

May 2 – May 7, 2009

**Alexander von Humboldt – Remapping Global Perspectives**

Alexander von Humboldt, Etching from Auguste Desnoyers after François Gerard, 1805, Private Collection, Munich, Germany

A series of events commemorating the 150th anniversary of Alexander von Humboldt's death

*Humboldt was one of those wonders of the world, like Aristotle, like Julius Caesar, like the admirable Crichton, who appear from time to time, as to show us the possibilities of the human mind, the force and the range of faculties.*

—Ralph Waldo Emerson

A man ahead of his time, Alexander von Humboldt (1769-1859) is known throughout the world as a result of his five-year research expedition to the New Continent. In addition to his work as a research explorer, naturalist, and

scientist, he is also remembered as an early advocator for human rights and a pioneer in the field of ecology.

Organized by Dr. Frank Holl and the German Embassy in cooperation with the German Historical Institute, the Goethe-Institut, the Library of Congress, and the Smithsonian Associates

**Saturday, May 2, 10 am – 2 pm**  
German Embassy Auditorium

**Research Explorer Alexander von Humboldt: A New Vision of the World**  
HALF-DAY SYMPOSIUM

**Dr. Frank Holl**, Independent Humboldt Scholar

Through illustrated presentations, Dr. Frank Holl presents highlights of the life of this extraordinary researcher and explorer, whose goal was “to examine the interweaving and interacting of all the forces of nature.” Topics will include Humboldt's concept of global thinking and his explorations in the Americas, which were of particular interest to President Thomas Jefferson. Dr. Holl, a science historian and journalist, has edited five books on Humboldt and organized exhibitions on him in Mexico, Cuba, Venezuela, Germany, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, and Spain.

Organized by the Smithsonian Associates in cooperation with the German Embassy.

**A catered lunch will be served.**  
**For tickets (\$80/\$60) and information:**  
**[www.ResidentAssociates.org](http://www.ResidentAssociates.org) or 202-633-3030**

**Monday, May 4, 6 pm**  
German Historical Institute

**Alexander von Humboldt – A Man for the 21st Century**  
ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION

Participants include **Dr. Ottmar Ette** (Institute of Romance Literature, University of Potsdam), **Dr. Andreas Daum** (Department of History, University at Buffalo), and **Dr. Kristen Belgum** (Germanic Stud-

ies Department, University of Texas at Austin). Independent Humboldt scholar **Dr. Frank Holl** will moderate.

Organized by the German Historical Institute  
**RSVP to 202-387-3355 or [events@ghi.dc.org](mailto:events@ghi.dc.org)**

**Tuesday, May 5, 6:30 pm**  
Goethe-Institut

**The World Consciousness of Alexander von Humboldt**  
LECTURE

**Ottmar Ette**, Chair of Romance Literature, University of Potsdam

Alexander von Humboldt, a traveler between the Old World and the New World during the 18th and the 19th centuries, developed his own concept of *Weltbewusstsein* (world consciousness).

Organized by the Goethe-Institut

**RSVP to 202-289-1200 ext. 170**  
**or [rsvp@washington.goethe.org](mailto:rsvp@washington.goethe.org)**

**Wednesday, May 6, 3 pm**  
Library of Congress, Thomas Jefferson Memorial Building, Room 119

**Mourning, Celebrating, Revisiting: Alexander von Humboldt in the United States, 1859-2009**  
LECTURE

**Dr. Andreas Daum**, Professor, Department of History, University at Buffalo

Even during his lifetime Alexander von Humboldt's persona and oeuvre were an important reference point for American scholars, artists, and even governmental officials. Humboldt's thinking about nature provided answers and a conceptual framework for questions arising from the exploration of North America's seemingly unlimited space, as the United States was expanding westward. However, only the dynamics of the United States' multi-cultural, immigrant society, rapidly growing in the second half of the nineteenth century, turned Humboldt into a true cultural hero beyond his scholarly achievements. Through commemorative events and public sculptures, Humboldt acquired the status of an icon for various social groups. Although this status eroded after 1900, Humboldt continued – and continues – to fascinate Americans.

Organized by the European Division and the John W. Kluge Center of the Library of Congress, the German Historical Institute, and the German Embassy. Reception to follow.

**Thursday, May 7, 7 pm**  
German Embassy Auditorium

**Humboldt's Influence on American Landscape Painting**  
LECTURE

**Dr. Eleanor Harvey**, Chief Curator, Smithsonian American Art Museum

This illustrated lecture will look at Humboldt's influence on 19th-century American landscape painters and photographers, exploring these artists' interest in, and knowledge of, changing theories of geological processes at the time Humboldt's *Cosmos* was published.

**Church, the Artist, on the Trail of Humboldt in Ecuador**  
LECTURE

**Dr. Kevin J. Avery**, Associate Curator, Dept. of American Paintings and Sculpture, The Metropolitan Museum of Art

The lecture will illuminate Frederic Edwin Church's understanding of Humboldt's perception of the New World landscape and his response to the naturalist's invocation to artists to represent equatorial America. Dr. Avery will trace Church's 1853 and 1857 journeys along Humboldt's 1802 route in Ecuador, illustrating the narrative with photographs from the speaker's two trips to Ecuador in 1992 and 2000. He will also compare the views with the drawings and oil sketches that Church made on site and show how Church synthesized them into his most famous painting, *The Heart of the Andes*, now in The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Organized by the German Embassy.

**Seating is limited; reservations are required:**  
**[event@wash.diplo.de](mailto:event@wash.diplo.de)**

**All events are free of charge, unless otherwise noted.**  
**For more information on this series of events, please visit [www.Germany.info/Humboldt](http://www.Germany.info/Humboldt)**

