

# Press release

Berlin, 4 June 2019

## Against the current: Francis La Flesche and the “Umó<sup>n</sup>ho<sup>n</sup>” (Omaha)

An inside look at preparations for one of the first temporary exhibitions

The **Humboldt Forum** will launch **five temporary exhibitions** in late 2020, including one conjointly with the **Nebraska Indian Community College** and **members of the Umó<sup>n</sup>ho<sup>n</sup>**, one of 573 federally recognised Native Nations in the United States located in North-eastern Nebraska and Western Iowa. Representatives are currently on their second working visit to Berlin. A **press workshop conversation** with them today provided some preliminary **insights** into the **principle of the temporary exhibitions** and the **specific preparations** being made for them. All those interested can engage in a **personal dialogue** with representatives of the NICC and Umó<sup>n</sup>ho<sup>n</sup> on **6 June 2019** as part of the *Long Night of Ideas*.

The first of the temporary exhibitions falling within the remit of the Stiftung Humboldt Forum im Berliner Schloss will be developed using objects from the collection of the Ethnologisches Museum of the SMB: while some of the exhibits will be on display for the first time, all of them will respond to various current issues, one of which relates to the provenance of the objects. The exhibitions are currently being devised by the SHF and SMB together with a range of primarily international partners in a process that is designed to be open-ended.

For the general director of the Humboldt Forum, Hartmut Dorgerloh, the temporary exhibitions are a clear example of “how we want to work at the Humboldt Forum. It is not the case that we determine the narrative ourselves; rather, we work closely together with communities in the countries of origin to develop a concept, engaging in a constant process of exchange – which means that the outcome is also open. I am looking forward to seeing the results.”

An insight into one such process came out of a workshop conversation conducted today with Ilja Labischinski, lead-curator of the exhibition on Francis La Flesche and the “Umó<sup>n</sup>ho<sup>n</sup>” (Omaha), and Pierre Merrick, Wynema Morris and Glenna Slater (Umó<sup>n</sup>ho<sup>n</sup>). The temporary exhibition with the working title *Against the Current: Francis La Flesche and the Umó<sup>n</sup>ho<sup>n</sup>* will be showing around sixty objects from the Umó<sup>n</sup>ho<sup>n</sup>. The objects are connected by a very special history. From 1894 to 1898, the indigenous ethnologist Francis La

Flesche compiled the collection representing “his own Umó<sup>o</sup>ho<sup>o</sup> [Omaha] culture” on behalf of the then Berlin Museum für Völkerkunde, today the Ethnologisches Museum of the SMB. It is the earliest example of self-representation on the part of an indigenous North American culture. Today the objects in the collection are the connecting link between past and present and the historical starting point for a new chapter in the relationship between the Umó<sup>o</sup>ho<sup>o</sup> and Berlin.

According to Lars-Christian Koch, director of collections for the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin im Humboldt Forum, “The joint work with the Nebraska Indian Community College and representatives of the Umó<sup>o</sup>ho<sup>o</sup> on these unique holdings is a perfect illustration of how important historical collections at the Ethnologisches Museum still are today and exemplifies the wealth of possibilities offered by exhibitions devised in collaboration with societies of origin. These cooperations have been a fixture in the work of the Ethnologisches Museum for many years and will also be a characteristic feature of the Humboldt Forum. The exchange of information and knowledge makes it possible for us to reconstruct the former significance and function of particular objects, to incorporate current interpretations and perspectives and thus recontextualise and reorganize the collections accordingly.”

The past and present of the Umó<sup>o</sup>ho<sup>o</sup> is shaped by their experience of racism, violence and land loss. The collection in Berlin is of special importance in this context, as it provides evidence of resistance against colonialism. It is an opportunity to reconnect with the ancestors and their way of life and to look and present their history with pride. Today, the exhibition is, above all, a means to convey their core message: “We are still here!”

Visitors will gain an insight into the world views espoused by the Umó<sup>o</sup>ho<sup>o</sup>, which will also be reflected in the architecture and design of the exhibition. As part of the **Long Night of Ideas** on 6 June 2019, the public is invited to meet representatives of the NICC and the Umó<sup>o</sup>ho<sup>o</sup> and watch films offering insights into their language and culture. For more information, please visit: [humboldtforum.com/en/events](http://humboldtforum.com/en/events)

**The temporary exhibitions at the Humboldt Forum** will open in late 2020 on the 2nd and 3rd floors. Together with the adjoining “intro rooms”, they will be under the responsibility of the Stiftung Humboldt Forum im Berliner Schloss. The spaces allocated to the temporary exhibitions and the intro rooms together comprise some 3,500 m<sup>2</sup>. They will be located between the permanent exhibitions organized by the Ethnologisches Museum and the Museum für Asiatische Kunst (Asian Art Museum) of the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin (SMB), which occupy an area of approximately 14.000 m<sup>2</sup>.

**Press images** [humboldtforum.org/press](http://humboldtforum.org/press)

**The Nebraska Indian Community College**, founded in 1973, provides post-secondary education on three campuses: on the Umó<sup>ho</sup> and Santee Sioux reservations and in South Sioux City, Nebraska. For the past forty-six years, the Nebraska Indian Community College has been and remains dedicated to providing higher education through unique and culturally relevant educational experiences. These experiences are geared toward all Umó<sup>ho</sup> (Omaha), Isanti (Santee Dakota), and any learners attending classes at one of our three campuses.

As the largest actor in the Humboldt Forum, **the Ethnologisches Museum** of the SMB will offer a comprehensive overview of the world's art and cultures that spans the ages as well as the continents and promises to open up new perspectives on the past and present cultures of Africa, the Americas, Asia, Australia and Oceania. The Ethnologisches Museum also intends to scrutinize and critically assess the legacy and consequences of colonial rule and the role played by Europe. The museum's goal is to stimulate interest in interaction and intercultural encounters and to promote a deeper understanding among the peoples of the world.

Inspired by the eponymous Alexander and Wilhelm von Humboldt and their delight in exploring the world and comprehending it as a system linking nature and culture in myriad ways, the **Humboldt Forum** will establish a new venue for experience, learning and encounter in the heart of Berlin. The organizations participating in the Humboldt Forum are the Stiftung Preußischer Kulturbesitz with the Ethnologisches Museum and the Museum für Asiatische Kunst of the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Kulturprojekte Berlin and Stadtmuseum Berlin, and the Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, with the Stiftung Humboldt Forum im Berliner Schloss at the helm.

## The Long Night of Ideas

We are still here. The Umó<sup>n</sup>ho<sup>n</sup> Speaking

**Date** Thursday, 6 June 2019

**Time** 6–11 pm

**Doors open** 5:30 pm

**Venue** Berliner Bauakademie, Schinkelplatz, 10117 Berlin, not wheelchair-accessible

**Language** English, questions can be asked in German, the answers will be in English.

**Entrance** free of charge, no registration necessary

**Participants** Michael Thomas Berger, Barbara Jo McKillip-Erixon, Pierre Merrick, Wynema Eleanor Morris, Vanessa Dawn Hamilton, Glenna Slater

**Organizer** Stiftung Humboldt Forum im Berliner Schloss

The event is part of the Federal Foreign Office's fourth *Long Night of Ideas*.

**Further information** [humboldtforum.org/en/events](http://humboldtforum.org/en/events)

## Against the Current: Francis La Flesche and the “Umó<sup>n</sup>ho<sup>n</sup>” (Omaha)

An inside look at preparations for one of the first temporary exhibitions

**Temporary exhibition** Against the Current: Francis La Flesche and the “Umó<sup>n</sup>ho<sup>n</sup>” (Omaha)

**Venue** Humboldt Forum, 2nd floor, north side of east wing, in the America section

**Space** 214 m<sup>2</sup>

**Opening** late 2020

An exhibition of the Stiftung Humboldt Forum im Berliner Schloss in cooperation with the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, the Nebraska Indian Community College and members of the Umó<sup>n</sup>ho<sup>n</sup>. Lead curator: Ilja Labischinski, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin.



**Ethnologisches Museum**  
Staatliche Museen zu Berlin



**NEBRASKA INDIAN  
COMMUNITY COLLEGE**

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