

## BRIEF CONCEPT OVERVIEW

NATIONAL MONUMENT TO FREEDOM AND UNITY IN BERLIN

“CITIZENS IN MOTION”



### The idea

The memorial **honours the brave men and women** who, in a peaceful revolution in 1989, allowed the wall to come down and Germany to be reunited.

It is **designed to be a movable, kinetic object**, the appearance of which is shaped every day by its visitors through their **participation and interaction**. As they take ownership of the monument, it comes alive. It invites its visitors to communicate and to act together, far more so than is usually the case when contemplating a monument.

Freedom and unity are not static conditions. They need to be constantly redefined and require constant commitment. This **process-dependence creates the intellectual basis** of the Monument to Freedom and Unity.

As with the peaceful revolution of 1989, the visitors have to **communicate and decide on joint action**, in order to create the motion: If there are at least 20 more people standing on one half of the bowl than on the other, the bowl will start to move, slowly and gently. New perspectives open up. The performative, changing nature of the monument is something to be seen and personally experienced.

## The place

The Monument to Freedom and Unity is to be built **in the centre of Berlin** where the historical axes "Unter den Linden" and the "Museumsinsel-Lustgarten-Humboldtforum" meet, across from the western gate of the castle.

It will be built on the existing **plinth of the equestrian statue of Kaiser Wilhelm I**, between Schlossfreiheit and Kupfergraben. Having survived World War II unscathed, the national monument to Wilhelm was removed in 1949 by the GDR regime.

The movable bowl and the access ways to it are placed on the old plinth like a contemporary architectural layer all of its own. This **principle of layering** makes it possible to combine the different levels of the old monument and the new without blurring the differences. The chequered **history of the location is still there to see.**

## The technology

The bowl is to be built using a **weight-optimised framework structure of steel components**, as used for the construction of bridges. It extends over a longitudinal and lateral axis of 50 meters and 18 meters. At its thickest point, the bowl measures 2.50 meters thick and tapers to just a few centimetres at the edges.

The **unhurried motion** of the bowl is **triggered by its visitors**. Their weight determines the degree and speed of its movement. A combined spring and damping system means that the motion will always be gentle.

Faceted metal alloy panels clad the **exterior of the bowl**. The upper surface is fitted with compacted high-grade chippings that adhere to the surface and provide a highly slip-proof layer with excellent rain-water seepage properties.

The **safe and barrier-free use** of the Monument is made possible due to its design in accordance with the Berlin construction code and the corresponding stipulations of barrier-free construction.

## PRESS CONTACT

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## IMAGE OVERVIEW

### National Monument to Freedom and Unity in Berlin



Bird's-eye view of the Monument.

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View from the castle (from the North).

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Night view, seen from Schinkelplatz.

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Sebastian Letz, Designer and Creative Lead. Creative Director at Milla & Partner.

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## FACTS & FIGURES

### NATIONAL MONUMENT TO FREEDOM AND UNITY IN BERLIN

Client	The Federal Republic of Germany, represented by the Federal Commissioner for Cultural and Media Affairs (BKM),  in cooperation with the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Construction and Nuclear Safety (BMUB)  and the Federal Ministry for Building and Regional Planning (BBR)
Design and implementation	Milla & Partner GmbH, creative agency for spatial communication, with offices in Stuttgart and Berlin
Design and artistic lead	Sebastian Letz, Creative Director at Milla & Partner
Title of the design	Bürger in Bewegung (Citizens in Motion)
Basic form	The monument is in the shape of a bowl curving gently upwards.
Dimensions	Width: 50 m Depth: 18 m (across the lateral axis) Accessible area: approx. 700 m <sup>2</sup> Height (from plinth): 5.72 m Weight: approx. 150 t Load in use: 35 kN/m <sup>2</sup>
Motion	The weight of at least 20 more people on one side of the bowl than on the other will cause it to sink slowly and gently towards the heavier side.  Maximum displacement is created by at least 50 people, creating a height difference of 1.5 meters, measured from the outer edge of the bowl.
Number of people (load capacity)	Approximately 1400 people
Materials	Construction of the bowl: steel framework structure Upper surface of the bowl: compacted high-grade chippings that adhere to the surface Exterior of the bowl: faceted light alloy panel



## SEBASTIAN LETZ

**Creative Director and architect. Devises places of encounter which speak of an inclusive, scenographic approach. In his work, he combines the effects of architecture, design, communication and media.**

Sebastian Letz became Milla & Partner's Creator Director in 2007, and has been a partner since 2009.

Born in Kassel in 1971, he studied Architecture at the Technical University of Berlin. Between 2000 and 2006, he worked as a freelance architect and art director in Berlin. He currently lives in Stuttgart and Zürich.

During his career, the nationally and internationally acclaimed creative architect has developed successful projects for brands such as Deutsche Telekom, E.ON, Mercedes-Benz, Skoda, Siemens, Vaillant and organisations such as Aktion Mensch, the Germany Land of Ideas Initiative and BMWi, with its exhibition presence in Shanghai in 2010.

Sebastian Letz has been a member and regular juror of the Art Directors Club für Deutschland (ADC) since 2009.