

The Tropics. Views from the Middle of the Globe

Martin-Gropius-Bau Berlin
12 September 2008 - 5 January 2009

Eighty five pieces of contemporary art along with two hundred exhibits from Africa, Asia, Oceania and tropical America from the collections of the Ethnological Museum in Berlin.

Following the highly successful presentations in Brasilia and Rio de Janeiro, with more than half a million visitors, a considerably extended version of the exhibition will be on view in Berlin. The joint project of the Goethe-Institut and the Ethnological Museum Berlin spans an arch from the premodern, precolonial times up to contemporary artistic positions, proposing "to explore in troubled times the currents of energy and subtle discords between the hemispheres, to show which cultural forces are working in harmony and which in opposition to one another. The exhibition aims to create an incorruptible, crisis-resistant stock of images that permits a non-hierarchical view of the world."

Alfons Hug, the project's initiator, writes in his catalogue text, among other things: "Since it is an art exhibition, the selection of the older works was primarily based on aesthetic and not on scientific criteria. The general idea is to re-aestheticize the subject of the tropics, not to look at them from a political and economic viewpoint for once, but to concentrate on culture as a counterweight. Instead of one-dimensional debates on poverty (or hunger, or violence, or political crises) or crass generalizations we are offered a glimpse of the artistic complexity and aesthetic richness of the tropics in a way that promises to change the terms of the North-South dialogue. This will free the South from the trap of always being seen in a bad light, while the North's insistence on explaining the world in economic terms can be put into proportion, thus paving the way for a genuinely cosmopolitan and multi-perspective view of the world in the Humboldtian sense."

The exhibition is structured around seven main, mythically charged themes, each of them bringing together contemporary artworks and museum's exhibits:

1. After the Deluge (nature and landscapes)
2. Life is Short (images of people, portraits, ancestors)
3. The Broken Arrow (power and conflicts)
4. The Colours of the Birds (colours and abstractions of the tropics)
5. The Forbidden Laughter (sound and music of the tropics)
6. Tropical Baroque
7. Urban Drama

The Tropics. Views from the Middle of the Globe is also meant as a way station on the road to the Humboldt Forum, which is planned on the Schlossplatz (square of the former castle) in Berlin's center, with the aim to present non-European cultures on a par with European cultures.

Organizers:

Goethe-Institut and Ethnological Museum - National Museums Berlin.
Supported by the German Federal Cultural Foundation.

Curators:

Alfons Hug, Director of the Goethe-Institut Rio de Janeiro
Peter Junge, Ethnological Museum, Curator
Viola König, Ethnological Museum, Director

Venue:

Martin-Gropius-Bau
Niederkirchnerstr. 7
10963 Berlin

Opening Hours:

Wed.-Mon. 10 am - 8 pm
Closed Tuesdays and on 24 and 31 December

Website of the project

<http://www.goethe.de/kue/bku/prj/tro/enindex.htm>

Catalogue

The Tropics. Views from the Middle of the Globe

With contributions on art and culture of the Tropics by Anthony F. Aveni, Breyten Breytenbach, Roberto Cabot, Ticio Escobar, Maria Gaida, Regina Höfer, Alfons Hug, Peter Junge, Viola König, Markus Schindlbeck and Michael Taussig

Editors: Alfons Hug, Peter Junge, Viola König

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Available at the Martin-Gropius-Bau (price there: 32 € - only from 12.9.2008 to 5.1.2009),
and bookshops.

Supporting program

Parallel to the exhibition at the Martin-Gropius-Bau, various cultural institutions offer a diverse supporting program on the theme *Tropics* with concerts, performances, films, exhibits, discussions, symposia and talks. Organizers are the Goethe-Institut, the Ibero-American Institute (IAI), the Theater Hebbel am Ufer, Freunde der Deutschen Kinemathek / Arsenal Cinema.

>> detailed Program

<http://www.goethe.de/kue/bku/prj/tro/pbr/enindex.htm>

Thematic focus "Tropics"
of the Ibero-American Institute (IAI)

>> Program

<http://www.iai.spk-berlin.de/en/events/annual-focuses/tropen.html>

Gods of the Latin American Tropics - a Contemporary Vision

Photographs by Antonio Briceño

5 September - 4 October 2008

Reading room of the Ibero-American Institute (IAI)

Opening on 4 September 2008 at 7:30 pm in presence of the artist

See also:

Antonio Briceño

Pavilion of Venezuela at the 52nd Venice Biennial, 2007

Photo tour by Universes in Universe

<http://universes-in-universe.de/car/venezia/eng/2007/tour/ven/index.htm>

Special web publication of the Goethe-Institut:

Tropics

Texts and essays from the past and present about the relations between the Tropics and Europe from different perspectives, among them some literary treasures. Overview of projects organized by the Goethe-Institut on the Tropics.

- Europe in the Tropics
- In the Mirror of the Tropics
- The Tropics Themselves
- Tropics in Europe
- Worldwide Programme

<http://www.goethe.de/kue/bku/prj/tex/deindex.htm>

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