



# MUSEUMS OF THE WORLD SERIES MU-76

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## HUMBOLDT FORUM

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View of the Humboldt Forum in the rebuilt Berlin Palace (2023)



[Wikimedia](#) | © [OpenStreetMap](#)

**Established** 2020

**Location** [Berlin Palace](#), Berlin,  
Germany

**Coordinates**  [52°31′03″N 13°24′10″E](#)

**Type** [Art museum](#)

**Collections** non-European art

**Director** Hartmut Dorgerloh

**Architect** [Franco Stella](#)

**Public transit access** [U: Museumsinsel \(U5\)](#)

**Website** [www.humboldtforum.org/en/](http://www.humboldtforum.org/en/)



**The Humboldt Forum** is a museum dedicated to [human history](#), art and culture, located in the [Berlin Palace](#) on the [Museum Island](#) in the historic centre of [Berlin](#). It is named in honour of the [Prussian](#) scholars [Wilhelm](#) and [Alexander von Humboldt](#). Considered the "German equivalent" of the [British Museum](#), the Humboldt Forum houses the non-European collections of the [Berlin State Museums](#), temporary exhibitions and public events. Due to the [COVID-19 pandemic](#), it opened digitally on 16 December 2020 and became accessible to the general public on 20 July 2021.

## History

The Humboldt Forum incorporates two former museums, the [Ethnological Museum of Berlin](#) and the [Museum of Asian Art](#). Both had their roots in the Ancient Prussian Art Chamber. The Ancient Prussian Art Chamber was originally established by [Joachim II Hector, Elector of Brandenburg](#) in the mid-16th century, but was nearly destroyed during the [Thirty Years' War](#) (1618–1648). The art chamber was rebuilt as a magnificent collection by [Frederick William, Elector of Brandenburg](#), and was moved to the newly extended [Berlin Palace](#) by [Frederick I of Prussia](#) in the early 18th century. The Ethnological Museum opened in 1886 as a successor of the Ancient Prussian Art Chamber; the Museum of Asian Art originated as the Indian Department of the Ethnological Museum in 1904. [Wilhelm von Bode](#), the Director-General of the Royal Museums in Berlin, established the Museum of East Asian Art as a separate collection in 1906. In 2006 the Museum of Indian Art and the Museum of East Asian Art were merged to form the Museum of Asian Art.

From 2020 the Ethnological Museum and the Museum of Asian Art are both part of the Humboldt Forum in the Berlin Palace. By 2019, the Forum's overall costs totaled \$700 million; at the time, it was considered Europe's most expensive cultural project. Its opening was initially planned for autumn 2019, then delayed to



2020 due to technical problems, including with its air conditioning system. Delivery delays and the unavailability of workers during a lockdown due to the [COVID-19 pandemic in Germany](#) pushed it back a few months further. In April 2020, two tar cookers exploded at the construction site, injuring one worker.

On 16 September 2022, the opening of the eastern wing, the last section of the Humboldt Forum Museum, meant the Humboldt Forum Museum was finally completed. It became Germany's currently most expensive cultural project.

## Building



North and east facades of Humboldt Forum.

*Main article:* [Berlin Palace](#)

The Humboldt Forum has its seat in the reconstructed [Berlin Palace](#). The foundation stone was laid by President [Joachim Gauck](#) in a ceremony on 12 June 2013.

## Museum

On completion in 2020, the City Palace housed the [Ethnological Museum of Berlin](#) and the [Museum of Asian Art](#), as well as two restaurants, a theater, a movie theater and an auditorium. The project is led by a three-member management committee, chaired by founding director [Neil MacGregor](#) and also including the co-directors, archaeologist [Hermann Parzinger](#) and art historian [Horst Bredekamp](#). The [Foundation for the Humboldt Forum in the Berlin Palace](#) has been set up to create the museum.



MacGregor has proposed to make the museum admission-free, based on the model of the British Museum.

## CONTROVERSY

The Humboldt Forum came under criticism before and after its 2020 opening due to the museum's own ship of [stolen art](#) and other artefacts which were acquired from the [German colonial empire](#) and other European colonies in Africa and Asia, such as the [Benin Bronzes](#). In 2018, it was at the center of a debate about the legality of cultural heritage from former German colonies being put on display in Germany, drawing protests from activists and art historians including as [B nedicte Savoy](#), who alleged the museum had not done enough to research the [provenance](#) and failed to critically present objects originating from the [Global South](#) in its collection.

## GALLERY

Images of the highlights shown at the Humboldt Forum.



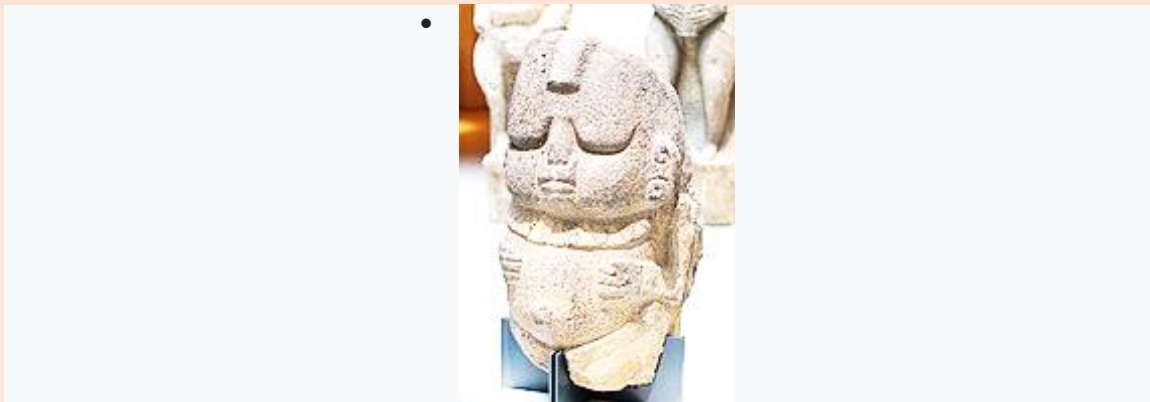
A historical boat from the island of Luff in modern [Papua New Guinea](#)



## A Cihuacóatl



## A beaker for chocolate from the Maya



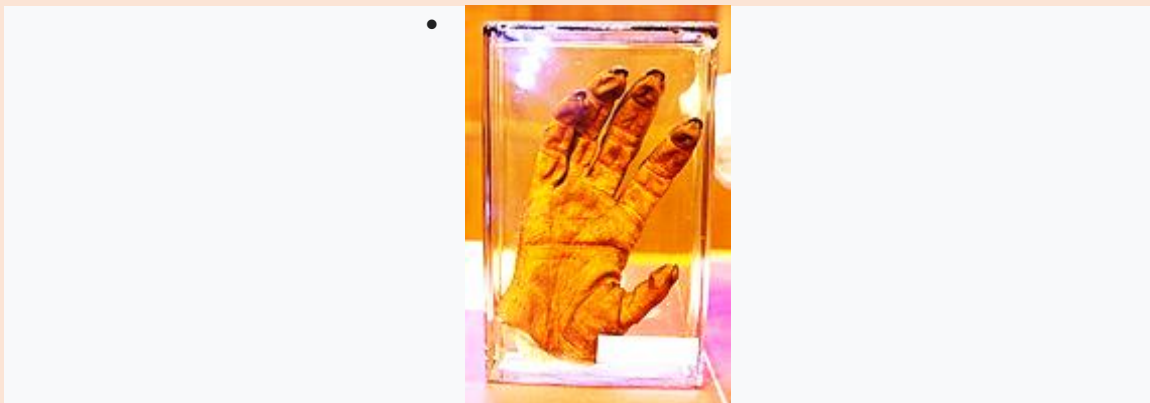
## The Barrion a [Potbelly sculpture](#)



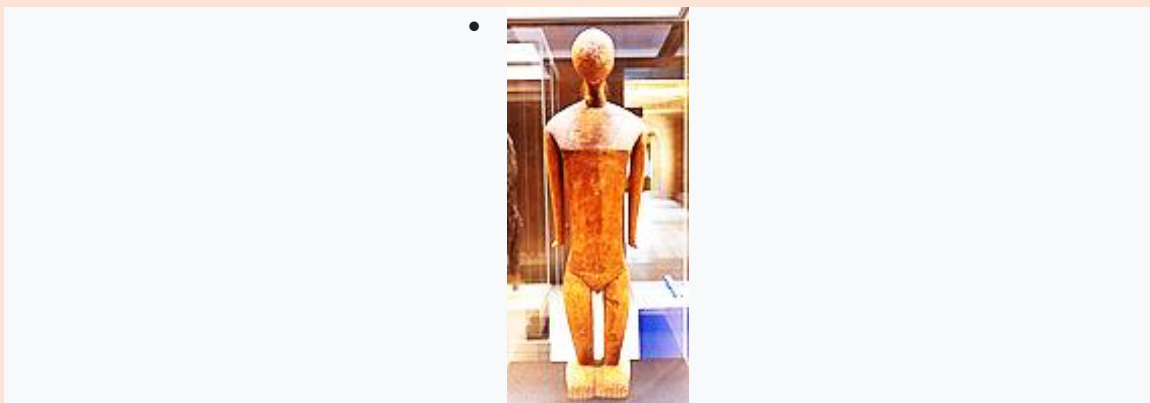
## Vishnu



## Nandi



## Hand of a Western gorilla





## Sope



Model of an *Orobates pabsti*: red parts are reconstructed from the fossil, blue parts are mirrors, and yellow parts are some estimations.

COMPILED, DESIGNED, AND EDITED – KRISHNA RAO KHANAPUR.



