



BERLINISCHE GALERIE

BERLIN'S MUSEUM OF MODERN ART,  
PHOTOGRAPHY AND ARCHITECTURE  
FOUNDATION UNDER PUBLIC LAW

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Press Release: Berlin, 8 August 2012

Exhibition: 5 October 2012 to 28 January 2013

# The Shuttered Society

## Art Photography in the GDR: 1949-1989

The Berlinische Galerie is to stage the world's first comprehensive exhibition of art photography in the GDR. Twenty years after the Wall, "The Shuttered Society" identifies traditions and trends while illustrating shifts in visual idiom and theme.

The retrospective will thus contribute to the present discourse about photography that has unfolded in recent years with a flurry of exhibitions and publications. The works and their protagonists, the cultural policies that framed them, regional particularities, technical parameters and personal strategies have been explored in detail, so that an interested audience will now be aware of many of these photographers and of pictures that have acquired a status little short of canonical.

The show at the Berlinische Galerie is designed to offer a broad overview, and the selection seeks to convey the specific character of each photographic work, its motivation and its language.

Although the exhibition is devoted primarily to the medium itself, it also tells a great deal about daily life in the GDR. This is above all because the most prolific current, in terms of volume, was socially committed photography, and that is the subject of the **first chapter**. The photographers working within this tradition are keen to depict their world truthfully. As a result, they seek out images enabling them to make statements about real social conditions.

The **second chapter** traces a thread with roots in the modernist idiom of the 1920s which was revived in the 1950s, but then found no successors for the next twenty years. Not until the mid-1970s did photographers lend more attention to the formal and aesthetic resources of their medium. The quest for new forms of aesthetic expression also led to works in three-dimensional space.

Many of the young photographers on display in the **third chapter** needed this broader range of expressive options to render their complex impressions and emotions more effectively. Many had broken with the assumptions that defined the role played by their elders, for their view of East German society was disillusioned. Their investigations with the camera were born of this attitude, and their photography centres upon themselves, their bodies and their perceptions.

The three chapters are preceded by a short **Prologue** with two significant series by Richard Peter sen. and Karl-Heinz Mai, offering an atmospheric impression of the period between the end of the Third Reich in 1945 and the foundation of the German Democratic Republic in 1949.

**Photographers of the exhibition:** Ursula Arnold, Tina Bara, Sibylle Bergemann, Christian Borchert, Micha Brendel, Kurt Buchwald, Lutz Dammbeck, Klaus Elle, Arno Fischer, Thomas Florschuetz, Ernst Goldberg, Klaus Hühner-Springmühl, Matthias Hoch, Edmund Kesting, Jörg Knöfel, Fritz Kühn, Matthias Leupold, Ulrich Lindner, Karl Heinz Mai, Sven Marquardt, Roger Melis, Florian Merkel, Peter Oehlmann, Helga Paris, Manfred Paul, Richard Peter sen., Evelyn Richter, Jens Röttsch, Rudolf Schäfer, Michael Scheffer, Erasmus Schröter, Gundula Schulze Eldowy, Maria Sewcz, Ulrich Wüst

**The Shuttered Society**  
**Art Photography in the GDR:**  
**1949-1989**



Jens Röttsch: Berlin (East) 1989 – Whitem Youth • Stadion der Weltjugend

PHOTOGRAPHY EXHIBITION  
5 October 2012 – 28 January 2013

PRESS CONFERENCE  
Thu 4 October 2012, 11 am

OPENING  
Thu 4 October 2012, 7 pm

CURATORS  
Ulrich Domröse, T. O. Immisch,  
Gabriele Muschter, Uwe Warnke

EXHIBITION DESIGN  
David Saik, Berlin

Funded by the Kulturstiftung des Bundes

This exhibition is part of the European Month of Photography

OPENING HOURS  
Wed-Mon, 10 am to 6 pm

PUBLIC TRANSPORT  
U1 / U6 Hallesches Tor  
U6 Kochstraße / U8 Moritzplatz  
M 29, 248

TICKETS  
Day ticket: € 8 / Concessions € 5  
1st Monday in the month: € 4  
Free entry for under-18s

Media partner to the Berlinische Galerie: WALL AG

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