art and culture, and its dialogue with the sciences, has an inherent logic: with the cultural state of Prussia newly evident, cultivating its museums as well as academic and educational establishments is for the benefit of the future of the reunited Germany. Comparable to the exceptional achievement of Prussia, the wealth of non-European art and culture that has been gathered encyclopedically against the background of its educational ideals will be the core of the Humboldt Forum.





Friedrichsbrücke

Museumsbau Berlin



# THE IDEA OF THE HUMBOLDT FORUM IS CLOSELY CONNECTED TO THE HISTORY OF THE LOCATION

The concept for the Humboldt Forum developed from the history of its location and carries a particular legitimacy. Museum, library, and university collections had a common source in the Brandenburg-Prussian cabinets of art and curiosities (Kunst- und Wunderkammern) at the Berlin Palace. Now they will return to their point of origin.

The Hohenzollern Palace was no citizens' forum and had no modern, publicly accessible library or museum. But art and knowledge always played a central role there. The palace was the site of the awakening scientific interest in nature and art, which found its expression in the "theater of nature and art" promoted by Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz. The ethnological collections that originated in the palace were meant to demonstrate the worldliness of the ruling house as well as its connections, which spanned continents. Also, inspired by Wilhelm von Humboldt, the idea was born in the palace to expand the Museum Island into a "sanctuary for art and science," where museum, university, and academia would collaborate. The concept for the contents of the Humboldt Forum renews the previous functions of the palace and expands on them for modern times.

Opening the Hohenzollern buildings for cultural purposes followed a long-established tradition. The National Museums once before had the opportunity to reshape the center of Berlin through the civilizing power of culture. After World War I and the declaration of a republic, several collections of the museums moved into the palace and the crown prince's residence after members of the Prussian ruling house had left. What better attests the vitality of democracy than turning the sites of monarchical and political representation over to the public for cultural use?

The **CABINETS OF ART AND CURIOSITIES** in the late Renaissance and the baroque derived from earlier models of collecting by which objects of varying origins and designations were displayed together. Over the course of the 19th century, cabinets of art and curiosities were replaced by the specialized museums that are common today. A few Wunderkammern still exist, and to this day the desire remains to place the singular and exceptional, whether natural object or artifact, in a universal context.

**GOTTFRIED WILHELM LEIBNIZ** (1646–1716) was a philosopher and scholar, mathematician, diplomat, physicist, historian, politician, librarian, and doctor of both secular and ecclesiastical law. He is considered the universal intellect of his time and counts among the preeminent German philosophers. His "theater of nature and art" (Theatrum Naturae et Artis) is a concept modeled on the Kunstkammer's "theater of knowledge," which, among other objectives, is meant to encourage comprehensive understanding through a variety of conveyors of knowledge, such as pictures and objects.

# THE CONCEPT EMBODIES THE COSMOPOLITAN WORLDVIEW OF THE BROTHERS HUMBOLDT

The joint forum for museums, library, and university carries the name Humboldt because the brothers Wilhelm and Alexander von Humboldt are not only closely linked to the location but are also considered leading figures for the ideological concept of the Humboldt Forum. Wilhelm represents the importance of classical thought for European intellectual history, the understanding of non-European cultures, the significance of language in comprehending art and culture, the connection between museum, library, and university, and a far-reaching educational policy. Alexander symbolizes curiosity about the world, openness to foreign cultures, the exploration of America and Asia across disciplines, and the idea of the inseparable unity of nature and culture. The Berlin Palace in particular was a site where Alexander von Humboldt was able to present and debate these ideas. King Friedrich Wilhelm IV invited him regularly, together with the historians Leopold von Ranke and Barthold Georg Niebuhr, the philosopher Friedrich Wilhelm Schelling, and the architect Karl Friedrich Schinkel, to participate in discussions at tea in the salon at the palace.

Wilhelm as well as Alexander supported a cosmopolitan world-view that is based on the equal value of world cultures. They stand for enlightenment and curiosity about what is different and unfamiliar in the world. What was only a model two hundred years ago, advocated by very few individuals, we can turn into a concrete reality today in the center of Berlin. This is entirely in the spirit of Wilhelm von Humboldt, who once said: "To be in touch with as much of the world as possible, even the entire world, part of your own being has to be alive in the higher sense of the word."



**ALEXANDER VON HUMBOLDT** (1769–1859) is among the most influential personalities in German academic and cultural history. Extensive research voyages took him to Latin America, the United States, and Central Asia. His observations on flora and fauna, his descriptions of local geographic and economic conditions, but also his lesser known historical studies of Mexican cultures were remarkable for his time and earned him a contemporary reputation as the “second, scientific discoverer of America.” Humboldt’s work created new horizons of knowledge and was influential far beyond the borders of Europe and his own time. Being open to the world and universal learning were the pillars of his ideological world.

As renowned as his brother but in other areas, **WILHELM VON HUMBOLDT** (1767–1835) shaped intellectual life in Berlin in the 19th century and beyond. As a Prussian politician and minister, he developed concepts for reform and models for the state, the constitution, and cultural policy. He was co-founder of the National Museums in Berlin and of Berlin University, which is today named after him and his brother. As a scholar, his interests focused especially on the languages of the world. His academic research, which addressed, among other topics, the indigenous languages of America as well as Coptic, ancient Egyptian, Chinese, Japanese, and Sanskrit, became the foundation for comparative linguistic research.



# A PLACE WHERE KNOWLEDGE WILL GROW

Three institutions will shape the Humboldt Forum: the Prussian Cultural Heritage Foundation, the Central and Regional Library in Berlin, and the Humboldt University in Berlin. The Prussian Cultural Heritage Foundation will occupy the largest area, reuniting the non-European collections of the National Museums in Berlin, still located in Berlin-Dahlem, where they are divided between the Ethnological Museum (Ethnologisches Museum) and the Museum for Asian Art (Museum für Asiatische Kunst). These collections contain more than 500,000 artifacts and works of art from all continents, supplemented by unique audio and video materials. Together they make up one of the richest holdings of non-European art and culture in the world. The Central and Regional Library offers a comprehensive range of services. With attractive core areas of dance, drama, film, art, and music, it makes available diverse media and offers a modern teaching library to children and young adults. As the third partner, the Humboldt University is planning a "Humboldt Lab," based on the enormous university collections and with thematically pertinent changing exhibitions and events. The university can enhance the ability of the Humboldt Forum to address global issues while also considering the most profound, extensive specialization. The principle of a global future has its foundation in the history of the palace as well as the university. In that sense, the programs of the Humboldt Forum may also prompt changes at the university.

The Humboldt Forum expands on the idea of the Pompidou Center in Paris, which combines exhibition areas, a public library, and a center for events to meet the demands of a globalized world in the 21st century. Museums, library, and university will pool their strengths and areas of expertise in an integrated concept of usage and will be a vibrant site to generate and disseminate knowledge about world cultures.

This concept presents the timely opportunity for a new link between the participating institutions: to develop models for interactive collaboration and create access to the world beyond the narrow limits of the classical disciplines. The arts and sciences will engage in dialogue and will offer the public a rich palette of cultural activities. The Western view of the world will be supplemented by additional perspectives, provoking a change in outlook. With this special forward-looking

combination of museums, library, and university, the Humboldt Forum will become a new intellectual center for the city of Berlin, amid a truly singular topography of art and culture, science and education. It will be surrounded by world-class cultural and academic establishments that have assembled scientific and artistic treasures of Western culture: Museum Island, the German Historical Museum, Humboldt University, the National Library in Berlin, and Central and Regional Library. In the spirit of the brothers von Humboldt, the Humboldt Forum will bring the world into view.

**The HUMBOLDT UNIVERSITY IN BERLIN** was founded in 1810 and is still seen as the "mother of all modern universities." Credit for this goes to the concept for the university developed by Wilhelm von Humboldt, who planned to unite research and teaching as well as offer a humanistic education to all students. Today the university is a research institution recognized around the world, the successful result of the first two rounds of the Initiative for Excellence by the German government and states.

**The CENTRAL AND REGIONAL LIBRARY** was established in 1995 by combining the American Memorial Library (in the former West Berlin/FRG) and the Berlin State Library (in the former East Berlin/GDR). Made possible by German reunification, it merges key libraries in the capital. In three venues so far, the library offers more than 3.4 million electronic and printed media.

**The NATIONAL MUSEUMS IN BERLIN** (Staatliche Museen zu Berlin), based on the "royal museum" of Friedrich Wilhelm III of Prussia, are today the largest part of the Prussian Cultural Heritage Foundation, with fifteen museums, three research institutes, a plaster cast studio, and general administration. The collections contain several million objects from the fields of art, archaeology, and ethnology and form a universal museum ranging from the beginnings of humanity to the present time.

**The ETHNOLOGICAL MUSEUM** of the National Museums in Berlin-Prussian Cultural Heritage Foundation—with roughly half a million objects from all corners of the world and a large inventory of sound recordings, photographic documents, and film—is among the largest and most important institutions of its kind. It collects, preserves, and researches especially the material culture of preindustrial societies, primarily from non-European areas.

**The MUSEUM FOR ASIAN ART** of the National Museums in Berlin-Prussian Cultural Heritage Foundation was created in 2006 from the Museum for East Asian Art (Museum für Ostasiatische Kunst) and the Museum for Indian Art (Museum für Indische Kunst). It houses one of the world's most important collections of works of art from Indo-Asiatic cultures, extending from 4000 BC to the present day.

**The POMPIDOU CENTER** in Paris is an interdisciplinary center devoted to modern and contemporary art, combining a museum, library, institutes, rooms for events, and restaurants under the roof of an architectonically emblematic new structure. It sprang from an initiative by French president Georges Pompidou and opened in 1977 as a new kind of center for art and culture. To this day it draws about six million visitors per year.









# MUSEUM ISLAND AND HUMBOLDT FORUM FORM ONE ENTITY

The development of the Museum Island began in 1830 with the completion of Karl Friedrich Schinkel's Old Museum. Schinkel was the first to define the center of Berlin, emanating from the museum, as a site for intellectual thought and the humanities. The then almost provocative modernity of the neoclassical building can be appreciated only when considering the reflection of the baroque façades of the palace opposite. Schinkel, as an architect of the Enlightenment, established a deliberate counterpoint to the palace with the portico of his Old Museum, based on the Greek agora, which is surrounded by columned walkways. Only after this structure has been re-created will the gap in the middle of the German capital be closed, and the architectural composition of the site become recognizable again.

An extensive dialogue among museums, university, and academia as well as the arts and sciences had, remarkably, already been envisioned by Friedrich Wilhelm IV when he talked about the Museum Island as a "sanctuary for art and science" ("Freistätte für Kunst und Wissenschaft"). He himself had designed an auditorium with lecture halls and with halls for festivities, appropriating the form of a raised temple in the center of the Museum Island. Although repurposed, it was eventually realized as the Nationalgalerie. This "royal" idea of a place for general education and discourse can now, more than 150 years later, become a reality with the Humboldt Forum in the Berlin Palace. It can inspire a previously unimaginable dialogue among world cultures.

The Museum Island, with its comprehensive presentation of art and culture from Europe and the Middle East, and the Humboldt Forum, with the art and culture of Africa, America, Asia, Australia, and Oceania, belong together. Through their content they form an entity in which each continent has its place and where the dialogue between cultures becomes manifest. The idea of the Humboldt Forum is today as visionary as was the creation of the Museum Island as a "sanctuary for art and science" in the 19th century. With the Humboldt Forum, the Palace Square opens to the world and becomes a site where global understanding is facilitated and the equal importance of world cultures can be experienced.



**FRIEDRICH WILHELM IV (1795–1861)** conceived the idea of the Museum Island in Berlin. The Royal Museum (today's Old Museum) was built under his father's reign and opened in 1830. Shortly after his accession in 1840, Friedrich Wilhelm IV ordered that "the entire Spree Island behind the museum be converted into a sanctuary for art and science." In his lifetime only the New Museum was completed, opening in 1855. The plan to build an entire museum complex did not become a reality until around ninety years later.







# NON-EUROPEAN COLLECTIONS MUST RETURN TO THE CENTER OF BERLIN

The non-European collections of the National Museums in Berlin—Prussian Cultural Heritage Foundation, divided between the Ethnological Museum and the Museum for Asian Art, had been moved to the suburb of Dahlem on the southwestern periphery of Berlin after World War II. (The Ethnological Museum had earlier occupied its own building next to the Museum for Applied Arts, the current Martin-Gropius-Bau, on Stresemannstrasse). The museums in Dahlem then displayed essential holdings of the National Museums in West Berlin, which attractively fit together as a small universal museum of art and culture. When the Kulturforum on Potsdamer Platz was expanded and the Museum Island was reclaimed after reunification, this provisional solution, the result of a divided Germany, lost much of its appeal. Important collections from the Paintings Gallery (Gemäldegalerie), the Prints Cabinet (Kupferstichkabinett), and Sculpture Collection (Skulpturensammlung), or the Museum for

Islamic Art (Museum für Islamische Kunst) moved away from Dahlem to occupy new premises or return to their old locations in the center of Berlin. What remained in Dahlem was a body of non-European art and culture—poorly attended and deprived of any opportunity for comparison with the art and culture of Europe and the Near East. This unity must be restored.

When the non-European collections from Dahlem move back to the heart of Berlin, they will regain proximity to the Museum Island and return to a context in which they shed the stigma of being considered exotic—restoring a balanced presentation and perception of global cultures. The Musée du quai Branly in Paris set the example: despite its controversial architecture and interior design, it reports a steadily increasing numbers of visitors. Even the Louvre now has a gallery of masterworks of non-European art and takes pride in having overcome artistic world hierarchies. The British Museum in London also juxtaposes European and non-European art. Large universal museums respond to visitor demand, and it is obvious that today's museum visitors and those interested in culture think in global coordinates.



Page 24: Head of a Buddha, Tumshuk, China,  
Autonomous Province Xinjiang, 6th century

Figure of the Cult Hero  
Chibinda Ilunga, Chokwe, Angola,  
19th century



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*IN THE CENTER OF BERLIN, THE  
NON-EUROPEAN COLLECTIONS  
RETURN TO A CONTEXT IN WHICH  
THEY LOSE THE STIGMA OF  
THE EXOTIC*

Wolf's Mask of the Haida Nation,  
Canada, c. 1880





# FOREIGN ART AND CULTURE AS A SOURCE OF INSPIRATION FOR MODERN TIMES IN EUROPE

Contemporary visual art in the 21st century is global and part of far-reaching global networks that have an increasingly strong influence on one another. But the roots of this influence extend far into the past. The huge change toward modernism at the beginning of the 20th century was essentially prompted by a pervasive influence of art from abroad.

Artists such as Pablo Picasso or Ernst Ludwig Kirchner discovered completely new sources for inspiration and expressive energy in the collections of ethnological museums, resulting in a fundamental transformation of their artistic creativity and heralding a new artistic era. Especially the sculpture of Africa and Oceania played an important role; non-European influences on the work of many leading artists of that time are obvious. They open our eyes to the aesthetic dimensions of this foreign art, yet our approach to it today is much more complex. The objects are no longer, as they were a hundred years ago, seen as the epitome of native and unadulterated art and no longer witness to an unfamiliar realm. We now perceive them in different relationships and value them in their own cultural context, which has been handed down to us in a variety of media.

Even outside of the arts, intellectual encounters with non-European cultures left a multitude of impressions. The famous art and cultural theoretician Aby Warburg was inspired by Native Americans in the American Southwest; and

Sigmund Freud's attempts to explain the human psyche employed comparisons with so-called primitive peoples. Even though we know today that the interrelationships established by scholars of the early 20th century are far more layered and therefore different, the intensive exploration of what is foreign and different in the world shaped European intellectual history in many ways. Visitors may research explanations for these connections in depth for themselves with the help of the library at the Humboldt Forum.

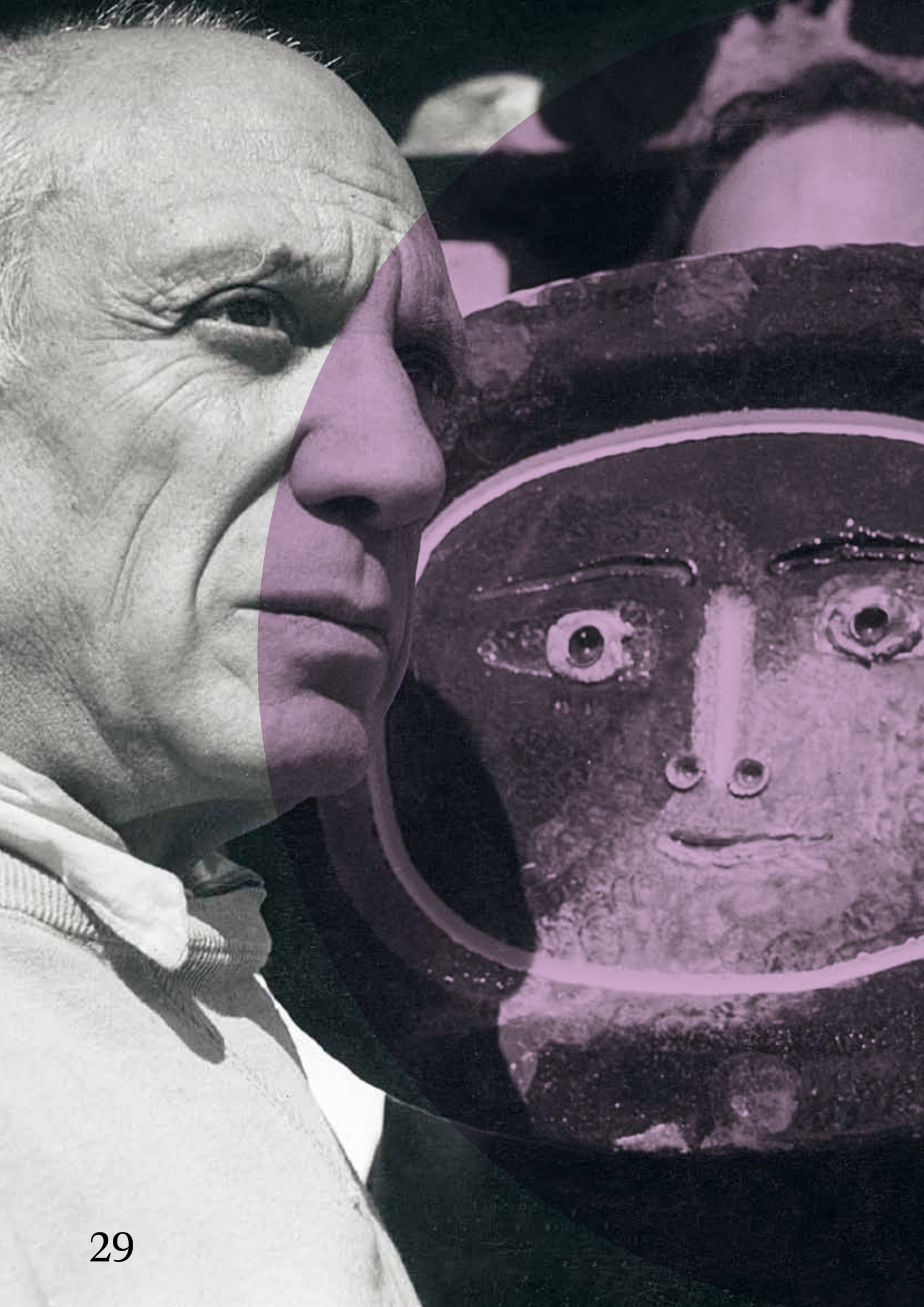
**PABLO PICASSO** (1881–1973) reportedly first came into contact with a sculpture from Africa in 1906. Henri Matisse had brought the head of a Bakongo Vili sculpture, made in the 19th century, from the Congo to a meeting in Paris. The unfamiliar form and strange aesthetic intrigued Picasso—and many of his contemporaries—so much that he began to collect sculpture and masks from Africa. A creative period between 1907 and 1909, termed his “African Period” by some art historians, was influenced by this type of art.

**ERNST LUDWIG KIRCHNER** (1880–1938) was inspired, as were the other members of the artists group Die Brücke, by the art of non-European cultures. These artists were especially fascinated by the examples in the anthropological collections of Dresden and Berlin. Next to artifacts from the South Seas, it was particularly art from Africa that influenced the Brücke painters. Objects from the Ethnological Museum frequently appear as recognizable motifs in their work.

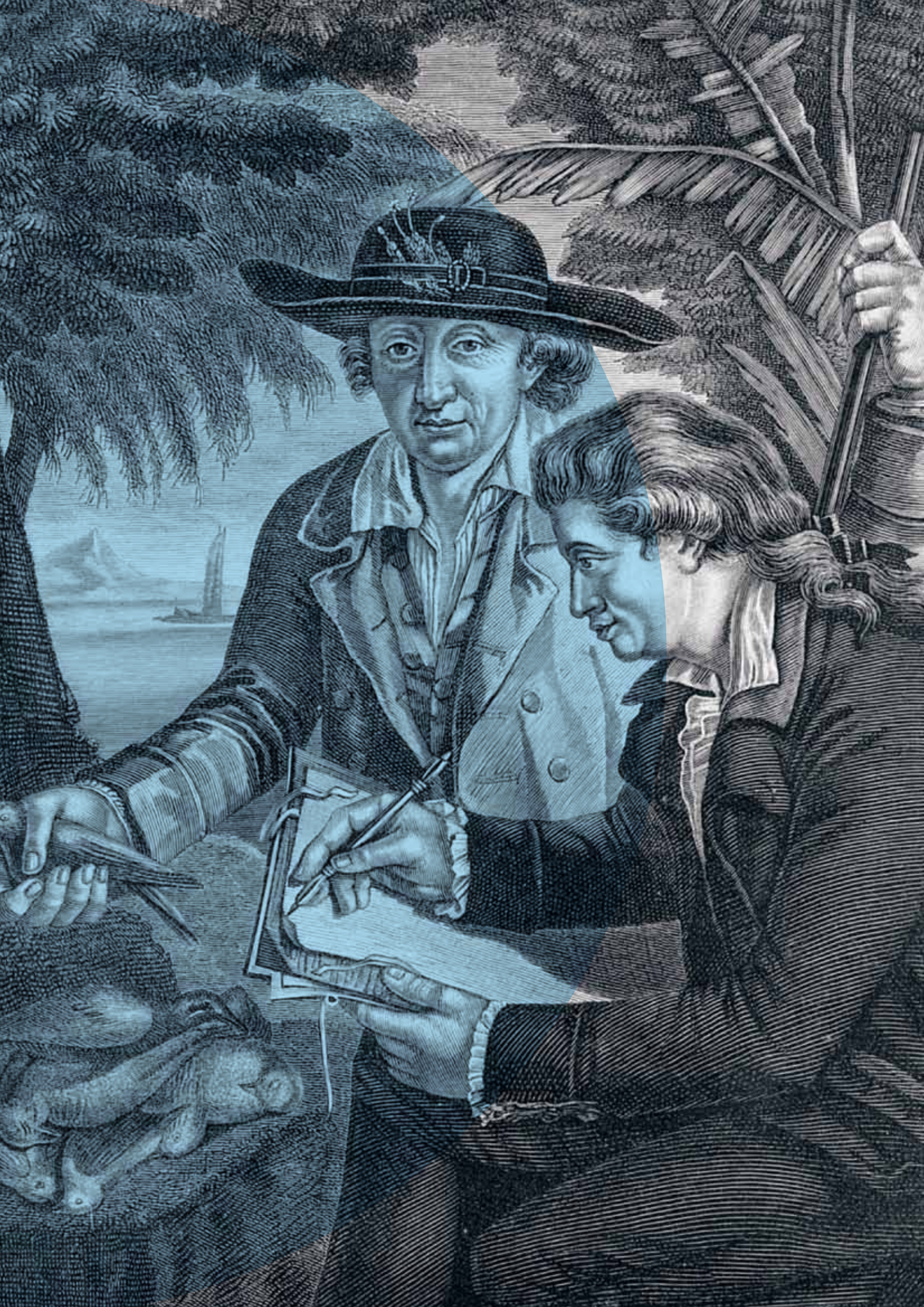
**ABY WARBURG** (1866–1929) was a German art historian, theorist, and the founder of the Library of Cultural Studies, Warburg, which is today part of the University of London. With his doctoral dissertation on Sandro Botticelli's paintings *The Birth of Venus* and *Primavera*, Warburg introduced iconography as a new methodology into the field of art history. In 1885–1886 he traveled to the United States, where he studied, among other areas, the culture of the Hopi Indians. The result of this stay, in Warburg's words, freed him from art history focused on aesthetics.

The Austrian physician, psychotherapist, and critic of religion **SIGMUND FREUD** (1856–1939) achieved worldwide fame as the founder of psychoanalysis. Searching for the origin of moral perception and ideas of human morality, Freud studied the works of numerous ethnologists on Australian, American, and African native populations. He was particularly interested in their taboos, assuming he would be able to draw conclusions from them about the origin of moral codes in his own society.











# THE COLONIAL PAST, COLLECTING PASSION, AND PURSUIT OF ACADEMIC KNOWLEDGE

Colonial history, the tragic and consequential bond between Europe and the populations of other continents, will be included in the exhibitions, not least because the colonial division of Africa was finalized under Chancellor Otto von Bismarck at the Berlin Conference in 1884/1885. The ethnological museums of Germany also profited from that development. But the foundation for a systematic collection of non-European art and culture was laid by explorers: Georg Forster accompanied James Cook to the South Seas, Alexander von Humboldt explored the natural and cultural history of Latin America, and Hermann Schlagintweit traveled in Tibet and Mongolia. They and countless others collected and brought objects from their travels back to Berlin. Their reports appeared in books and films, and their stories were retold for children, awakening the interest in the academic pursuit of knowledge in the next generation.

The beginning of a systematic analysis and comprehension of world cultures can be traced to Adolf Bastian's founding of the Royal Museum of Ethnology (Königliches Museum für Völkerkunde) in 1873. Bastian's goal was to document the cultures of foreign continents then threatened by colonialism: to gather the evidence in full, if possible, and to analyze it and preserve it for posterity. He suspected that colonization, missionary work, and modernization would soon introduce irreversible changes to the world and its cultures. While the establishment of German colonies in Africa and the South Seas resulted in a steady stream of objects from these areas of the world, the balance and completeness of the Berlin holdings is based on a unique, worldwide net of collectors

and buyers that Bastian had cultivated. The academic foundation of the Ethnological Museum in Berlin was established at that time and by legal means. The Berlin museums are therefore legitimate owners of their holdings.

The founding of the Museum of East Asian Art (Museum für Ostasiatische Kunst) in 1906 reflected a different approach, following the initiative of Wilhelm von Bode. At the beginning of the 20th century, equivalence of Western and Asian art would be demonstrated for the first time, and with this new vision Berlin again set the standard in the museum world. The basis for the collection came about through an active acquisitions program and with the help of public donations. In 1963 the former Museum for Indian Art was added, and since 2006 the two museums together have made up the Museum for Asian Art.

The **BERLIN CONFERENCE** took place at the invitation of Chancellor Otto von Bismarck in Berlin in 1884/1885. Bismarck did not want the increasing pressure by various European powers for colonial property in Africa, which held vast natural resources, to lead to conflict among them and was looking for a way to reconcile their interests. The final document, known as the General Act, sealed the colonial division of Africa. As a consequence of the conference, competition to take possession of territories in Africa gathered speed. Within a few years the entire continent, with the exception of Liberia and Ethiopia, was under European domain.

**ADOLF BASTIAN** (1826–1905), the first director of the Royal Museum of Ethnology in Berlin, was also the first professor to teach ethnology at the university in Berlin and was founder of the academic field of ethnology in Germany. His goal was to document comprehensively the then unknown and endangered cultures of non-European peoples. In the era of burgeoning colonialism Bastian, with the help of patrons in

Berlin and a global network of connections, tirelessly expanded the collections, wrote many academic papers, and traveled the world for years at a time.

The art historian **WILHELM VON BODE** (1845–1929) began his tenure at the Royal Museums (Königliche Museen) in Berlin as an assistant in the sculpture collection, becoming its director in 1883 and director general of the Berlin museums in 1905. Bode not only founded the Kaiser-Friedrich-Museum on the Museum Island, which today carries his name, but he also exerted a decisive influence on Berlin's art collections, which grew to world renown under his aegis, and on museums abroad, particularly in the United States.

Johann Reinhold Forster with his son  
Georg Forster conducting research during  
a voyage, wood engraving, 1879





Imperial throne, China,  
Qing Dynasty, 17th century

Queen mother's memorial head, Nigeria,  
Benin Kingdom, 16th century

Feather headdress, Bororó, Brazil,  
acquired 1889

Ancestral figures, Indonesia, 19th century

Human head, Nigeria, Ife,  
12th–15th century

Figure of an Aztec goddess, Mexico,  
c. 1350–1521

Plate, Bukhara, West Turkestan,  
late 19th century

Feather scepters of the Mundurucú people,  
Brazil, c. 1810

Lime container in the form  
of a male figure, Colombia, Quimbaya,  
3rd–10th century

Uli figure, New Ireland/Oceania,  
19th century

# ART OF THE WORLD IN BERLIN

The extraordinary quality of the non-European collections of the National Museums–Prussian Cultural Heritage Foundation testifies to the truth of a statement by French president Jacques Chirac in 1995 that the Louvre could not remain a truly great museum if it continued to ignore the art of 70 percent of the world's population. The Berlin collections encompass masterworks of world art from every continent, for an especially impressive aesthetic effect.

The collection of African art in Berlin contains a stellar group of works from Benin Kingdom, today's Nigeria. From the 15th to the 19th century Benin was a center for trade between West Africa and Europe. Brass, a European import, was used as material for so-called memorial heads and relief plaques of superb artistic quality—both portraits and idealized images. The splendid feather decorations of the Amazonian Mundurucú, made of colorful plumage from parrots, had already been admired by visitors to the cabinet of curiosities in the Berlin Palace. The stone gods of the Aztec and stelae weighing tons from the territories of the Maya, featuring rich, narrative relief decoration, are among the most important works of art of the pre-Columbian cultures

of Mesoamerica. The Uli figures of New Ireland, an island of the Bismarck Archipelago in Papua New Guinea, were so powerfully expressive that they exerted a long-lasting influence on the imagination of the German expressionists.

A Chinese 17th-century Qing Dynasty imperial throne, made from rosewood and with mother-of-pearl inlays that shimmer in countless hues, impresses the viewer not only with the technical perfection of its design but also with its magnificent interplay of color. It is a masterwork of Chinese art. Gandhara sculptures from Central Asia guide us into very different worlds—they illustrate the continuation of Greek-Roman influences along the Silk Road during the time of Buddhism.



CULTURE IS EXCHANGE  
BETWEEN PEOPLE—  
WELCOME TO THE AGORA



The Humboldt Forum will differ fundamentally from a traditional museum of ethnology and will be divided into three main parts: the agora, workshops of knowledge, and exhibition spaces.

The agora on the ground floor will be the starting point for visitors, exposing and orienting them to the diversity of global cultures and their manifestations. A room for multiple functions and an auditorium are intended for theater, film, music, literature, and performance. Traditional and experimental theatrical performances from around the globe will bring popular stage traditions to life for a broad audience and will make them accessible. A stage for musical performances will bring the sounds of every continent to the center of Berlin and will establish connections between traditional music and the currents of our time. Areas for special exhibitions will present the newest developments in contemporary art in Africa, America, and Asia and will identify and demonstrate societal developments. The Humboldt Forum will be a site for the contemporary as well.

The agora will also be an integral component of our presentation of global cultures. As a forum for science, culture, and politics, the agora will be a place for the spoken word, where current sociopolitical topics will be publicly debated by acknowledged experts.

The agora will be the focal point and heartbeat of the Humboldt Forum. Individual core areas, supervised autonomously by participating institutions, will be interconnected by a dense network of common activities. They will be launched from the agora, as an attractive and lively center for events, and will spread through the exhibition areas of the upper floors. In this way, the Forum can build two-way bridges between the historical collections of the museums and the issues of our time.



Wole Soyinka and Timothy Garton Ash in conversation (moderator Susanne Stemmler), in the series "1989—Globale Geschichten" (1989—Global Histories), February 2009

As the centrally located square, the **AGORA** in ancient Greece was the social center of a city. Often surrounded by porticoes, the agora also served as the marketplace and daily meeting spot for the city's residents and visitors. The Humboldt Forum interprets the idea of the ancient agora as a contemporary concept, intended to revitalize the center of Berlin.

To ensure that a Eurocentric world-view does not dictate the agenda of the Humboldt Forum, the Prussian Cultural Heritage Foundation has selected an **INTERNATIONAL ADVISORY BOARD** for the newly conceived representation of the non-European collections at the Forum. Through regular meetings, major partner museums and museum experts from around the world will participate in the future development of the existing exhibition concept.

With the opening of the **HUMBOLDT BOX** on the Palace Square in 2011, an information center with exhibition areas will make known the types of topics the Humboldt Forum will address and the ways in which participating institutions will collaborate with one another.

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*THE AGORA WILL BE THE HEART  
AND PULSE OF THE HUMBOLDT  
FORUM*







# NEW FORMATS FOR SCIENCE AND TOP RESEARCH

In the knowledge workshops—the area for scholarship and research on the first floor in the Humboldt Forum—museums, library, and university will join forces to develop new forms of presentation. In conjunction with their respective research networks and together with additional domestic and international partners, the Humboldt Forum will become a center for non-European cultures that will transcend the boundaries of individual disciplines and institutions. The natural and intellectual foundations of the world's cultural diversity will be investigated there and the results conveyed to the public, through the most up-to-date electronic and printed media—an interactive encounter with global knowledge.

This objective is founded on the collections of the Ethnological Museum and the Museum for Asian Art, their research libraries and archives, as well as scientific research gathered at the Central and Regional Library. The areas of interface between the three partners—museum, library, and university—are particularly numerous here and offer great potential for weaving together the institutions. The non-European holdings of the National Museums—Prussian Cultural Heritage Foundation and the relevant university collections complement each other. The sound archives of Humboldt University augment the phonogram archive of the Ethnological Museum—a unique collection of music and voices from all continents recorded more than one hundred years ago on a total of 16,000 wax cylinders and included by UNESCO in its “Memory of the World” list. Building on such cultural roots, the current offerings of the music holdings of the Central and Regional Library will be able to demonstrate the horizons of global development and its various influences up to modern times.

Regional studies, which have a strong presence in Berlin, will come together at the Humboldt Forum and enhance mutual understanding in theme-specific, interdisciplinary gatherings. They will develop connections that supersede regional ties and will promote orientation and translation that can deepen our appreciation of the correlation between regions of the world. International, interdisciplinary teams of researchers, such as ethnologists, sociologists, and climatologists, can develop new ways to present their findings.

The Humboldt Forum will become an especially vital locus for the collaboration between academics and artists, fostering knowledge through events and scientific programs offered to the general public by the Central and Regional Library.

Supported by research grants, international groups of scholars, both established experts and outstanding young scholars, can devote their efforts to the study of fundamental human questions. At the Humboldt Forum, these will be more easily accessible to the public than elsewhere, and researchers will share with as many visitors as possible the ways in which global knowledge is developed.

At the Humboldt Forum the museum, library, and university will collaborate especially closely in the areas of the transmission of knowledge and cultural education. Children and young adults in particular will be introduced to art and culture in special ways and will gain new insights on their own by learning the skills to obtain knowledge. Through the collaboration of cultural, educational, and academic institutions and a program of events (a student academy and lab, together with the learning center of the youth library), the unique aspects of the cultures of Africa, America, Asia, Australia, and Oceania, and their reciprocal interaction with Europe, will be communicated, taking into consideration various focal points and including all media, written and visual culture, theater, music, and film.

The Humboldt Forum will make knowledge accessible in the most up-to-date and comprehensive way. Such knowledge increases comprehension of world culture and encourages respect and understanding.



# THE COLLECTIONS FACILITATE GREATER COMPREHENSION OF THE WORLD

The exhibition spaces on the second and third floors of the Humboldt Forum will offer visitors a trip around the world and will facilitate new ways of perceiving cultural relationships and artistic currents. Through presentation of a full visual, auditory, and sensual experience, every continent will gain in visibility here.

Cultural continuities across time and space will be demonstrated here, as will the powerful effects of the environment and the methods humankind has devised to overcome limits imposed by nature. Evidence of everyday life, religious culture, artistic expression, technical innovation, ecological and economic conditions, processes of globalization, and much more is united in a panorama of the civilizations of the world. Key to presenting the cultures of Africa, America, Asia, Australia, and Oceania is a multiplicity of approaches. The objects are intended to display their aesthetic appeal as works of art, but they become comprehensible in their cultural context by telling their own stories.

In Chinese and Japanese painting and graphic art, for example, visitors become acquainted with East Asian traditions of the presentation of art, which reflect the changes of seasonal, religious, and social events. Returning visitors will always experience a different aspect of East Asian visual culture. This form of exposition makes it possible to retrace and elucidate major historical phases of Asian intellectual history. Those looking for an artistic, aesthetic experience as well as those with an interest in religion and cultural history will find answers in these collections and are invited to examine this world in greater depth at the library.

The collections of art and artifacts from every continent vividly illuminate the history of humankind. The display of boats from Oceania raises the question of what navigation and the perception of space might mean in a world composed of islands—in terms of outside contact and an awareness of one's own environment. Was it not a huge accomplishment, within a few centuries, to settle all of Oceania, from Southeast Asia close to the coast of South America? Or, considering African masks: European museums generally exhibit them strictly as works of art, even though they could also tell a great deal about ancestral beliefs, social structure, and even political power in some locations. Colorfully preserved feather headdresses from the Amazon region remain similarly limited in what they convey to visitors if we fail to talk about the way in

which indigenous people wrested their land from an extremely inhospitable environment and developed social and cultural institutions under especially adverse conditions in Amazonia.

Our objective is not the traditional permanent exhibition, but an open, permeable, mutable formation that investigates the diversity, changes, opportunities, and risks of our times, reflects contemporary references of the collections discerningly, and renders the fundamental mechanisms of human action understandable from a historical perspective.

Special exhibitions devoted to the primary issues of our time will play an important role at the Humboldt Forum, addressing globalization, migration, climate change, megacities, and much more. Many of the topics and problems that affect our world today are not new at all. Migration, for example, has occurred through all of human history. The consequences have ranged from so-called multicultural societies to processes of stratification. The same applies to the diverse causes and the economic, political, and social effects of climate change. Megacities, too, are not just a phenomenon of our times. The Mesoamerican holdings of the Ethnological Museum, among the most important in the world, tell of the rise and fall of the major Mayan cities. They enable us to understand how it was possible to organize the population, of nearly incomprehensible density for that time, in terms of its administration and logistics of supply. They also warn us about what can happen when people rob themselves of their basic means of livelihood through imprudence and lack of discipline.

With the help of the non-European collections, the library, and the university, the Humboldt Forum will be able to tell these stories in an extraordinarily vivid manner, explaining historic processes while pointing out their causes.









# THE CULTURAL HERITAGE OF PRUSSIA INTRODUCES NEW PERSPECTIVES IN INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE

Berlin's non-European collections are the largest and most significant of their kind in Europe and among the most important in the world. The specific composition of the holdings in ethnology, archaeology, and works of art creates a multifaceted basis for a broad portrayal of the artistic and cultural history of Africa, America, Asia, Australia, and Oceania, still always including their ambivalent relationships toward Europeans. Today, the descendants of those peoples whose material culture was collected by Europeans, especially in the 18th and 19th centuries, are becoming increasingly interested in these items. They regard them as poignant evidence of their history; in many instances, these are the only records of this kind that survived the colonial era, missionary work, and modernization undamaged. Yet the Berlin collections are not only a testament to the past, but they also provide a point of departure on issues of cultural identity, especially in light of globalization. The exhibitions at the Humboldt Forum will take these aspects into consideration.

It no longer suffices today to limit ourselves to the viewpoint of a European researcher, and we are already experimenting with new ways of collaborating with indigenous groups on various projects. Whether Amazonian Indians or Yup'ik Eskimos, their knowledge about the museum objects and their ideas regarding an appropriate presentation will enrich our appreciation. That is the only way to bring greater integrity to our perspective.

When staff at the Museum for Asian Art today investigate Buddhist rock paintings discovered in the early 20th century by the German Turfan expeditions, they work with colleagues from the province of Xinjiang in northwest China—virtually bringing the materials now in Berlin together with those still on site in China and assuming joint responsibility for the maintenance and preservation of cultural heritage in an exemplary manner.

Equitable cultural and academic exchange must to be our benchmark. Europe has long ceased to be the center for global interpretation. When visitors from Asia or the descendants of indigenous Indian or African societies experience

the same emotions visiting the Humboldt Forum as Europeans do visiting the Museum Island, the Louvre, or the Prado, the Humboldt Forum will have achieved one of its most ambitious and noble goals.

If Berlin's Museum Island, as a "sanctuary for art and science" featuring the art and culture of Europe and the Near East, was the great vision of the 19th century, then the Humboldt Forum in the Berlin Palace represents the continuation of this vision at the beginning of the 21st century. We are seeking to respond appropriately to the demands of a globalized world and to embrace this challenge at Germany's premier location, the historic center of its capital. This very special gesture consists of creating a site for a new approach to the cultures of the world. The site will not be strictly a museum center but will establish bridges between the past and urgent issues and questions of our time.

The equivalence of the world's cultures will become apparent through interaction with the Museum Island, and it will be possible to experience the cultural and artistic aspects of human history as never before. "Everything is interaction," the scholar Alexander von Humboldt once stated. With the extraordinary quality and range of its collections, Berlin will become a leading international cultural metropolis.

Knowledge about the world will grow on such fertile ground. Knowledge and education are keys in the respect for and tolerance of foreign cultures, without which a peaceful coexistence is impossible. This is also the extraordinarily humane message behind the grand project of the Humboldt Forum. We refer—recalling the best of Prussia—to our proud tradition as a nation of science and culture, and draw from it a new vision for the future. It is an opportunity we must not miss.





PARTNERS IN THE  
HUMBOLDT FORUM

BERLIN PALACE–  
HUMBOLDTFORUM FOUNDATION

PRUSSIAN CULTURAL  
HERITAGE FOUNDATION–  
NATIONAL MUSEUMS IN BERLIN

HUMBOLDT UNIVERSITY  
IN BERLIN

CENTRAL AND REGIONAL  
LIBRARY IN BERLIN



# BERLIN PALACE– HUMBOLDTFORUM FOUNDATION



The nonprofit Berlin Palace–Humboldtforum Foundation (Stiftung Berliner Schloss – Humboldtforum) was set up in November 2009. It owns the Berlin Palace–Humboldt Forum and serves as the commissioning body for its creation. In addition, it coordinates activities surrounding the construction and organizes cultural events. Concern for the historic identity of the location is of utmost importance to the foundation. An exhibition entitled Historic Center of Berlin—Identity and Reconstruction is planned for the Berlin Palace.

Another significant mission of the foundation is to facilitate public participation in this unique project. It will report regularly on the status of the reconstruction, and interested members of the public are invited to take part in the ongoing dialogue. The Berlin Palace–Humboldtforum Foundation is organizing meetings and exhibitions to draw early attention to the global significance of this center for knowledge and culture in the middle of Berlin.

From the beginning both enthusiasm and debate have accompanied this once-in-a-century opportunity. The engagement of the public was the decisive signal for the German Parliament to back the project and provide public funding. Also deserving particular mention here, the nonprofit group Friends of the Berlin Palace has been a vital partner to the foundation in raising donations to reconstruct the historic façade of the palace. The great personal effort by individuals to create the Berlin Palace–Humboldt Forum is strengthened by such support.

The Berlin Palace–Humboldt Forum will also rely on the commitment of private donors in the future. The Berlin

Palace–Humboldtforum Foundation has made it a goal to recruit many additional private donors. A combined effort is needed, involving the entire country.

This symbolic building, with its daring intention to bring culture and learning into a lively discourse, depends upon the support of donors, patrons, and those willing to make a legacy gift to this historic site. Every individual can contribute to the reconstruction of the Berlin Palace–Humboldt Forum. Contact the foundation to discuss the ways you can become involved.

**We appreciate your donation and your contribution to the realization of this project.**

## **BANK ACCOUNTS FOR CONSTRUCTION DONATIONS**

### **Deutsche Bank**

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### **Stiftung Berliner Schloss– Humboldtforum**

**Unter den Linden 3**

**10117 Berlin**

**Germany**

**+49 (0)30 31805720**

**info@sbs-humboldtforum.de**

**www.sbs-humboldtforum.de**

# PRUSSIAN CULTURAL HERITAGE FOUNDATION– NATIONAL MUSEUMS IN BERLIN



**Staatliche Museen zu Berlin**  
Preußischer Kulturbesitz

With its internationally renowned museums, libraries, archives, and research institutes, the Prussian Cultural Heritage Foundation (Stiftung Preussischer Kulturbesitz) is one of the world's largest cultural institutions. It unites all sectors of cultural heritage under its umbrella (objects, archival materials, pictorial and sound resources) and combines art and culture with scholarship and research in a very special way. The foundation is also one of the largest non-university research organizations in the humanities and social sciences in Germany, operating in various capacities in the fields of cultural education. Established in 1957, the Prussian Cultural Heritage Foundation evolved from the collections and archives of the Prussian state. Today it is funded by the federal government and all sixteen German states, thus it is an expression of nationwide cultural responsibility, given the federal structure of Germany. The institutions now belonging to the foundation are the National Museums in Berlin, the National Library in Berlin, the Secret State Archives of Prussian Cultural Heritage, the Ibero-American Institute, and the State Institute for Music Research. The organizational union of these institutions under the Prussian Cultural Heritage Foundation removes the usual division of different branches and materials and promotes interdisciplinary projects and approaches. This model is pioneering yet also steeped in tradition, firmly rooted in the thinking of Wilhelm and Alexander von Humboldt.

The National Museums in Berlin (Staatliche Museen zu Berlin), having evolved from the Royal Museum founded by Friedrich Wilhelm III of Prussia, comprise fifteen collections and

four institutes. They form a universal museum for the preservation, research, and dissemination of the knowledge of human history. The holdings encompass European and non-European art, archaeology, and ethnology. From the beginning, it was not princes and kings but scholars and artists who shaped the collections. In addition to individual works, such as the world-famous Pergamon altar or the bust of Nefertiti, it is the encyclopedic gathering and systematic structure that reflect the educational mission. The preservation and conservation of the collections, their maintenance and expansion, as well as continued academic research are the basis for the museums' commitment to education and better understanding between cultures. The National Museums present their collections at five locations: Museum Island, Kulturforum Potsdamer Platz, Charlottenburg, Dahlem, and Köpenick.

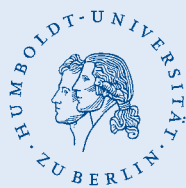
The Museum Island in Berlin, the core of Berlin's museum landscape, was designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1999. The Ethnological Museum (Ethnologisches Museum) of the National Museums in Berlin, with one of the largest and most impressive collections of its kind in the world, holds about 500,000 ethnological, archaeological, and other culturally significant objects from nearly all parts of the world. The Museum for Asian Art (Museum für Asiatische Kunst) houses priceless works from the Indo-Asian cultural region, dating from the 4th millennium BC to the present. Bringing together these museums as well as the collections of Western and ancient Near Eastern art and artifacts on the Museum Island, the Humboldt Forum in

the Berlin Palace will turn the vision of a world-renowned landscape of interdisciplinary education into reality.

[www.preussischer-kulturbesitz.de](http://www.preussischer-kulturbesitz.de)  
[www.smb.museum](http://www.smb.museum)



# HUMBOLDT UNIVERSITY IN BERLIN



Humboldt University maintains a special relationship with the former Berlin Palace. The palace's *Kunstammer*, nexus of today's collaboration between museum, library, and university at the Humboldt Forum, largely passed into the possession of the university at its founding in 1810. Research and teaching were based on these collections from the start. The Humboldt brothers wanted students to study not just textbooks but physical objects as well.

Humboldt University will use these collections, expanded by later additions, to support the European dialogue with world cultures at the Humboldt Forum, providing scholarly expertise and elaborating on selected topics before the public. In a contemporary interpretation of the ideas of Wilhelm and Alexander von Humboldt, to unite intellectual and natural history and to integrate research focusing on both text and object, a wealth of scholarship will illuminate the varied presentations at the Humboldt Forum. Changing exhibitions and public programs will contribute to this goal, with the Forum restoring connections between museum and science, collection and experiment, research and teaching—as once conceived by Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, the father of numerous academic establishments in Berlin and Germany. These fields of study later spawned many separate institutions, and by reuniting this multiplicity, the Humboldt Forum will revitalize the concept of interdisciplinary education.

In its Humboldt Lab, a large room for exhibitions and events, the university will bring together academics from

Berlin and around the world. The intention is not only to present research to the public but also to further this research with substantive new contributions. Like a modern research laboratory, the Humboldt Lab will pursue a focused analysis of individual problems, texts, or objects within the kind of overarching context that once formed the basis of the cabinet of curiosities. The essence of a baroque *Kunstammer* was to consider the world as a whole, using selected objects to demonstrate the diversity of its elements—from nature to art and science, from indigenous objects to the most remote “exotica”—within a colorful, unique collection, and to combine firmly established order with spontaneous discovery. Scholars from all over the world visited the cabinet of curiosities and, after contemplating the objects, entered into academic discourse. This type of holistic approach came to an end: Prussia's attempt to found a colonial empire collapsed, and the hopes for one institution to represent a universal whole failed, with the assets being divided among three successors—the museum, the library, and the university.

Humboldt University's Humboldt Lab will be the intellectual equivalent of the *Kunstammer* transferred into the modern era. It will present object-related learning that considers the “non-European” not in isolation but as a European construct, as “the distinctly ‘other’ existing in Europe.” Representatives of the traditional social sciences as well as natural scientists, art historians, and scientists at large will use a comparative transregional

perspective to facilitate a comprehensive view. For example, it will consider non-European cultures in light of the physical nature of these regions and in combination with global questions, such as the effect of climate change on culture. It will contrast the European and non-European views of Europe by, for instance, inviting scholars and artists from the regions showcased there. Culture and learning will be shown in action, finding a stage at the Humboldt Forum.

[www.hu-berlin.de](http://www.hu-berlin.de)

# CENTRAL AND REGIONAL LIBRARY IN BERLIN



zentral- und Landesbibliothek Berlin

The Central and Regional Library in Berlin (Zentral- und Landesbibliothek Berlin) is the largest public library in Germany. Two locations—the American Memorial Library in Kreuzberg and the Berlin State Library in Mitte—offer free access to more than 3.4 million printed items and electronic media. The library attracts up to 5,000 visitors daily and is one of the most highly frequented cultural institutions in Berlin.

The library holds an array of fiction, music, and film, and features areas equipped with multimedia resources for children, youth, and adults. It contains specialized sections and databases for all the arts and sciences. As the Regional Library in Berlin, it automatically receives all the texts, data, and audio items that are published in the city and maintains an excellent inventory of materials on Berlin's past and present.

The Foundation for the Berlin Central and Regional Library was created in 1995 by merging the Berlin State Library on Palace Square in the eastern part of Berlin and the American Memorial Library on Hallesches Ufer in the western part, an achievement made possible by German reunification in the capital.

The particularly popular departments of art, music, and film will move into the Humboldt Forum along with the library for children and young adults, occupying an area of 4,000 square meters (43,056 square feet). The Central and Regional Library will present innovative programs and a broad spectrum of media—from traditional and audio books, CDs, and DVDs to digital content and services for smartphones. This variety will be provided in modern surroundings

of sophisticated design, inviting visitors to linger.

The Library perceives its role at the Humboldt Forum as a supplement to the wealth of objects in the museums of the Prussian Cultural Heritage Foundation and to the Humboldt University collections, offering attractive media resources that promote a continual, ongoing debate and dialogue between world cultures. By creating a motivational stage and mixing traditional and new media, the Central and Regional Library encourages people of varying backgrounds to become interested in life-long learning, culture, and creativity with a view toward a tolerant and open-minded understanding of the world.

The Library is a user-friendly service organization with a firmly established place in the knowledge-based society of the 21st century. It promotes free access to scholarship, art, and entertainment and thereby enhances opportunities for personal participation in shaping society at large.

[www.zlb.de](http://www.zlb.de)

# PUBLISHER'S DETAILS

## **Publisher**

Stiftung Berliner Schloss–  
Humboldtforum  
Unter den Linden 3  
10117 Berlin  
Germany

Tel.: +49 (0)30 31805720  
Fax: +49 (0)30 318057213  
info@sbs-humboldtforum.de  
www.sbs-humboldtforum.de

## **Responsible for Content**

Manfred Rettig  
Chairman, Berlin Palace–  
Humboldt Forum Foundation

## **Editing and Production**

Tam Curry Bryfogle  
Bernhard Wolter  
Carolin Herms

## **Translation**

Ulrike Mills  
Kathryn Prouty  
Jon Darch

## **Coordination**

Kerstin Ischen

## **Consulting and Design**

Stan Hema Agentur für  
Markenentwicklung GmbH  
www.stanhema.com

## **Printing**

Krögers Buch- und Verlags–  
druckerei GmbH, Wedel

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“To be in touch with as much of the  
world as possible”  
after Wilhelm von Humboldt

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