



09/06/2017

## **A virtual stroll around the world heritage site of Palmyra**

**A joint exhibition mounted by students from the University of Konstanz and the Hochschule Konstanz University of Applied Sciences uses virtual reality and 3D reconstruction to create a virtual walkthrough of the fought-over city**

**How should one respond to the destruction of Palmyra? What are the chances of rebuilding it (digitally or otherwise)? These are the questions that the “Rebuild Palmyra? Zukunft eines umkämpften Welterbes” exhibition, which takes place from 30 June until 17 September 2017 in the Konstanz Bildungsturm, seeks to answer. Using innovative digital media, the exhibition traces the history of the city, its culture and trade relationships from its foundation to the destruction of its ruins by the terrorist group Daesh (the Arabic name for “Islamic State”). Virtual reality points and 3D reconstruction enable visitors to switch between views of the ancient buildings, their ruins and the city’s current state of destruction. The exhibition seeks to involve visitors actively and playfully in on-going discussions about how to treat our world heritage sites. The exhibition opens at 19:00 on 30 June 2017.**

In antiquity, the oasis city of Palmyra was key to long-distance trade between China, India and the Roman Empire. With its fantastically preserved temples, colonnaded streets and burial sites rising right out of the desert, it garnered immense interest from the scientific community and turned into a must-see highlight for travellers.

In May 2015, the terrorist group Daesh seized the oasis and, in a publicity stunt that elicited an international outcry, blew up the UNESCO world heritage site. Palmyra shares its fate with the Buddhas of Bamiyan, the saints’ shrines in Timbuktu and the historic district of Aleppo. It has since turned into a symbol of the dangers threatening the common cultural heritage of mankind.

The forthcoming exhibition was organised by students of architecture, history, computer science and communications design at the University of Konstanz and the Hochschule Konstanz University of Applied Sciences (HTWG). It was designed and is being curated by Professors Stefan R. Hauser, Harald Reiterer (both University of Konstanz) and Eberhard Schlag (HTWG). “We are deeply impressed with what our students have achieved. They have not only managed to present a highly complex topic that touches upon archaeology, culture and politics in the most creative and comprehensible way, but also to bring visitors to think about how to deal with cultural heritage that is at risk or has been destroyed”, says Stefan R. Hauser.

The exhibition, which is generously supported by the city of Konstanz’s “Amt für Schulen, Bildung und Wissenschaft” (bureau for schools, education and science), also includes a supporting pro-

gramme of guided tours and lectures as well as additional educational offers for local and regional schools. The exhibition is rounded off by a printed volume.

**Facts:**

- Event: "Rebuild Palmyra? Zukunft eines umkämpften Welterbes"
- Date: 30 June - 17 September 2017
- Opening: 30 June 2017 at 19:00
- Location: Konstanz Bildungsturm
- Opening hours: Tuesday - Friday from 10:00 - 18:00, Saturday & Sunday from 10:00 - 17:00
- Generously supported by the "Amt für Schulen, Bildung und Wissenschaft der Stadt Konstanz"

**For further information, please visit:** [www.rebuild-palmyra.de](http://www.rebuild-palmyra.de)

**Note to the editors:**

A selection of pictures is available for download here:

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<http://bit.ly/2sJLMXl>

<http://bit.ly/2s2LCge>

Pictures: "Rebuild Palmyra? project"

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