



**Reopening of the Museum der Kulturen Basel
6 September 2011**

Museum der Kulturen Basel - A place for encounters and inspiration

After two years of reconstruction, refurbishment and expansion, the Museum der Kulturen is ready to reopen its doors. Herzog & de Meuron, the Basel-based architectural firm, has designed a stunning crown for the historical walls: the beautiful rooftop of irregular folds fits harmoniously into the rooftops surrounding the cathedral. The infrastructure has been updated, the spatial aesthetics optimized and the exhibition area increased. On 6 September Switzerland's largest museum of ethnology will celebrate its reopening. Director Anna Schmid comments: "Our innovative approach to life's cultural dimensions makes them more accessible. We want to be a place for new encounters and inspiration."

The Museum der Kulturen Basel is one of Europe's great ethnographic museums. Parts of its impressive collections are without equal. The exhibitions to celebrate the Museum's reopening relate overarching ethnological considerations to immediate social topics. Whereas some presentations are given the space needed to draw attention to the exhibit's essence, others are kept compact to illustrate dependencies and linkages. In future, exhibitions will rotate more frequently so as to do greater justice to the wealth of the Museum's collections. The offering will be rounded off by an extensive programme of events.

New programming with exciting exhibitions

The Museum is reopening with three exhibitions. The exhibition "Intrinsic Perspectives – Inspiring Aspects of Anthropology" is in itself a programme of the Museum's activities. It deals with the basic areas of interest in modern ethnology: community, agency, space, knowledge and performance. All exhibitions refer to these concepts and are organized in accordance with the Museum's unique conception and approach, which rejects ostensibly all-embracing blockbuster presentations of individual ethnic groups, territories, religions and other ethnological divisions in favour of topically focused, intercultural and interregional exhibitions focused on people's activities in the here and now.

The Museum's long-standing interest in the social and cultural developments of the East Asia is as strong as ever. In this field the Museum der Kulturen presents two exciting topics: one exhibition is dedicated to the fascination of Beijing Opera and the other to the phenomenon of Chinatown. Questions of affiliation and differentiation, cultural conflict and fusion in the interplay between diverging standpoints and perceptions are some of the facets attractively and instructively illustrated by the two exhibitions.

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