

Press release

Berlin, 5 November 2018

A Drua from the South Pacific

In Fiji a double-hulled sailing boat is being built for the junior areas

The **Humboldt Forum** is to feature a true experience: a **double-hulled boat** from **Fiji**. The sailing vessel, known as a *drua*, is currently being built on the islands of Viti Levu and Ogea Levu in cooperation with **Fiji National University** and **Fijian boatbuilders** using **traditional techniques**. Next year the individual components will be shipped to Berlin and assembled in the Humboldt Forum. Along with the other boats from Oceania, the *drua* will allow visitors to experience the relationship between the inhabitants of the Pacific region and the sea. Children will be able to board, climb and explore the *drua* as part of the **junior areas**.

Islands and atolls only comprise a tiny part of the total area of Oceania; the rest is made up of ocean. The peoples of the Pacific were able to keep in contact thanks to the sophisticated boatbuilding techniques in the region. The boats from Oceania, which were moved to the Humboldt Forum from Dahlem's ethnological museum last spring, will bear eloquent witness to this. A new Fijian double-hulled boat will make the perfect addition to the collection.

The Polynesians used to explore the eastern Pacific with double-hulled boats, heading for and settling on distant islands. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the more manoeuvrable Fijian boats with hulls of different lengths replaced their predecessors with same-sized hulls. In Fiji, double-hulled boats used to be an important means of transport between the islands for conducting trade and maintaining social relationships.

The *drua* which is soon to be acquired is a reproduction of a thirteen-metre double-hulled boat dating from 1913, now on display in the maritime exhibition of the Fiji Museum in the capital city Suva, located on the main island of Viti Levu. It was there that Hans-Dieter Hegner, chair of the Stiftung Humboldt Forum im Berliner Schloss, and Joji Marau Misaele of the Fiji National University's college of engineering signed the contract a few weeks ago to construct and purchase the boat. Lars-Christian Koch, director of the collections

of the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin in the Humboldt Forum, was also in attendance.

Hans-Dieter Hegner views it as a stroke of luck that Joji Marau Misaele and his team agreed to reconstruct the *drua*: “In the Humboldt Forum we will be presenting a boat built using traditional techniques, and we will accompany and document the entire construction process.” Lars-Christian Koch is also delighted at the acquisition of the boat and added: “We will use this traditionally constructed double-hulled boat for educational purposes in particular.”

In Fiji work on the boat has already begun. Until the end of January, local artisans will be on the small rainforest island of Ogea Levu, felling the required kinds of wood – *damanu* (*Callophyllum vitiense*) and *vesi* (*Intsia bijuga*) – under the keen eye of Joji Marau Misaele. The wood will be used to build the two hulls and the planks, which will then be transported 300 kilometres to the island of Viti Levu, where the rest of the boat’s components will be manufactured by the end of April 2019, and the entire *drua* will be assembled as a test run. Then the boat will be taken apart again and transported to Berlin in a shipping container.

In June and July 2019 the Fijians will be assembling the *drua* in the Humboldt Forum. The individual parts will be bound together with *magimagi*, a type of rope made from coconut fibre. Once the Humboldt Forum has opened, visitors can admire the *drua*, measuring around 2.70 metres wide and 10 metres long, in the foyer of the southern exhibition hall. As part of the junior spaces, children and teenagers will even be able to clamber over the *drua* via a wave-shaped access point. Virtual reality headsets will help the young adventurers to immerse themselves in the world of navigation.

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. 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 (SMB), Kulturprojekte Berlin with Stadtmuseum Berlin, the Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin (HU), and with the Stiftung Humboldt Forum im Berliner Schloss at the helm. The Humboldt Forum has already developed a highly visible presence with a broad programme of exhibitions, discussions, performances, workshops, films and artistic interventions.

Further information is available at humboldtforum.com

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Drua Fijian double-hulled sailing boat

Original model A *drua* dating from 1913 in the Fiji Museum, Suva, Fiji Islands

Measurements Length of the longer hull: 10 metres, shorter hull 9 metres; width c. 2.70 metres.

Components Decking (*rara*), cabin (*vale*) and superstructure, mast (*vana*), triangular matting sail (*laca*) with rigging, two yardarms (*kariaki*), two rudders (*uli*), two oars (*sua*), a pole for punting (*kara*) and two bailing buckets (*nima*) as well as binding made from coconut fibres (*magimagi*).

Client Stiftung Humboldt Forum im Berliner Schloss in cooperation with the Ethnologisches Museum of the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin.

Contractor / project management in Fiji Joji Marau Misaele, Head of School, School of Mechanical Engineering, College of Engineering, Science and Technology, Fiji National University, Samabula, Suva, Fiji

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