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PRESS RELEASE

Gropius Bau

Niederkirchnerstr. 7, 10963 Berlin

Opening hours: Wed – Mon 10 am – 7 pm, Tue closed

Restless Times. Archaeology in Germany

21 September 2018 – 6 January 2019

A special exhibition by the Museum für Vor- und Frühgeschichte – Staatliche Museen zu Berlin in cooperation with the Verband der Landesarchäologen in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland to mark the European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018

Digital communication and high-speed transport are bringing people ever closer together, and make globalization seem like a modern phenomenon. But the reality is that transregional networks and all of their concomitant effects have always been an inherent part of society, and have fundamentally influenced people's lives since prehistoric times. Every day, archaeologists make discoveries which back this up in striking ways. *Restless Times. Archaeology in Germany* presents the most spectacular archaeological finds of the past 20 years, from the Stone Age to the 20th century. Organized around the four themes of *Mobility, Conflict, Exchange* and *Innovation*, and with over 1000 exhibits, visitors will be able to get a sense of the personal, economic and cultural effects of transregional interaction.

The European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018 aims to shed light on processes of exchange and on relationships within Europe. Under the motto *Sharing Heritage*, the rich cultural heritage of Europe will be presented through diverse projects, enabling new interpretations. *Restless Times. Archaeology in Germany* is the major project under the theme *Exchange and Movement*, and looks at the cultural heritage of Europe from an archaeological perspective. The aim of the exhibition is for the objects on display to highlight the connections between our cultural past with the current day, and to make clear that the foundations of a common Europe were laid several thousand years ago, and that it is from these foundations that a unique cultural network arose which continues to shape us today.

Above all of this stands the movement of people as a connective, basic principle of history: this is the basis for the spread of goods and ideas, the development of trade and progress, and of their associated structural changes and conflicts. For this reason, the exhibition is not divided chronologically, but rather is guided by the four themes of Mobility, Exchange, Conflict and Innovation. Framed by this thematic system, the exhibition presents spectacular finds and research findings from the past 20 years from every state in the Federal Republic over a space of 1600 m², covering the entire ground floor of the Gropius Bau. 70 individuals and institutions from right across Germany are supporting the exhibition with loans, with a total of 300 archaeological finds providing well over 1000 high-calibre exhibits from the Stone Age into the 20th century. All the exhibits

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are united by the fact that, despite their uniqueness, they do not stand alone, but always have to be viewed as part of a European network.

At the centre of the exhibition in the atrium of the Gropius Bau stands the port wall of Roman-era Cologne, which was recently unearthed during the construction of the Cologne metro. The colossal remains of a 3.5m high retaining wall made of almost 2000-year-old oak planks will be presented together with thousands of fragments from the port basin.

In the **Mobility** section, the human being stands front and centre. People moved about for a whole range of reasons, alone or in large groups, on short trips or across long distances, and their paths are traceable through what they left behind. Here, we take a look at four major migrational events of the Neolithic Age that had lasting effects on the European gene pool. A particularly fascinating find is the Neolithic ritual site in Herxheim (Rhineland-Palatinate), where at the beginning of the 5th century BCE people converged from as far away as 400km for a mysterious sacrificial ritual.

Right up to the current day, Europe has been shaped by **Conflicts** and military clashes. One of the discoveries of recent years is the Bronze-Age Battle at Tollense (Mecklenburg-Vorpommern). On this site, in around 1300 BCE, the earliest attestable battle in the history of Europe was carried out. But conflict also emerges on another, intellectual level, in the form of iconoclasm. The Berlin sculptural find can be understood as an example of this, with the 16 works stemming from an exhibition of “degenerate art” organized by the Nazis in the 1930s for propaganda purposes, which were stored together with other seized artworks in an apartment that was destroyed in 1944 by bombing raids.

In the **Exchange** section, the focus is on commodities. A broad arc is drawn from the production of raw materials to distribution and professionalized trade, and the social and urban planning changes that went along with them. Exhibits such as the Gessel Gold Hoard (Lower Saxony) with 82 standardized gold spirals, or the Oberding Copper Treasure (Bavaria), with 796 identical clasp-ingots bundled into groups of 10, show strikingly that even 4000 years ago there were transregional trading units. In the old centre of the city of Lübeck however, trade has to be understood in a totally different way. Here, in the 12th century, standardized buildings were constructed to cater to merchants, with still intact wooden basements designed to hold trading goods.

In the final section, the exhibition turns its focus to **Innovations** – both in technical and intellectual terms. Exhibits include humanity’s earliest example of figural art, the approximately 35,000-year-old Venus of Hohle Fels (Baden-Württemberg), and the Bronze-Age Nebra Sky Disk (Saxony-Anhalt), with the world’s oldest known concrete depiction of the cosmos. Also on show are 3000-year-old gold hats from Germany and France, which represent not just masterly achievements in techniques of goldsmithing, but are also adorned with calendrical symbols.

Restless Times. Archaeology in Germany is under the patronage of the Federal President Frank-Walter Steinmeier, and is supported by the Fed-

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Verband der
Landesarchäologen
in der Bundesrepublik
Deutschland



Staatliche Museen zu Berlin
Preußischer Kulturbesitz

eral Government Commissioner for Culture and the Media, and the Kuratorium Preußischer Kulturbesitz.

The exhibition will be accompanied by a comprehensive catalogue, published by Michael Imhof Verlag: German, 480 pages, ca. 355 images, ISBN 978-3-7319-0723-7, price: 39,90 €, price at the museum: 29 €.

For more information please visit: www.bewegte-zeiten-berlin.de.

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