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Das Berliner Schloss and Humboldt Forum: A Contemporary Repository of Cultural Identity

Rachel Florence Goldstein

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Qualifying Paper

Submitted by

Rachel Florence Goldstein

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The University of St. Thomas
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Committee Members:

Dr. Jayme Yahr, Ph.D., Chair

Dr. Victoria Young, Ph.D.

Dr. Michelle Nordtorp-Madson, Ph.D.

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Dr. Jayme Yahr, Ph.D., Chair

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Abstract

The collecting history of the Brandenburg-Prussian *Kunstkammer* began in the late seventeenth century after the original sixteenth-century collection was destroyed during the Thirty Years War. The ethnographic objects that were collected over five hundred years by the rulers of Brandenburg and Prussia with a Western purview were originally housed within the Berliner Schloss as a part of the Brandenburg-Prussian *Kunstkammer*, a cabinet of curiosities. Torn down in 1950 by the East German government, the Berliner Schloss is being rebuilt, with a projected opening date of 2019. The new Berliner Schloss will contain the Humboldt Forum, a global, cultural museum that will house the non-Western ethnographic collections that were part of the original Brandenburg-Prussian *Kunstkammer*. The collections that will be housed in the new Berliner Schloss will be encoded with cultural value and will position Germany within a global context, rather than retain the country's historic identity as a harbinger of empire.

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Introduction

In 2007, the Parliament of the Federal Republic of Germany, known as the Bundestag, agreed to the reconstruction of the Berliner Schloss with one interesting stipulation: the new building was to have three sides built to replicate the Baroque façade of the original Berliner Schloss, which was last altered in 1845 and demolished in 1950, and that the fourth side façade facing the Spree River could be in the style of the architect and planning committee's choosing (Figs. 1, 2, 3).¹ The planning of the new building and its contents evoked debate for more than half of a century by politicians, historians, architects, urban planners and academics before the Bundestag finally decided upon the creation of the Humboldt Forum in 2002. In 2008, an Italian architect well known in Europe named Franco Stella won the international competition for the new building's redesign (Fig. 4). Stella's design will engage the public by being easily accessible with the inclusion of a public thoroughfare bisecting the building, as well as create an architectural dialogue with the city of Berlin.²

The Humboldt Forum within the new Berliner Schloss will "further develop the idea that lay behind the creation of the Museumsinsel in the 19th century, now turning it into a comprehensible vision of the equal validity of all cultures in the globalized world of the 21st Century."³ Like all major European cities of today, Berlin has a long and varied history that has shaped the ways in which Germans view their contemporary culture and their place within a global world.

The Berliner Schloss is no different to Berlin when it comes to creating a national cultural identity, as it was the seat of the ruling family of Brandenburg, then Prussia, and

¹ Thomas Flierl and Hermann Parzinger, *Humboldt Forum Berlin: The Project* (Berlin: Verlag Theater der Zeit, 2009), 10.

² Franco Stella, "The New Berliner Schloss: The Architecture," in *The Humboldt-Forum in the Berliner Schloss: Planning, Processes, Perspectives*, edited by Astrid Bähr, 34-39 (Munich: Stiftung Preußischer Kulturbesitz und Hirmer Verlag GmbH, 2013), 34.

³ Flierl and Parzinger, 10.

finally the Empire of Germany. From the laying of first stone in 1443 to the demolition of the Berliner Schloss in 1950 by the German Democratic Republic (GDR), the royal palace of the Hohenzollerns had many functions.

In this study I address the formation of cultural propaganda by Germany through the collecting and use of the Brandenburg-Prussian Kunstkammer collections, a cabinet of curiosities, as well as the access to the ethnographic, anthropological, and material culture collections that are planned to be on display at the new Humboldt Forum. I also examine the continuous revision of the museum site as a vessel for exhibiting national identity through royal collections. Through the analysis of the history of the original Berliner Schloss, the Brandenburg-Prussian Kunstkammer, and their ethnographic and anthropological collections, I argue that German politicians and academics working within the context of the new Berliner Schloss and Humboldt Forum will be utilizing dominant-hegemonic messages of global identity to encode the collections that will be housed and displayed within the Humboldt Forum.⁴

This argument will be established through the use of Ian Hodder's thing theory and entanglement theory, which he outlines in his book, *Entangled: An Archaeology of the Relationships between Humans and Things*. Hodder discusses not only the relationships between humans and things, but also how things affect human behavior, especially the act of ownership. Ownership precedes the commodification of things, as well as economic and cultural value theories, which are discussed by anthropologists Arjun Appadurai and Igor Kopytoff. Appadurai also furthers Stuart Hall's communications theory by suggesting that

⁴ There are three encoding/decoding (communications) positions established by social and media theorist Stuart Hall, dominant-hegemonic, negotiated, and oppositional. See Stuart Hall, "Encoding/Decoding," in *Media and Cultural Studies: KeyWorks*, 2nd ed, edited By Meenakshi Gigi Durham and Douglas M. Kellner, 137-144 (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 137-144., and Stuart Hall, "Encoding/Decoding," in *Culture, Media, Language: Working Papers in Cultural Studies, 1972-79*, Edited by Stuart Hall, Dorothy Hobson, Andrew Lowe and Paul Wilson, 128-138 (London: Hutchinson, 1980), 128-138.

commodities are encoded with messages of value.⁵ The ethnographic, anthropological and material culture collections that were started in the late seventeenth century as a part of the Brandenburg-Prussian *Kunstammer* have been commodified for centuries. The types of encoded messages and cultural value associated with commodification of the collections has changed with time and collecting motivations throughout the five centuries of the Brandenburg-Prussian history. The collecting and communications theories outlined by Hall, Hodder, Kopytoff, and Appadurai provide an understanding of the process of collecting and commodification, as well as the assignment of value that has been placed upon objects in the Brandenburg-Prussian *Kunstammer* for hundreds of years.

In his article entitled “Encoding/Decoding,” Hall discusses the steps of encoding and decoding messages.⁶ There are three types of encoding and decoding positions that Hall discusses: dominant-hegemonic, negotiated, and oppositional, which are indicative of the audience’s ability to decode a message that has been encoded. Dominant-hegemonic position is when a message is encoded on an image or object, and once the message reaches an audience (either through an exhibition, marketing, or another method such as a television show) the viewer decodes the message in the same way it was presented. In a negotiated position, the encoded message and the decoded message do not align, but are not contrary to one another. Furthermore, in an oppositional position the “decoder” understands the original message, but chooses to read the message in a “globally contrary way.”⁷

⁵ See Appadurai, Arjun. “Introduction: Commodities and the Politics of Value.” In *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective* Edited by Arjun Appadurai, 3-63 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 13-58. Igor Kopytoff, “The Cultural biography of things: Commoditization as Process,” in *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective* Edited by Arjun Appadurai, 3-63 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 3-63. Also see Hall, 2012,137-144, and Hall, 1980, 128-138.

⁶ Hall, 2012, 137-144. Hall, 1980, 128-138.

⁷ Hall, 1980, 136-138.

The theory of encoding and decoding messages is important, because the Humboldt Forum must be able to explicitly communicate its message of global cultural value through its collections. The Humboldt Forum's ideal type of encoding and decoding position is that of dominant-hegemonic, which will allow for Germany's global identity to be encoded upon the non-Western ethnographic, anthropological, and material culture collections that will make up the collection of the Humboldt Forum. Encoding and decoding theory allows communication between institutions, audiences and objects, or between subjects. In order to fully understand how the display of a collection that is centuries old will enhance Germany's identity as it pertains to the global cultural management realm, communications theory, along with the theories of commodification and cultural value must be applied to the Humboldt Forum case study.

Although the collections that will be displayed and exhibited within the Humboldt Forum are going to be ethnographic, anthropological, and non-Western in scope, the collection's roots date back to seventeenth-century Europe, a time when collecting was based upon Western aesthetics and judgment. Germany will be communicating its national identity through objects that reflect a history of ownership of non-Western objects. From the seventeenth through the nineteenth centuries, the value encoded within the Berliner Schloss' collection was one of dominance and exoticism of non-Western cultures, but this outlook has shifted with the redesign of the Berliner Schloss and with the design of the Humboldt Forum. Now, the display of non-German cultural objects asks visitors to position themselves globally, not from above looking down on a complex web of cultural knowledge, but from within, as advocates for the need of greater learning opportunities. These learning opportunities will include expanded access for the public to the future exhibitions and programming regarding the historic collections that were limited in access in previous times. By allowing public access to the collections, the Humboldt Forum will be able to

communicate Germany's new, knowledge-based, academic place within a global world. Germany's national identity, as shown through the Humboldt Forum's collection, is no longer inward looking, but is based upon an outward, global and inclusive interpretation.

Berlin, the Hohenzollerns, and the manifestations of the Berliner Schloss

The importance of the Berliner Schloss as a repository of culture within the context of the history of Berlin, and Germany as a whole, is based within its physical and architectural history. In the early fifteenth century, the Franken branch of the Hohenzollern family bought the Margraviate of Brandenburg, a border province of the Holy Roman Empire. With the acquisition of the title of Margrave of Brandenburg and the acquisition of the lands associated with it, the Hohenzollerns began to create the kingdom and empire of Prussia, part of which is today's German State of Brandenburg. Margrave and Elector of Brandenburg, Friedrich II, Irontooth, (r. 1440 – 1470) chose to construct his fortress on Fisherman's Island (today known as Museum Island) in the middle of the Spree River in Cölln, which was the sister city to Altberlin (Fig. 5). The construction of the first manifestation of the Berliner Schloss began in 1443; a year after Friedrich II decreed the construction of his fortress.

The fortress grew into a Renaissance castle and then into a Northern Baroque palace, which also boasted the Brandenburg-Prussian *Kunstammer*, a cabinet of curiosities (Fig. 6). The *Kunstammer* was created and collected by the royal family of the Hohenzollerns starting with the reign of Margrave Joachim II (r. 1535 – 1571). This collection was comprised of *Naturalia*, *Artificialia* and *Scientifica*.⁸ It was during the Thirty

⁸ The Latin terms *Naturalia*, *Artificialia* and *Scientifica* means natural specimens, man-made objects (including artworks) and scientific instruments. Der Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, *Königliche Kunstammer*, in *Wissenschaftliche Sammlungen an der Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin: Portal der Sammlungsaktivitäten und Sammlungeserschließungen*, <http://www.sammlungen.hu-berlin.de/dokumente/7614/> (accessed September 20, 2016). Horst Bredekamp and Michael Eissenhauer, "The KunstKammer as Nucleus" in *The Humboldt-Forum*

Years' War (1618 – 1648) that the majority of the original royal Brandenburg-Prussian collection was destroyed or lost. Margrave Friedrich Wilhelm (r. 1640 – 1688) began a new collection once peace reached Berlin. The collection grew and was kept in the Berliner Schloss until parts of the collection were distributed to other state-run institutions beginning in the early eighteenth century (Figs. 7 & 8).⁹

Friedrich I of Prussia (r. 1688 – 1713) had the largest influence on the development of the cultural identity of Brandenburg and Prussia out of all the members of the Hohenzollern royal family. Eight years after crowning himself King in Prussia in 1701, Friedrich I merged Cölln and Altberlin into Berlin, a new, unified capital of Prussia (Fig. 9). Small in population at first, Berlin steadily grew and became an economic and cultural epicenter in the early eighteenth century. It was also Friedrich I who founded the Academie der Mahler-, Bildhauer- und Architectur-Kunst in 1696 in Berlin, today's Akademie der Künste Berlin. This institution facilitated and influenced the courts and cultural activities of Friedrich I and those who ruled after him, including Friedrich Wilhelm III (r. 1797 – 1840) who gifted Berlin's first public museum to the city's citizens in 1830, what is today known as the Altes Museum (Fig. 10).¹⁰ The creation of the Altes Museum, founded for the "study of all antiquities and the free arts," laid the foundation for future Berlin and Prussian museums facilitated by the Hohenzollern Family and the State of Berlin, as well as the ensuing

in the Berliner Schloss: Planning, Processes, Perspectives, edited by Astrid Bähr, 50-57 (Munich: Stiftung Preußischer Kulturbesitz und Hirmer Verlag GmbH, 2013), 50.

⁹ Der Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, *Königliche Kunstammer*, in *Wissenschaftliche Sammlungen an der Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin: Portal der Sammlungsaktivitäten und Sammlungeserschließungen*, <http://www.sammlungen.hu-berlin.de/dokumente/7614/> (accessed September 20, 2016).

¹⁰ Elsa van Wezel, "Denon's Louvre and Schinkel's Alte Museum: War Trophy Museum verses Monument to Peace," in *Napoleon's Legacy: The Rise of National Museums in Europe 1794-1830*, edited by Ellinoor Bergvelt, Debora J. Meijers, Lieske Tibbe, and Elsa van Wezel, 157-172 (Berlin: G + H Verlag Berlin, 2009), 157.

collections that were created out of the holdings of the original Brandenburg-Prussian *Kunstammer*.¹¹

The majority of the Brandenburg-Prussian *Kunstammer* collection was systematically removed from the Berliner Schloss over two centuries and held elsewhere, beginning with the natural history collection in the late eighteenth century. The Berliner Schloss did not cease being a repository of the Brandenburg-Prussian *Kunstammer*, rather, it still held parts of the original collection, along with objects and art works belonging to the Hohenzollern family. After the abdication of Kaiser Wilhelm II (r. 1888 – 1918) in 1918, the Berliner Schloss was turned into a museum by the government of the Weimar Republic in 1920. Opened in 1921, this museum was known as the Schlossmuseum and was comprised of the Kunstgewerbemuseum collection, the holdings of the Brandenburg-Prussian *Kunstammer* and the royal holdings of the Hohenzollern family, which included royal period rooms, artworks and furnishings (Figs. 11, 12, 13).¹² The opening of the decorative arts museum and its collection in 1867 embodied Prussia's response to England's Victoria and Albert Museum in London, which opened to the public in 1857.¹³ When considering the history of the Berliner Schloss and the Brandenburg-Prussian *Kunstammer* in the nineteenth century, it is important to note that this was the first true public exhibition space within the Berliner Schloss since its founding. The display of the collections were altered when the site was made accessible to the public during the Weimar Republic, as the Hohenzollern family relinquished their treasures to the state after the abdication. The Schlossmuseum also allowed the German public to view areas of the Berliner Schloss that

¹¹ Inscription on the portico of the museum, found on today's Altes Museum webpage: Altes Museum, *About Us*, <http://www.smb.museum/en/museums-institutions/alters-museum/about-us/profile.html> (accessed November 8, 2016).

¹² The Kunstgewerbemuseum was founded in 1867 and resided in the Martin-Gropius-Bau until 1920.

¹³ Richard Schneider, *Das Berliner Schloss in historischen Photographien* (Berlin: Lukas Verlag, 2013), 17.

they otherwise would not have, especially after 1926, when the historic private rooms of royal family members were open to museum patrons.¹⁴

Today, the collection of the Kunstgewerbemuseum includes decorative objects, clothing and furnishings. Parts of these collections can still be seen in and around Berlin today within the holdings and exhibitions of the Staatliche Museen Berlin, which includes the Ethnologische Museum, Kunstgewerbemuseum, Museum Europäischer Kulturen, Neues Museum and Museum für Asiatische Kunst, as well as in the museum and archive collections of the Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, Zentral- und Landesbibliothek Berlin and the palaces Schloss Charlottenburg, Schloss Sanssouci and Schloss Köpenick.¹⁵

As of now, the new Berliner Schloss will not reference the Schlossmuseum by including period rooms where objects, furnishings, and artworks from the Kunstgewerbemuseum collection could be exhibited; instead, the Stiftung Humboldt Forum im Berliner Schloss has stated that this could become a possibility in future.¹⁶ Though the period rooms will not be constructed at this time, the reconstruction of the three historic exterior façades along with the historic façades of the two courtyard areas Franco Stella has created will help recreate the majesty and significance of the original Berliner Schloss.

The rebuilding of the historic exterior of the palace along with the new contemporary architectural designs by Stella makes the Humboldt Forum a large undertaking in and of itself. As with all civic cultural projects, the government, cultural institutions, non-profit foundations and donations by patrons and fundraising activities will fund the Berliner Schloss. The funding of this project dictates both the budget and the project aims. Period rooms and historic furnishings of the original Berliner Schloss are not a

¹⁴ Schneider, 17.

¹⁵ Hermann Parzinger, "The Humboldt-Forum in the Berliner Schloss: Expectations and Opportunities" in *The Humboldt-Forum in the Berliner Schloss: Planning, Processes, Perspectives*, edited by Astrid Bähr, 12-29 (Munich: Stiftung Preußischer Kulturbesitz und Hirmer Verlag GmbH, 2013), 16-17.

¹⁶ As stated on the Stiftung Humboldt Forum im Berliner Schloss website, *Stiftung Humboldt Forum im Berliner Schloss*, <http://www.sbs-humboldtforum.de/> (accessed May 7, 2016).

high priority for this project, as it is centered on global discourse and international cultural exchange. However, the history of the original Berliner Schloss has an integral part to play in the rebuilding and reorganization.

The importance of the Berliner Schloss can be seen in its history, which must be discussed in order to obtain a greater understanding of why the rebuilt Berliner Schloss was chosen to house the Humboldt Forum and its ethnographic, anthropological and material culture collections that originated as a part of the Brandenburg-Prussian Kunstkammer. Unfortunately, the original Berliner Schloss was a victim of the Second World War and sustained moderate bomb damage during the war's last year. After the war ended in 1945, the Prussian royal collections did not return to the Berliner Schloss; instead, the Russians, who occupied the eastern zone of Berlin, and the subsequent communist government of Eastern Germany utilized the damaged building as a venue for temporary exhibitions. These temporary exhibitions were on view until the Berliner Schloss was demolished in fall of 1950. The fate of the Berliner Schloss was greatly debated and contested by the Federal Republic of Germany (FRD)¹⁷ and the German Democratic Republic (GDR)¹⁸ after World War II. GDR authorities subsequently demolished the palace to allow the site to be used as a parade ground. In 1973, the GDR started to construct the Palast der Republik (PdR), designed by Heinz Graffunder (1926 – 1994) (Fig. 14).

Opened in 1976, the PdR was a government building with many amenities, including gallery and exhibition space. In 1990, the GDR agreed to shut the PdR due to the high levels of asbestos it contained, and in 2003 the building was declared to be asbestos free after over a decade of deconstruction, industrial cleaning and asbestos mitigation. This led to a debate regarding the function and dismantlement of the PdR and its use by cultural institutions. In 2007, the Bundestag voted to rebuild the Berliner Schloss as a cultural

¹⁷ Also known as West Germany.

¹⁸ Also known as East Germany.

institution, which led to the subsequent dismantling of the PdR later in the year. Finally, in 2008, the PdR was demolished with a large field left in its place (Fig. 15). Thus, the original Berliner Schloss location was ready for a new cultural and civic building, the redesigned Berliner Schloss and Humboldt Forum. Now the site will once again house a palace that will exhibit part of the original Kunstkammer collections: the ethnographic, anthropological and non-European objects collected by the Hohenzollerns. The fine art and decorative objects of the Hohenzollerns' royal collections are now housed in separate museums and locations in Berlin.

The Humboldt Forum, an integral part of the new Berliner Schloss, will be a museum of non-European collections that will include ethnographic and anthropological objects and artifacts owned by the state of Berlin. Taking advantage of the size of the original palace, the building will also contain separate wings for library space for the Zentral- und Landesbibliothek Berlin, archives for the Humboldt Forum, departments belonging to the Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, temporary exhibition space, an archaeological museum pertaining to the archaeological history of the site of the Berliner Schloss, conference rooms, two auditoriums, multiple restaurants and a gift shop/bookstore (Figs. 16, 17, 18, 19).¹⁹

As mentioned previously, Franco Stella won the worldwide competition to redesign the Berliner Schloss in 2008. Chosen by a jury comprised of German politicians from the federal parliament and Berlin, as well as individuals from the future institutions, including the Humboldt Forum, that will be housed inside the new Berliner Schloss. Construction of the building began on June 12, 2013 with then German President Joachim Gauck laying the cornerstone (Fig. 20). The new cultural building is expected to open in 2019 along with the Humboldt Forum, which, as mentioned before, will contain ethnographic and anthropological objects from around the world. Some of the objects that will be housed in

¹⁹ As stated on the Stiftung Humboldt Forum im Berliner Schloss website, *Stiftung Humboldt Forum im Berliner Schloss*, <http://www.sbs-humboldtforum.de/> (accessed May 7, 2016).

the new Berliner Schloss originated within the collection of the Brandenburg-Prussian Kunstkammer that was originally housed in the historic Berliner Schloss.

The Historic Brandenburg-Prussian Kunstkammer and the Future Humboldt Forum

What is the significance of the ethnographic, anthropological and material culture collections that the new Humboldt Forum will house? The significance lies in the history and make up of the Brandenburg-Prussian Kunstkammer's ethnographic collections, as well as the history of the access to the ethnographic collection by academics and the public. The first Brandenburg-Prussian Kunstkammer of the sixteenth century began with three categories: Naturalia, Artificialia and Scientifica.²⁰ After its demise in the mid-seventeenth century during the Thirty Years War, the Brandenburg-Prussian Kunstkammer was not only rebuilt, but also expanded to include artifacts and curiosities from other regions of the world. These artifacts and curiosities included Asian weapons, textiles, and everyday items. Chinese porcelain and Indian manuscripts are also said to have been included.²¹ Additionally, "African 'curiosities'" were catalogued as being present in the collection in the beginning of the second Kunstkammer, however, these objects are now unknown within today's ethnographic collection according to anthropologist and current Ethnologisches Museum Director Viola König.²² These objects and artifacts came from ships trading along the Spree River, including vessels owned by the Dutch East India Company.²³

As more items from other parts of the world were added into the Kunstkammer through ocean trade and expedition, including items from the expeditions and travels of the

²⁰ Der Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, *Königliche Kunstkammer*, in *Wissenschaftliche Sammlungen an der Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin: Portal der Sammlungsaktivitäten und Sammlungeserschließungen*, <http://www.sammlungen.hu-berlin.de/dokumente/7614/> (accessed September 20, 2016).. Bredekamp and Eissenhauer, 50.

²¹ Viola König, ed., *Ethnologisches Museum Berlin* (Munich: Prestel Verlag, 2007), 13-14.

²² König, 2007, 14.

²³ *Ibid.*

Humboldt brothers for whom the Humboldt Forum and Der Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin are named, Wilhelm von Humboldt (1767-1835) and Alexander von Humboldt (1769-1859), classification of the ethnographic objects were made. At first, the ethnographic collection was placed into the category aptly named “Collection of Rarities from beyond Europe,” which was installed in a separate room from the other parts of the collection in 1798, according to König in *Ethnologisches Museum Berlin*, a visitor guide to the Ethnologisches Museum.²⁴ By 1830, the “Collection of Rarities from beyond Europe” was still housed in the Berliner Schloss and known as the Ethnographic Collection in name. This collection was categorized by place of origin under the following criteria: textiles, jewelry, sculpture, everyday items and utensils, nautical and fishing gear, hunting implements and weapons, musical instruments or religious objects.²⁵ By 1859, the majority of this ever-growing collection was stored and exhibited in the lower level of the Neues Museum, which was built between 1843 and 1855 (Fig. 21). By 1861, the ethnographic collection had grown to 5,192 objects from Africa, Asia, the Americas, Europe, and the Pacific, including Australia.²⁶ In 1886, the collection was transferred to a building of its own, as the collection was designated as a separate museum in the 1870s (Fig. 22). Now known as the Royal Museum of Ethnology, the collection had expanded to include 40,000 objects.²⁷ This historic ethnographic collection will be held and shown once again in the Berliner Schloss after 160 years.

As the collection grew and expanded, there was a need for more exhibition space and storage, as well as a plan to facilitate access to the collection for the public and

²⁴ König, 2007, 14.

²⁵ See Leopold von Ledebur, *Leitfaden für die Königliche Kunstammer und das Ethnographische Cabinet zu Berlin* (Berlin: Königliche Kunstammer und das Ethnographische Cabinet zu Berlin, 1844).

²⁶ König, 2007, 15-16.

²⁷ König, 2007, 16, the museum was actually founded in 1873, but it took over 13 years for the museum to physically materialize, and throughout her book, König makes note of the many individual collections obtained over the course of three centuries that currently make up the Berlin State ethnographic, anthropological and Asian art collections today.

academics.²⁸ This need resulted in the Dahlem Museum Complex (known today as the Museen Dahlem), which was established in 1906, then interrupted by the two world wars, and finally fully developed into a museum complex by 1964 (Figs. 23 & 24).²⁹

In 2000, the non-western ethnographic collection housed at the Dahlem Museum Complex was renamed the Ethnologisches Museum to honor the history of the collections it holds and its beginnings within the Brandenburg-Prussian Kunstkammer in the Berliner Schloss.³⁰ Currently, the Dahlem Museum Complex houses the Ethnologisches Museum, the Museum für Asiatische Kunst and the Museum Europäischer Kulturen. The plan is for the Ethnologisches Museum and Museum für Asiatische Kunst to be moved to the Humboldt Forum, while the collection of European ethnology, known as the Museum Europäischer Kulturen today, will be joining the Kunstgewerbemuseum, Gemäldegalerie, Kunstbibliothek, Kupferstichkabinett, and Neue Nationalgalerie at the Kulturforum by Potsdamer Platz in Berlin.³¹

When it opens, the Humboldt Forum will consist of two distinct collections: that of the Ethnologisches Museum and the Museum für Asiatische Kunst. Combined, the collections boast over half a million objects.³² How will the populous of Berlin and the international visitors to the new Berliner Schloss and Humboldt Forum connect the over half a million non-western objects with Germany's national identity? Scholar Adrian von Buttlar states that even before the Brandenburg-Prussian Kunstkammer and its collections

²⁸ The changes in access between scholars, academics and the public will be discussed in more detail in the section entitled History of Collections, Propaganda and Value.

²⁹ König, 2007, 19, this complex also housed European artworks and objects until 1990, because the site belonged to West Berlin and West Germany, König says this limited the amount of ethnographic exhibitions and displays.

³⁰ König, 2007, 20.

³¹ Museen Dahlem <http://www.smb.museum/en/museums-institutions/museen-dahlem/home.html> (Accessed May 7, 2016).

³² Unfortunately, there are still tens of thousands of objects missing after World War II and the subsequent looting of Berlin by Russia. See König, 2007, Museen Dahlem website and Klaus-Dieter Lehmann, Günther Schauerte, and Uta Barbara Ullrich, eds., *Cultural Assets- Transferred and Missing: An Inventory of the Prussian Cultural Heritage Foundation 60 Years after the End of World War II*, (Berlin: Stiftung Preußischer Kulturbesitz, 2004).

were available to the public, the citizens of the Margraviate of Brandenburg, then the Prussian Kingdom and Empire, were aware of the collections and how they were both a part of cultural heritage and “of their own emerging national identity.”³³ This indicates that the dominant-hegemonic messages the rulers of Brandenburg-Prussia were encoding upon the Brandenburg-Prussian *Kunstkammer* were being successfully decoded in a dominant-hegemonic manner through mass media and word of mouth, as the collections were not open to the general public.³⁴

The idea that a collection of objects and artworks could define a group of people was new for Germany in the late eighteenth century; however, this idea became institutionalized by the raise in state run museums in Europe in the nineteenth century. The construction and organization of the *Altes Museum* in the first decades of the nineteenth century, according to Elsa van Wezel, “was not to instruct artists and connoisseurs in order to improve art, nor was it to contain ‘all manner of antiquities’,” rather, the museum was created to “awaken public sensibility for the fine arts as one of the principle expressions of human culture...to improve humanity”.³⁵ This idea is mirrored in the articles and academic discussions of the future Humboldt Forum that explain how the non-Western cultural collections housed at the site will be on view to aid in the improvement of global humanity.³⁶ The idea of aiding in the improvement of global humanity will be evident through the encoding of dominant-hegemonic messages of cultural value upon the

³³ Adrian von Buttlar, “The Museum and the City: Schinkel’s and Klenze’s Contribution to the Autonomy of Civic Culture,” in *Napoleon’s Legacy: The Rise of National Museums in Europe 1794-1830*, edited by Ellinoor Bergvelt, Debora J. Meijers, Lieske Tibbe, and Elsa van Wezel, 173-189 (Berlin: G + H Verlag Berlin, 2009), 173-174.

³⁴ Hall, 2012, 137-144. Hall, 1980, 128-138.

³⁵ van Wezel, 170.

³⁶ See Astrid Bähr, *The Humboldt-Forum in the Berliner Schloss: Planning, Processes, Perspectives* (Munich: Stiftung Preußischer Kulturbesitz und Hirmer Verlag GmbH, 2013), Viola König, “Renaming Ethnographic Museum,” *Museumskunde* 81, No. 1 (2016): 80-86., Hermann Parzinger, “Museum Island and Humboldt-Forum: A New Centre for Art and Culture in Berlin,” *Science First Hand* 42, No.3 The Epoch of Acceleration (2015): 56-77., and Thomas Flierl and Hermann Parzinger, *Humboldt Forum Berlin: The Project* (Berlin: Verlag Theater der Zeit, 2009).

Humboldt Forum collection. By encoding the objects with specific messages, the Humboldt Forum will be communicating the role Germany has within the global cultural realm, as a distinctive leader within non-western cultural academics.

Collections, Cultural Value, and Identity

The historic Berliner Schloss has not been widely discussed by academics outside of Germany in the context of contemporary museum theory, nor as a future institution symbolic of Berlin's place within global culture. By redesigning the Berliner Schloss and exhibiting parts of the historic, centuries-old Brandenburg-Prussian collections, the German government is valuing culture as a type of propaganda, which can be used to establish a new German identity, one that deems Germany a center for cultural scholarship. Through public access to the objects and artworks in the Brandenburg-Prussian *Kunstkammer* and the museums and collections belonging to the State of Berlin, public engagement with the collections increased and fostered a sense of national identity.³⁷ The creation of national identity through collections can be seen in the museums and exhibitions created and organized during the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries (Fig. 25).³⁸ However, the

³⁷ See Peter Paret, "The Artist as 'Staatsbürger': Aspects of the Fine Arts and the Prussian State before and during the First World War," *German Studies Review* 6, No. 3 (1983): 421-437, especially page 428. Paret discusses how Kaiser Wilhelm II felt that the type of art presented to the populace and subject matter depicted had a direct correlation to the way in which the Empire of Germany and its government was viewed.

³⁸ Specifically, the creation of the Schlossmuseum by the government of the Weimar Republic after World War I; the exhibition entitled *Alt-Berlin* organized by the Staatlichen Museen Berlin in 1931 (Fig. ?); the use of the Staatlichen Museen Berlin as propaganda during the Summer Olympic Games of 1936 in Berlin; the reestablishment of the Dahlem Museum Complex by the allies (excluding the Soviets) to include the holdings that were in the museums located on Museum Island from the late 1940s well into the 1960s; the West Berlin exhibition *Preußen, Versuch einer Bilanz: Eine Ausstellung der Berliner Festspiele GmbH, 15. August - 15. November 1981, Gropius-Bau (ehemaliges Kunstgewerbemuseum) Berlin* in 1981; and Friederisiko: *Friedrich der Große, 28 April bis 28 Oktober 2012*; an exhibition on Friedrich II, King of Prussia (r. 1740-1786) for the three-hundredth anniversary of his birth. Translation: *Prussia, Seeking a Balance: an Exhibition by the Berliner Festspiele GmbH, from August 15 - November 15, 1981, Gropius-Bau (the former Kunstgewerbemuseum) in Berlin*. See: Niels Holst, "Die Berliner Museen und die Aussenwelt," *Berliner Museen* 59, No. 2 (1938): 40-46., Jürgen Luh, "Frederick 300 in 2012: A Case Study of Institutional Management of Heritage in Germany," in *Cultural Impact in the German Context: Studies in Transmission, Reception, and Influence*, edited by Rebecca Braun, and Lyn Marven, 117-128 (Rochester, NY: Camden House, Boydell & Brewer, 2010), 117-128., Christine Lattek, "Preussen:

national identity formed by the Brandenburg-Prussian *Kunstammer* had already been developed without being experienced. As discussed previously, von Buttlar stated that the citizens of the Margraviate of Brandenburg then the Prussian Kingdom and Empire of Germany were aware of the collections and their importance to the people regardless of public access to them.³⁹ This development happened through the awareness of other powerful European ruler's collections, such as the French collections that belonged to the French King first, then to the French people after the French Revolution. The scope of this collection is thought to have created and informed the identity of the collection of the Brandenburg-Prussian *Kunstammer* in the mind of the public.⁴⁰ Germany's historic national identity of power and empire will be replaced throughout the Humboldt Forum by dominant-hegemonic messages encoded upon its collections. These encoded messages will embody Germany's strength and central role within the context of a global world, a message that is not one of military power as before, but, rather, a message of power within academia and scholarship, as well as cultural change and cultural value. The purpose of the new museum within the Berliner Schloss is to create a collaborative, cross-cultural environment to facilitate learning and allow messages to be encoded and decoded with a dominant-hegemonic position.

Historically, Germany's royal collections, housed in royal palaces, displayed the country's national identity, cultural value, and power. The ethnographic collections and academic archives that will be housed and displayed in the future Humboldt Forum were once a part of the Brandenburg-Prussian *Kunstammer*, as mentioned previously. Founded by the Margrave Joachim II (r. 1535 – 1571) in the early to mid-sixteenth century, the

Versuch Einer Bilanz, the Prussia Exhibition, Berlin, August to November 1981," *History Workshop*, No. 13 (1982): 174-180., and Otto Reichl, "Die Staatlichen Museen auf der Ausstellung 'Alt-Berlin'," *Berliner Museen* 52, No. 1 (1931): 13-16.

³⁹ von Buttlar, 2009, 173-174.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

Brandenburg-Prussian *Kunstammer* contained about 1,900 objects. This initial collection was subsequently destroyed and dispersed by the Thirty Years' War from 1618 to 1648.⁴¹ These collections were of personal importance to the Hohenzollern Margraves and rulers from the fifteenth century to the mid-seventeenth century. The first royal collection was inventoried twice, in 1603 and 1605, and there is believed to be a lost inventory that was completed in 1599.⁴² The earliest item, thought to be a piece of silver, was recorded as being placed within the original Brandenburg *Kunstammer* in 1465, according to J. Hildebrand and Christian Theuerkauff.⁴³

Princely collections have been imbued with messages of power throughout history, as the objects themselves represented military prowess, cultural expression, and wealth, regardless of what the collection physically contained, of art, antiquities and/or natural curiosities. Anthropologist Igor Kopytoff explains that state art collections and royal residences are collected exclusively to serve as control, or in the instance of the Brandenburg-Prussian collections and Berliner Schloss, political and symbolic power.⁴⁴ Kopytoff states that "Power often asserts itself symbolically precisely by insisting on its right to singularize an object, or a set of objects [sic]."⁴⁵ In order for the objects in the Brandenburg-Prussian collections and the Berliner Schloss to obtain the status of singularly unique and extraordinary, the objects and palace must be designated as singularly unique and extraordinary by those in power; once this label is bestowed upon an object, it becomes

⁴¹ Der Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, *Königliche Kunstammer*, in Wissenschaftliche Sammlungen an der Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin: Portal der Sammlungsaktivitäten und Sammlungeserschließungen, <http://www.sammlungen.hu-berlin.de/dokumente/7614/> (accessed September 20, 2016).

⁴² Der Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, *Königliche Kunstammer*, in Wissenschaftliche Sammlungen an der Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin: Portal der Sammlungsaktivitäten und Sammlungeserschließungen, <http://www.sammlungen.hu-berlin.de/dokumente/7614/> (accessed September 20, 2016). See J. Hildebrand and Christian Theuerkauff, eds., *Die Brandenburgisch-Preussische Kunstammer: Eine Auswahl aus den alten Beständen* (Berlin: Staatliche Museen Preußischer Kulturbesitz, 1981), 13.

⁴³ Hildebrand and Theuerkauff, 13.

⁴⁴ Eva Giloi, *Monarchy, Myth, and Material Culture in Germany, 1750-1950* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 46-48.

⁴⁵ Kopytoff, 73.

invaluable.⁴⁶ Thus, the value of each object increases both economically and culturally. The Brandenburg-Prussian collections were comprised of many different types of objects depending on the ruler in power and the collecting trends at any given time. The objects chosen to be included in the Brandenburg-Prussian *Kunstkammer* had to have a specific value, both personally for the ruler and monetarily, while also representing the power of the empire.

Significance applies to the Brandenburg-Prussian collections, as the collections were important enough to the Brandenburg-Prussian rulers to reconstruct and create during the seventeenth century. After the Thirty Years' War in 1648, Friedrich Wilhelm (r. 1640-1688), Margrave of Brandenburg and Duke of Prussia, began a new *Kunstkammer* of Brandenburg-Prussia, as the old one had been either lost or destroyed. This new cabinet of curiosities was multifaceted in scope and subject matter. At its height, the royal collections consisted of antiquities, medals and coins, paintings, drawings, prints, books and manuscripts, sculptures, furnishings, decorative objects including silver, gold, ivory, amber and bejeweled objects, including royal "relics."⁴⁷ Moreover, the collection was expanded by the incorporation of ethnographic objects and curiosities collected by explorers sailing under the auspices of the Brandenburg-Prussian crown starting in the seventeenth century, in addition to gifts from the Brandenburg-Prussian court.⁴⁸ Thereafter, a collection of art and objects from Asia known as *Asiatica* (this included Chinese porcelain, a highly coveted commodity that played a major role in diplomacy and trade between European rulers), a collection of weapons and armor (*Rüstkammer*), and a collection of natural specimens with

⁴⁶ Kopytoff, 80-83.

⁴⁷ Historian Eva Giloi refers to different types of objects once personally belonging to rulers or family members of the Hohenzollerns as being relics throughout her book entitled *Monarchy, Myth, and Material Culture in Germany 1750-1950*, as the objects were displayed to represent the power and prestige of the Brandenburg and Prussian rulers and their family.

⁴⁸ There is a history of looting and illegal obtainment of art and artifacts within all European royal collections, a history that is addressed by this paper; however, it is still important to note. König, 2007, 13.

global origins known as Naturalia and scientific instruments were added. Historian Eva Giloi refers to the inclusion of scientific instruments in the Brandenburg-Prussian *Kunstkammer* as a way to understand the collections that made up the curiosity cabinets and as technology used to create masterful works of art by human hands.⁴⁹ Furthermore, as Appadurai explains, “commoditization lies at the complex intersection of temporal, cultural, and social factors.”⁵⁰ The value of commodities are driven by both demand and politics, “from a *theoretical* point of view human actors encode the things with significance from a *methodological* point of view it is the things-in-motion that illuminate their human and social context.”⁵¹ The encoded significance of the commodity is made significant by the action of trade, not just value of the commodity place upon it by those who demand it. The significance of the Brandenburg-Prussian *Kunstkammer* is both cultural and social, and is driven by demand.

The importance of these collections can be seen in the action of rebuilding by Friedrich Wilhelm. He felt the need to rebuild what had been destroyed by war and in doing so placed a cultural value upon the new Brandenburg-Prussian *Kunstkammer*. By placing the non-European Brandenburg-Prussian collections in the rebuilt Berliner Schloss, the collections are imbued with cultural and historical value within a global context. The history of the objects is not lost; rather it is reframed within a redesigned site along with the move from the Dahlem Museum Complex, which signifies Germany’s role in the global exchange of ideas.

In order for a commodity to be valued, it must be demanded and must be able to be owned. Hodder describes the process of ownership creation and the commodification of objects by using the example of a pebble on a beach, which can subsequently be applied to

⁴⁹ Giloi, 48.

⁵⁰ Appadurai, 1986, 14-15.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 5.

collection formation.⁵² By finding a pebble on a beach, an individual automatically associates the object (pebble) with the memory of the time spent at beach. Hodder explains that “Through associations and memories, and naming and keeping and conserving [the pebble] has become more ours.”⁵³ When thinking about Hodder’s object/memory association broadly, memories can be attached to places and multiple objects, including those that are man-made and natural, or memories can be attached to a person or a song. These memories and “owned” objects include things and places can be passed on from one person to another in the form of a collection, a memory, or oral history. Hodder takes the pebble and imagines it being inherited by one’s children.⁵⁴ This demarks a transfer of ownership of something that really is not owned, but because it has memories attached to it, those who hold the memories hold ownership of it.⁵⁵ In the action of ownership, the object, place, or thing becomes a commodity with value attached to it. The value being what the object, place, or thing means to a person.

Applying Hodder’s theory to the Berliner Palace allows for the consideration of memory and place, as well as the construction of a commodity. The Berliner Palace is an owned palace imbued with cultural value stemming from collective German experiences, which contains objects owned first by the Hohenzollerns, then by the state of Berlin. These objects and collections are also imbued with cultural value determined by commodity market value, as well as memories or experiences of those who collected the objects. The collections that began as parts of the larger Brandenburg-Prussian cabinet of curiosity were slowly dispersed between state institutions and museums starting in the early eighteenth

⁵² Ian Hodder, *Entangled: An Archaeology of the Relationships between Humans and Things* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 2012), 23-27.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 24.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 25.

century with Friedrich Wilhelm I (r. 1713 – 1740).⁵⁶ It was also during this time that the new King of Prussia took 319 of the largest medallions from the medallion and coin collection and had them melted down to settle debts of the state.⁵⁷ After repurposing the medallions and coins, Friedrich Wilhelm I went one step farther to reinvigorate the might of his army by agreeing to an exchange in 1717 with August II, Elector of Saxony. The exchange was comprised of 151 objects from the Prussian Chinese porcelain collection for 600 Saxon Soldiers, according to historian Neil MacGregor, also the Director of the Humboldt Forum.⁵⁸ The outcome of this exchange culminated in cultural lore that for every large blue and white Chinese vase that was included in the exchange, twelve dragoon soldiers were given in return.⁵⁹ These vases are held in the porcelain collection of the Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden today and are referred to as Dragoon vases (Fig. 26).

The role of the Margraves, Kings and Emperors of Brandenburg and Prussia within commodification and exchange of cultural objects have been explained by countless historians and anthropologists. Historian Christopher Clark argues that it was specifically Friedrich Wilhelm I's aversion to art and culture coupled with his focus on the administration, military, and politics of Prussia that were the impetus for his collections-based decisions.⁶⁰ The explanation for this aversion lies within the adverse relationship Friedrich Wilhelm I had with his father King Friedrich I, which seems to have been a theme between Brandenburg-Prussian rulers and their sons.⁶¹ It was because of Friedrich Wilhelm I's negative feelings toward his father and his father's beloved collections that he decided

⁵⁶ Der Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, *Königliche Kunstammer*, in Wissenschaftliche Sammlungen an der Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin: Portal der Sammlungsaktivitäten und Sammlungeserschließungen, <http://www.sammlungen.hu-berlin.de/dokumente/7614/> (accessed September 20, 2016).

⁵⁷ Hildebrand and Theuerkauff, 28.

⁵⁸ Neil MacGregor, *Germany: Memories of a Nation* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2015), 319. Also see Giloi, 51.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ See Christopher Clark, *Iron Kingdom: The Rise and Downfall of Prussia, 1600-1947* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2008) 78-114,

⁶¹ See Clark, 101-114.

not to care for the collections in the same manner as his father before him. He did not have memories encoded within the collection or memory-based attachment to the objects themselves. Instead, he saw the collections as collateral in building up state finances and the military. Friedrich Wilhelm I's own son, Friedrich II, known as Friedrich der Große, eventually used these finances to rebuild the cultural foundation of the empire, largely diminished during the reign of his father.

There was a distinct difference between ruling styles and finance management between Friedrich Wilhelm I and his predecessors and successor. In place of cultural power that is gained through the ownership of things that are imbued with a cultural value, Friedrich Wilhelm I believed

that only a well-trained and independently financed fighting force would provide him with the autonomy in international affairs that had been denied to his father and grandfather...The army was... an instrument of policy, but it was also the human and institutional expression of this monarch's view of the world.⁶²

Up until the early eighteenth century, the Brandenburg-Prussian *Kunstammer* was a fond possession of the Margraves and Kings of Brandenburg-Prussia, as the collections were imbued with cultural value, and that the citizens of Brandenburg-Prussia knew the cultural value of the collections, as outlined previously by von Buttlar. It is a fact that other Germanic rulers amassed similar collections at the time, but how could this one individual ruler not see the value in keeping such an encyclopedic collection together? Clark notes that Friedrich Wilhelm I overspent on his famous army, but as it grew he did not want to use it. It was his perfect collection.⁶³ With the changing time, armies do not last, nor do they continue to carry the same message of national identity, however, cultural collections such as princely cabinets of curiosity do have that capability. It is through the encoding of the Brandenburg-Prussian *Kunstammer* that Germany and State of Berlin can communicate its

⁶² Clark, 95-96.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 95-101.

place within today's global world. The adversaries of Prussia change, the population changes, the need for the military changes, but the need for culture and identity never changes.

The interest in the enlightenment by Friedrich der Große, the son of Friedrich Wilhelm I, motivated him to create a "temple of Antiquities" at his summer palace, Sanssouci in Potsdam that he constructed in 1747.⁶⁴ Giloi states, however, that Friedrich der Große was thoroughly academic and access to the Brandenburg-Prussian *Kunstammer* remained restricted to aristocrats and academics at court only. It was Friedrich der Große's son Friedrich Wilhelm II (r. 1786 – 1797) who was the first Prussian ruler to allow scholars outside of court access to the collections.⁶⁵

In 1798, Friedrich Wilhelm III (r. 1797 – 1840) gave the control of the Brandenburg-Prussian *Kunstammer* and its collections to the Royal Prussian Academy of Sciences.⁶⁶ Shortly after obtaining this honor from the King of Prussia, the Royal Prussian Academy of Sciences communicated its idea of whom should be allowed access to the collection of the Brandenburg-Prussian *Kunstammer*, an opinion that ran counter to that of the *Kunstammer's* director, Jean Henry (1761 – 1831). During the struggle over control of the collections, Henry did an about-face in regard to his previous strict visitor policy and let what Giloi classifies as the "public" access to the collection with a fee attached.⁶⁷ Henry's change in policy was in reaction to the Royal Prussian Academy of Sciences stance that he was, in basic terms, a snob, and was in fact only allowing paying foreign aristocrats into the

⁶⁴ Giloi, 52. Potsdam is now the capital of the Federal State of Brandenburg and is within 20 miles of the center of the city of Berlin.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Der Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, *Königliche Kunstammer*, in *Wissenschaftliche Sammlungen an der Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin: Portal der Sammlungsaktivitäten und Sammlungeserschließungen*, <http://www.sammlungen.hu-berlin.de/dokumente/7614/> (accessed September 20, 2016). Giloi, 57.

⁶⁷ Giloi, 57-58. Originally, Henry only wanted wealthy foreign aristocrats as visitors, but the Royal Prussian Academy of Sciences wanted to include scholars and academics. This infuriated Henry, so he decided to let more people than just aristocrats, scholars and academics see the collection.

Kunstammer.⁶⁸ Giloi is quick to mention that shortly after Henry's change of heart, Friedrich Wilhelm III decided that "Henry's Pseudo-educational efforts did not carry much weight...because they ignored the political needs of the time...the king turned to educational institutes and museum collections to encourage loyalty to the state."⁶⁹ The type of institution Friedrich Wilhelm III was interested in, according to Giloi, was Wilhelm von Humboldt's (1767-1835) "idealistic principle of *Bildung*, understood as the edification and cultivation of the whole individual," which Humboldt had applied to the Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin and Brandenburg-Prussian Kunstammer once he was appointed director of the King's "Department of Culture and Public Education- Kultusministerium" in 1810.⁷⁰ With an ever-changing director and ever-changing policies, the Brandenburg-Prussian Kunstammer changed not only in scope and size, but also in where it was kept and who it belonged to, including the ruler, the court and/or the public. The significance of the historic Brandenburg-Prussian Kunstammer informed the importance of those who managed and/or owned it.

The significance of a thing, according to Hall and Appadurai, is encoded by individuals who place value upon an object or objects that are then decoded by an audience who views this significance in a defined manner.⁷¹ With regard to the history of the Brandenburg-Prussian Kunstammer, the individuals who encoded cultural value onto the collections were the Brandenburg-Prussian rulers, for instance Fredrick William III, as well as the directors, i.e. Henry and Humboldt, and the Academy of Sciences, who all value the collections as having educational, political and authoritative significance over Prussian citizens. Appadurai defines these encoded and decoded sets of significance-imbued

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 59-61.

⁷⁰ Giloi, 61.

⁷¹ Appadurai, 13-58. See also Hall, 2012, 137-144. Hall, 1980, 128-138.

information as “knowledge.” In the case of the Brandenburg-Prussian collections, the encoded messages of cultural value were decoded by the populous when they were able to access the collections for educational purposes. Over time, the messages of value and the significance of the collections changed.

The application of Humboldt’s *Bildung* began a series of changes in the way in which the *Kunstkammer* was constructed, deconstructed, and separated. By 1830, parts of the Brandenburg-Prussian *Kunstkammer* were distributed between the Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin and newly created museums including the Altes Museum, also known as the Schinkel Museum, named after the architect of the building that houses the Altes Museum collection, Karl Friedrich Schinkel, and the Neues Museum constructed in twenty-five years later. Academic and early museologist Leopold von Ledebur was appointed director of what remained of the original Brandenburg-Prussian *Kunstkammer* in 1830.

According to a guide von Ledebur created and distributed to visitors in 1844, entitled *Leitfaden für die Königliche Kunstkammer und das Ethnographische Cabinet zu Berlin*, the Brandenburg-Prussian *Kunstkammer* collections were separated into three areas of scholarship: the department of art, the department of history, and the department of ethnology and anthropology.⁷² Each department had its own assistant director/curator. Director von Ledebur’s guide gives insight into what nineteenth-century scholars and academics viewed as important in a royal collection of art, history, and ethnography.

Particularly interesting is von Ledebur’s long explanation for the department of ethnology also known as Das Ethnographische Cabinet. Director von Ledebur begins by stating that the beginning of the ethnographic collection in the Brandenburg-Prussian *Kunstkammer* was that of Chinese and Japanese objects.⁷³ This collection was strengthened,

⁷² Entitled *Leitfaden für die Königliche Kunstkammer und das Ethnographische Cabinet zu Berlin*.

⁷³ Historically, a large amount of the objects held within European royal collections at the time was Asian porcelain, a commodity that was greatly valued by European rulers.

according to von Ledebur, by exploration commissioned by Friedrich Wilhelm III.⁷⁴ The artifacts brought back by these expeditions to the far reaches of the earth are divided by area: China and Japan, Asia (other than China and Japan), Africa, North America, South America and Australia. Within these divisions the items are themselves categorized, for instance, into jewelry and art objects, or weapons and hunting implements. Each region has a small, but detailed, introduction with each type of object category explained with examples in ordered sentences.⁷⁵ The attention to detail and concern for the origin, use, and history of the objects shows the significance placed upon the ethnographic collection by von Ledebur and his colleagues.

By printing specifically ordered information in a visitor guide, von Ledebur imparts knowledge that is imbued with significance as the detailed history of the collection, a dominate-hegemonic message. It is probable that the information and dominate-hegemonic message encoded within von Ledebur's guide was easily decoded by the guests to the Brandenburg-Prussian *Kunstammer*, because of the specific he order in which the guide was printed, and the fact the ethnographic collection was included at the end of the publication. Historian Giloi notes that von Ledebur's *Kunstammer* was successful in attracting visitors, as there were almost 50,000 visitors to the *Kunstammer* in 1854.⁷⁶ The new techniques for the systematic cataloguing of collections were key in the development of the Brandenburg-Prussian *Kunstammer* from a private princely collection to a publicly accessed and academically esteemed set of collections. It is important to point out that careful curation of the collection began in the early seventeenth century, which lends

⁷⁴ Giloi, 109. Also See von Ledebur's "Vorwort" in *Leitfaden für die Königliche Kunstammer und das Ethnographische Cabinet. zu Berlin.*

⁷⁵ See von Ledebur's *Leitfaden für die Königliche Kunstammer und das Ethnographische Cabinet.*

⁷⁶ Giloi, 109. von Ledebur's well organized collection guide could have helped with this high number of attendees.

weight to the museology work that was carried out in context of the collection from the mid-nineteenth century onward.⁷⁷

The Ethnographische Cabinet, comprised of over 5,000 ethnographic objects, did not remain at the Berliner Schloss for long, as once the Neues Museum was completed in 1855, the objects were installed in 1859 in the lower level of the building designed by Friedrich August Stüler.⁷⁸ The placement of the ethnographic collection in the lower level is far removed from the way in which objects of an ethnographic nature are valued today. Many scholars believe that the ethnographic collection was viewed as something only academics would be interested in studying and viewing in the nineteenth century, therefore, the placement of the collection in the lower level of the Neues Museum diminishes the significance that the collection once held when housed within prominent spaces of the Brandenburg-Prussian Kunstkammer.

In 1873, the Society for Anthropology, Ethnology and Prehistory advocated for public access and a place of prominence for the culturally and historically important collection and was successful with the new German Emperor Wilhelm I (r. 1861 – 1888), who made an official decree for the creation “of an ‘autonomous Ethnological and Anthropological Museum in Berlin.’”⁷⁹ The museum was built on today’s Stresemannstrasse and was named the Königliches Museum für Völkerkunde.⁸⁰ Viola König makes the distinction between the present collections held in the Dahlem Museum Complex and the museum founded in the late nineteenth century, that was first held at the Neues Museum, then in its own building on Stresemannstrasse. When it was housed in the museum on Stresemannstrasse, the Königliches Museum für Völkerkunde held ethnographic objects

⁷⁷ Barbara Segelken, *Bilder Des Staates: Kammer, Kasten und Tafel als Visualisierung Staatlicher Zusammenhänge* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, GmbH, 2010), 111-112.

⁷⁸ König, 2007, 15. The collection was noted as having 5,192 objects in 1861.

⁷⁹ König, 2007, 16. Ten years as King of Prussia before becoming German Emperor in 1871.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

along with prehistoric and anthropological artifacts, around 40,000 individual objects in all.⁸¹

The new Königliches Museum für Völkerkunde, housed in a new building, was altered the classification of objects by then director, Adolf Bastian. König says Bastian applied a classification system that was used at the time by “prehistorians” known as the comparative-genetic method. König explains that this method was not be based upon “perceived character” and would be altered “in their relative cultural value,” no longer based upon aesthetics.⁸² Bastian’s “aim...was to document as fully as possible the cultures of non-European peoples,” but from a European point of view.⁸³ This shows a large shift in the idea that the objects, regardless of origin, were owned and possessed in order to communicate Brandenburg-Prussia as powerful culturally within central Europe. Interestingly, in exhibiting the objects from this historic collection in an academic way, the Humboldt Forum is actually emulating the basis for the Brandenburg-Prussian *Kunstkammer*’s function as a symbol of power, rather than just studying objects for object’s sake.

Moreover, Bastian changed the way items were collected while also adding to the collections. He employed academics to go on expeditions to collect items from supposed dying cultures.⁸⁴ I argue that by classifying other cultures as dying cultures, the action is indicative of the notion that Germany is superior to other cultures and that Germans are superior to other cultural groups.⁸⁵ The financial support for this collecting endeavor, according to König, was through the Committee for the Enlargement of the Ethnological

⁸¹ König, 2007, 16.

⁸² König, 2007, 17.

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ At this time, Germany, along with all of Europe, defined non-European cultures and people groups as “Other/Primitive” and without value of their own. The only value they seemed to possess was the one that Europeans gave them, mainly as academic specimens to be examined and judged.

Collections.⁸⁶ Additionally, Bastian altered the scope of the collection by subscribing to nineteenth-century ideas on human evolution in order to understand non-European societies and cultures.⁸⁷ Bastian was only interested in the academic possibility of the collections and not imparting information to the general public.⁸⁸ The collections were thus communicated as being something separate from the purview of the general public. Though the public was able to view the collections at the location on Stresemannstrasse, the exhibition space was not geared toward public viewing. Furthermore, the ethnographic collection stood for the power of the crown of Prussia and then the Empire of Germany. Furthermore, the collection was only accessible by academics, which communicated the message that non-European cultural groups were inferior, and, therefore, the collected cultural objects were symbols of Germany's own cultural power. The idea of unobtainable knowledge was perpetuated by Bastian until his death in 1905.

By the end of World War I and the beginning of the Weimar Republic, the Königliches Museum für Völkerkunde was exhibited for the understanding of the general public for the first time since the collection was displayed in the lower level of the Neues Museum. The Asian collections were separated from the rest of the collections and installed in a different building completed in 1921, known today as the Bruno-Paul-Bau after its architect Bruno Paul. The exhibitions prepared for the general public were staged at the original museum building by the mid 1920s.⁸⁹ After World War II, the government of Western Berlin utilized land in the quarter of Berlin known as Dahlem for the art, history, and ethnographic collections now owned by the FDR, where the objects and artworks were stored and displayed. This included the holdings of the Museum für Völkerkunde, as well as

⁸⁶ König, 2007, 17. The Committee for the Enlargement of the Ethnological Collections was founded by Bastian along with other academics in 1881.

⁸⁷ König, 2007, 16-17.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 19.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

European collections that had not fallen into Soviet hands. König states that this gave little room for the ethnographic collections to be exhibited and displayed.⁹⁰ The Soviet troops systematically took artwork and objects that belonged to the State Museums of Berlin when the allies won the Battle of Berlin in May of 1945. Due to the evacuation of artworks and objects during the war and subsequent looting by victors and the losing side alike, many artworks and objects from the original Brandenburg-Prussian Kunstkammer have been lost.

The number of artworks, objects, and archival items taken by the Soviets and returned to East Berlin by 1960 was more than four million.⁹¹ The return of the objects was documented as being the “restitution by the Government of the USSR of art treasures saved by the Soviet Army to the Government of the German Democratic Republic.”⁹² Supposedly this restitution was complete, however, another restitution was facilitated between 1977 and 1978 that saw around 50,000 ethnographic objects named the “Leningrad Collection” returned to East Germany and kept there although they belonged with the ethnographic collections of West Berlin. Today, the estimate for the number of missing objects within the ethnographic collection is 50,000.⁹³ The number of missing objects within the Indian Art collection is over 2,100 in number plus a further 8,000 Indian books are missing.⁹⁴ Over ninety per cent of the collection of East Asian Art is still thought to be in Russia. There is evidence from a cultural and diplomatic visit of German ministers and academics to St. Petersburg that these objects are in the Hermitage.⁹⁵ The significance both the Germans and

⁹⁰ König, 2007, 19-20.

⁹¹ Lehmann, Schauerte, and Ullrich, 14.

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Lehmann, Schauerte, and Ullrich, 25. Today, the ethnographic collection is still referred to as being the ethnographic collection as a part of the Ethnologisches Museum housed and displayed at the Dahlem Museum Complex. The Indian and East Asian collections form the Museum für Asiatische Kunst at this time, a museum that is held in a separate building within the Dahlem Museum Complex today. With the opening of the Humboldt Forum all the collections will be stored and displayed in the same place.

⁹⁴ Lehmann, Schauerte, and Ullrich, 50-51.

⁹⁵ Ibid., 56-59.

the Russians assign to the objects leads to the collections being encoded with dominant-hegemonic messages of power.

The Brandenburg-Prussian Kunstkammer was not only important to East Germany and Russia, but also to the allies and West Germany. In 1981, the Berliner Festspiele put on an exhibition of the history of Prussia while utilizing the Hohenzollern and Schloss collections held in West Berlin. The catalogue of that exhibition entitled *Preußen, Versuch einer Bilanz: Eine Ausstellung der Berliner Festspiele GmbH, 15. August-15. November 1981, Gropius-Bau (ehemaliges Kunstgewerbemuseum) Berlin* discusses not only the objects that were displayed in the exhibition and their provenance, but also the way in which the exhibition was organized, the themes of the exhibition rooms, and significance of the exhibition themes in the context of German political, economic and cultural views in 1981. The recounting of this exhibition provides an understanding of the ways in which the objects and artworks held within the Brandenburg-Prussian Kunstkammer, Kunstgewerbemuseum and Schlossmuseum correlate to the building of the Berliner Schloss and how their display and identity were altered by the changes in the historic palace. The alteration of the collection's identity prior to and post destruction also correlates to the ways in which the collection's identity will change with the opening of the Humboldt Forum. Simultaneously, the Staatliche Museen Preußischer Kulturbesitz Berlin – then a foundation operating in East Berlin – published a companion catalogue to the West Berlin Prussian exhibition of 1981. This catalogue is comprised of objects from the original Brandenburg-Prussian Kunstkammer entitled *Die Brandenburgisch-Preussische Kunstkammer: Eine Auswahl aus den alten Beständen*. The publication gives further detail in the movement and management of the collections as a whole and explains where and how the collection was housed within the original Berliner Schloss. The existence of these two publications is evidence of the importance of the collections as a whole in post-World War Two Germany,

that academics in both the FDR and GDR viewed the collections as having significance within the historical identity of Germany as a whole.

The collections displayed at the Dahlem Museum Complex changed with German reunification in the early 1990s, as more space was given to the display and exhibition of non-European collections. In 2000, the ethnographic collection was given its own museum designation and renamed the Ethnologisches Museum.⁹⁶ Two years later, in 2002, it was announced that the almost five-hundred-year old ethnographic and anthropological collection from the original Brandenburg-Prussian Kunstkammer would be returned to where it originated at the site of the historic Berliner Schloss, which would be rebuilt.

The ownership of something assigns a collective value, and a collective value has been placed upon the historic Berliner Schloss and Brandenburg-Prussian Kunstkammer by many different individuals and governments over the palace's and collections' lifetimes. It is only once the Berliner Schloss is rebuilt and the Humboldt Forum is open, that the German public and tourists can set a value of their own upon the museum and academic complex. The placement of a collective value is facilitated through memories and histories assigned to the collections of the Humboldt Forum. Hodder says that things, in this case the Brandenburg-Prussian collections and the Berliner Schloss, display the authority of rulers over the public, as the collections are a direct reflection of their owner. For the Berliner Schloss the association of power and ownership relates to the Prussian crown and the State of Berlin as having a right to the palace and/or collections and, thus, those entities have defined history, culture, and identity within Germany society.⁹⁷ The history of the Brandenburg-Prussian Kunstkammer, especially the ethnographic collections that arose out of the original Kunstkammer, is key in understanding the ways in which the new Berliner Schloss and Humboldt Forum will be encoding messages of cultural value. This encoding

⁹⁶ König, 2007, 20.

⁹⁷ Hodder, 23-26.

will communicate messages of Germany's place within the larger global web of cultural constructions, which replaces a unique empire-based national identity that the collections once held.

The New Berliner Schloss and Humboldt Forum

Many academics, architects, city planners, and city politicians have had their say during the debates surrounding the rebuilding of the Berliner Schloss, which took place over the period of almost six decades. After 1950, the site of the historic Berliner Schloss was no longer viewed as a bastion of Prussian strength; rather, it had become a Communist communal government site used for both everyday government business and for the pomp and circumstance of the GDR. Wilhelm von Boddien, one such academic, states with regard to the debate that:

Ohne das Schloss ist die architektonisch-historische Entwicklung Berlins undenkbar, im Gegensatz zu den meisten europäischen Metropolen entwickelte sich die Stadt vom Schlossplatz aus, ohne dieses riesige Gebäude war die Stadt über Jahrhunderte nicht vorstellbar. Das Berliner Schloss war bis zu seiner Sprengung ihr Gravitationszentrum.⁹⁸

This statement is indicative of the sentiment many have had, that the Berliner Schloss was central to the design of the city of Berlin and without the historic palace the city would not function as a historic European city usually does. European city designs are often reliant on central royal residences and in the coming centuries Berlin will no longer be in its original form, because it is missing its center, the Berliner Schloss. Not only is the Berliner Schloss a symbol of the royal family of the Hohenzollerns, it is also a symbol for the state as a whole, including government buildings and museums, such as those on Museum Island, which

⁹⁸ Translated: "Without the Berliner Schloss the historic and architectural development of Berlin is unthinkable. Most European cities developed from a royal residence outward, and without this type of key building such a city is unconceivable. Until it was destroyed, the Berliner Schloss was Berlin's center of gravity." Wilhelm von Boddien and Helmut Engel, *Die Berliner Schlossdebatte – Pro und Contra* (Berlin: Berlin Verlag Arno Spitz, 2000), 9.

include the Staatsoper and the Berliner Universitäten amongst others (Fig. 27). The palace was and will be the uniting element within the architectural history of Berlin.⁹⁹ As a symbol of Germany's lost history, the Berliner Schloss will once again designate Berlin as a world power in historical, cultural, and museum management. The physicality of the new Berliner Schloss will communicate the cultural significance and value of the Humboldt Forum.

Never has a museum institution in Germany boasted the type of local, global, and academic collaboration that will characterize the function of the rebuilt Berliner Schloss and Humboldt Forum. The future manifestation of the Humboldt Forum is the definition of multiculturalism, which will be evident within its new programming that will include research, archival work, and exhibition development. Stuart Hall, mentioned previously and known as the "Godfather of Multiculturalism," first wrote about encoding and decoding in regard to television and film the early 1970s.¹⁰⁰ Hall states that the process of communicating something to a mass audience is not just a linear set of occurrences and actions, but rather, it is a "process in terms of a structure produced and sustained through the articulation of linked but distinctive moments – production, circulation, distribution/consumption, reproduction."¹⁰¹ The underlying message communicated within the marketing literature for the Berliner Schloss and Humboldt Forum is the need to reproduce the history of the Berliner Schloss and Brandenburg-Prussian Collections while creating something new, a global platform for the future of culture.

The process of creating the new while reproducing the old allows for a dialogue between collection and visitors. The very act of communication is a form of assembly, an assembly that is never-ending and repeated. Hall calls the "object" of the assembly a "form

⁹⁹ Boddien and Engel, 10.

¹⁰⁰ Hall, CCCS Stencilled Paper no. 7, 1973. Stuart Hall obituary, <https://www.theguardian.com/education/2014/feb/10/stuart-hall-cultural-legacy-britain-godfather-multiculturalism> (accessed August 21, 2016).

¹⁰¹ Hall, 1980, 128.

of sign-vehicle...any form of communication or language” that is then controlled by the guidelines of language, itself.¹⁰² Hall explains the action of the production, that an expansive “circulation of the product takes place, as well as its distribution to different audiences.”¹⁰³ The message of the communication “must then be translated – transformed, again – into social practices if the circuit is to be both completed and effective.”¹⁰⁴ The message itself must be understood or the act of communication is no longer a continuous assembly. Hall believes that the actual encoding and decoding of a communication “are determinate moments.”¹⁰⁵ The ability to communicate and understand that communication determines the ability of the communication to be successful and sustainable. The act of communication along with successful encoding and decoding is essential to the way in which the new Berliner Schloss Humboldt Forum itself will be successful within the local and global cultural realms.

The foundations, societies, institutions, and endowments involved in the creation of the new Berliner Schloss and implementation of the Humboldt Forum have been successful in communicating their message to a global audience through their marketing, academic, and proposal literature. This communication is strengthened by the physical construction of the new Berliner Schloss and the work of team behind The Humboldt Lab Dahlem, who are experimenting with different types of exhibitions to be displayed in the Humboldt Forum once construction is complete.¹⁰⁶ There is no doubt what the Berliner Schloss and the Humboldt Forum will embody: the remembrance of a lost German history while looking toward the future in a present global world.

¹⁰² Hall, 1980, 128

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 129.

¹⁰⁶ See Dagmar Deuring, Christiane Kühl and Barbara Schindler, *The Humboldt Lab Dahlem: Museum Experiments on the Way to the Humboldt-Forum* (Berlin: Humboldt Lab Dahlem, Kulturstiftung des Bundes and the Stiftung Preußischer Kulturbesitz, 2015).

If a communication and the reception (decoding) of a message are “meaningful,” Hall says, than that message can be affective and fulfill a “need.”¹⁰⁷ The message will “have an effect, influence, entertain, instruct or persuade, with very complex perceptual, cognitive, emotional, ideological or behavioral consequences” as long as it is meaningful in delivery and interpretation.¹⁰⁸ Many examples of this type of communication can be found throughout the literature and marketing material for the new Berliner Schloss and Humboldt Forum. The new Berliner Schloss and Humboldt Forum will provide a platform for international and non-Western scholarship, as well as the planned access to historic ethnographic, anthropological, and material culture collections that will be viewed by visitors through the context of a global world. Therefore, the new Berliner Schloss and Humboldt Forum will be created as a global center of cultural academia. As a global center, the new Berliner Schloss and Humboldt Forum will be fulfilling a need within the non-Western ethnographic, anthropological, and material culture realms. By becoming a global center, Berlin as city, and Germany as a country are creating a new international cultural identity, rather than a national identity. In order to create this new international cultural identity, Germany needs to become culturally open in order to create and maintain Germany’s “cultural self-image.”¹⁰⁹ This can be done through the implementation of the encoding and decoding of specific messages.

Interestingly, Hall makes it clear that though a message may be encoded, the decoded message will not be identical, nor would it “constitute an ‘immediate identity’.”¹¹⁰ There will not be any symmetry between the encoded message and decoded message, as the source of the message and the receptor of the message are not identical. The product of the

¹⁰⁷ Hall, 1980, 130.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ Bähr, 9.

¹¹⁰ Hall, 1980, 131.

this asymmetry is “distortion.”¹¹¹ Codes are inherent in messages through the use of language. Hall explains that,

Discursive ‘knowledge’ is the product not of the transparent representation of the ‘real’ in language but of the articulation of language on real relations and conditions. Thus there is no intelligible discourse without the operation of a code. Iconic signs are therefore coded signs too – even if the codes here work differently from those other signs. There is no degree zero in language.¹¹²

Language is made up of codes that are representative of real objects or ideas, rather than the actual objects themselves. These codes have both ‘denotation’ and ‘connotation’.

Denotation is “the literal meaning of a sign [or object],” and ‘connotation’ refers to “associative meanings.”¹¹³ Hall says that codes that arise from ‘connotation’ “are the means by which power and ideology are made to signify particular discourses” and are also “maps of meaning” and “maps of social reality”.¹¹⁴ These maps are encoded knowledge that carries a “dominant or preferred meaning”, according to Hall.¹¹⁵ These meanings must be properly encoded with the dominant (enforced codes) or preferred meanings (social constructs) in order to be properly decoded.¹¹⁶ Yet, how can dominant or preferred meanings be applied through encoding and decoding within the context of the new Berliner Schloss and Humboldt Forum? Germany and Berlin need to focus on authentic cultural representation in order to be authentic and the Humboldt Forum must function as an international non-Western cultural center and museum. If it does not, Germany, and Berlin in particular, will not succeed in being an active and central member within global culture realm of the twenty-first century.

Like the commodities market, culture has pre-set codes used by those in power to communicate value. Whether cultural value is interpreted according to these codes or

¹¹¹ Hall, 1980, 131.

¹¹² Ibid., 131-132.

¹¹³ Ibid., 132-133.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 134.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 134-135.

through the viewer's own experience can be difficult to determine. Take, for instance, a planned exhibition space within the future Humboldt Forum that will be utilizing the ethnographic collection. The way in which the objects will be displayed, the number and quality of objects, and the language used to describe the objects on didactics are vehicles for the encoding of the objects themselves, and most importantly, the vehicles that will be used by visitors to decode the dominant-hegemonic messages. The vehicles for encoding and decoding meaning are the same, yet it is not possible for those in power to dictate how the messages are decoded.

Viola König outlines three approaches to display and the communication of information regarding the collections in the Humboldt Forum: 1. The Humboldt Forum will allow the ethnographic collection to be presented as a "unified whole with coherent concepts regarding its regional collection segments;"¹¹⁷ 2. The perspectives of the areas of focus within the collections will be presented and discussed, sometimes in a "provocative" manner. She states that "These shifts in focus zero in on artistic expressions and historical developments," including inquiry and collaboration with individuals from the culture being displayed and discussed;¹¹⁸ 3. The objects within the collections will be "scrutinised in chronological depth, both with regard to the understand of their own and extrinsic roots and as possible keys to an awareness of current global developments and questions."¹¹⁹ By utilizing these approaches, the objects and exhibitions will be encoded with meaning and significance within a global and contemporary museological context. The pre-set vehicles and language codes can be seen in the use of the words: unified, presented, and discussed, provocative, inquiry and collaboration, scrutiny, awareness, and, of course, global. By

¹¹⁷ Viola König, "Worlds in Motion: The Ethnologisches Museum at the Humboldt Forum," in *The Humboldt-Forum in the Berliner Schloss: Planning, Processes, Perspectives*, edited by Astrid Bähr, 82-97 (Munich: Stiftung Preußischer Kulturbesitz und Hirmer Verlag GmbH, 2013), 84.

¹¹⁸ König, 2013, 85.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

presenting and discussing a unified, but provocative, collection display based on inquiry and collaboration, both scrutiny by visitors and awareness of collecting history will be evident. By encoding these terms and meanings in the display and the study of the ethnological, anthropological, and material culture collections, Germany is then asking the public to engage with a new sense of identity. Visitors will decode what Germany hopes to communicate, a dominant-hegemonic message that defines the Humboldt Forum as a new participatory place within a global cultural and academic context. However, it is the audience that determines the way in which the objects, collections, or building are decoded using the dominant-hegemonic, negotiated, or oppositional positions set forth by Hall. This decoding will depend on the social and political views of each member of the public. It is possible that the overarching public response will not reflect the message that Germany plans to encode with the display of collections. In order to allow diverse interpretation of the objects and exhibitions, while still maintaining the encoded meaning, König states that the Humboldt Forum staff will employ “Multiperspectivity” to exhibit “a plurality of truth.”¹²⁰ The plurality of truth will be accomplished through the presentation of global history in different ways and from different vantage points.¹²¹ By utilizing multiperspectivity, the Humboldt Forum will be encoding multiple viewpoints, ideas, and opinions within the display of collections. I argue that these multiple viewpoints, ideas, and opinions will be similar to each other, not contradictory, and that they will be dominant-hegemonic.

The Humboldt Lab Dahlem

While the new Berliner Schloss and Humboldt Forum are under construction, the Ethnologisches Museum and the Museum für Asiatische Kunst, both currently housed at the

¹²⁰ König, 2013, 88.

¹²¹ Ibid.

Dahlem Museum Complex in the Dahlem neighbourhood of Berlin, conducted exhibition experiments with their combined collections and objects between 2012 and 2015.¹²² One of the goals was to understand how museum objects could lead audiences to new global perspectives. The communication of the act of experimenting with objects to form new global perspective could be viewed as a vehicle that facilitates the encoding of cultural value as a dominant-hegemonic message within a global context upon the collections. One of these experimental exhibitions was entitled *Museum of Vessels* (Figs. 28, 29, 30). The impetus for this experiment was the fact that the collections housed at the Dahlem Museum Complex contained an over-abundance of vessels; thirty-eight percent of objects within the collections are vessels.¹²³ The idea of this experiment was to encourage new ways of thinking about an object's function. This experiment used thing theory to understand the way in which a vessel predetermined a human's interaction with it.¹²⁴ The ways in which vessels were displayed and the fact that the vessels were from all different regions of the world, cultures, and epochs, allowed for in-depth observation of how one could interact with the objects.¹²⁵ The vessels were grouped into four different types of possible investigation: "their abundance in the museum, their fragility, the interiors of the vessels, and their function as a medium of giving."¹²⁶ This information was to be used by the audience members to think about the different ways we interact with vessels. The theoretical goal of the experiment was to break down the norms of museology and use multiperspectivity in a contemporary exhibition.¹²⁷ This experiment is interesting in that there was only one dominate-hegemonic message encoded upon the objects, specifically

¹²² The collections of the Ethnologische Museum and the Museum für Asiatische Kunst were used for these experiments and will be combined to create the Humboldt Forum collection.

¹²³ Dagmar Deuring, Christiane Kühl, and Barbara Schindler, *The Humboldt Lab Dahlem: Museum Experiments on the Way to the Humboldt-Forum* (Berlin: Humboldt Lab Dahlem, Kulturstiftung des Bundes and the Stiftung Preußischer Kulturbesitz, 2015), 25.

¹²⁴ Deuring, Kühl, and Schindler, 26.

¹²⁵ Ibid.

¹²⁶ Ibid., 27.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

that the objects were vessels. This type of open-ended thinking changes the vessels physically, as well as metaphorically. In allowing access to historic objects that are stripped of their pre-determined history, the Humboldt Lab gave the objects a new history and new context, one that is global in scope. By offering exhibitions such as the *Museum of Vessels*, the Humboldt Forum will be allowing the public access to objects in a new way. Gone are the preconditional histories; gone are the Western preconceived views. This type of exhibition is forward thinking and innovative for Germany. It is an exhibition that a global museum institution would display.

Conclusion

The collecting history of the Brandenburg-Prussian *Kunstkammer* began in the late seventeenth century with Margrave Friedrich Wilhelm (r. 1640 – 1688) after the original sixteenth-century collection was destroyed during the Thirty Years War. These collections included ethnographic objects that were collected with a Western purview. The ethnological objects were housed within the Berliner Schloss, with the rest of the Brandenburg-Prussian *Kunstkammer*, until they were moved in the mid-nineteenth century to the lower level of a museum. It was only until the mid-1880s that the collection was organized and housed as its own museum and renamed the *Königliches Museum für Völkerkunde* (Fig. 38). This museum was organized primarily for the academic research of ethnology, and not necessarily the public's interest. After World War I the museum welcomed a public audience during the Weimar Republic.

With the advent of World War II, parts of the collection were evacuated along with the other Berlin State Museum collections. With wartime looting, especially by the Soviet Army, the collections that once formed the original Brandenburg-Prussian collection were

dispersed all over Europe and the USSR. With time, some of the missing artworks and objects were returned to Germany. Some are still thought to be in Russia today.

After German Reunification in 1989, the fractured collections were brought back to Berlin and reassembled within the museums where they were housed in before World War II. The non-Western ethnographic collections were placed along with the Western ethnographic collection and the Asian art collection in the Dahlem Museum Complex, in the Dahlem quarter of Berlin. These collections have been housed in the Dahlem Museum Complex for over twenty years. Now there is a plan in motion to place the Asian art collections with the non-Western ethnographic collections in a new construction of the Berliner Schloss. The Berliner Schloss was damaged in 1945 and destroyed by the East German government in 1950 to make way for a government building that is no longer standing. The new Berliner Schloss will contain the Humboldt Forum, a globally-minded museum institution that will question the way in which non-Western art and objects are viewed, analyzed, studied, and exhibited. Through the creation of the Humboldt Forum, Germany will be assigned a new global identity within the context of global cultural scholarship, a dominant-hegemonic message that will be encoded upon the collections of the Humboldt Forum.

Germany's new global identity will be seen in the way in which the collections and exhibitions in the Humboldt forum will be encoded with dominant-hegemonic messages of cultural value as outlined in theories by Appadurai and Hall. By displaying historic ethnographic, anthropological, and material culture collections, which were expanded over time in accordance with the Western approach to collecting, the Humboldt Forum will be encoding messages of global cultural value upon the collections.¹²⁸ The encoding and communication of the objects will also be facilitated by greater visitor access to the

¹²⁸ Appadurai, 13-58. See also Hall, 2012, 137-144. Hall, 1980, 128-138.

collections, as well as programming. This expanded access is a change from the limited availability of the collections in previous centuries.

Currently, the public perception of the new Berliner Schloss and Humboldt Forum has yet to be truly formed, as the building is being constructed, the museum has yet to open, and the collections are being stored elsewhere. The idea is that the public will, through a dominant-hegemonic position, decode messages of cultural value associated with the collection installed in the new Berliner Schloss and Humboldt Forum. Given that the buildings have not been completed, however, it is impossible to know the public's response to the reinstalled collections. It is possible that the messages encoded upon the collections will subsequently be misinterpreted and misunderstood by the public, resulting in the message of global identity being lost within the context of the Humboldt Forum collection.

As Germany's national identity will be connected to the cultural value of the non-German collections of the Humboldt Forum, Germany plans to attract an international audience and to situate the country at the forefront of non-western cultural research. The decoding of the dominant-hegemonic messages that will be placed upon the collections by the Humboldt Forum along with the German public response to the altered view of a historic non-Western collection remains to be seen.

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Illustrations



Fig. 1. Unknown, Das Berliner Schloss, ca. 1925, Aerial photograph. This photograph shows the original Berliner Schloss within a pre-World War II Berlin. Note how the buildings that frame interior courtyards display a long history of building styles, but that the entire outer façade of the building is northern Baroque in style.

<http://www.southwillard.com/page/230/>

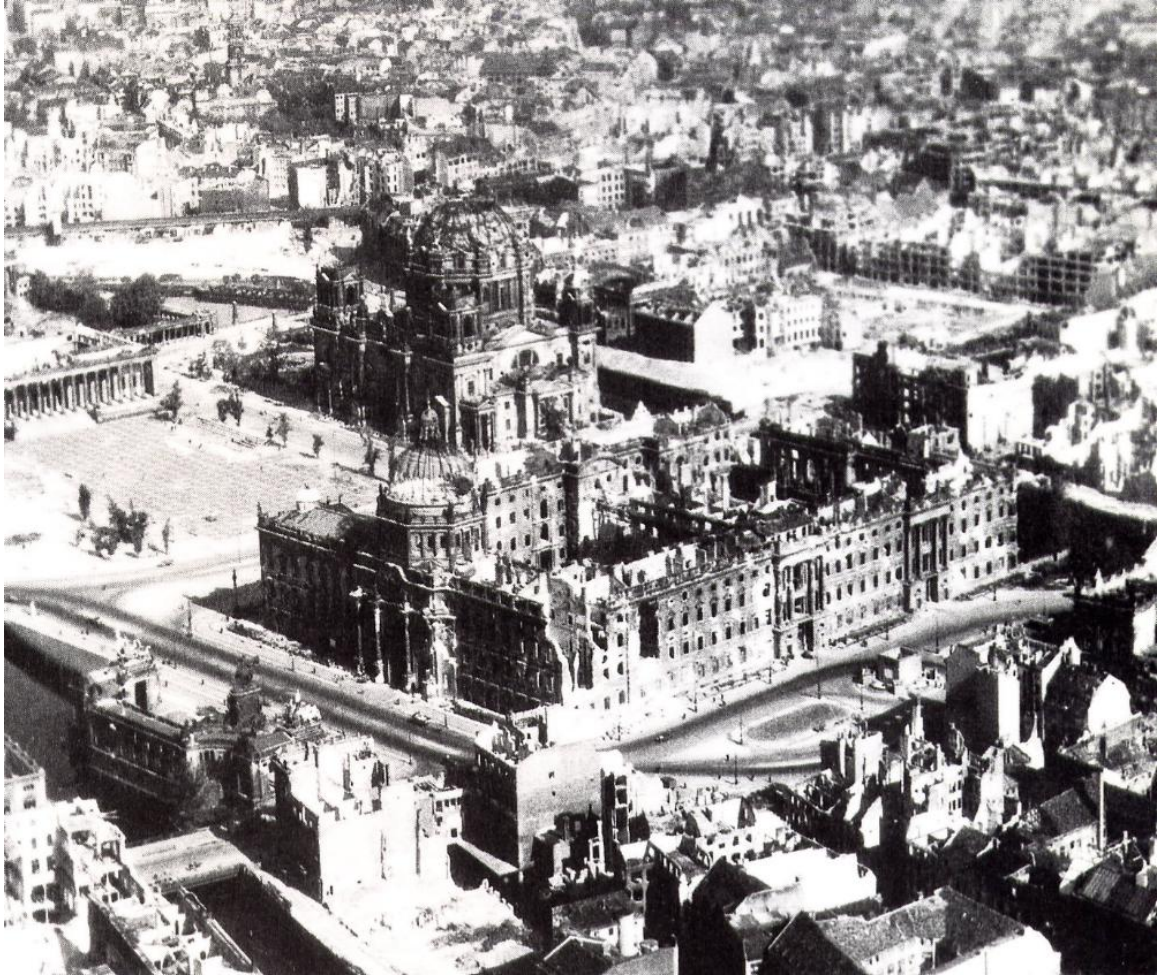


Fig. 2. Aerial Photograph of Berlin Mitte ca. 1945, the bombed-out Berliner Schloss is in the center. Note the amount of destruction of the palace and the fact it was actually used as a gallery and public space after the war. The building could have been reconstructed, like that of the Cathedral just above the palace, which was reconstructed during the GDR period.

<http://berliner-schloss.de/en/palace-history/war-destruction-and-demolition/>



Fig. 3. Franco Stella, computer rendering of view of New Berliner Schloss and Humboldt Forum's southwest side and contemporarily designed section known as "Belvedere" and the way in which it will be integrated with the mock-Baroque façade, which mirrors the original façade of the Berliner Schloss. Image owned by the Stiftung Humboldt Forum im Berliner Schloss and Franco Stella. <http://www.sbs-humboldtforum.de/en/Service/Press/Images-for-Media-Use/>

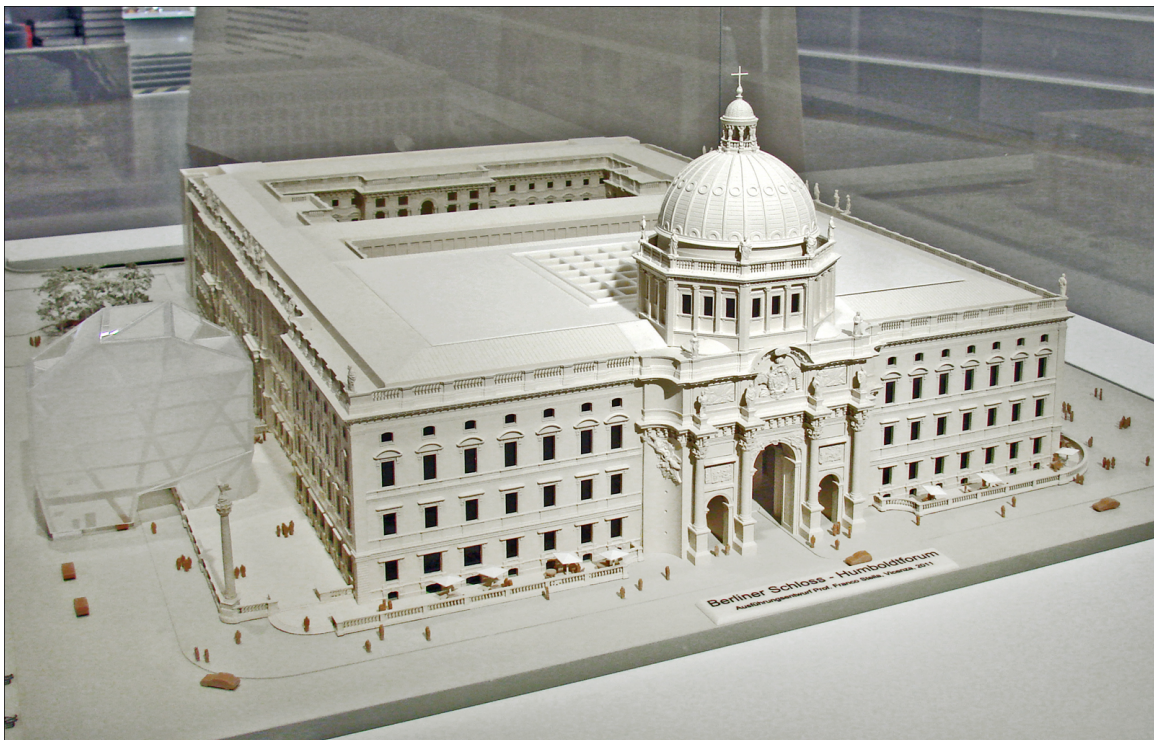


Fig. 4. Franco Stella, Model of future Humboldt Forum to be opened in 2019, including the Humboldt-Box on the left, ca. 2008. Note the Baroque design of 3 sides of the façade that mirrors that of the original Berliner Schloss.

[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Le_projet_Humboldt-Forum_\(Berlin\)_\(6087765939\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Le_projet_Humboldt-Forum_(Berlin)_(6087765939).jpg)

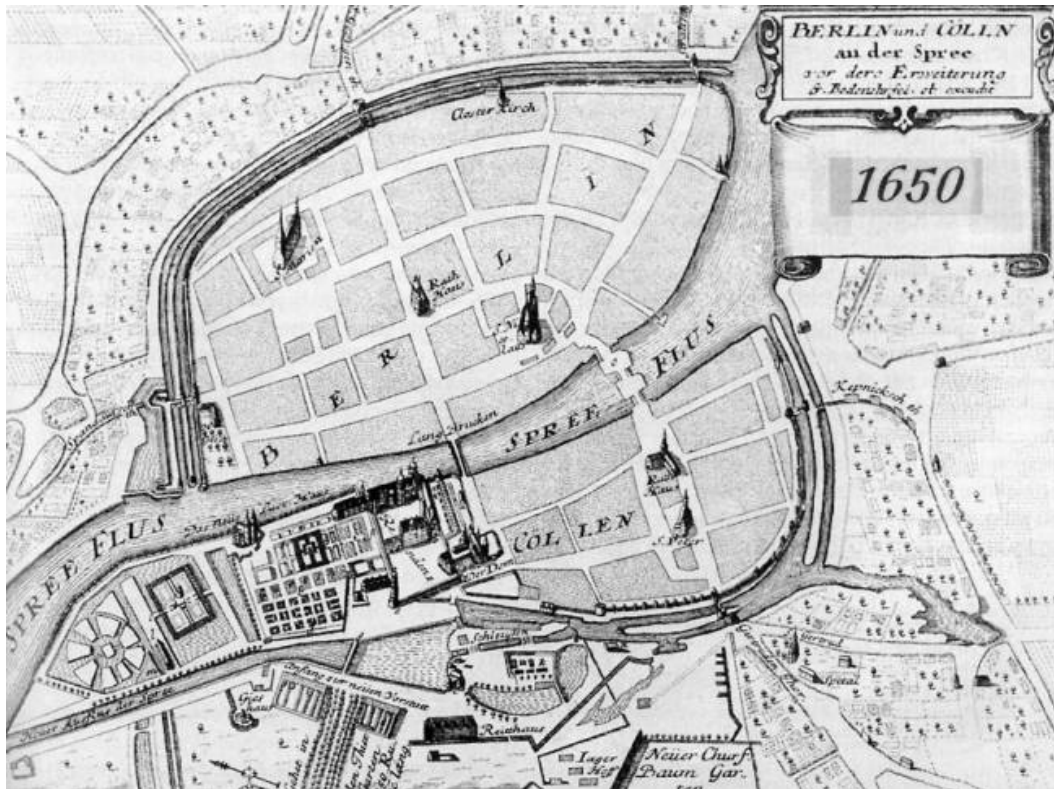


Fig. 5. Oldest surviving map of Cölln and Altberlin ca. 1650, thought to be drafted by Johann Gregor Memhardt. The Berliner Schloss and its gardens were situated on the western side of Fisherman's Island, the island that embodied the southern city of Cölln.

http://www.stadtentwicklung.berlin.de/aktuell/kalender/downloads/347_bauzaun_petriplatz_2008.pdf



Fig. 6. Unknown artist, *Berliner Schloss*, ca. 1687-1690, oil painting, collection of the Stadtmuseum Berlin. This painting displays the original Renaissance palace with an addition of an arcade built by Johann Arnold Nering in 1690. Franco Stella mirrors this original arcade within the design for the contemporary section of façade that will face the Spree River known as the “Belvedere.”
<http://www.stadtmuseum.de/ausstellungen/schloss-stadt-berlin>



Fig. 7. Samuel Blesendorf, *Idelisierte Ansicht des Münz- und Antikenkabinetts in Berliner Schloss um 1695*, copper etching from *Thesaurus Brandenburgicus selectus*, Band 1, Berlin, 1696, collection of the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin. An idealized rendering of the money, medallion and antiquities cabinet in the Berliner Schloss in 1695.

<http://www.smb.museum/en/exhibitions/detail/lob-der-guten-herrschaft-die-lackkunst-des-gerard-dagly-im-berliner-schloss.html>

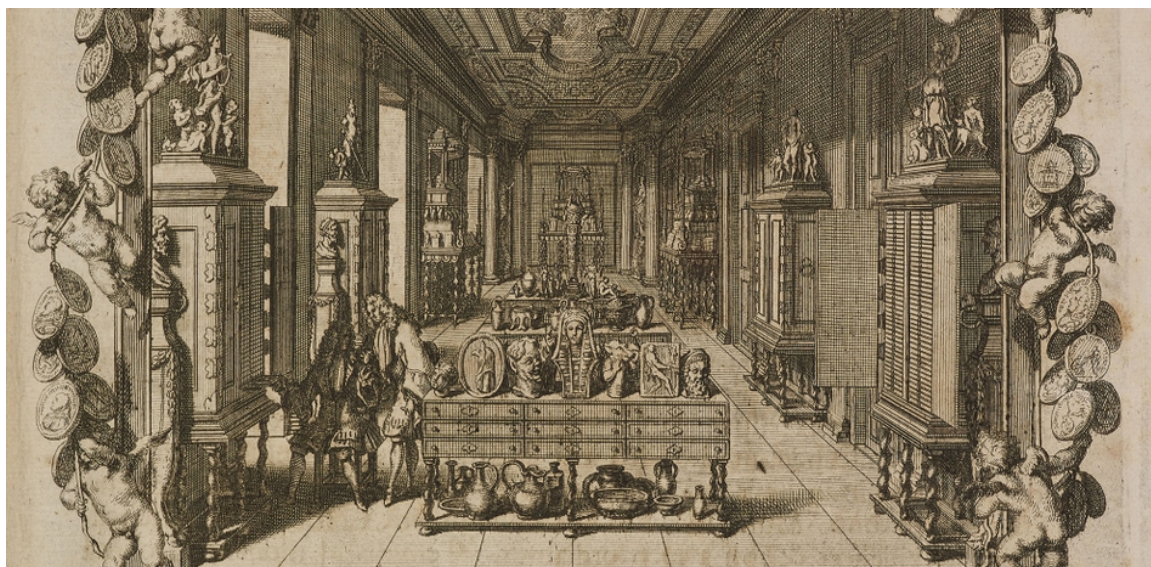


Fig. 8. Lorenz Beger, *Ansicht des Münz- und Antikenkabinetts in Berliner Schloss um 1703*, copper etching from *Numismata Pontificum Romanorum*, Berlin, 1704, collection of the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin. A rendering of the way in which the money medallion and antiquities cabinet was displayed in the Berliner Schloss in 1703.

<http://www.smb.museum/en/exhibitions/detail/lob-der-guten-herrschaft-die-lackkunst-des-gerard-dagly-im-berliner-schloss.html>

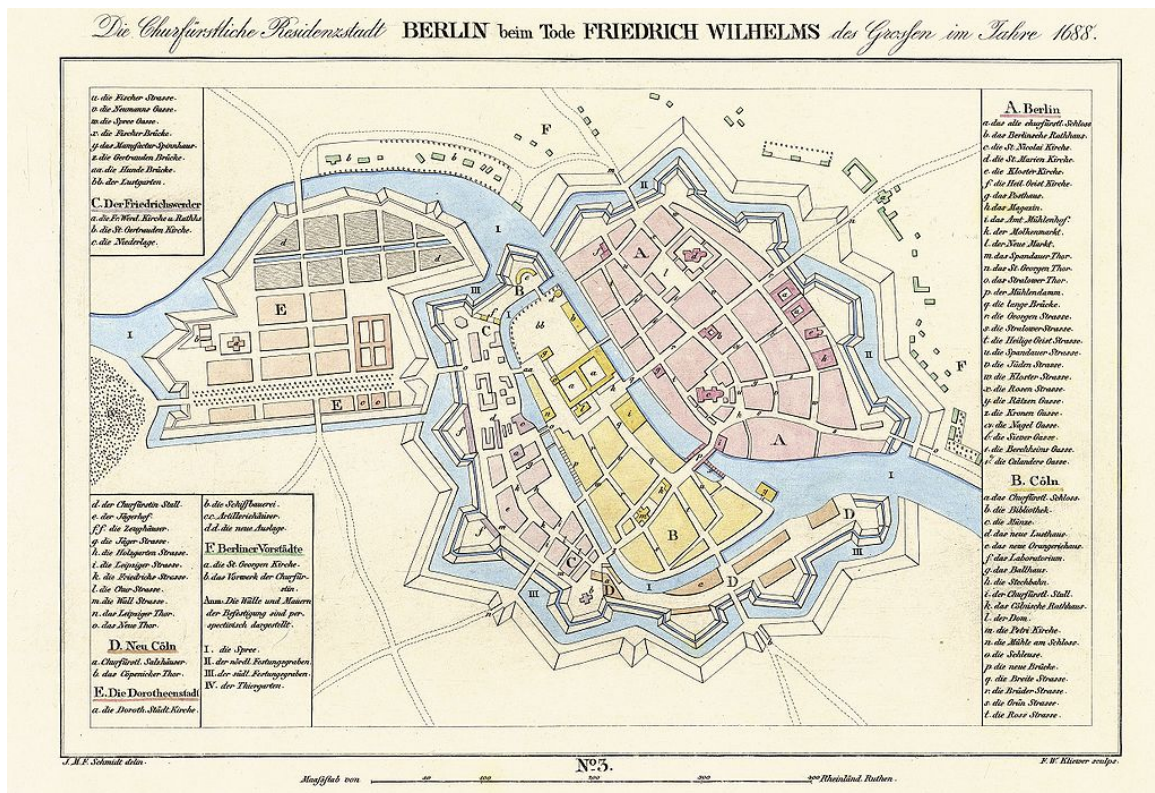


Fig. 9. J.M.F. Schmidt, *Die Churfürstlich Residenzstadt Berlin beim Tode Friedrich Wilhelms des Großen im Jahr 1688*, printed in *Historischer Atlas von Berlin in VI Grundrissen nach gleichem Maßstabe von 1415 bis 1800*, Simon Schropp, 1835, Berlin. A map of the royal residence city of Berlin at the time of the death of Friedrich Wilhelm the Great in the year of 1688 published in the nineteenth century. Note the Berliner Schloss and gardens are in the center of the map.
http://www.wikiwand.com/en/History_of_Berlin



Fig. 10. *Altes Museum und Lust Garten*, designed by Karl Friedrich Schinkel in 1822, built from 1825 to 1830, first named *Königliches Museum*, colorized photograph, ca. 1900. The Altes Museum is directly in front of the Berliner Schloss with palace's Lust Garten separating the two culturally significant buildings.

http://www.wikiwand.com/hu/Altes_Museum



Fig. 11. Reception Room of Kaiser Wilhelm II, Room 668, Berliner Schloss, Berlin, 1913-1916. This reception Room was drastically changed into a gallery when the palace was turned into a museum by the Weimar government.

Guido Hinterkeuser, *Das Berliner Schloss: Die erhaltene Innenausstattung Gemälde, Skulpturen, decorative Kunst* (Regensburg: Verlag Schnell & Steiner GmbH, 2013), 142.



Fig. 12. Second Parade Antechamber as a museum gallery for clocks and instruments, Room 14, Schlossmuseum, Berliner Schloss, Berlin, 1925.

Guido Hinterkeuser, *Das Berliner Schloss: Die erhaltene Innenausstattung Gemälde, Skulpturen, decorative Kunst* (Regensburg: Verlag Schnell & Steiner GmbH, 2013), 62.



Fig. 13. Great Hall as a museum gallery for the silver collection, Room 10, Schlossmuseum, Berliner Schloss, Berlin, 1925.

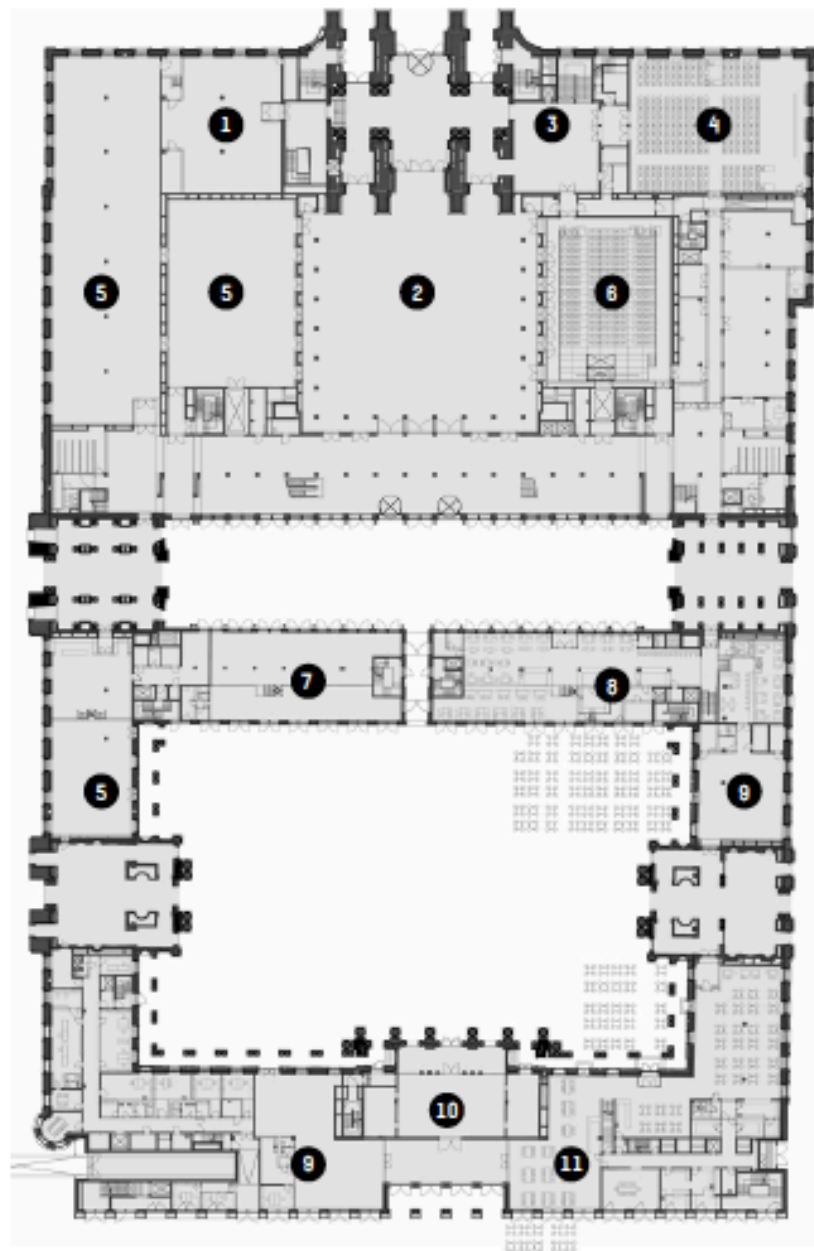
Guido Hinterkeuser, *Das Berliner Schloss: Die erhaltene Innenausstattung Gemälde, Skulpturen, decorative Kunst* (Regensburg: Verlag Schnell & Steiner GmbH, 2013), 37.



Fig. 14. Peter Heinz Junge, *Palast der Republik with the Television Tower in the Background*, 1986, black and white photograph. The Palast der Republik barely took up a third of the original Berliner Schloss. The rest of the space was used as for parades, festivals and as parking lot.
https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/4/48/Bundesarchiv_Bild_183-1986-0424-304%2C_Berlin%2C_Palast_der_Republik.jpg



Fig. 15. Field left after the dismantling of the Palast der Republik in 2008.
http://si.wsi.net/public/resources/images/BN-EB632_0815sc_J_20140812131454.jpg

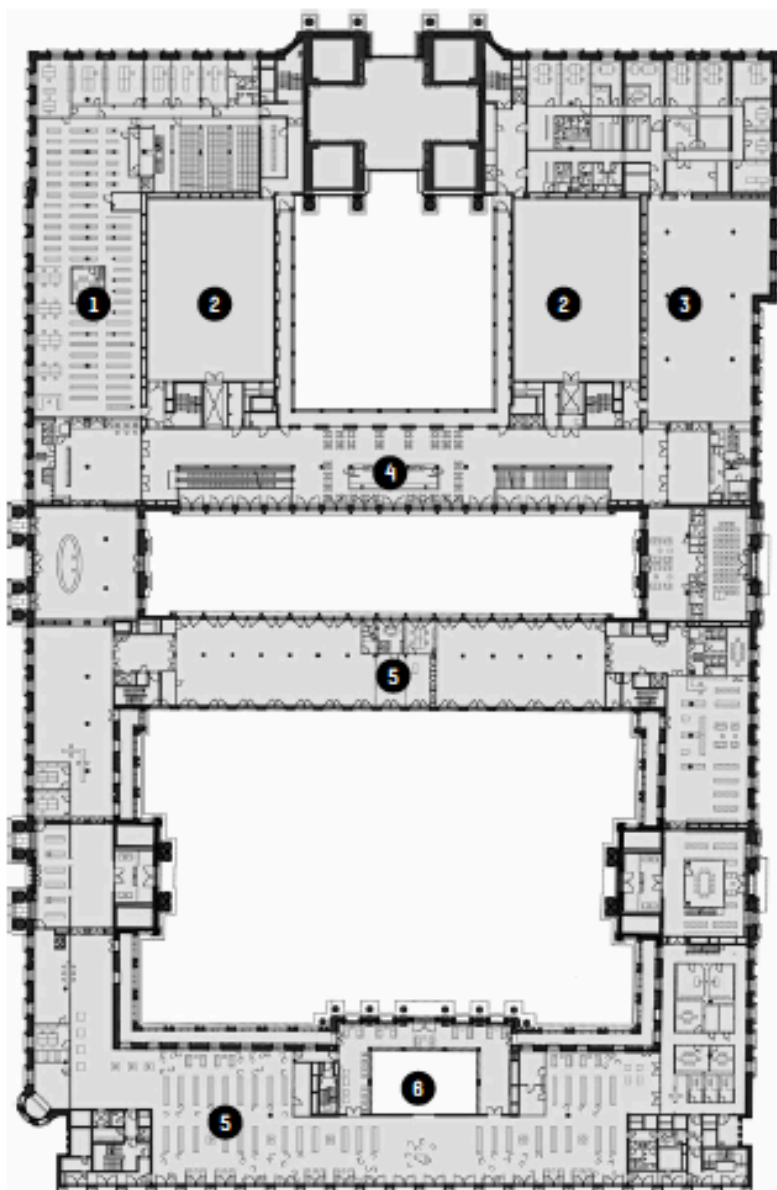


Layout ground floor:

- | | |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1 site history museum | 7 museum shop/ bookstore |
| 2 entrance hall/ reception area | 8 Bistro of World Cultures |
| 3 foyer halls | 9 trade |
| 4 auditorium | 10 Lapidarium |
| 5 special exhibitions | 11 Restaurant of the Continents |
| 6 multifunctional hall | |

Fig. 16. Layout of the ground floor of the new Berliner Schloss and Humboldt Forum. 1. Site History Museum; 2. Entrance Hall/Reception Area; 3. Foyer Halls; 4. Auditorium; 5. Special Exhibitions; 6. Multifunctional Hall; 7. Museum Shop/Bookstore; 8. Bistro of World Cultures; 9. Administration; 10. Lapidarium (where archeological artifacts of the Berliner Schloss site will be on display); 11. Restaurant of the Continents.

<http://www.sbs-humboldtforum.de/en/Service/Media/Brochure/#/2/>



Layout 1st floor:

1 specialized libraries (SMB)

4 café

Ethnological Museum (SMB)

Central and Regional Library Berlin

2 Oceania

5 library rooms

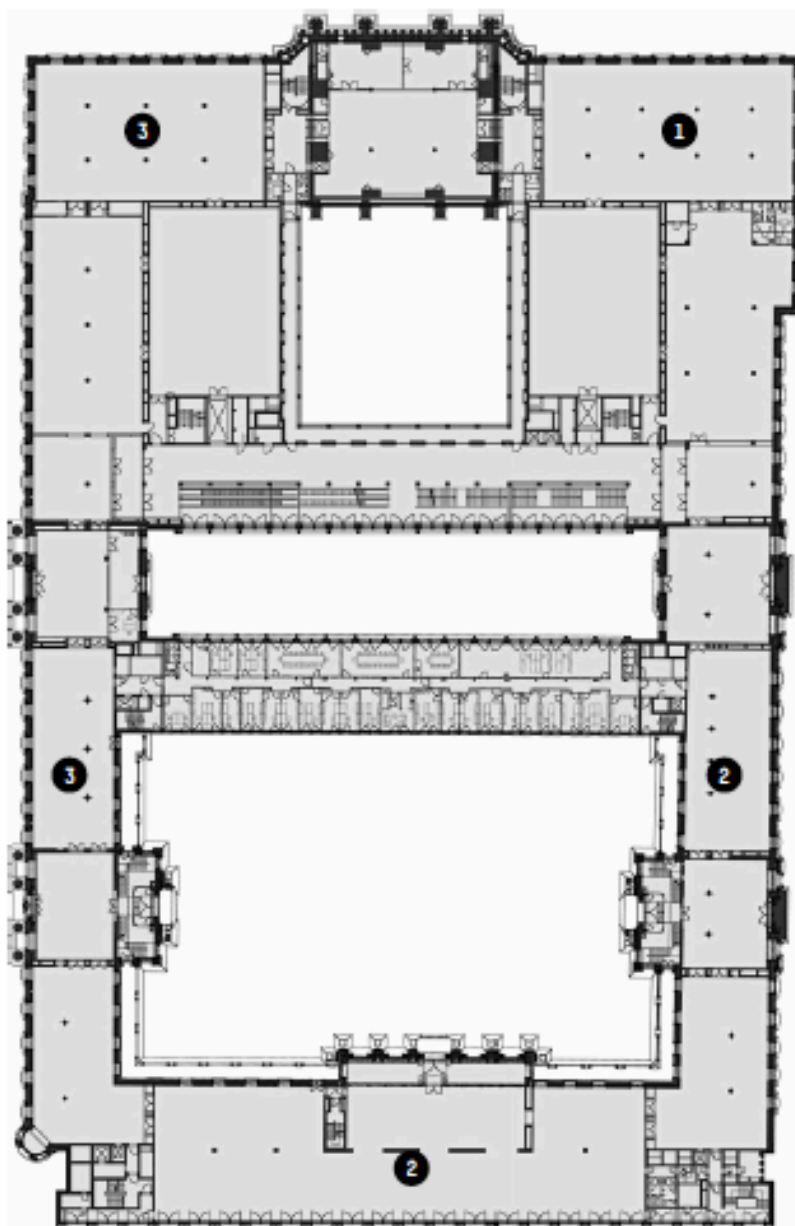
Humboldt University

6 café

3 conceptual space

Fig. 17. Layout of the first floor of the new Berliner Schloss and Humboldt Forum. 1. Specialized Libraries of the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin; 2. Oceania Exhibition Galleries, Ethnologisches Museum Berlin of the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin; 3. Conceptual Space of the Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin; 4. Café; 5. The Zentral- und Landesbibliothek Berlin; 6. Café.

<http://www.sbs-humboldtforum.de/en/Service/Media/Brochure/#/2/>

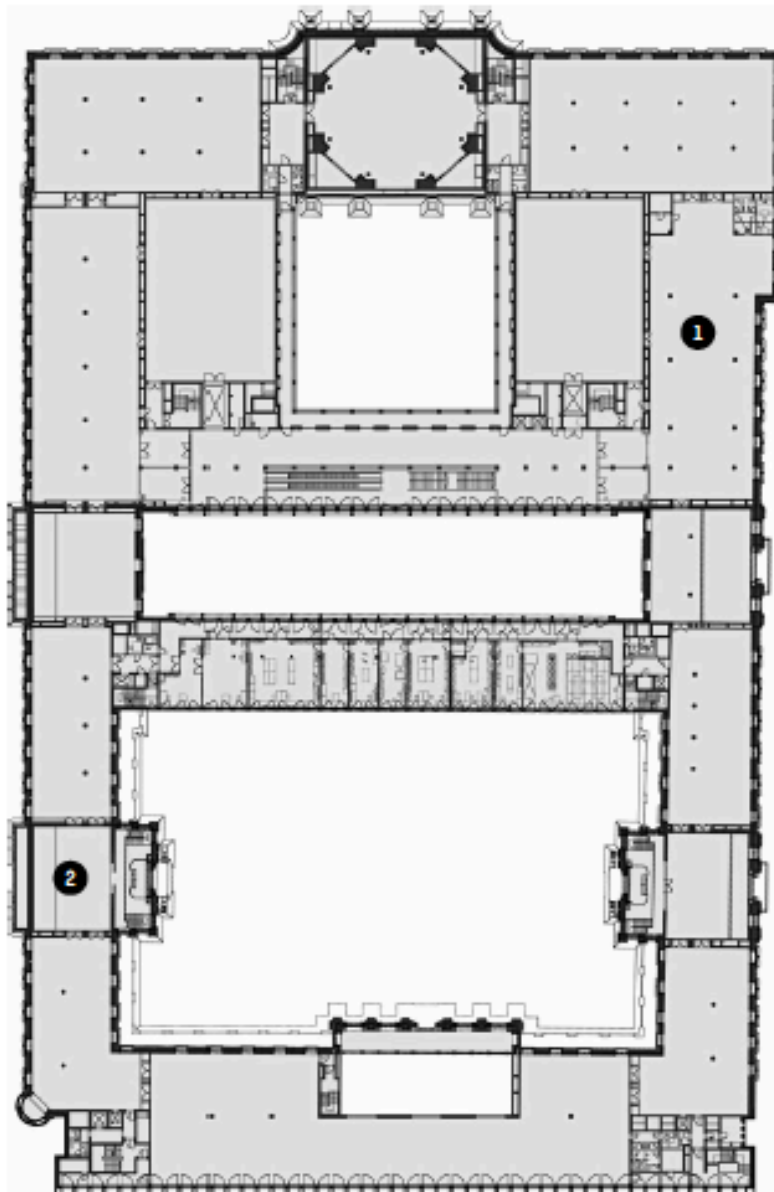


Layout 2nd floor:

Ethnologisches Museum (SMB)
 1 Oceania
 2 America
 3 Africa

Fig. 18. Layout of the second floor of the new Berliner Schloss and Humboldt Forum. Ethnologisches Museum Berlin of the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin Exhibition Galleries: 1. Oceania; 2. The Americas; 3. Africa.

<http://www.sbs-humboldtforum.de/en/Service/Media/Brochure/#/2/>



Layout 3rd floor:

Museum for Asian Art (SMB)

1 Asia

Ethnological Museum (SMB)

2 Asia

Fig. 19. Layout of the third floor of the new Berliner Schloss and Humboldt Forum. 1. Exhibition Galleries for the Asian collection of the Museum für Asiatische Kunst of the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin; 2. Exhibition Galleries for the Asian collection of the Ethnologisches Museum Berlin of the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin.

<http://www.sbs-humboldtforum.de/en/Service/Media/Brochure/#/2/>

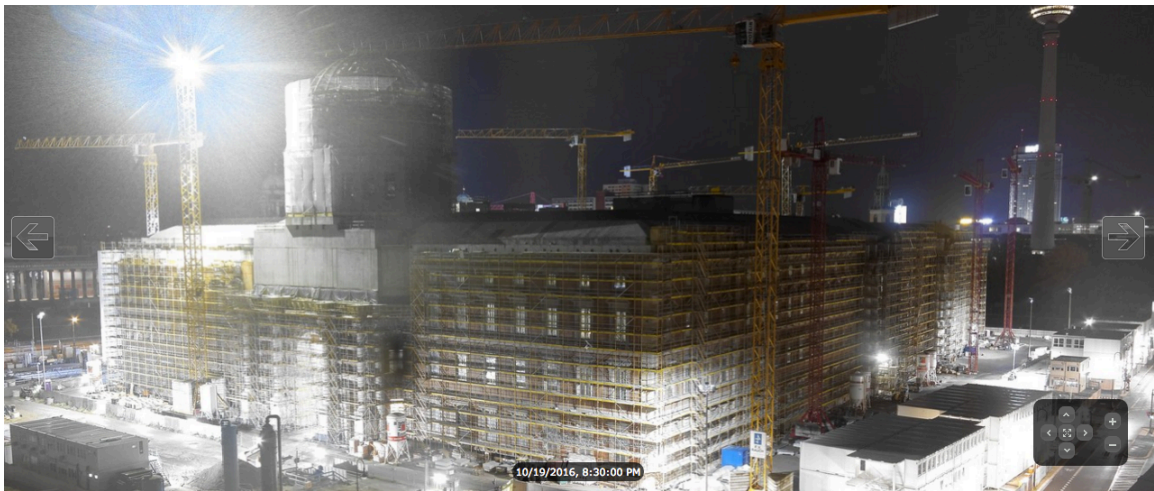


Fig. 20. Photograph of construction of new Berliner Schloss via web camera on October 19, 2016.
<http://cam01.berlinerschloss-webcam.de/>



Fig. 21. Henry Albert Payne, *Neues Museum Berlin, Ansicht mit der Friedrichsbrücke um 1850*, Engraving, From *Berlin und seine Kunstschätze*, Leipzig: Payne, 1850. Completed in 1855, the Neues Museum is situated behind the Altes Museum on Museum Island and the Altes Museum would be on the right of the engraving above.
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Neues_Museum_Anzicht_Payne_um_1850.jpg



Fig. 22. *Das Museum für Völkerkunde an der Königgrätzer Straße* (today's Stresemannstraße), Berlin, Postcard, Ca. 1900. This museum was completed in 1886 and demolished in 1961 after being heavily bombed during World War II.

https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ethnologisches_Museum



Fig. 23. Bruno Paul, *Bruno-Paul-Bau*, 1921, Dahlem Museum Complex, Berlin. The first building of the Dahlem Museum Complex which holds the Museum Europäischer Kulturen today.

<http://www.smb.museum/en/museums-institutions/museen-dahlem/home.html>



Fig. 24. The present Museen Dahlem, also known as Dahlem Museum Complex, Dahlem, Berlin. The museum complex belongs to the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin and currently houses the two museum collections that will make up the Humboldt Forum collection, the international ethnographic collection of the Ethnologisches Museum Berlin and the Asian art collection from the Museum für Asiatische Kunst, along with a third collection that will not be included in the Humboldt forum: the European ethnographic collection of the Museum Europäischer Kulturen. The Complex was built beginning in 1914 with the Bruno-Paul-Bau designed by Bruno Paul with the last building of the complex added in the 1990s designed by Wils Ebert and Fritz Bornemann.

<http://www.smb.museum/en/museums-institutions/museen-dahlem/home.html>

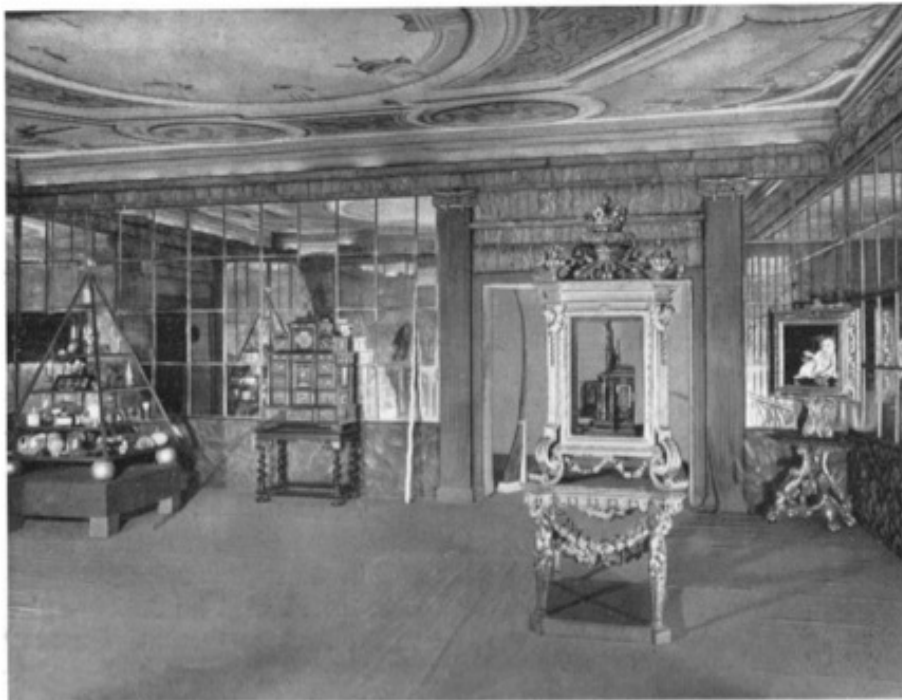


Fig. 25. *Reconstruction of the Naturalienkammer ca. 1931*, Photograph, Staatlichen Museen Berlin, Berliner Schloss, Berlin, 1931. The natural specimen collection was given to the Humboldt Universität Berlin in the late eighteenth century; it was the first of the collections to be taken out of

the Berliner Schloss. Otto Reichl, "Die Staatlichen Museen auf der Ausstellung 'Alt-Berlin.'" *Berliner Museen* 52, No. 1 (1931): 15.



Fig. 26. *Set of Five Dragoon Vases*, Chinese porcelain vases, China, Qing period, ca. 1700, Porzellansammlung, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden, Dresden, Photographer: Jürgen Karpinski. These vases were among the 151 pieces of Chinese porcelain traded by Friedrich Wilhelm I in 1717 for Dragoon Soldiers.

<https://www.google.com/culturalinstitute/beta/asset/dragon-vase-set-of-five/PwFqAhyvvs7ygA?hl=en>



Fig. 27. Aerial photograph of Berlin's Museum Island (originally Fisherman's Island), 2010, DOM Publishers. From the left lower corner of the photograph to the right upper corner: Berliner Cathedral, Lust Garten, Altes Museum, Neues Museum, Alte Nationalgalerie, Pergamon Museum, Bode Museum.

<https://www.preussischer-kulturbesitz.de/en/about-us/profile/unesco-world-heritage.html>



Fig. 28. “Museum of Vessels: Vessel Center,” photograph of exhibition *Museum of Vessels*, March 14 through May 12, 2013, Humboldt Lab Dahlem, Dahlem Museum Complex, Berlin, photographer: Jens Ziehe.

Dagmar Deuring, Christiane Kühl, and Barbara Schindler, *The Humboldt Lab Dahlem: Museum Experiments on the Way to the Humboldt-Forum* (Berlin: Humboldt Lab Dahlem, Kulturstiftung des Bundes and the Stiftung Preußischer Kulturbesitz, 2015), 32.



Fig. 29. “Museum of Vessels: Vessel Activities,” photograph of exhibition *Museum of Vessels*, March 14 through May 12, 2013, Humboldt Lab Dahlem, Dahlem Museum Complex, Berlin, photographer: Jens Ziehe.

Dagmar Deuring, Christiane Kühl, and Barbara Schindler, *The Humboldt Lab Dahlem: Museum Experiments on the Way to the Humboldt-Forum* (Berlin: Humboldt Lab Dahlem, Kulturstiftung des Bundes and the Stiftung Preußischer Kulturbesitz, 2015), 32.



Fig. 30. "Museum of Vessels: The Emptiness of Vessels," photograph of exhibition *Museum of Vessels*, March 14 through May 12, 2013, Humboldt Lab Dahlem, Dahlem Museum Complex, Berlin, photographer: Jens Ziehe.

Dagmar Deuring, Christiane Kühl, and Barbara Schindler, *The Humboldt Lab Dahlem: Museum Experiments on the Way to the Humboldt-Forum* (Berlin: Humboldt Lab Dahlem, Kulturstiftung des Bundes and the Stiftung Preußischer Kulturbesitz, 2015), 35.