Diversity Max*

Multiple Differences in Exhibition-Making in *Berlin Global* in the Humboldt Forum

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Diversity has come to be considered an obvious good thing in most areas of public culture, including in the museum and heritage sector. Numerous programmes and initiatives have been designed to 'increase diversity' and to 'diversify'. These generally entail the implicit assumption that the aim should be to achieve as much diversity as possible. In other words, their goal is what I here call (using an orthography that I will explain later) 'diversity max*'.

In this chapter, my aim is not to question whether diversity is or is not a good thing. With caveats, I mostly agree that it is.[1] Rather, taking the assumed goodness of diversity, and the quest for more of it, as my starting point, I examine how exhibition-making is undertaken in a context of diversity-proliferation. In particular, I am interested in the question of 'maxing out' on diversity, either in the sense of achieving—or aiming to achieve—some kind of maximum coverage or of otherwise reaching limits on the range or forms of diversity included. Whether such coverage is deemed possible, or to what extent, depends on certain usually implicit, or only semi-explicit and taken-for-granted ideas about what 'diversity' means and how it is understood to operate, as well as about the practice through which diversification is attempted and realised. This is not to say, however, that such implicit or semi-implicit understandings of diversity are necessarily either fully shared or coherent. On the contrary, there may be multiple and even discrepant understandings at work without this necessarily being fully evident to participants collectively engaged in practice. This can have consequences for what a maximisation of diversity might mean and entail, including for whether it is imagined as even possible or desirable.

The questions that I raise here were prompted by conducting ethnographic fieldwork—as part of the multi-researcher museum and heritage project, *Making Differences*—with a team of progressive curators as they created a new exhibition in Berlin.[2] In multiple ways, they sought to make an exhibition that would be 'inclusive' and 'diverse' as well as for 'everybody' (words that they themselves used). Some of the questions are, however, also debated within political theory, if not always in quite the same way.

Putting some of these debates into conversation with ethnography, as I seek to do in this chapter, makes it possible to examine the specific language, context and practices that give shape to positions that might otherwise be only abstract or that might play out in other ways. It also highlights 'sticking points' or complications in the realisation. In this way, ethnography contributes to the task of understanding the workings of specific institutions that some political theorists see as vital for avoiding the analytical pitfalls of institution-blind extrapolations from 'formal political systems' (Tully 2004: 87). In the ethnographic case that I discuss, institutional, or even more locally specific, conditions—for example, the remit to address a 'public' whose 'diversity' is itself at issue—shape what is done and how. The fact that some of the dilemmas that arise are ones that are seen as rather intractable within political theory makes it unsurprising that they pose difficulties for curators. At the same time, however, I suggest that there are possibilities within the specific institution of the exhibition that allow, to some extent at least, for these to be accommodated or even brought productively together.

The ethnographic case is that of the curatorial team making the 4000m2 non-temporary exhibition called *Berlin Global*, which opened in 2021 in the Humboldt Forum. A large, costly and contested cultural development in Berlin, the Humboldt Forum houses exhibitions from various museums in a reconstructed city palace and is widely proclaimed as being a significant—if far from unproblematic—public statement about Germany and its worldview today. Especially in light of Germany's histories of Holocaust and colonialism, as well as experiences of migration and racism, how this new high-profile memory institution performs 'diversity' is of great political importance, as well as of considerable academic and public interest (see the Introduction to this volume). *Berlin Global* positions itself as addressing 'the diversity of Berlin—a city whose most striking feature is its heterogeneity,' as the first sentence in the exhibition's catalogue puts it (Leimbach and van Dülmen 2021: 5). Moreover, it has been flagged up by others involved in Berlin cultural institutions as 'a model project in terms of diversity'.[3] How it does diversity is, therefore, of considerable significance for the high-profile Humboldt Forum, as well as for cultural production more widely in the capital and beyond.

Below, I first explain the orthography of my title, which also highlights the broader ambiguity of diversity discourse as a signalling of diversity in relation to specific currently neglected differences versus invoking unlimited potential differences. I then look at the dominant model of 'diversity'—as the 'non-European' or 'other'—within the Humboldt Forum in relation to which *Berlin Global* was at least partly formulated. This is followed by other understandings of diversity—including that of migrants, of the non-mainstream, of subcultures, of lifestyles, or of everybody—that were mobilised or that otherwise arose, and how these were variously negotiated and accommodated. In the concluding discussion, I consider how these could be brought productively together, while also looking further at the limits of diversity max* and its wider implications.

Asterisked diversities

At a table strewn with papers, cups, biscuits and fruit, a group of women and men are discussing what in German is called 'gender-sensitive language' (*gendersensible Sprache)* or

'gender-correct language' (*gendergerechte Sprache*). At issue is whether they will use this in the planning document that will present the exhibition, at that time provisionally called *Berlin und die Welt* (Berlin and the World) to the public. What this language entails is using orthographic forms for certain nouns (usually for jobs or roles—such as curator or director) that do not use masculine forms as generic but indicate feminine—and all in-between—ones too, through specific linguistic suffixes. Most of those present at the meeting are nodding in ascent at using this, though there is at least one furrowed brow and a question of whether this language will also be used in the finished exhibition. If so, the questioner suggests, he thinks this might be confusing for visitors. Somebody else says that she too has been wondering about this. A freelance member of the team who has a lot of expertise in gender issues says that it is very important to bring greater awareness to these issues and that the finished exhibition definitely should do so. Several people nod, others look thoughtful. For now, however, it is agreed that the decision concerns the text for the document.

How the gender-sensitive language works is that compound nouns for roles, such as professions, are created that indicate feminine as well as masculine versions. So, for example, beginning from the fact that there are the words *Kurator* and *Kuratorin* (the 'in' indicating the feminine form) for male and female curators respectively, a compound form is created using either an underscore or 'Gendergap' (as it is sometimes also called in German), as in *Kurator_in*, or an asterisk, as in *Kurator*in*. These forms are taken to indicate not only 'either/or' but also further possible genders and sexualities.[4] In the meeting, it was argued that * especially opens up the latter and the decision was reached, for the document at least, to use the asterisk, referred to as *Sternchen*, literally 'little star'.

In using * in the orthography in my title, then, I am, like the curatorial team, harnessing its capacity to point to multiple possible—potentially even as yet unrecognised—diversities. Although the orthography was designed to address gender diversity—and although this was the focus of the use of the asterisk in the team discussion—I use it to indicate other diversities too. This is congruent with the team's attempt to consider many kinds of diversity, as I discuss further below. In using it in my title, I also position it as one might a number to indicate 'to the power of', thus drawing on its indeterminacy to signal potentially limitless multiplication, which is the topic of my diversity-max discussion.

For the curatorial team, using the asterisk in the text and presentation to be presented to the press and public in July 2016, felt bold and even a bit risky. It was, though, just one concern amidst the much bigger question of how the overall exhibition plans would be received within the wider context of the Humboldt Forum. The fact that the Humboldt Forum had been so much under the gaze of critical commentary—including for questions relating to difference and diversity—made this especially acute.

Diversity in the Humboldt Forum

A discourse of diversity had already been widely deployed to promote and legitimate the Humboldt Forum (see von Bose 2016) and this has continued. Berlin's main tourism-promotion organisation, Visit Berlin, for example, introduced an entry on the City Palace/Humboldt Forum in 2020 as follows: 'a palace is being rebuilt in the heart of the city, not

as a seat for kings and Kaisers—but as a museum for the whole world and all the diversity of its cultures'.[5] Although this appears to be an all-encompassing use of 'diversity', in practice it is used most often to index what are called 'the non-European collections' (*die außereuropäische Sammlungen)*, namely those of the Ethnological Museum and the Museum of Asian Art, which occupy the largest areas of the reconstructed palace. For Visit Berlin and other organisations supporting this development, the non-European objects are regarded as bringing a welcome cultural diversity to Berlin and, at the same time, giving positive recognition to that non-European diversity through its incorporation into the important cultural venue of the Humboldt Forum (Macdonald 2016; von Bose 2016). A very different view, however, is held by groups such as Berlin Postcolonial, which regard the Humboldt Forum as a Eurocentric and colonial project (see Introduction and von Oswald, this volume), and argue that not only does this entail an implicit 'self' being juxtaposed with 'the other', but also 'Europe [being] constructed as the superior norm'.[6] Far from enriching culture, in this view, the Humboldt Forum's dominant model of diversity merely replicates limited binary formulations of difference, sustaining a hierarchical relationship between Europe and the rest of the world.

As planning for the Humboldt Forum had already been underway for many years by the time that it was decided, in 2015, to include a permanent space dedicated to Berlin, what was to become *Berlin Global* began in a context in which many parameters were fixed, politics were prickly and debate was heated. Under the leadership of Paul Spies, who in 2016 moved from Amsterdam to take up the directorship of the Berlin City Museum (Stadtmuseum Berlin) and the Chief Curatorship of what was usually referred to as 'the Berlin Exhibition' (*die Berlin Ausstellung)* in the Humboldt Forum, a team of curators—variously freelancers or from the City Museum or *KulturProjekte Berlin* (a Federal State non-profit cultural organisation which was jointly responsible, together with the City Museum, for the exhibition)—devised an approach that positioned the Berlin Exhibition as a kind of hinge, connecting with other parts of the Humboldt Forum, especially the displays upstairs of the Ethnological Museum and Museum of Asian Art, which Paul Spies, sometimes tongue-in-cheek referred to as 'the world above'. This connecting is evident in the working title, *Berlin and the World,* as well as in the Exhibition's stated aim to show Berlin's 'entanglement with the world' ('*Berlins Verflochtenheit mit der Welt*'; *Berlin und die Welt* 2016: 5). The wording of this aim is an outcome of much discussion of the potential dilemma inherent in the working title, namely that in the very act of trying to indicate the city's links with, and being part of, wider global relationships, it risks setting up a division between Berlin and the rest of the world and even of replicating an idea of diversity as being brought to Berlin by the world beyond, a double-bind that occurred, as described below, in other instances too.

In emphasising Berlin as entangled with other parts of the world, the curatorial team stressed that Berlin's impact elsewhere was not necessarily positive but could be damaging and destructive. In so doing, they addressed criticisms that the exhibition might be city marketing. In addition, however, they were responding to concerns voiced by activists, such as Berlin Postcolonial, and others, that the Humboldt Forum would give inadequate attention to colonial entanglements, especially with respect to the ethnological collections. Frequently discussed in team meetings, the curators sought to bring missing critical attention to colonialism, and related issues of racism, into the Humboldt Forum.

Many members of the team had knowledge of critical and postcolonial perspectives, and they augmented this during the exhibition-making process, by, for example, consulting experts in this area—such as one who highlighted ways in which images might be incipiently racist—and themselves undertaking anti-racist training. As part of this critical awareness, they not only attempted to avoid perspectives such as exoticism and stereotyping but also planned to point out how certain exhibitionary practices involving the display of other cultures have been part of the means of disseminating such negative representations. In so doing, the curatorial team aimed to bring critical attention to the model of diversity as the difference of the (non-European or exotic) other that they feared might be promulgated in other parts of the palace.

Double-binds and dilemmas in displaying diversity

In trying to devise ways of referring in the exhibition's display to problematic modes of representing diversity, however, the curators faced a double-bind—namely, that they might be seen to be reproducing the representations that they were seeking to criticise (see also Tinius, this volume). The clearest instance of this concerned curators' attempts to include discussion of *Völkerschauen*—'human shows', sometimes also called 'human zoos'. Especially popular in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, these displayed living people, usually from countries outside Europe, in supposedly natural—but usually stereotypical and old-fashioned—scenes from their home countries. One such in Berlin in 1896, for example, was part of an exhibition that attracted an audience of over seven million people (Geppert 201: 56). The plan for *Berlin Global* was to discuss such shows in an exhibition area called 'Entertainment' (*Vergnügen*), the idea being that this would show that popular entertainment connected with other parts of the world could have negative dimensions. The difficulty came to a head when the designers (from the company Krafthaus/Facts & Fiction) proposed showing images of the shows in display-cases that would resemble large snow domes, in which one side would show original posters or photographs of the shows and the other would have information such as quotes about the poor living conditions to which performers were subjected. The designers argued persuasively that the display-cases would evoke the idea of ethnological display and of touristic practice, critically reminding visitors of their own role as tourists. After reflection, however, the curators decided that the double-bind risk that visitors would view the human zoos voyeuristically, replicating rather than challenging the problematic gaze, was too great, and the snow domes were, so to speak, dropped and the human show content later cut entirely. This is just one instance of a sticking point that is familiar from theory, in this case especially from discussion within anthropology about the discipline itself, which in its attempts to highlight and discuss difference may risk overemphasising it and even exoticising (e.g. Kapferer 2013). In exhibition-making, however, the problem is all the greater due to the visual and three-dimensional content and the fact that publics may well not read accompanying texts.

If the Berlin team tried to avoid reproducing the reductive model of diversity as the difference of the other—and even to confront it—what did they turn to instead? What

was entailed by the max* approach to diversity that they took? Here I turn first to why what became *Berlin Global* was sometimes regarded as a model diversity project.

Model diversity and participation

In referring positively to the not yet opened Berlin Exhibition for its anticipated approach to diversity, Sandrine Micossé Aikins, the director of the new organisation Diversity Arts Culture, did so, she said, on account not only of its approach to personnel but also the diversity (*Vielfalt)* of perspectives that would be brought into the exhibition. At the time when the interview was conducted the then ten-person core curatorial team consisted of three men and seven women, of whom three of the latter identified as 'people of colour'—to use the terminology that, after much discussion, came to be used within the team, and the rest as white. Two of the people of colour, both identifying as Turkish-German Berliners, had been recruited as part of a concerted effort to do what was specifically referred to as diversifying the team. It had been expected that this diversification would have resulted in also recruiting somebody from the black community, and it was still hoped that this would be possible. While gender and colour were most often remarked upon in explicit considerations of the diversity of the team, other kinds of difference were also sometimes commented upon as significant in the media and by the team themselves as important. These included the mix of West and East Germans, with one team member having been brought up in East Berlin; and the mix of countries, with not only Paul Spies but two other members of the original curatorial team being from the Netherlands. Within the team, the fact that not all team members identified as heterosexual was also occasionally mentioned; and it was sometimes reflected upon whether the team should also be diversified further to include a greater range of physical diversity, in relation to ableism, as well as of social background.

The diversity of team members was considered important to helping the team themselves not just represent but also perceive and potentially include a 'diversity of perspectives,' as Aikins had put it. As their attempts to appoint new members had not resulted in the team becoming more diverse—and as the team size inevitably limited the amount of diversity it was possible to include—they sought to expand the range of inputs through their consultations with others (including some who they called 'critical friends' who were consulted over a longer time-period), and through various areas within the exhibition that would be left open for changing content suggested by different groups themselves. All of this was in order to 'bring in' more—and more diverse—perspectives.[7]

In trying to achieve this, however, the curators did not want to replicate what they saw as a problematic position of themselves just representing the perspectives of others. Rather, they sought modes in which diverse individuals and groups might be enabled to represent themselves. The key word here was 'participation'. This was the subject of extensive discussion among the curators, including by a sub-group that wrote up a guiding document about it, drawing on literature including Nina Simon's categorisation of different types of participation (2010). The considerable thought—and hours and hours of discussion—given to it was itself an indication of just how seriously they took the task they had set themselves, as was the fact that they also established a post specifically to ini-

tiate and manage participative work. Many participative projects were undertaken during the exhibition's making, bringing collaboration with a wide range of individuals and groups, including artists, schools and local initiatives of various sorts. The number of collaborations, although substantial, was, however, necessarily limited by the time available. Indeed, as participative work is typically intensive and time-consuming, attempting to diversify could lead to a paradoxical limiting of coverage. This is just one of the constraints that diversity max* may bump up against in practice. So how, in the face of that, was diversifying, with its necessary selection, done?

Especially significant in the case of *Berlin Global* was the idea of diversifying beyond the status quo and the 'usual suspects.' In addition, selection was often in relation to particular topics already selected. Important too, however, were operational dimensions of selection, a matter to which ethnography is well-placed to attend. The curators' own networks—sometimes connected to their previous exhibition or community work—were often a starting point in the selection of participants, sometimes one contact leading to another. They asked friends for further contacts; and in curatorial meetings they shared information about people that they had heard about, perhaps also from the news or other exhibitions. Through the many participative projects established, the selection of certain exhibition content was to varying degrees delegated. Thus, for example, a refugee Syrian journalist was invited to interview refugees from various countries, herself playing a role in choosing at least some of the further participants. Or, to take another example, fashion school students worked together to select examples of 'Berlin style' and create some of the content for the part of the exhibition dealing with fashion.

It is beyond the scope of this chapter to look in more detail at how the participative approaches in *Berlin Global* worked, how participants experienced the collaboration and how visitors viewed the results. Research into this is underway within the *Making Differences* project.[8] As *Berlin Global* embraced participative approaches to an unusual extent, such research can make an important contribution to the wider understanding of how participation operates within museum practice. Not least, it can help show the extent to which it succeeds in diversifying, and in what ways. In the following section, I look further at the various understandings of diversity—which also shaped how selections were made—that were present during the making of *Berlin Global*. These different understandings, as well as certain dynamics and tensions between them, are also present, as will be shown, within political theory.

Expanding and constraining diversities

In July 2016, after intense months of discussion of the use of asterisks and far more, the Berlin exhibition-team presented the principles—referred to as the concept—that would guide their exhibition, together with some proposed content, to the press and public. This included the following statement about diversity:

> The exhibition is intended to reflect the diversity of society, which is shaped by migration, diverse lifestyles and lived realities. It should give space for diverse, quite

> contradictory, unexpected perspectives on Berlin, including beyond the mainstream (Spies et al. 2016: 4).

Although short and perhaps not especially striking at first glance, the statement is a condensed result of a struggle over certain difficulties. While not explicitly articulated as such, a core dilemma concerned whether diversity is understood in terms of multiple differences that result in everybody being regarded as different in some way, or whether difference is more specifically difference from what in the quote is expressed as 'the mainstream'.

This is a tension that has also fuelled debates in political theory. Giving recognition to difference rather than operating a liberal 'politics of universalism', as philosopher Charles Taylor (1994) has famously written, has been a major development in many societies since the later twentieth century. As he explains: 'Where the politics of universal dignity fought for forms of nondiscrimination that were quite "blind" to the ways in which citizens differ, the politics of difference often redefines nondiscrimination as requiring that we make these distinctions the basis of differential treatment' (1994: 39). What this opens up, however, is the question of what counts as a difference that deserves such differential treatment—and who gets to decide and how. Here it is worth noting (as also pointed out in the Introduction to this volume), that museums and heritage—especially those with high social and cultural status—can be regarded as especially significant cultural agencies on account of their historically-based legitimating role and capacity to make difference visible for the public.

As various commentators have pointed out (e.g. Smits-Leutoff 2018, Vertovec 2019), both in public life and in academic theorising, there has been a tendency towards identification of more and more differences—towards, we might say, diversity max*. Political sociologists Raphael Baehr and Daniel Gordon refer to this as diversity's 'fractal dynamic' (2018: 979). Intersectionality—how differences may intersect to create more specific differences, e.g. black women—contributes further to this by creating even more specific differential conditions that need to be recognised. Not only does this create an issue of coverage, it also comes together with a tendency to identify more and more specific differences beyond those of relatively clearly discriminated against 'minorities' (to use the language in which these early claims were made) that were the focus of the earlier politics of difference.

The proliferative dynamic was evident in the making of *Berlin Global*. At a public presentation of the exhibition plans in 2019, audience members posed questions, some asking about content they hoped to see there. One question was whether the exhibition would include anything about eating, and specifically about *Curry Wurst* (the famous Berlin hot dog with curry-flavoured ketchup). 'Yes', replied Chief Curator Paul Spies, 'Curry Wurst will be included, in [the exhibition area on] Entertainment'. Further, however, diverging from the content that was in fact planned at that point but showing, perhaps, the way that a diversity max* impulse had taken hold, discursively at least, he continued: 'What many people don't know is that there are many kinds of curry in the world, not just that of the powder sprinkled on the *Wurst*.' Then, after reiterating the hope to have a flexible structure in order to include other topics and groups that could not be part of the permanent opening exhibition, he remarked: 'Maximal is maximal.'

Yet, where does 'maximal' end? The problem with allowing an endlessly proliferating form of diversity is that it dilutes the significance of any particular diversity. This is especially the case when difference is individualised, leading to the conclusion that 'everybody' is different in some way. Feminist critics (e.g. Fraser 2000) have been at the forefront of arguing that such expansion of the recognition of difference in effect undermines the very political efficacy for which it was devised—namely to address marginalised positions in relation to a privileged mainstream.

In the statement about diversity within the concept document of the Berlin exhibition—and even more so in the thoughtful and sometimes lengthy discussions of the team that led to it—there is awareness of this problem, signalled directly by the reference to 'beyond the mainstream.' However, the statement does not call *only* for inclusion of non-mainstream difference. Rather, it attempts to ensure that the non-mainstream is present but without defining diversity exclusively in these terms. The phrase 'the diversity of society' leaves open what is referred to—Berlin, Germany, the world? Moreover, the reference to 'lifestyles and lived realities'—rather fuzzy and open-ended designations—opens up an unlimited expansive understanding of diversity. While these two positions—diversity as beyond the mainstream and diversity as all kinds of lifestyles and lives—tend to be seen as opposed at an abstract level within political theory, within the context of exhibition-making, they can be practically accommodated. In effect, the exhibition attempts to speak to as many people as possible while at the same time giving as much recognition as feasible to the usually marginalised. Both of these are, however, necessarily limited by the fact that there is an inevitable 'max'—the inherent limitlessness of diversity. As such, the question of which specific differences and diversities to address does not go away entirely.

Migration

Although the statement on diversity in the 2016 concept document above does not specifically mention possible differences such as those of gender, sexuality or age (though some are mentioned elsewhere in the document), it does refer to migration, and indeed does so before anything else. This reflects the fact that migration is seen as a core concern for the exhibition. It was one of the first topics to be listed for inclusion in the exhibition's planning when the team did their initial brainstorming sessions, and some of the first freelancer team members had expertise in exhibiting migration. Within the framework of Berlin and the World—which gave priority to highlighting global interconnectedness—it was clearly vital that migration should be foregrounded in this way and that it should thread throughout the exhibition. On the one hand, giving priority to migration could push against the limitless expansion of diversity. On the other, unless 'migration' is reduced to a homogenous difference of 'the migrant', migration itself opens up to the expansion of difference in that there are potentially numerous different realisations of migration (i.e. from different places, at different times, with different genders, sexualities, religions, lifestyles etc). As such, even foregrounding migration only partially limits diversity proliferation. At the same time, however, migration sets up a further

dilemma over which the curators struggled and that led them to emphasise certain already-present tendencies in addressing diversity.

Migration was considered crucial as a vector between Berlin and the rest of the world, and integral to highlighting the diversity of Berlin. In initial plans, it was listed as one of eight 'aspects' of the exhibition. These aspects were thematic areas, the others being: Images of Berlin, Revolution, Free Space, Entertainment, War, Boundaries and Fashion. Migration was, thus, the only one that could be said to be 'a diversity', though other aspects could certainly also accommodate it, as was intended. Although the initial idea was that these aspects would not map directly onto space—one reason why they were called 'aspects'—once thinking about the exhibition layout began, they came, almost by default, to do so, and by the time of the concept document in July 2016 they were presented as such. Putting migration into one space, however, contained it and meant that the diversity that it signalled was less prominent than it would otherwise have been, and it ran the risk that migration would be seen as separate from all of the other aspects. Later, however, initially for practical reasons, migration was moved to the last room in the exhibition. The conceptual advantage of this quickly became clear. Placed at the end of exhibition, migration could act as a kind of 'apotheosis'—this was the word Paul Spies enthusiastically and semi-jokingly used— giving migration greater significance once again.

Simmering in the background during all of this, however, was the dilemma that the topic of migration raises—namely, that it seems to single out people with what in Germany is called *Migrationshintergrund*—a migratory background. Such a singling out could easily inadvertently create an implicit category of non-migrant Berliners who might thus be seen as somehow the 'real' Berliners. Moreover, given the incipient binarism of the exhibition's then title, *Berlin and the World*, it could map onto this, equating migrants with the world beyond Berlin. All of this came to a head in a meeting of the curators with 'critical friends' (selected external advisors—of which I was one), at which several of us, including me, raised these points.[9] Following discussion, it was decided instead to emphasise the multiple positionings of individuals in relation to other places—i.e. not just that of migrating into Berlin. This meant an emphasis on more diverse forms of interconnections. Various possible terms were discussed as alternatives to 'migration' and that of '*Verflechtungen*'—a word that had already figured in some previous discussion and text—was deemed to best capture the idea. Often translated as 'entanglements', the German suggests something less untidy, more like braiding or plaiting together. Following weeks of further discussion and some misgivings—and even a public plea made for alternative suggestions—'interconnection' was selected as the English wording to be used. While in general the move to interconnections was regarded as good, in order to avoid the dilemmas posed by using migration, there was also concern that it might relativise issues faced by migrants, such as discrimination and border regimes. But precisely by raising this concern, the exhibition-makers attempted to address this.

Interconnections

In terms of doing diversity, what happened in relation to migration, then, was a shift from a model of relatively discrete differences—often talked about in terms of 'commu-

nities'—to a much broader idea of interconnection. A move in the max* direction, it more readily allowed consideration of various and complicated migration stories, and supported the exhibition's attempt to highlight multiple possible connections across difference. In many ways, this was an articulation of something that was already being put into practice, and that drew on critique made by some of the team members (Miera and Bluche 2014). To gather stories and objects for this area of the exhibition, then, rather than contacting a specific 'community', curators sought out organisations in which participants came together from a wide range of diverse, and often multiple, countries and experiences. Furthermore, rather than asking them about their migration routes—a trope in which migration reaches its apotheosis in the new country—they were asked to talk about their connections with various other places, within Germany, as well as beyond, which were not necessary tied to their migration experiences.

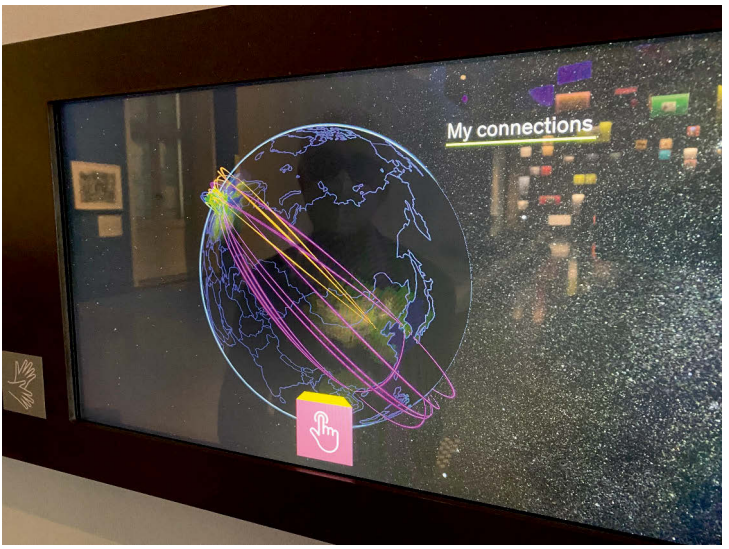
Within the exhibition, this is realised in the *Interconnection* area by exhibits such as 'audio portraits', in which speakers tell of their 'interconnected lives' (as the text panel describing this puts it) and sometimes narrate their experiences of discrimination and exclusion. These are accompanied by art work created by the Tape That collective and consisting of different designs and selected objects that feature in the narratives (Images 81. and 8.2). At computer terminals, visitors can input six cities that are meaningful to them in various ways—places where relatives live or for which they feel longing, as well as where they have lived. The responses then turn into lines on a spinning globe—even if all of the responses are within close geographical proximity (Image 8.3). This exhibit resembles the large globe near the beginning of the exhibition (Image 8.4), which likewise suggests the world as criss-crossed by many and various routes. This motif is also present in the exhibition's background design, also created by Tape That, which consists of lines in a 'network of perspectives'.

Visitors' own interconnections, the idea of individual connections—and thus individualised diversity—is threaded through the exhibition via each visitor being invited to don an armband with a chip that records their responses to particular questions. At the end of the exhibition, in an area called the Lounge, they can input this and be shown what percentage of other visitors replied in what way to each question. On a card, they then receive a question—such as 'What does security mean to you?' or 'What does tradition mean to you?'—with the suggestion to discuss this with other visitors who are present. To encourage this, the area is filled with large green cushions in the form of gigantic tree-creepers (Image 8.5), given the witty name of '*Berlianen*'—blending together the word 'Berlin' with that for tree-creeper, *liana*. The idea is, then, to make connections with others, finding possible commonalities, though also differences. Individuals are not here classified into categories, then, but neither does the exhibition end simply with a celebration of diversity for its own sake. Instead, the possibility for multiple connection and difference is opened up but it is not left without implications. Rather, it leads to questions whose answers may have consequences that visitors are encouraged to consider—and that might even result in visitors changing their minds.

8.1 Tape That sound portraits and artworks. Photograph by Thomas Beaney. Reproduced courtesy of Stadtmuseum Berlin and Kulturprojekte Berlin.

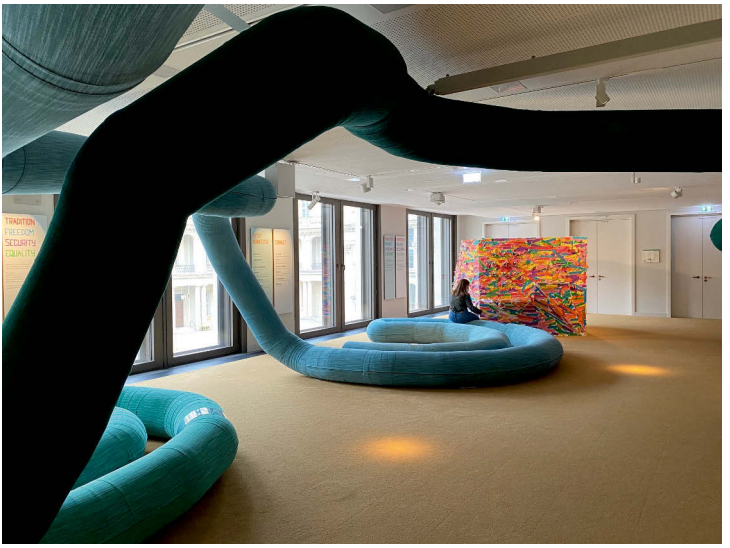
8.2 Interconnections area in Berlin Global. Photograph by Thomas Beaney. Reproduced courtesy of Stadtmuseum Berlin and Kulturprojekte Berlin.

8.3 Computer terminal showing visitors' connections. Photograph by Thomas Beaney. Reproduced courtesy of Stadtmuseum Berlin and Kulturprojekte Berlin.



8.4 Globe showing multiple connections near the beginning of Berlin Global. Photograph by Thomas Beaney. Reproduced courtesy of Stadtmuseum Berlin and Kulturprojekte Berlin.

8.5 Berlianen in Berlin Global. Photograph by Thomas Beaney. Reproduced courtesy of Stadtmuseum Berlin and Kulturprojekte Berlin.



Concluding discussion

In the making of *Berlin Global*, then, diversity was understood both expansively and also in terms of difference from the mainstream, with the inequalities and discrimination that could come with the latter. Yet rather than these being incommensurable, as they may seem in the abstract, they come together within the exhibition to fulfil different functions—sometimes to bring in more of the difference that has been left out and often, indeed, to highlight this very fact (e.g. in consideration of migrants), and at others to attempt to recognise the potential multiplicity of the diversity of members of the public and their possible interconnections. But this is not just about putting theoretical alternatives alongside each other in practice. Rather, the challenge to the status quo involved in 'beyond the mainstream' is coupled with a provocation to visitors to move beyond their usual connections and to recognise and make others.

In neither of these formulations of diversity, however, is its maximisation endless. Limits are set by constraints of space and time, as well as by prior interests and personal connections. They are at least in part also set by the very imagination of what might constitute a difference—though opening up the possibility for visitors to provide input and for others to get in touch and exhibit within the space mitigates this to some extent. Yet, the fact of limits does not in any case invalidate the attempt to include as much diversity as possible—to be as diversity max* as can be. Certainly, there needs to be careful examination of the kinds of assumptions that might creep in, shaping selections in unexamined ways. But compared with approaches that try to fill a predetermined hit-list of diversities, or to map them (see Tinius, this volume), the max* approach keeps options open. Moreover, it does not rule out being accompanied by the aim to select particular diversities on account of their having been underrepresented, or due to a story considered important to be told. And it does not rule out *not* covering certain differences. In the catalogue of *Berlin Global*, this is aptly put by Paul Spies and Brinda Sommer when they write that 'a diversity of voices does not mean whateverism' (Spies and Sommer 2021: 16). '[O]n the contrary', they continue, 'it requires a stance. However, we do not want to instruct anyone with our stance; rather, we understand it as an invitation for discussion' (ibid.).

The question of the limits of diversity max*—of where it maxes out—are, of course, not only numerical but also political. Who is included and who is excluded is another way of putting the questions raised above. A diversity max* impulse, however, raises the issue of how much of the political spectrum should be given space or voice in the exhibition. During the making of *Berlin Global* this was directly addressed by Paul Spies in a lecture (subsequently published, 2018) titled 'Populists, No Thanks! Or: Populists Welcome!' ('Populisten, nein danke! Oder: Populisten Willkommen!'). The lecture illustrated a thoroughly diversity max* approach, noting that people define themselves as different from their neighbours through numerous differences of style or preference (p.186). If museums were not to just attempt to speak to 'communities, often described as 'minorities' (p.186)—but to truly address 'culture for all'—then what about groups such as populists? Was that a step too far or should the museum only speak with politically-correct thinking people? Describing an attempt to work with populists (right-wing football fans) in Amsterdam Museum, during his time there as director, Spies' argued that museums should

have the courage to try to engage with the broadest spectrum of society—including those with what the curators themselves might regard as repugnant views.

So far, *Berlin Global* has not done this, though Paul Spies has suggested that it might be considered in the future for one of the free spaces of the exhibition. Also, however, he accepts arguments from some of the other curators that in deciding which diversities to include, a line should be drawn to exclude those who would themselves seek to exclude diversity.

The difficulties over diversity—including diversity max*—are certainly not restricted to the *Berlin Global* exhibition. What kind of model of diversity to deploy, how to put it into operation and who to involve in the process and how are questions for all exhibitions. So too are those of where to draw the lines. As evident in this case, and brought to light especially through ethnographic research into the details of the specific case, some of these difficulties are inherent in the very idea of diversity—its proliferative or fractal tendencies, the risk of categorical models, and the double-bind of attempting to highlight problematic forms. Others, however, come into play in the making—the search for appropriate metaphors and terms, scenographic design and even the diacritics of language.

Regarding the latter: the asterisk made it through to the finished exhibition. Berliners are addressed as Berliner*innen and visitors as Besucher*innen, and so forth, thus invoking, within these categories and orthographically at least, a potentially limitless diversity.

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Notes

1 For caveats, see the Introduction to this volume and, among others, Ahmed 2007.

2 *Making Differences: Transforming Museums and Heritage in the Twenty-First Century* was funded by my Alexander von Humboldt Professorship (2015–2022), together

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3 All translations from German throughout are by me unless otherwise specified. This quote is from Sandrine Micossé-Aikins in a discussion with Claudia van Laak in 'Diversität im Berliner Kulturbetrieb—"Wir können der Anfang von etwas Neuem sein"', 25 August 2019, https://www.deutschlandfunk.de/diversitaet-im-berliner-kulturbetrieb-wir-koennen-der.911.de.html?dram:article_id=457039 (accessed 30 November 2020).

4 It is indicative of many other comments that I have witnessed during my fieldwork concerning the curatorial team of what became *Berlin Global*. Though some see the underscore as doing this too. For discussion, see, for example: https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-3-531-91972-0_90; https://www.tagesspiegel.de/politik/geschlechtergerechte-sprache-kommt-das-gendersternchen-jetzt-in-den-duden/22573778.html (accessed 30 November 2020).

5 https://www.visitberlin.de/en/humboldt-forum-berlin-city-palace (accessed 30 November 2020). In the German version of this, the word *Vielfalt* is used for 'diversity'. The terms *Diversität* and *Vielfalt* are often used more-or-less interchangeably for 'diversity', though the latter is of more longstanding and wider use, and includes the variety or kinds of media that might be used, while *Diversität* is more likely to be used for contemporary diversification initiatives.

6 http://www.no-humboldt21.de/resolution/ (last accessed 30 November 2020). The issues were intensified further by questions over the provenance and possible restitution of objects from the ethnological museum—see Förster, this volume.

7 I have already discussed notions of 'perspective' and 'multiperspectivity' in the Humboldt Forum, as well as in anthropology. See Macdonald 2023.

8 This research is being conducted by Irene Hilden and Andrei Zavadski. Participation has also been a focus in work for *Making Differences* at various other museums in Berlin. See the chapters by Gerbich and by Garbellotto and Nadim, this volume; and Puzon 2019; Macdonald, Gerbich, Gram, Puzon and Shatanawi 2021.

9 The professors of social anthropology, Ayşe Çağlar and Regina Römhild, both of whom have been critical of certain models of migration (e.g. Çağlar 2001; 2016; Römhild 2014; 2017), were especially vocal, and Regina proposed the term *Verflechtungen*. In a recent study (Macdonald 2023), I provide some further discussion of the use of this term within the exhibition.

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