

# Museum am Rothenbaum

## Rothenbaumchaussee 64 | 20148 Hamburg Germany | [markk-hamburg.de](http://markk-hamburg.de)

### Yurt Now! Nomadic Design Relived

From 15 December 2023



Kyrgyz yurt © MARKK Photo: Paul Schimweg

Housing and mobility are topics of intense socio-political debate and concern many people. With the exhibition "Yurt now! Nomadic design revisited", MARKK is devoting itself to a mobile form of housing that has been an integral part of nomadic life in Central Asia for over two thousand years. Over the last 200 years, however, political and economic upheavals have had a serious impact on the nomadic way of life in Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan and Mongolia. Nevertheless, the ingenious design principles of the yurts and the values and technologies associated with them continue to have an impact today and are also being used in new ways. Whether as accommodation in war zones and disaster areas or for tourist glamping - the yurt is more than just a tent. In 2013, the traditional knowledge and technologies of yurt making in Mongolia and in 2014 in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan were added to UNESCO's list of intangible cultural heritage, as was the associated textile art of felting and carpet making.

The exhibition is based on two yurts from the MARKK collections: the one created by Kyrgyz textile master Turdu Kydyrbaeva in the 1980s and donated to the museum in 2017 is designed to be both representative and suitable for everyday use, showcasing all of Turda Kydyrbaeva's artistic skills. The second Kazakh yurt was acquired by the then Museum für Völkerkunde in 1906 from the Hamburg ethnographic trading company J. F. G. Umlauff. Little has been handed down about its exact origin, time of creation or use. Expedition photographs by the Russian ethnographer Samuil M. Dudin, who documented life in the Kazakh steppe under Russian colonial rule in 1899, provide a

historical context for the exhibition.

The exhibition also addresses the conservation challenges involved in storing and preserving these predominantly large textile objects in museums. The work and methodology of the MARKK conservation team is juxtaposed with traditional forms of transportation and storage. The conservation work remains visible to the public during the exhibition and is part of the accompanying program. Events as part of the accompanying program will take place in the Kyrgyz yurt.

Two contemporary positions draw attention to the present and future of the yurt: Altynai Osmoeva (\*1988), a multimedia artist who lives in Kyrgyzstan and works internationally, shows with her installation UNITY! The more feet enter your home, the more blessing they bring - consisting of a felt carpet and synthetic resin galoshes woven together by threads in the shape of a tent - highlights the values of hospitality and textile art. The installation UNITY! is on loan from the artist and was previously shown at Arte Laguna Prize in Venice in March 2023.

The future of yurt architecture is also the focus of the Rural Urban Framework research group, which is led by architect Joshua Bolchover at the University of Hong Kong. In the course of urbanization processes, Mongolians are increasingly settling in urban suburbs and often use the most favorable residential architecture for them, the Mongolian yurt. Rural Urban Framework is responding to the unstoppable boom in these actually mobile forms of housing with residential modules that aim to meet the needs of the population for an urban infrastructure in the Mongolian metropolis of Ulaanbataar.

*An exhibition in collaboration with representatives of the Kyrgyz community.*

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