

# Press release

Berlin, 26 February 2019

## Humboldt Forum Highlights

Discussion #6: Commission – Art – Freedom

On Thursday, 21 March 2019, at **7:30 pm**, as part of the **Humboldt Forum Highlights** season, the **Humboldt Forum** will host the discussion **Commission – Art – Freedom** at **ESMT**, Schlossplatz 1, 10178 **Berlin**. Seven **experts** will take the painting **Guten Tag** [Good Day] by **Wolfgang Mattheuer** as their starting point for a discussion on **freedom and rules in art**. At 7 pm and again at 9:15 pm there will be a half-hour tour through ESMT, focusing on the art in what used to be the East German State Council building, as well as the history of the building itself. The **tour** and **admission to the discussion** are **free of charge**.

You can register to attend until 20 March 2019 at [events.humboldtforum.com](http://events.humboldtforum.com). Media representatives should please contact Michael Mathis at [m.mathis@humboldtforum.com](mailto:m.mathis@humboldtforum.com) for mandatory accreditation.

When it comes to rules and regulations, there's a fine line between restricting art and enabling it. When do rules start to get in the way of art? When does the rulebook protect artistic freedom? And when does it become censorship? What role is played by the political setting in each case? And what does this fine line mean today for contemporary and future work at the Humboldt Forum? Taking the Humboldt Forum Highlight *Guten Tag* by Wolfgang Mattheuer as their starting point, three artists, two curators, the departmental head of a government office and a member of a competition jury will discuss three different approaches to Kunst am Bau ("Percent for Art"), commissioned art in East Germany, and art commissions in the future Humboldt Forum.

The first discussion will be about the rules, freedoms and limitations of the Kunst am Bau competition at the Humboldt Forum. Talking about this issue will be Beate Hückelheim-Kaune, the departmental head responsible for Kunst am Bau at the Federal Office for Building and Regional Planning (BBR), Barbara Steiner, who chaired the jury for one of the most recent Humboldt Forum competitions and Kang Sunkoo, whose design for *Statue of Limitations* won the competition for the main staircase.

Wolfgang Mattheuer's work *Guten Tag* [Good Day] is one of several works to reference the Palast der Republik, and will form the main focus of the second discussion. Dieter M. Weidenbach, an artist from East Germany, will talk with Michael Philipp, chief curator at Museum Barberini, about the work's creation and significance in East Germany, and about the freedom and limits experienced by artists of that era.

The event is rounded off by Paul Spies, director of Stadtmuseum Berlin and chief curator for the state of Berlin in the Humboldt Forum, who will first explain the various ways in which artists can cooperate with and participate in the Berlin Exhibition. He and his curatorial team have commissioned a number of artists, photographers and urban artists to produce works for the exhibition. As an expert on photographic images of urban spaces in Berlin, photographer Arwed Messmer has proven the ideal partner for the exhibition section on *Free Space*. In conclusion to their discussion, Spies and Messmer will give the audience some insights into how they work together.

**Beate Hückelheim-Kaune** is a trained architect and head of the department responsible for project management, competitions, publicly funded construction, landscape architecture/interior design and Kunst am Bau at the Federal Office for Building and Regional Planning (BBR) in Berlin. The Kunst am Bau competitions are thus run under her purview. **Kang Sunkoo** is an artist and architect in Berlin. His piece *Statue of Limitations*, which is about remembering the colonial past, won the Kunst am Bau competition for the main staircase of the Humboldt Forum. Curator and author **Dr. Barbara Steiner** has been head of Kunsthaus Graz since 2016. She has published works on the museum, on spatial concepts, on the relationship between architecture, design and art, as well as on curation. **Paul Spies** set up and ran the art-historical consultancy *D'arts* until 2009, when he became the director of Amsterdam Museum. He has been director of Stadtmuseum Berlin and chief curator for the state of Berlin in the Humboldt Forum since February 2016. From the start of the 1990s, urban photographer **Arwed Messmer** devoted himself to documenting the changes taking place in Berlin. Since 2006 he has been exploring collections of images in public archives which have lost their original documentary function. The result has been a number of exhibitions and publications on the Berlin Wall and Stasi archives. In 2017 he presented his most recent works on left-wing West German terrorism and its origins in Berlin, with a show that remains open in London until June. **Dr. Michael Philipp** is head curator at Museum Barberini, where in 2017 he (and Valerie Hortolani) curated the exhibition *Hinter der Maske: Künstler in der DDR* and the presentation *Dürfen Kommunisten träumen? Die Galerie im Palast der Republik*. **Dieter M. Weidenbach** is a painter and graphic artist from Weimar. He was a master student of Willi Sitte, and lived in East Germany until 1985. His works, including *Unterwegs* [On the Way] were most recently shown in the exhibition *Hinter der Maske, Künstler in der DDR* at Museum Barberini.

Inspired by the eponymous Alexander and Wilhelm von Humboldt and their delight in exploring the world and comprehending it as a system linking nature and culture in myriad ways, the Humboldt Forum will establish a new venue for experience, learning and encounter in the heart of Berlin. The presentations by the various Humboldt Forum institutions will bring together a wide range of topics from science and art, nature and culture, history and society, accompanied by many different perspectives from past and present, near and far. As a foretaste, the Humboldt Forum is already exhibiting fifteen Highlights: eight are on show on Berlin's Museum Island and at the Kulturforum, while a further selection of objects are to be the focus for eight discussions held at locations throughout the city. Details of all fifteen Humboldt Forum Highlights as well as the full programme can be found at [humboldtforum.com/highlights](http://humboldtforum.com/highlights).

## Humboldt Forum Highlights

Discussion #6: Commission – Art – Freedom

**Date** Thursday, 21 March 2019

**Time** 7:30 pm

**Venue** ESMT, Schloßplatz 1, 10178 Berlin

**Language** German

**Admission** free of charge

**Registration** by 20 March 2019 at [events.humboldtforum.com](http://events.humboldtforum.com)

**Participants** Beate Hückelheim-Kaune, Arwed Messmer, Dr. Michael Philipp, Kang Sunkoo, Dr. Barbara Steiner, Paul Spies, Dieter M. Weidenbach

**Words of welcome** Lavinia Frey, managing director for programming and projects at the Stiftung Humboldt Forum im Berliner Schloss

**Tours** through ESMT, focusing on the history of the former State Council building and the art it contains, from 7 to 7:30 pm and 9:15 to 9:45 pm.

Drinks and snacks will be on offer before the start of the event and during an informal conclusion.

**Organizer** Stiftung Humboldt Forum im Berliner Schloss

**Participating institutions** Stiftung Preußischer Kulturbesitz with the Ethnologisches Museum and the Museum für Asiatische Kunst of the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Kulturprojekte Berlin with Stadtmuseum Berlin, and the Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, with the Stiftung Humboldt Forum im Berliner Schloss at the helm.

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