

**PRESS RELEASE**  
**21 October 2024**

**Exhibition and Events Programme**

**Exhibition opening: 28 November 2024; runs from 29 November 2024**

**Press conference: 27 November, 10 am in Saal 2, registration at**  
[presse@humboldtforum.org](mailto:presse@humboldtforum.org)

**Singeli Label Night: 30 November 2024, 7 pm**

**European premiere of *Frozen Power*. Guest performance by MUDA Africa from Dar es Salaam**

**5–8 December 2024, 7 pm**

## **Histories of Tanzania**

**The special exhibition *Histories of Tanzania* illuminates the chequered histories of the territory of modern-day Tanzania. Curators from Dar es Salaam, Songea, and Berlin have developed the exhibition collaboratively, in conversation with representatives of communities in Tanzania. The exhibition presents their different perspectives and stories, dealing, in particular, with the violence of German colonial rule and its consequences. It also shows short films by school students from Berlin and Dar es Salaam, which investigate traces of colonialism in their respective cities. A diverse programme of events accompanies the exhibition, featuring artists from the fields of film, dance, photography, media art, and music. The highlight here is the European premiere of *Frozen Power*, the new work by Tanzanian dance company MUDA Africa.**

The territory of modern-day Tanzania looks back on a tumultuous history. Its geographical location on the Indian Ocean meant that the societies there were involved early on in interregional trade networks. Under German colonial rule, from 1884 to 1919, Tanzania was known as “German East Africa” and thereafter, until independence in 1961, it was ruled by the British under the name of “Tanganyika”. The consequences of colonial oppression, exploitation, and violence can still be felt today. During this period, thousands of cultural belongings were brought to Germany. In Berlin’s Ethnologisches

Museum (Ethnological Museum) alone there are more than 10,000 “objects” from the territory of modern-day Tanzania.

### **Special exhibition**

What (hi)stories do these cultural belongings relate? The exhibition presents narratives and perspectives illustrating the centuries of entanglements that are part of the history of today’s Tanzania. The exhibition focuses particularly on the period of colonial oppression and exploitation, critically reflecting on colonial narratives and challenging racist attributions.

The exhibition was developed collaboratively: curators from Dar es Salaam, Songea, and Berlin as well as representatives of communities in Tanzania have been given the opportunity to present their perspectives in texts and filmed interviews. Works by East African artists offer a critical examination of the colonial gaze. In the exhibition design these contributions are presented alongside Tanzanian cultural belongings within structures made of teak and bamboo that protect the “objects” and provide an aesthetic setting that appeals to the senses.

### ***City Research* a short film project**

An integral component of the exhibition is the international schools project *City Research*. Two groups of school students – one in Berlin, one in Dar es Salaam – set out to explore their respective cities to examine the traces of colonialism still discernible today. The exhibition showcases the short films that they produced, which focused on buildings, street names, and public squares.

**The exhibition is a collaboration between the National Museum of Tanzania, the Ethnologisches Museum, and the Zentralarchiv (Central Archive) of the Staatliche Museen Berlin – Stiftung Preußischer Kulturbesitz and the Stiftung Humboldt Forum im Berliner Schloss.**

### **Events on the opening weekend**

A diverse programme of events accompanies the exhibition, with a focus on the opening weekend. Films, dance performances, communal eating, photography and VR presentations, concerts, and workshops on the East African game of bao present contemporary artistic positions from Tanzania and the Tanzanian diaspora. The

Tanzanian artists reflect critically on the long shadows cast by the colonial era and formulate visions of the future that transcend colonial narratives. Audiences will gain insights into the current debates, aesthetics, and strategies of cultural (re)appropriation and get a taste of the dynamic, young, burgeoning cultural scene in Dar es Salaam, one of the world's fastest-growing metropolises.

## **Selected highlights**

On 30 November the legendary Dar es Salaam record label **SISSO Records** presents a **Singeli Label Night** with live acts from the likes of **Jay Mita**, **Kadilida**, and **Nana & Zai**. Singeli is the sound of Dar es Salaam's youth – a hybrid of traditional Tanzanian musical genres, from Taraab to Ngoma, mixed with electro beats and pitched up to 300 bpm. Ecstatic, subversive dance music made for local communities that is as frenetic and eclectic as the urban landscape of Dar es Salaam.

In a **music lecture** on 30 November and 1 December, the legendary **John Kitime**, who has been an avid chronicler of Tanzanian music culture for more than 50 years, will take the audience through the histories of Tanzania, bringing them to life through music. He will play hits and rare treasures from his unique archive and recount the stories behind the record covers, demo tapes, and vinyl rarities – from the years when the independence struggle was raging and the formative period of African socialism (*Ujamaa*) to the present day. The popular musician and radio host tirelessly travels the country to catalogue and digitise recordings that were presumed lost and make them available to the public again.

The **DAR Foto Festival** will be held in the Humboldt Forum in a pop-up format throughout the opening weekend. Five young photographers were commissioned by the festival to explore the theme of “coexistence” and look into questions of historical memory, diversity, and identity in Tanzania today.

Another highlight of the opening programme is *Frozen Power*, the European premiere of the most recent piece by Tanzanian dance company **MUDA Africa**, staged every evening at 7 pm from 5 to 8 December 2024. Mixing contemporary dance and theatre, choreographer **Ian Mwaizunga** explores female empowerment and the magic of reimagining history. Five dancers and a live musician tell the story of a female ruler who is beset by colonial occupation and local intrigues and has to fight to hold on to power.

Funded by the Federal Government Commissioner for Culture and the Media on the basis of a decision by the German Bundestag

## **PRESS CONFERENCE**

A press conference on the exhibition and events programme will be held at the Humboldt Forum on 27 November at 10 am. Please register to attend: [presse@humboldtforum.org](mailto:presse@humboldtforum.org).

Images can be downloaded at [www.humboldtforum.org/presse](http://www.humboldtforum.org/presse).

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