

Museum am Rothenbaum

Rothenbaumchaussee 64 | 20148 Hamburg Germany | markk-hamburg.de

Press Release

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Architecture team for the modernization of MARKK has been appointed

The Museum am Rothenbaum – Kulturen und Künste der Welt (MARKK), together with Dr. Carsten Brosda, Senator for Culture and Media, presented today the team of architects that will not only modernize the museum building in the coming years, but also renew the permanent exhibition. The aim is to make the museum an attractive place of encounter and knowledge for the future. The Federal Government Commissioner for Culture and the Media and the Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg have provided a total of 123 million euros for this purpose. The internationally renowned architect Lina Ghotmeh, Paris, leading *Lina Ghotmeh – Architecture*, and the well-known Hamburg team BIWERMAU Architekten BDA were selected as part of an EU-wide tendering process.

MARKK is one of the most important former ethnographic museums in Europe. The building on Rothenbaumchaussee was built according to the plans of architect Albert Erbe for the former Museum für Völkerkunde and opened in 1912. It has been continuously transformed ever since.

Since 2017, MARKK has begun a process of substantive and strategic realignment, towards an internationally networked and recognized museum that brings us closer to the cultures and arts of the world. To this end, the museum is, among other things, placing its collections in new contexts through a variety of collaborations, including with peoples of origin or contemporary artists, making colonially influenced references visible and dealing openly and critically with its history.

The new permanent exhibition is intended to give the museum's significant and global collections greater visibility and to place them in the context of the city's history. It is also about making visible the interweaving of the collections with global trade relations and the role of the trading city in Germany's colonial history.

A new permanent exhibition should significantly increase the attractiveness of the museum and both increase the importance of the house for city tourism, as well as appeal to the diverse urban society and increasingly become a place of learning for schools. In addition to the references to the city's history, the presentations will link contemporary topics with the collection and offer a special and novel visitor experience. In addition to conventional concepts of "exhibition", the museum is also to develop into a generally accessible place of coming together, exchange, participation and interaction. As the living room of the city, exhibition spaces should be combined with discursive and performative spaces of multisensory knowledge transfer and experience, with quiet places of retreat and learning, with shopping areas and gastronomy. These functions should be more closely interlinked in the future to meet the diverse needs of society and thus become more attractive as a place to visit.

The urgently needed structural renewal supports this reorientation in terms of content and will enable the museum to adapt public areas to contemporary standards. One of the decisive structural changes will be the creation of a new barrier-free entrance, which should make access to the museum easier both structurally and visually. This, along with a restaurant and outdoor area that is independent of the museum's operations, will open the museum up even more to the city. The public areas will be modified to make the museum experience more attractive for individuals, groups and families of all ages, with additional lounge areas, more seating and optimized air conditioning. There will also be new rooms for hire, which should increase the popularity of the MARKK as a venue for events and exhibitions. The installation of additional elevators and the modernization of the technical facilities will create the basic conditions for a future-proof building.

The concrete planning, including the process and schedule, is now beginning. The modernization should be completed by the early 2030s.

Dr. Carsten Brosda, Senator for Culture and Media:

“The MARKK is increasingly becoming a museum where we can understand the cultural diversity of our globalized world and the intertwining of its histories. It invites a diverse urban society to come together and engage with each other through the MARKK's collections and exhibitions. We need these places that inspire a desire to experience a deeper understanding of different ways of life and experiences. With LINA GHOTMEH ARCHITECTURE and BIWERMAU, we have gained an internationally renowned team of architects who will successfully continue the MARKK's journey of change and opening to the public with this comprehensive modernization. They understand how to open the MARKK to the city's society and to today's world with respect for the listed building and its history.”

Prof. Dr. Barbara Plankensteiner, Director Museum am Rothenbaum (MARKK):

“We are looking forward to working with an outstanding team of architects that combines two important perspectives on our museum, its contents, history and future. We are thrilled to have LINA GHOTMEH ARCHITECTURE and BIWERMAU on board for our project. The new permanent exhibition, the modernization of the historic building and its public areas, their improved accessibility and the modern technical infrastructure are a great gift for our museum and open up new possibilities for us that we have been waiting for a long time. This will enable us to position ourselves in Hamburg, nationally and internationally, not only in terms of content, but also in terms of design and space, as a forward-looking museum of cultures and arts.”

Jan Zunke, Managing Director of Sprinkenhof GmbH:

“We are delighted to be supporting such an important project for Hamburg's cultural scene as the implementing agency, and to be helping the MARKK to play a pioneering role in Hamburg. A significant milestone in this regard was reached with the completion of the award procedure last December, which required coordination in numerous committees and meetings to meet the interests of all project participants and, equally, the requirements of the funding agency. We are now very excited to see how the team of architects plans to develop an

architectural framework that is appropriate for a listed building and will meet the requirements of the content-related reorganization. We look forward to working with the MARKK, the BKM, BIWERMAU Architekten from Hamburg and the Paris-based planners from *Lina Ghotmeh — Architecture*.”

Lina Ghotmeh, *Lina Ghotmeh — Architecture*:

“We are thrilled to embark on this exciting journey to breathe new life into the MARKK museum. This museum is a testament to the rich history of this port city, a center of trade, exchange and culture. The building houses a vast collection from around the world belonging to the world and showcasing diverse histories and legacies. We have reimagined MARKK as a vessel that challenges traditional certainties - a place for workshops, creation and collaboration that fosters empathy. It is a place that celebrates the impermanence and constant change that defines our world. We are confident that this transformation will make MARKK an important destination and meeting place for its audience and beyond.”

Michael Biwer, BIWERMAU Architekten BDA:

“What makes the existing MARKK museum truly unique is the opportunity to give a physical expression to the transformation process that aims to realign the museum, striking a balance between preservation and contemporary renewal. Together with Lina Ghotmeh — Architecture, we combine different perspectives and experiences and look forward to a fruitful exchange that will help the MARKK museum to achieve new vitality.”

Lina Ghotmeh — Architecture is a Paris-based architecture firm led by architect Lina Ghotmeh, who is known for her commitment to sustainable, human-centered and environmentally sensitive design. Her work is characterized by a strong affinity for materials that create sensual spaces and that are in harmony with both the environment and history, while promoting a strong connection between people and the built world. Their outstanding projects include the “Stone Garden” tower in Beirut, which was named “Project of the Year 2021” by the architecture and design magazine *Dezeen* and exhibited at the 17th Venice Architecture Biennale, as well as works in the *MAXXI* museum in Rome and the *Cooper Hewitt Design Museum* in New York. Other notable projects include the Estonian National Museum, which was nominated for the Mies van der Rohe Award and won the Grand Prix Afex 2016. And the *Ateliers Hermès*, which is France's first energy-positive, low-carbon manufacturing building and won the 2023 Opal Award.

Lina Ghotmeh — Architecture also designed the renowned 22nd Serpentine Pavilion in London and was commissioned to design the future AIUla Contemporary Art Museum. Most recently, her studio delivered the highly acclaimed exhibition design for the Olga de Amaral retrospective at the Fondation Cartier in Paris. Ghotmeh's academic career includes serving as Louis I. Khan Professor at Yale, the Gehry Chair at the University of Toronto (2021–2022), and the Kenzo Tange teaching position at Harvard in 2024. Her work has been recognized with numerous awards, including the Schelling Architecture Prize (2020) and the Great Arab Minds Award (2023).

The Hamburg-based BIWERMAU Architekten BDA, under the direction of Michael Biwer and Thomas Mau, has made a name for itself in the field of building in listed buildings. They pursue the concept of empathetic architecture, which is evident in their sensitive handling of buildings, spaces and established structures. They strive for a harmonious balance between preserving the historical context and structural renewal. Considering contemporary requirements and usage concepts, they transform the historical substance into contemporary architecture with sustainable added value for users, the environment and society. BIWERMAU's success is based on a culture of open collaboration – both within the team and with their external partners. Michael Biwer (Dipl.-Ing. Architekt BDA, born 1966) and Thomas Mau (Dipl.-Ing. Architekt BDA, born 1967) have been working together for more than 20 years. Their work has received numerous awards. Exemplary projects in the protection of historical monuments and world heritage sites include repurposing of warehouses in Hamburg's Speicherstadt, e.g. Hauptzollamt and Maschinenzentralstation; Gut Hasselburg, Neustadt; Waterworks, Blankenese Falkensteiner Ufer; Kraftwerk Bille, Hamburg. In addition, projects in the context of Hamburg's city center, Kontorhäuser in the Burstah Ensemble and at Gänsemarkt.

Tendering procedure:

The call for tenders in accordance with the EU-wide procurement regulation (VgV), to find suitable planning offices for the modernization of the listed building, was published by Sprinkenhof GmbH in May 2024. By the end of June, Sprinkenhof GmbH had received 24 applications from teams of architects. The selection committee, consisting of the Chief Planning Director, the Ministry of Culture and Media and the Office for the Protection of Historical Monuments, the executing Sprinkenhof GmbH and the Museum am Rothenbaum (MARKK), made its selection in the two-stage process at the end of October 2024.

Press material in German and English and a selection of press photos are available for download on the MARKK press page.

Event announcement:

On the evening of January 16 at 7:00 p.m., the architectural firms Lina Ghotmeh – Architecture and BIWERMAU Architekten BDA will present their work and visions for the MARKK in a public event consisting of a lecture followed by a discussion with director Barbara Plankensteiner. Admission is free.