

Press release

Berlin, 17 August 2018

A Tea House for the Humboldt Forum

Winning competition entry by URA Architects from Kanazawa to be realized

In the **Humboldt Forum im Berliner Schloss**, a **tea house** will offer visitors the opportunity to enjoy a **tea ceremony** as part of the **exhibition module on Japanese art**. On **10 August 2018** the Stiftung Humboldt Forum im Berliner Schloss and **URA Architects from Kanazawa**, winner of the design competition, signed the necessary contractual arrangements. The **modern sculptural architecture** of the new tea house will combine a sense of **tradition and modernity**, while also referencing **Japanese and German culture**.

Bôki literally means “forgetting one’s day-to-day concerns”. Taking this as a thematic inspiration, a tea room was set up in October 2000 in what was then the Museum für Ostasiatische Kunst (Museum of East Asian Art) in Dahlem. It was given the name “Bôki”, and tea ceremonies were offered there on a regular basis as of 2005. At the tea gatherings mundane cares were set to one side, so that the mind could focus completely on the ritual preparation and subsequent enjoyment of the tea, appreciating the practical and supremely aesthetic implements and room decoration that form part of the ceremony.

This tea ceremony tradition is now to be continued in the new spaces built for the collection in the Museum für Asiatische Kunst (Asian Art Museum) as part of the exhibition module on Japanese art in the west wing on the third floor of the Humboldt Forum. URA Architects from Kanazawa in Japan won the design competition launched by the Stiftung Humboldt Forum im Berliner Schloss in coordination with the Museum für Asiatische Kunst. Their design will now be realized. This particular component of the exhibition is being conceived in Japan and furnished with Japanese handcraft: it will be installed and tested in Japan before being brought to Berlin.

The form and materials of the tea house will make nuanced local references. The external walls and roof made of Corten steel pick up on the octagonal shape of the ruined tower of the Kaiser Wilhelm Memorial Church, which was destroyed in World War II and is now a monument to

peace. The interior walls of the main room, which will have the dimensions of eight traditional Kyoto tatami mats, are to include elements of European loam. The tea house consists of the main room (the tea room) and an ancillary room (preparation space). The tea room is fitted with a hearth set into the floor (*ro* in Japanese) and a tokonoma (alcove). As of late 2019, the tea house will enable visitors to experience the culture of the Way of Tea amidst outstanding examples of Japanese painting, graphic art, ceramics and lacquer work.

Hans-Dieter Hegner, chief technology officer of the Stiftung Humboldt Forum im Berliner Schloss and member of the five-person jury says: “I am delighted that the Museum für Asiatische Kunst has successfully found a space in which it can once again present Japanese tea ceremony to the public. The tea house that the Stiftung Humboldt Forum im Berliner Schloss is purchasing from Japan for the exhibition was selected in a competition involving Japanese architects and artists. The winning design produced by a team led by Jun Ura from Kanazawa seems to effortlessly combine ancient tradition with modern elements. It complies with the strict specifications laid down for tea ceremony, while at the same time drawing on a modern sculptural form of architecture. Traditional Japanese materials like washi paper and lacquered wood are combined with dominant modern materials like steel. This shows that history and tradition also have their place in the modern world. This special exhibition piece will be much enjoyed by visitors to the museum as well as by the Japanese tea association.”

When the **Humboldt Forum** opens its doors in late 2019, it will mark the establishment of a whole new cultural quarter in the very heart of Berlin. By bringing together outstanding collections containing major exhibits – among them spiritual objects and artworks from Asia, Africa and America – and coupling these with a variety of cultural activities, the Humboldt Forum is seeking to inspire new insights into the worlds of the past, present and future. With the Stiftung Humboldt Forum im Berliner Schloss at the helm, the participating actors are the Stiftung Preußischer Kulturbesitz (SPK) 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. The Humboldt Forum has already developed a highly visible presence with its diverse programme of exhibitions, discussions, performances, workshops, films and artistic interventions.

Further information is available at humboldtforum.com.

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Competition

Stiftung Humboldt Forum im Berliner Schloss
Unter den Linden 3, 10117 Berlin

Winning design

Tea house by URA Architects and Engineers

Jury

Hans-Dieter Hegner, Chief Technology Officer, Stiftung Humboldt Forum im Berliner Schloss

Dr Alexander Hofmann, Curator of Japanese Art, Museum für Asiatische Kunst, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin – Stiftung Preußischer Kulturbesitz Berlin

Tim Ventimiglia, Director Berlin Operations RAA Berlin (architectural and exhibition design)

Ms Nobuko Sugai-Baumgarten, Vice President, Chadō Urasenke Tankōkai Berlin Association

Prof. Dipl.-Ing. Axel Sowa, RWTH Aachen, Teaching and Research Department – Theory of Architecture

Press photos can be downloaded at humboldtforum.com/press

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