

BG

Marc

Brandenburg

**20th Century
Debris**

**Exhibition
Texts**

**BERLINISCHE
GALERIE
MUSEUM OF
MODERN ART**

Artistic Practice

Pencil drawings are Marc Brandenburg's primary medium. The meticulous execution of his photorealistic drawings exerts a great fascination. Photographs always stand at the beginning of his work process. For him, they are a sort of sketch. By transferring them to paper freely and without any aids, he transforms the photographs, which he takes himself or finds in magazines, into detailed drawings.

Brandenburg started abstracting his motifs in the late 1990s. The inversion of the pictures—thus the reversal of light and dark—is his most striking stylistic device until today. “I can look at the positive image and already see what it'll look like as a negative,” says Brandenburg. Around the turn of the century, he began manipulating his photographic sources even further: distorting them and making them dissolve into abstract forms.

Brandenburg lets his drawings stand for themselves and foregoes explanatory or descriptive titles. He regards “untitled” less as a blank space than as an aid to focusing. The works exhibited here are pencil drawings on paper. The exhibition dispenses with labels. Visitors are instead invited to let themselves drift through Brandenburg's visual cosmos.

Early Series

In the 1990s, Marc Brandenburg produced his first series of drawings. Working in tightly delimited groups of works was a central component of his practice at this time. The first room of the exhibition presents drawings from five work series. They show Brandenburg's rapid development as an artist as well as the recurring appearance of particular motifs and details.



From June to November

“From June to November” from 1993 is the earliest series in the exhibition. It consists of interiors and still lifes, portraits of famous individuals like The Supremes, as well as pictures from cigarette ads and explicit scenes. Stylistically, the realistic drawings all share a fragmentary character. With their irregular edges, they seem to have been ripped of a larger context.

The drawings were not originally produced with the idea of creating a series or based on a fixed concept. Brandenburg was instead interested in drawing itself, which he was once again doing intensively for the first time since his childhood.

Bilderbuch

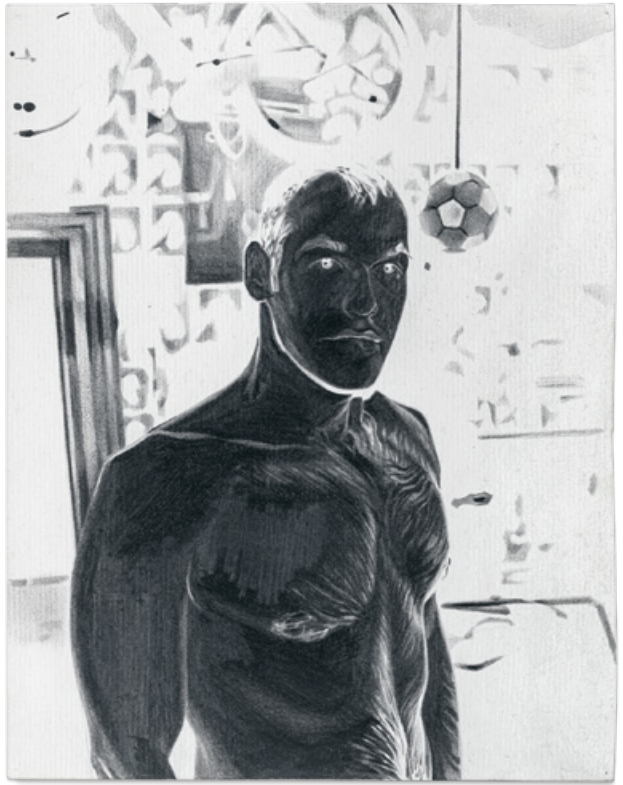
In 1994, Marc Brandenburg published “Bilderbuch” (Picture Book). The series put his own photographs in the center for the first time. The drawings take up the aesthetics of the snapshot—imperfect compositions, fragmentary body parts, and a blurred focus. The existing pictorial repertoire of still lifes and portraits is supplemented with a wide range of scenes from the artist’s life. It is a fictitious daily routine. Brandenburg himself is frequently depicted along with his friends. The fragmentary motifs are now given a defined frame in the form of heavy, black lines or light, cloudlike scribbles.





The Dangling Conversation

From 1993 to 1996, Marc Brandenburg lived in the London district of Brixton. The series “The Dangling Conversation” of 1996 addresses his life at the time. The sheets are pierced by staples or have paperclips attached to them, very much in contrast to the softly modulated drawings. Brandenburg regards this as a gesture of irreverence. The series is based on the idea of a pin-board and was shown in its first presentation, in 1996, as a composition manifested at random.



Meddle

The first drawings in which Brandenburg uses of the reversal of light and dark values were created in the late-1990s with the series “Meddle”. They call to mind negatives from analogue photography. The things depicted seem ghostly. As a result of the inversion, it is barely still possible to make out the characteristic traits of the individuals portrayed, thus making them appear anonymous.

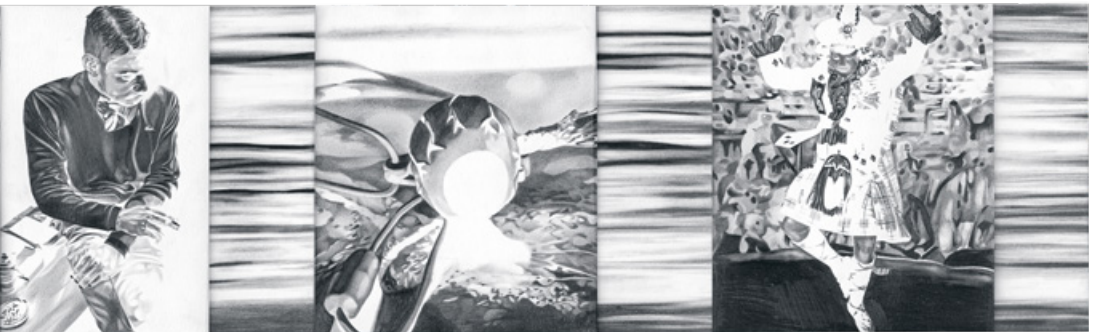
Brandenburg’s room in a shared apartment at the time is the central setting. The toy figures, (self-)portraits, or extremely enlarged details seem to have been captured in a flash of light and give rise to a motley overall picture.

Music plays a big role in Brandenburg’s life. This is also reflected in his art: “Meddle”, for instance, references Pink Floyd’s album of the same title, while “The Dangling Conversation” is named after a song by Simon & Garfunkel.



White Rainbow

In “White Rainbow” of 2000, Brandenburg continues exploring the negative aesthetic. The ten works in the series consist of several individual sheets, which are mounted next to each other to form an elongated whole. As in “Meddle”, objects from his room in the shared apartment form the starting point. Abstract streaks are added as a new element, which Brandenburg positions between the figurative drawings. They call to mind camera panning shots in film, conveying simultaneity or a blurred impression of speed. As already in the case of “Bilderbuch”, “White Rainbow” is published as a book.



Under Blacklight

The middle room of the exhibition is illuminated with blacklight. Marc Brandenburg has already been presenting his drawings in this way since 2000. As a result of the unusual lighting, the white areas of the paper fluoresce. The drawings seem to shine and, with the interplay between them, generate a spatial experience.

In the blacklight room are drawings from the mid-2000s until today. Brandenburg circles around themes like bodies or clothes and/or costumes. He traces their outward appearances in a society that, for him, seems to be at a breaking point due to growing isolation, inequality, and capitalist excess. He continues to be fascinated by absurd-seeming consumer goods. Examples of this are a lamp with characters from the Wizard of Oz found in an online auction, supplemented by a figure of serial killer John Wayne Gacy, or a gingerbread house decorated with a joint. In 2024, Marc Brandenburg dedicated himself to the topic of landscape after a longer period of time with two large panorama drawings of the Tiergarten in Berlin. The individual strokes now disappear more and more and recede behind a metallically shiny surface.



Brandenburg regards his observation of the metropolis as well as the artistic rendering of it as strictly documentary. The static drawings, which are always snapshots, are supplemented in the exhibition by new video works. They once again impressively show Brandenburg's remarkable powers of observation and how he encounters his motifs in random situations. An uncanny atmosphere, resulting from the inversion and slowing-down of the videos, is further increased by the ghostly audio.



Tattoos

Since 2012, Marc Brandenburg has been designing editions of temporary tattoos based on his drawings. Over the years, more than ten such editions have been produced, including, for instance, for the ten-year anniversary of the Berghain techno club. After transposing photography into drawing a new change of medium takes place, with which the artist examines people as picture carriers. The term “sampling” once again comes to mind when Brandenburg’s drawings are combined anew on skin.



Photographs

For Marc Brandenburg, photography is like a sketch. Even though he does not consider himself to be a photographer, his artistic process already begins with capturing situations with the camera. Over the years, this has led to the creation of a visual archive. He first transposes some of the motifs into drawings years later. In the final room of the exhibition are photographs that provide insights into Brandenburg's visual cosmos. Motifs from drawings in the exhibition can also be found again here. This makes visible, among other things, the precision with which he translates the snapshot aesthetic into drawing.

List of Works

Unless otherwise indicated the works are untitled drawings (pencil or graphite on paper)

1993, 25,5 x 23,5 cm Campañā Collection, Berlin	1993, 25,2 x 24,3 cm Deutsche Bank Collection	1994, 23 x 25 cm Private collection, Berlin	1996, Pencil on paper, paper clips, staples, 15,5 x 14,5 cm Familie Brunnet- Hackert, Berlin
1993, 25,6 x 23,2 cm Campañā Collection, Berlin	1993, 25,2 x 23,7 cm Deutsche Bank Collection	1994, 26,8 x 17,3 cm Deutsche Bank Collection	1996, Pencil on paper, paper clips, 25,8 x 27 cm Marc Brandenburg, Berlin
1993, 22,5 x 22,5 cm Syreeta Rush, Berlin	1993, 25,3 x 24 cm Deutsche Bank Collection	1994, 26,9 x 17,5 cm Deutsche Bank Collection	1996, Pencil on paper, staples, 24 x 36,7 cm Marc Brandenburg, Berlin
1993, 24,7 x 25,5 cm Nicolette Krebitz, Berlin	1993, 25,5 x 24 cm Deutsche Bank Collection	1994, 27,2 x 17,6 cm Deutsche Bank Collection	1996, Pencil on paper, staples, 27,4 x 19,9 cm Marc Brandenburg, Berlin
1993, 25,5 x 25,5 cm Private collection, Berlin	1993, 24 x 25 cm Deutsche Bank Collection	1994, 26,9 x 17,5 cm Deutsche Bank Collection	1996, Pencil on paper, paper clips, 30,5 x 16,4 cm Marc Brandenburg, Berlin
1993, 25,5 x 23 cm Private collection, Berlin	1994, 27 x 17,4 cm Andreas Lang, Munich	1994, 26,9 x 17,5 cm Deutsche Bank Collection	1996, 16,4 x 21,4 cm Marc Brandenburg, Berlin
1993, 25 x 23,4 cm Private collection, Berlin	1994, 19,8 x 19,6 cm Campañā Collection, Berlin	1994, 27,3 x 17,5 cm Deutsche Bank Collection	1996, Pencil on paper, staples, 21,8 x 15,9 cm Marc Brandenburg, Berlin
1993, 23,5 x 25,5 cm Private collection, Berlin	1994, 26,9 x 17,5 cm Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Kupferstichkabinett	1994, 22,5 x 20,5 cm Frank Radermacher	1996, 26,5 x 21,2 cm Nicolette Krebitz, Berlin
1993, 23,2 x 25,5 cm Private collection, Berlin	1994, 26,9 x 17,5 cm Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Kupferstichkabinett	1994, 26,4 x 17,2 cm Frank Radermacher	1996, Pencil on paper, paper clips, 20 x 31,9 cm Nicolette Krebitz, Berlin
1993, 25,5 x 23,4 cm Private collection, Berlin	1994, 26,9 x 17,5 cm Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Kupferstichkabinett	1994, 24 x 24,5 cm Luis Alberto Gutierrez Ibañez, Barcelona	1996, Pencil on paper, paper clips, staples, 18,2 x 13,2 cm Private collection, Berlin
1993, 25,5 x 23,5 cm Private collection, Berlin	1994, 27,1 x 17,4 cm Marc Brandenburg, Berlin	1995, 24,7 x 23,8 cm Campañā Collection, Berlin	1996, 20 x 15 cm Private collection, Berlin
1993, 25,3 x 24 cm Private collection, Berlin	1994, 26,7 x 17,3 cm Marc Brandenburg, Berlin	1995, 18,2 x 11,3 cm Private collection, Berlin	
1993, 25 x 23,6 cm Private collection, Berlin	1994, 26,8 x 17,3 cm Marc Brandenburg, Berlin	1995, 20,3 x 20,1 cm Private collection, Berlin	
1993, 25,7 x 23,2 cm Deutsche Bank Collection	1994, 26,5 x 17,2 cm Marc Brandenburg, Berlin	1995, 23 x 21 cm Frank Radermacher	
1993, 23,6 x 25,6 cm Deutsche Bank Collection	1994, 27 x 17 cm Marc Brandenburg, Berlin	1995, 23,5 x 24 cm Frank Radermacher	
1993, 26,1 x 23,5 cm Deutsche Bank Collection	1994, 26,8 x 17,2 cm Private collection, Berlin	1996, Pencil on paper, paper clips, staples, 17,6 x 18,6 cm Familie Brunnet- Hackert, Berlin	
1993, 25,5 x 23,3 cm Deutsche Bank Collection			

1996, Pencil on paper, paper clips, staples, 17,8 x 25,7 cm Frank Radermacher	White Rainbow Nr. 5, 2000, 3-part, 31 x 53,5 cm Helaba Art Collection	2008, 40 x 40 cm Marc Brandenburg, Berlin	Tattoo Edition Brasilien 1, 2015, Inkjet print on foil, 60 x 45 cm Marc Brandenburg, Berlin
1996, Pencil on paper, paper clips, staples, 23 x 34 cm Frank Rademacher	White Rainbow Nr. 6, 2000, 7-part, 20,5 x 80 cm Familie Brunnet-Hackert, Berlin	2009, 27 x 25 cm Thomas und Stefan Minks, Berlin	Tattoo Edition Brasilien 2, 2015, Inkjet print on foil, 60 x 45 cm Marc Brandenburg, Berlin
1996, 33 x 18 cm Frank Radermacher	White Rainbow Nr. 10, 2000, 6-part, 31 x 160 cm Helaba Art Collection	2010, 33 x 22 cm Marc Brandenburg, Berlin	2016, 53,3 x 39,3 cm Deutsche Bank Collection
1996, Pencil on paper, paper clips, staples, 26,5 x 30 cm Sammlung Alexejew-Brandl, Berlin	Untitled, (Sheet from White Rainbow Nr. 8), 2000, 21 x 34 cm Privatsammlung, Berlin	2010, 42 x 32 cm Bundesrepublik Deutschland, Sammlung Zeitgenössische Kunst	2016, 53,3 x 39,3 cm Deutsche Bank Collection
1998, 21,6 x 16,5 cm Campaña Collection, Berlin	Untitled, (Sheet from White Rainbow Nr. 9), 2000, 21 x 17,1 cm Sammlung Schulz-Wulkow, Berlin	2010, 32,7 x 21 cm Bundesrepublik Deutschland, Sammlung Zeitgenössische Kunst	Tattoo Edition Bless, 2016, Inkjet print on foil, 60 x 45 cm Marc Brandenburg, Berlin
1998, 22 x 17,2 cm Marc Brandenburg, Berlin	Untitled, (Sheet from White Rainbow Nr. 8), 2000, 20,5 x 20 cm Marc Brandenburg, Berlin	2010, 40 x 40 cm John und Esra Hartung, Berlin	Stress Reliever 2, 2019, 65 x 65 cm Marc Brandenburg, Berlin / Courtesy Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac, London · Paris · Salzburg · Milan · Seoul
1998, 21,5 x 16,5 cm Marc Brandenburg, Berlin	Untitled, (Sheet from White Rainbow Nr. 8), 2000, 20,5 x 20 cm Marc Brandenburg, Berlin	2010, 35,7 x 23 cm John und Esra Hartung, Berlin	Yves Saint Laurent, 2021, Inkjet print on foil, 60 x 45 cm Berlinische Galerie
1998, 20,7 x 16,5 cm Frank Radermacher	2002, 21 x 36,4 cm Sammlung Schulz-Wulkow, Berlin	2010, 29 x 20 cm John und Esra Hartung, Berlin	2021, Inkjet print on foil, 60 x 45 cm Berlinische Galerie
1999, 20,9 x 17 cm Marc Brandenburg, Berlin	2004, 2-part, 99,0 x 21,0 cm Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Kupferstichkabinett	2010, 45 x 32 cm Private collection, Leipzig	2022, 44 x 64 cm Marc Brandenburg, Berlin / Courtesy Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac, London · Paris · Salzburg · Milan · Seoul
1999, 21,6 x 16,5 cm Deutsche Bank Collection	2004, 2-part, 21 x 133,4 cm Peter Most	2012, 29 x 29 cm Marc Brandenburg, Berlin	2022, 47,5 x 62 cm Kunstsammlung Deutsche Bundesbank
1999, 21,6 x 16,5 cm Deutsche Bank Collection	2006, 75 x 39 cm Marc Brandenburg, Berlin	Tattoo Edition 1, 2012, Inkjet print on foil, 60 x 45 cm Berlinische Galerie	Tattoo Edition Griffelkunst 1, 2022, Inkjet print on foil, 60 x 45 cm Marc Brandenburg, Berlin
1999, 22 x 17,6 cm Deutsche Bank Collection	2006, Collage on honeycomb cardboard, 2-part, 238,7 x 236,5 x 2 cm Berlinische Galerie	Tattoo Edition 2, 2012, Inkjet print on foil, 60 x 45 cm Marc Brandenburg, Berlin	Tattoo Edition Griffelkunst 2, 2022, Inkjet print on foil, 60 x 45 cm Marc Brandenburg, Berlin
1999, 21,7 x 16,6 cm Deutsche Bank Collection	2006, 58,5 x 85 cm Private collection, Munich	2014, 72,7 x 55,7 cm Marc Brandenburg, Berlin / Courtesy Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac, London · Paris · Salzburg · Milan · Seoul	2023, 42 x 29 cm Frank Radermacher
1999, 22,2 x 17,4 cm Deutsche Bank Collection	2007, 30 x 21 cm Courtesy Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac, London · Paris · Salzburg · Milan · Seoul	2014, 93,8 x 58 x 4,2 (framed), Marc Brandenburg, Berlin / Courtesy Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac, London · Paris · Salzburg · Milan · Seoul	2024, 6-part, 25 x 427 x 3,5 cm Marc Brandenburg, Berlin / Courtesy Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac, London · Paris · Salzburg · Milan · Seoul
2000, 21 x 29,5 cm Marc Brandenburg, Berlin	2007, 99,5 x 67 cm Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Kupferstichkabinett	Tattoo Edition Berghain, 2014, Inkjet print on foil, 60 x 45 cm Marc Brandenburg, Berlin	
2000, 17 x 23,7 cm Private collection, Berlin	2007, 39,5 x 282 cm Private collection, Munich	2015, 39,4 x 52 cm Kunstsammlung Deutsche Bundesbank	
White Rainbow Nr. 1, 2000, 4-part, 31 x 101,4 cm Helaba Art Collection			
White Rainbow Nr. 3, 2000, 5-part, 31 x 166 cm Helaba Art Collection			

2024, 6-part, 25 x 425 x 3,5 cm Marc Brandenburg, Berlin/Courtesy Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac, London · Paris · Salzburg · Milan · Seoul	2025, 22 x 37 cm Marc Brandenburg, Berlin/Courtesy Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac, London · Paris · Salzburg · Milan · Seoul	2026, 16,5 x 36,7 cm Marc Brandenburg, Berlin/Courtesy Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac, London · Paris · Salzburg · Milan · Seoul
2024, 29,7 x 21 cm Marc Brandenburg, Berlin/Courtesy Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac, London · Paris · Salzburg · Milan · Seoul	2025, 21,3 x 22,4 cm Marc Brandenburg, Berlin/Courtesy Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac, London · Paris · Salzburg · Milan · Seoul	2026, 18 x 30,5 cm Marc Brandenburg, Berlin/Courtesy Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac, London · Paris · Salzburg · Milan · Seoul
2024, 21,1 x 16,8 cm, Private collection, Salzburg	2025, 22 x 19 cm Marc Brandenburg, Berlin/Courtesy Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac, London · Paris · Salzburg · Milan · Seoul	2026, 18,3 x 38,7 cm Marc Brandenburg, Berlin/Courtesy Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac, London · Paris · Salzburg · Milan · Seoul
Tattoo Edition Harvard 1, 2024, Inkjet print on foil, 60 x 45 cm Marc Brandenburg, Berlin	2025, Video, 0:33 min Marc Brandenburg, Berlin/Courtesy Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac, London · Paris · Salzburg · Milan · Seoul	2026, 19,5 x 43,5 cm Marc Brandenburg, Berlin/Courtesy Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac, London · Paris · Salzburg · Milan · Seoul
Tattoo Edition Harvard 2, 2024, Inkjet print on foil, 60 x 45 cm Marc Brandenburg, Berlin	2025, Video, 1:03 min Marc Brandenburg, Berlin/Courtesy Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac, London · Paris · Salzburg · Milan · Seoul	2026, 15,5 x 41,4 cm Marc Brandenburg, Berlin/Courtesy Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac, London · Paris · Salzburg · Milan · Seoul
Scruff July 5th 4:21 p.m., 2025, 27,5 x 43,3 cm Marc Brandenburg, Berlin/Courtesy Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac, London · Paris · Salzburg · Milan · Seoul	2025, Video, 0:09 min Marc Brandenburg, Berlin/Courtesy Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac, London · Paris · Salzburg · Milan · Seoul	2026, 14,2 x 44,7 cm Marc Brandenburg, Berlin/Courtesy Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac, London · Paris · Salzburg · Milan · Seoul
2025, 36 x 29 cm Marc Brandenburg, Berlin/Courtesy Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac, London · Paris · Salzburg · Milan · Seoul	2025, Video, 4:34 min Marc Brandenburg, Berlin/Courtesy Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac, London · Paris · Salzburg · Milan · Seoul	2026, 22,5 x 14 cm Marc Brandenburg, Berlin/Courtesy Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac, London · Paris · Salzburg · Milan · Seoul
Ebay 02-07503-21202, 2025, 97 x 48 cm Marc Brandenburg, Berlin/Courtesy Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac, London · Paris · Salzburg · Milan · Seoul	2025, Video, 0:26 min Marc Brandenburg, Berlin/Courtesy Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac, London · Paris · Salzburg · Milan · Seoul	
Ebay 02-07503-21202 (Inverted), 2025, 97 x 48 cm Marc Brandenburg, Berlin/Courtesy Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac, London · Paris · Salzburg · Milan · Seoul	2026, 17 x 43,4 cm Marc Brandenburg, Berlin/Courtesy Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac, London · Paris · Salzburg · Milan · Seoul	
	2026, 14,5 x 39,5 cm Marc Brandenburg, Berlin/Courtesy Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac, London · Paris · Salzburg · Milan · Seoul	

Biography

Marc Brandenburg was born in West Berlin in 1965. He spent his early childhood in the United States. In 1977, he returned to his home city. Punk became a formative experience and he found himself again in the creative subculture of West Berlin. Via fashion, Brandenburg came to art as an autodidact and first exhibited his drawings in the 1990s. Solo exhibitions followed, including at Künstlerhaus Bethanien (1993), MMK Frankfurt (2005), Denver Art Museum (2010), Hamburger Kunsthalle (2011), PalaisPopulaire (2021), Städel Museum (2021–22), and many more. Today, Brandenburg lives and works in Berlin and Barcelona.

Colophon

Marc Brandenburg
20th Century Debris
April 17–September 14, 2026

Images

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Design

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Landesmuseum für Moderne Kunst,
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Supported by the
Hauptstadtkulturfonds

**I think that causing
confusion is an
important driving
force for prompting
contemplation.**

Marc Brandenburg
2021