

## Press Release

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## What Next – Directions for the Future.

A Series of Lectures jointly organized by the Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin and the Siemens Stiftung

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**Under what conditions can a good life be led in future? To approach this question the Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin and the Siemens Stiftung will be organizing a public series of lectures entitled “What Next – Directions for the Future” to be held from 2010-04-28 to 2010-06-30. This lecture series will be held as part of Humboldt-Universität’s 200th anniversary celebratory program.**

The current crises and dangers form the point of departure for the reflections of the invited speakers who will adopt both natural science and humanistic as well as artistic stances here. In their lectures they will ask questions as to the future perspectives of a world growing together and becoming ever more complex in all areas of life. The lectures will present future models and scenarios that offer food for thought on the further development of open, responsible societies able to solve their own problems.

On the individual lectures:

### 2010-04-28, 7.00 pm

#### **Baroness Susan Greenfield (Oxford): “The Human Mind in the 21st Century: Scenarios and Options”**

The new lifestyle of the 21st century may lead to a new dominance of the “mindless” way of life where the brain remains in a state similar to that of a young child. For this reason brain researcher Susan Greenfield feels we need to explore how best to achieve a fulfilling life in the 21st century since technology has finally delivered the expectation that we will have the time to do so.

### 2010-05-05, 7.00 pm

#### **Josef Winkler (Klagenfurt): “Telling Reality as if it Didn’t Exist”**

In his lecture writer Josef Winkler at first sight devotes himself to a genuinely literary theme but one which still says a great deal about how we view and describe the world. Winkler deals with language development from childhood and youth, exploring both language and speechlessness and the fear of this language and speechlessness.

### 2010-05-12, 7.00 pm

#### **Sunita Narain (New Delhi): “Building a Climate-Resilient World”**

Environmentalist Sunita Narain is committed to the fair distribution of natural resources that also takes into account the needs of developing countries. In her lecture she explores how we can strike a balance that is acceptable to everyone in a rapidly changing world.

**2010-05-12, 7.45 pm**

**Harald Welzer (Essen): “Too Late for Pessimism. On the Cultural Practice of a Sustainable Society”**

Harald Welzer’s lecture deals with the conditions and opportunities presented by the great transformation now affecting industrial societies necessitated as a result of climate change and resource disputes. He shows why the former strategies for changing lifestyles and cultural practices fail and what role is played by mental forces of gravity.

**2010-05-19, 7.00 pm**

**Stephan A. Jansen (Friedrichshafen): “‘Who does what?’ A constitutional perspective on the social division of labor of what is good. A plea for a new discourse on state, economy, foundations and socially responsible companies”**

In his interdisciplinary analysis of the division of labor between producing and guaranteeing “good” and (public) goods economist Stephan A. Jansen takes very simple questions as his starting point and he formulates plea for reopening the debate on public-sector issues.

**2010-05-26, 7.00 pm**

**Charles Taylor (Montreal): “Two Directions for Secular Societies”**

In his lecture philosopher and political scientist Charles Taylor lays out two kinds of secularism, which have similarities, but end up in rather different places. Both models practice some kind of separation of church and state, and try to maintain a neutrality of state institutions between different fundamental outlooks.

**2010-06-02, 7.00 pm**

**Arjun Appadurai (New York): “The Future of Hope: Emerging Global Conditions for Urban Aspirations”**

Arjun Appadurai’s lecture traces the policy of hope for the inhabitants of the “planet of slums”. This is a politics whose sustainability will require collaborations between the state and the private sector, between designers, architects and activists and between high-level intellectuals and their counterparts in slums.

**2010-06-09, 7.00 pm**

**Eva Illouz (Jerusalem): “Capitalism with Feelings, or: How Emotions Became Commodities”**

Sociologist Eva Illouz is concerned with the correlation between capitalism and emotions. Here she not only investigates phenomena like romance and love and how people live these out with the help of consumer products but also how capitalist structures and emotions depend on each other in the workplace, in the family and in other social relationships.

**2010-06-16, 7.00 pm**

**Paul Collier (Oxford): “The Plundered Planet: Why We Must and How We Can Manage Nature for Global Prosperity”**

Paul Collier’s lecture is devoted to the special opportunities and challenges that lie in a concept for the use of global resources. For instance, he develops international standards that allow poor but resource-rich countries better resource management without ignoring the special conditions of climate change.

**2010-06-23, 7.00 pm**

**Martin Hoffmann (Berlin): “An Open Society is a Cultural Society”**

In his lecture Martin Hoffmann develops a concept of culture that triggers public debate. Only in this way can culture achieve a certain level of permeability between class, generations and cultures and thereby do justice to its function within society.

**2010-06-30, 7.00 pm**

**Marcel Hénaff (San Diego): “The New Mastery over the World: Virtual Money, Debt, and Time”**

In his lecture anthropologist Marcel Hénaff deals with the power of private financial networks. The aim of these new masters of the world is no longer the pursuit of an equilibrium on financial markets but to multiply the credit that attracts new investments and thus generates debt.

All lectures will be held in English or German at the Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin on Wednesdays at 7.00 pm (Main Building, Kinosaal, Unter den Linden 6, 10117 Berlin). Admission is free. Hosting the lectures will be Prof. Dr. Thomas Macho from the Institute for Cultural History and Theory at the Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin. The lectures given by **Susan Greenfield on 04-28, by Sunita Narain and Harald Welzer on 5-12 and by Charles Taylor on 5-26 will be available as a webcast on the Internet.**

Detailed information on the lecture series schedule, on speakers' biographies and the content of their lectures can be found at: [www.siemens-stiftung.org](http://www.siemens-stiftung.org) and [www.hu200.de](http://www.hu200.de)

The **Siemens Stiftung** was founded in September 2008 as a charitable foundation constituted under civil law, headquartered in Munich and endowed by Siemens AG with foundation capital of Euro 390m. The Foundation thereby continues the company's over 160-year tradition of social commitment. The task of the Siemens Stiftung is to find answers to global social challenges, highlight opportunities and provide aid for self-help in emergencies. In line with the Foundation's mission the focus of its activities are social commitment, education, technology as well as arts and culture. The Siemens Stiftung's work is largely operational, i.e. it mainly initiates its own projects and implements these.

Over its 200-year history the **Humboldt-Universität** zu Berlin underwent many changes. Today, it is divided into eleven faculties boasting influential interdisciplinary research centers, several central institutes and graduate schools. The teaching and research profile at the Humboldt-Universität comprises all basic academic disciplines in the arts and social sciences, in cultural studies, human medicine, agricultural sciences as well as in mathematics and natural sciences.