

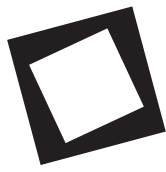


HUMBOLDT
FORUM

TEMPORARY EXHIBITIONS

IN THE ETHNOLOGISCHES
MUSEUM AND MUSEUM FÜR
ASIATISCHE KUNST

PRESS KIT



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The temporary exhibitions were developed by the Stiftung Humboldt Forum im Berliner Schloss, the Ethnologisches Museum and the Museum für Asiatische Kunst together with communities from regions throughout the world. They are the result of many years of cooperation. Bringing together different areas of knowledge and experience, they contribute greatly to the forum character of the Humboldt Forum. Objects from the North American Omaha and Haida, the Indian Naga, questions about objects from Tanzania as well as presentations of Korean Art provide insights into different societies and their cultural practices.



Starting in spring 2024, the Humboldt Forum will present a temporary exhibition *Loot.10 Stories*. Through ten case studies, visitors will be immersed in the complex topic of looted art over three different periods: the colonial era, the Napoleonic conquests in the 18th century and the so-called “Third Reich” between 1933 and 1945. The objects from the collections of the Mauritshuis (The Hague, Netherlands), three Berlin museums (Ethnologisches Museum, Stadtmuseum and Gipsformerei) and the Musée des Beaux-Arts de Rennes will be presented both as originals and as replicas. The visitors will encounter, besides the others, the horse head of the Quadriga, a self-portrait by Rembrandt or a Magic Staff from Surinam and replicas and moulds of the Benin bronzes. With the help of VR applications, visitors can experience selected stories which prompt to think about the questions: In what contexts were these objects looted? How do the museums deal with looted art today? And what else should be done in the future?



The exhibition is being taken over from the Mauritshuis in The Hague as part of an international collaboration. The Stiftung Humboldt Forum im Berliner Schloss, the Stadtmuseum Berlin, the Ethnologisches Museum and the Museum für Asiatische Kunst of the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin have cooperated in the realisation of the project.

Overall design concept: Jongsma + O'Neill.

1 View of the exhibition *Loot.10 stories* in the Mauritshuis © Mauritshuis 2 View of the exhibition *Loot.10 stories* in the Mauritshuis © Mauritshuis 3 Staff from Surinam featuring a female figure, ca. 1900, Ethnologisches Museum, inv. VA 13776 © Staatliche Museen zu Berlin – Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Ethnologisches Museum, Claudia Obrocki.

AGAINST THE CURRENT

The Omaha, Francis La Flesche, and His Collection

Until Autumn 2025
2nd Floor, Room 203
Free admission



The name Umo^oho^o (Omaha) means “against the current” and stands for overcoming obstacles and doing things differently. At the same time, it describes an important historical moment preceding the colonization of the American Midwest, when the Umo^oho^o split from the Osage, Quapaw, Kansa, and Ponca and moved upriver.

Between 1894 and 1898, Francis La Flesche compiled a collection of around 60 objects from his “own” culture, that of the Umo^oho^o, on behalf of the Ethnologisches Museum in Berlin. Their provenance is well-documented. La Flesche purchased the items over the course of four years on the reservation. If things weren’t available, he had new ones made. The collection was assembled at a time when the political, economic, and cultural independence of Indigenous nations in the United States was being drastically curtailed. Their lives were marked by land loss, racism, and violence. La Flesche hoped to preserve at least part of the Umo^oho^o culture by collecting objects. He straddled two worlds: as an umo^oho^o (Omaha) he fought for the rights of his community, and as an ethnologist he studied his own culture. He lived at a time when life for the Umo^oho^o was changing radically.

Today the collection is a link between past and present. It is the historical starting point for a new chapter in the relationship between the Umo^oho^o and the Ethnologisches Museum in Berlin. Organised in cooperation with teachers and students of the Nebraska Indian Community College, descendants of Francis La Flesche, and representatives of the Umo^oho^o and the Ethnologisches Museum, the exhibition of the Stiftung Humboldt Forum im Berliner Schloss addresses current political and social issues. Since November 2023, contemporary objects have complemented Francis LaFlesche’s historical collection and embody the culture lived today.

The collection is of particular importance in this context because it bears witness to resistance against colonialism. For today’s Umo^oho^o, it offers the opportunity to tell their own story. Their message is: „We are still here!“

1 View of the temporary exhibition *Against the Current. The Omaha, Francis La Flesche, and His Collection* at the Humboldt Forum © SHF / © Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Ethnologisches Museum, Photo: Alexander Schippel 2 Portrait of Francis La Flesche in a suit © National Anthropological Archives, Smithsonian Institution, NAA INV 00688600 3 Selection of jewellery for the continuation of the exhibition *Against the Current. The Omaha, Francis La Flesche, and His Collection*, September 2023 © Staatliche Museen Berlin, Ethnologisches Museum / Photo: Elisabeth Seyerl-Langkamp

TS'UU – CEDAR

Of Trees and People

Until 23 February 2026
2nd Floor, Room 201
Free admission



1 Depiction of an eagle, double-headed snake monster Sisiutl when unfolded © Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Ethnologisches Museum, digital reproduction: Lars Malareck 2 View of the temporary exhibition *Ts'uu - Cedar. Of Trees and People* at the Humboldt Forum © SHF / Photo: Alexander Schippel



„...when the trees are gone,
we'll just be like everybody else.“

Gidansda Guujaaw,
artist and former president of the Haida Nation

For millennia, people and land have been inextricably linked in Canada's coastal rainforests. An example of this is the special importance cedar trees hold for the First Nations living there: cedars provide the raw material for a wide range of everyday objects and ceremonial objects. They play a central role in handed-down stories, traditions, and ceremonies.

Based on the “giant tree of life” (western red cedar) and the “Nootka cypress” (yellow cedar), the exhibition tells of the relationship between humans and the environment. Eight chapters highlight the relations between coastal rainforests, First Nations, and Euro-Canadians, the effects of colonisation, and the resurgence of First Nations.

One focus is on recent history: colonization by Europeans from the eighteenth century led to the systematic displacement of the First Nations and curtailment of their rights. At the same time, large parts of the coastal rainforest habitat were destroyed by the development of industrial forestry.

Both had, and continue to have, far-reaching effects on First Nations cultures and their relationship to cedar. For this reason, the cedar plays a special role today in the resurgence of the First Nations and the way they see themselves: be it in the anti-forestry movements; in land and resource use based on traditional ecological knowledge; or in the reappropriation of cultural practices and traditions.

The exhibition, developed in cooperation with the Haida Gwaii Museum in British Columbia, presents over 130 exhibits, including tools for working the wood, media installations, cultural historical and natural history exhibits as well as contemporary artworks. An additional integral part of the gallery are two cedar totem poles from the collection of the Ethnologisches Museum of the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin. The variety of the displayed objects and the transdisciplinary approach make it possible to explore the cedar-related topics and issue on several levels.

NAGA LAND

Voices from Northeast India

Until Autumn 2025
3rd Floor, Room 309
Free admission



All over the world, minorities are fighting for cultural self-determination or political autonomy. One such minority are the Naga – an umbrella term for more than thirty different tribal groups which, despite many similarities, differ in their culture and language and in the way they see themselves. The majority of the approximately three million people now live in the state of Nagaland in north-eastern India.

Since the end of British colonial rule, the Naga have been fighting for autonomy from mainland India and for cultural self-determination. It was only during this period that the desire for a common identity emerged. Christianity is the main religion in Nagaland and has greatly influenced the culture.

So what does it mean to be a Naga today? The exhibition *Naga Land. Voices from Northeast India* looks at different aspects of contemporary Naga society and its cultural identity. It brings together the historical Naga collection of the Ethnologisches Museum in Berlin with contemporary photography, fashion, and visual arts from the region. The Naga have been an important research interest of European scholars since as early as the nineteenth century.

The Naga artist Zubeni Lotha is a part of the interdisciplinary curatorial team behind the collaborative exhibition of the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin Berlin, the Stiftung Humboldt Forum im Berliner Schloss, and the Berlin Botanical Museum; she looks critically at the constructed image of the Naga in historical Western photography. *I will not weep*, a new sound installation by Naga artist Senti Toy Threadgill in the Humboldt Forum's listening room also reflects on contemporary Nagaland, its colonial past, and current political situation.



1 View of the temporary exhibition *Naga Land. Voices from Northeast India* at the Humboldt Forum © SHF / Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Ethnologisches Museum, photo: Alexander Schippel 2 Mangko Akir Collection © Imchatsung Imchen 3 *Untitled* (from the series *Looking at a tree again*) © Zubeni Lotha



1 Temporary exhibition *Matters of Perspective* in the Humboldt Forum © SHF, Scenography Valentine Koppenhöfer, Photo: Alexander Schippel

In recent years, ethnological collections in European museums have come under strong criticism. The Humboldt Forum is also working to address this issue. A temporary exhibition entitled *Matter(s) of Perspective*. A Prelude examines some radical perspectives that expose colonialism as a macrosocial occurrence. The installation is specifically dedicated to the traces left by colonisation in the former German colonial territories of Cameroon, Namibia and Oceania and presents interconnections that reach right into the present day.

Photographs and school books, sculptures and interviews form a starting point for reflection on the views of colonisers and formerly colonised societies. These views are typified by the distinction between Us and Them – the Othering of German society with regard to Cameroonian, Namibian and Oceanic societies, and their view of German society.

In order to focus on the points of view themselves, and in the spirit of the current discussion on restitution, the installation works less with museum exhibits, choosing instead to rely on reproductions. Additional artistic works raise awareness of cultural and institutional perspectives: using biographies of Namibians who spent part of their childhood in the GDR from 1979 onwards, a selection of films and images on the theme of intersectionality reflect the effects of colonial cultural contact.

TEMPORARY EXHIBITIONS

Opening times	Wed–Mon 10:30–18:30
Admission	Free
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