

# PRESS KIT



## DANCING ON THE VOLCANO

### The Berlin of the Twenties as Reflected in the Arts

#### EPHRAIM-PALAIS | Stadtmuseum Berlin

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<b>Address</b>	Poststraße 16   10178 Berlin
<b>Infoline</b>	Tel. +49 30 24 002-162   <a href="mailto:info@stadtmuseum.de">info@stadtmuseum.de</a>
<b>Duration</b>	04.09.2015 to 31.01.2016
<b>Opening hours</b>	Tu, Th-Su 10:00 am – 6:00 pm   Wed 12:00 pm – 8:00 pm
<b>Admission</b>	6.00 / reduced 4.00 Euros   Free admission the first Wednesday of each month   Free admission for registered school classes and children / young adults under 18
<b>Special ticket</b>	8.00 / Concessions 5.00 Euros   Offers entry to the Ephraim-Palais and the Märkisches Museum until 31.01.2016
<b>Accompanying programme</b>	<a href="http://www.stadtmuseum.de">www.stadtmuseum.de</a>

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## Press release

# DANCING ON THE VOLCANO

## The Berlin of the Twenties as Reflected in the Arts

**Exhibition at the Ephraim-Palais: from 04.09.2015 to 31.01.2016**

Berlin in the twenties – a legendary city, and the subject of numerous publications, features and exhibitions of all kinds. To date, however, there has been no comprehensive exploration of how the political, social and intellectual developments are reflected in the artwork of the period. The exhibition “Dancing on the Volcano” captures the mood of Berlin’s populace as it experienced upswing and downfall, luxury and misery. The exhibition’s main focus is to retrace the material and historical complexity of examples from visual art, architecture, design, fashion, theatre, music halls and revues. In addition, the exhibition includes film and audio documents such as excerpts from “Berlin Alexanderplatz” from 1931 with Heinrich George and radio reports such as Alfred Döblin’s reportage on the exhibition about the Berlin Secession in the same year.

With more than 500 works by around 200 painters, graphic artists, photographers, artisans and fashion designers – all taken from the Stadtmuseum Berlin’s rich collections – the exhibition both illustrates the Berlin population’s living conditions and gives detailed insights into the multifaceted cultural life of the interwar period. Alongside well-known names such as Max Beckmann, Otto Dix, George Grosz, Karl Hofer, Käthe Kollwitz, Wilhelm Lehbruck and Rudolf Schlichter, there are also many re-discoveries such as the commercial artist Bruno Böttger-Steglitz with his traumatic depictions of riots, rape and murder and the “man with the mysterious skirt,” Max Grünthal, who worked under the pseudonym Mac Walten taking stunning commercial photographs of his artistic colleagues.

The luxurious side of the twenties can be seen in the parallel exhibition “IA-scent | Schwarzlose & the perfume of Berlin” on the 3rd floor of the Ephraim-Palais. The reconstruction of the legendary Schwarzlose perfume collection is spectacular. The perfumes, the elegant design of the bottles and the Art Deco-style advertisements take visitors on a sensual and glamorous journey back in time.

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Berlin in the Weimar Republic period appeared to be a tumultuous place yet authoritarian structures and values from the German Empire remained. In reaction to political, social and economic crises, a fast-paced, largely hedonistic and sensual attitude to life emerged. It was expressed in the staccato movements of the Charleston, the exhibitionism of honky-tonk, the jeering of cabaret numbers, the styling of the “new woman,” in short: in the proverbial hustle and bustle of big-city life.

Thrills and sensual titillation provided a balance to the daily struggle for survival during the period of inflation. The capital city as a hotbed of vice – the young democracy allowed for previously unimagined freedoms, as illustrated in the erotic photographs from the estate of the sexologist Wilhelm Schöffner. The high society indulged in debauchery activities, preferably after dark when the crowded streets around the Kaiser Wilhelm Memorial Church began to light up. One particular centre of attraction was the cinema, built in the Neues Bauen (modernist) style with brightly lit façades and striking billboards. Photography and painting represented the effects of artificial lighting, as well as the mysteries of the twilight. People who lived an upscale lifestyle provided important cultural stimulus as the customers of interior decorators and couturiers. In contrast, the motto “Bubikopf ist Mode” (“the bob cut is in style”) represented not only a trend in fashion, but also a transformation in the way the modern working woman saw herself.

Caricatures in the satirical journal “Ulz” avidly poked fun at the nouveau riche society of wartime profiteers and speculators, and publications by the Malik publishing house castigated the persisting militarism and businessmen as exploiters. Art gave a face to the socially underprivileged, both as an empathetic portrayal of the milieu and as a political indictment. George Grosz, who had several run-ins with the law, represented a prototype of the politicised artist. The members of the Association of Revolutionary Visual Artists of Germany sought to introduce the working class to culture and to convey a self-conscious image of the proletariat. The theatre and the opera developed innovative new ways to deal with social upheaval, sometimes moving into radical territory. Piscator’s stage designs came to represent the epitome of leftist avant-garde theatre. Elaborate stage revues and circus spectacles catered to the public’s desire for large-scale sensations.

On 3rd October 1929, the death of Reich Foreign Minister Gustav Stresemann, whose policies were responsible for Germany’s acceptance into the League of Nations, signalled the end of the insouciant era. The “Golden Twenties” actually only lasted for five years. The effects of the National Socialists coming to power on 30 January 1933 are reflected in the exhibition through the eyes of artists who went into “internal exile” as a result of their work being labelled “degenerate” or because they had to leave Germany due to political or “racial” reasons.

**There will be a multifaceted supporting programme to accompany the exhibition starting in September 2015.**

An accompanying catalogue will be released by Verlag M publishing house with an introductory essay by Bodo-Michael Baumunk.

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**EPHRAIM-PALAIS | Stadtmuseum Berlin**

<b>Address</b>	Poststraße 16   10178 Berlin
<b>Infoline</b>	Tel. +49 30 24 002-162   info@stadtmuseum.de
<b>Press preview</b>	Friday   28.08.2015   11:00 am
<b>Pre-opening night</b>	Saturday   29.08.2015   6:00 pm – 2:00 am   Long Night of Museums
<b>Opening</b>	Thursday   03.09.2015   7:00 pm
<b>Duration</b>	04.09.2015 to 31.01.2016
<b>Opening hours</b>	Tu, Th-Su 10:00 am – 6:00 pm   Wed 12:00 pm – 8:00 pm
<b>Special opening hours</b>	Saturday   03.10.2015   10:00 am – 6:00 pm Thursday   24.12.2015   closed Friday   25.12.2015   2:00 pm – 6:00 pm Saturday   26.12.2015   2:00 pm – 6:00 pm Monday!!!   28.12.2015   10:00 am – 6:00 pm Thursday   31.12.2015   closed Friday   01.01.2016   2:00 pm – 6:00 pm
<b>Admission</b>	6.00 / reduced 4.00 Euros   Free admission the first Wednesday of each month   Free admission for registered school classes and children / young adults under 18
<b>Special ticket</b>	8.00 / reduced 5.00 Euros   Offers entry to the Ephraim-Palais and the Märkisches Museum until 31.01.2016

**Accompanying Programme [www.stadtmuseum.de](http://www.stadtmuseum.de)**

<b>Tours</b>	<b>Every Sunday   4:00 pm</b> Big city frenzy in the Twenties Admission: 9.00 / reduced 6.00 Euro including museum entry
<b>Curator-led tour</b>	<b>16.09.2015   6:00 pm</b> with Prof. Dr. Dominik Bartmann Admission: 9.00 / reduced 6.00 Euro including museum entry
<b>Symposium with lecture, Music, dance and film</b>	<b>17.10.2015   2:00 pm – 6:00 pm</b> <b>Stage – dance – madcap entertainment</b> The <i>Golden Twenties</i> in Berlin in cooperation with the Komische Oper Berlin Admission: 5.00 Euro including party at 10:30 pm
<b>Closing event</b>	<b>31.01.2016   10:00 am – 6:00 pm</b> Museum admission: 6.00 / reduced 4.00 Euro
<b>Publications</b>	<b>Tanz auf dem Vulkan</b> (29.90 Euro, 228 p., approximately 300 illustrations)
<b>Verlag M</b>	<b>Berliner Düfte</b> ( 6.90 Euro, 96 p., approx. 60 illustrations)

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DESCRIPTIONS | 1<sup>st</sup> FLOOR**Lights off, Knives out!**

The war cry of “So now, we will thrash them!” was followed during the revolution by the slogan “Lights off, knives out!” – the chorus of a popular dance song. Kaiser Wilhelm II abdicated on 9th November, 1918. On the same day, Social Democrat Philipp Scheidemann declared the “German Republic” on a parliamentary-democratic basis; a short time later, Communist Karl Liebknecht declared a “Free Socialist Republic” founded on the Soviet example. The mass, heroic deaths on the battle field – which had proven “meaningless” – and the horror of war etched into the memory of the survivors placed a heavy burden on this new beginning. The opposing notions of Germany's future were implemented violently within the emergent party landscape. Bloody street battles and political assassinations were daily occurrences. Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg from the party committee of the KPD fell victim to right-wing terror on 15th January, 1919. The crushing of the Spartacus Revolt, attempts to overthrow the government like the Kapp Putsch or the “Bloody Sunday of Köpenick” in March 1920, and clashes between communist workers and the police e.g. during the “Bloody May” of 1929 all played a part in destabilizing the Republic. Fine artists, writers and theatre directors involved themselves actively in the design of post-war society with their newly gained, critical approach to real events. They not only captured the political and social reality of the times with their work, but also put it up for discussion, simultaneously exhorting and warning their audiences.

**Those on the Dark Side**

One of the aims of the Weimar Republic was a fair social policy with modern labour protection laws. Initially, however, this was in conflict with shortages of supplies, mass unemployment and hyper-inflation, and towards the end with the stock-exchange crash, bankruptcies and dismissals. Despite an interim period of economic consolidation and improvement on the housing front due to the construction of modern estates, war cripples, beggars, the homeless and the unemployed were part of everyday life. More than 600,000 Berliners had no job in 1932. Those on the dark side, threatened by social decline, were rarely perceived as individuals by the rest of society. But they drew attention to themselves en masse: in hunger revolts, protests among the unemployed, strikes, and political demonstrations. Not least, fine art gave a face to the socially disadvantaged, whether in the shape of sensitive milieu portraits or political accusations. Shortages of food, miserable housing conditions, homelessness, vagabondage, the existence of social outsiders, illness and suicide provided all manner of material for – in some cases drastic – depictions of existential uncertainty. After the National Socialists had taken over power, the independent unions were defeated. Their place was taken by the Deutsche Arbeitsfront run on the Führer principle, which numbered 22 million members at its height. Its purpose was to equalize “all productive Germans” in accordance with the propagated ideal of the National Socialist worker as part of the “national community”: heroic, active, ready to fight.

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## Faster, Faster!

Berlin was becoming mobile in the twenties. Modern means of transport caused distances to shrink, progress was made with the “great electrification”, and the media age was fast approaching: radio, and later television waves raced across the ether, broadcast from Berlin's radio tower, a symbol of technical progress. Between 1924 and 1930, the urban railway (S-Bahn) routes in the inner city and connecting to the suburban lines were electrified. New urban railway and underground lines were added, in particular leading to the working-class areas in the North and East. The city's appearance was dominated increasingly by motorized vehicles – buses, cars and motorcycles. 300,000 spectators came to the Avus, opened five years previously, for the German Grand Prix in 1926. There, in 1928, Fritz von Opel achieved a land-speed record of 230 km/h in a rocket-driven Opel RAK2. The propeller-driven Zeppelins on route between Berlin and Hamburg also reached speeds of 230 km/h; a journey taking only 98 minutes. The central Tempelhof Airport run by the Berliner Flughafen Gesellschaft mbH recorded as many as 100 take-offs and landings in its opening year, 1923. After 1930 the volume of traffic exceeded even that of London and Paris. Artists and creatives in particular captured the sense of living in an accelerating world. Whereas the Expressionists had depicted the city as a chaotic conglomeration of buildings, vehicles and people, now the artists of New Objectivity documented Berlin's cityscape and attitude to life in a quieter way, nonetheless reflecting on the darker sides of technological progress.

## Big City Lights

In the twenties Berlin was frequently evoked as the glittering setting for a new lifestyle. Residents as well as tourists were captivated by the metropolis' night-time charms. In the words of the song *Jeder einmal in Berlin* dating from 1927:

“Where the Funkturm's burning rays  
in gleaming arcs entrance the gaze,  
where a million lights like stars  
pierce the darkness from afar ...  
a chain of orbs that seem alight,  
there lies Berlin, queen of the night!  
Hushed, in awe, our voices meet:  
hark, the heart of Europe beats!”

“Light is life” was the motto of the lighting industry. In 1928, on the initiative of Berlin's merchants, businessmen and major industries, a “week of light” took place in the city. This event propagated the illumination of the city's sights, the spotlighting of commercial buildings, neon advertising, and display window lighting as means of presenting the city. The latest technical developments were widely used. In painting, Hans Baluschek, Johannes Hänsch and Paul Hoeniger adopted Lesser Ury's principles in their depictions of Berlin at night. Albert Birkle illustrated the magical atmosphere at twilight. Werner Heldt characterized the city as a place of abandonment. Bruno Böttger-Steglitz revealed how the glittering big-city night could turn into a nightmarish shadow-world.

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## Streets of Labour

Fine and applied arts were employed in the service of politics as from the mid-twenties. Inspired by Soviet models, the members of the Rote Gruppe and the Association Revolutionärer Bildender Künstler Deutschlands (ASSO) propagated independent “proletarian aesthetics”. Art's task, they maintained, was to mobilise the masses for the radical-revolutionary overthrow of the state and economic structures. In many cases, the ASSO artists supported demonstrations and other events by the KPD and associated organisations – like the Rote Hilfe and the Rotfrontkämpferbund – with creative agitational graphic art and mobile propaganda sculptures. Portraits of workers and depictions of proletarian life were tools of social criticism, but also evidence of increasing self-confidence in the labour movement. Oskar Nerlinger adopted stimulus from political constructivism, for example, whereas Otto Nagel documented the simple people's lives in socially critical images. The aim of Sella Hasse's depictions of workers was to show how contemporary society rested on their shoulders. There were also efforts to develop proletarian art “from below” in other fields: collective agit-prop groups organised revue-like performances in public space, which were popular with the people. Worker photography experienced a major upswing. Political photo montages by John Heartfield appeared in the Arbeiter Illustrierte Zeitung and were published by the Malik-Verlag. Even in media such as radio and film, there were experiments with proletarian content and modern forms of expression.

## Heads of Culture

Portrait art during the twenties was determined in part by sensitivity to psychological aspects, but also by elements of expressive caricature and objective observation. As supporters of the republic, representatives of culture were frequently portrayed. Because artists often saw themselves as seismographs of social conditions, self-portraiture held a key position. Käthe Kollwitz depicted herself as a strong but sensitive woman – one who criticised social deficits and was committed to the pursuit of peace. Rudolf Großmann gave the title “Fifty Heads of the Era” to a collection of portraits he made, including one of the terminally ill artist, Lovis Corinth. Alongside Max Liebermann, the latter had assisted in the breakthrough of the first modernist generation. A developing star cult came hand in hand with increasing numbers of actor portraits. Elisabeth Bergner, Lotte Lenya and Paul Graetz were among those compelled to emigrate due to the National Socialists' race laws. By contrast, Emil Jannings, the first ever Oscar winner, progressed to become one of Hitler's favourite actors. Erich Büttner created a series of portraits of poets and writers like Max Herrmann-Neisse, whose physical deformity branded him as an outsider. Textile merchant Julius Freund, portrayed by Max Slevogt, owned an important art collection, which was confiscated and sold at auction in Lucerne in 1942. One portrait painter persecuted and driven out of Germany was Annot Jacobi. While in Germany, she had been regarded as “degenerate”, but in New York she received a gold medal for her painting of doll-maker Käthe Kruse together with her children in 1935. Willy Jaeckel created a universally valid characterization of contemporary youth with his image of the Wilke siblings.

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## Clear the Stage!

In the twenties Berlin developed into an international theatre metropolis. The founding of the Weimar Republic and the abolition of censorship meant that there were no further limits to the joy in experimentation among creatives in the theatre world. Contemporary dramatists found their way onto the stage, and classic works were directed in novel ways. Innumerable groups were formed parallel to the established institutions, implementing their political experiences in agitprop theatre. The revolutionizing of theatre began in the former Königliches Schauspielhaus, where Leopold Jessner staged his version of Schiller's Wilhelm Tell. He adopted stylistic means from the Expressionists: the stage remained bare, place- and timeless. Rather than staging the simple fable, Jessner staged the idea behind the fable. Piscator's stages became the epitome of avant-garde theatre. Erwin Piscator directed performances of contemporary works and introduced fresh political accents. The text functioned as material, always supplemented by projections and political slogans. Piscator opened the Theater am Nollendorfpfplatz with Ernst Toller's historical revue Hopppla, wir leben! in 1927. In the twenties Berlin supported three opera houses: the State Opera with its venues on Unter den Linden and the Platz der Republik, and the Municipal Opera House in Charlottenburg. In 1921 the German premiere of the ballet The Legend of Joseph took place at the State Opera House. Tilla Durieux played Potiphar's wife, creating the sensation of the season.

## A Somersault Head-First

In only a decade, the capital of the new republic blossomed into the centre of an expanding entertainment industry. Facing social problems, the Berliners' desire for diversion grew. In dance halls and cabaret shows, at the circus and variété theatres, the big-city dwellers allowed themselves to be transported into an intoxicating world of illusion and sensations. Thrills at any price: death-defying acrobats risked their lives in daredevil performances on the city's rooftops. Elementary qualities like strength or speed, struggles against fire, water and gravity became part of the entertainment culture. Spectacular inventions, complicated apparatuses, and free-fall in cars while looping the loop captivated the masses. Reflecting the contemporary trend, spectacular circus programmes and variété revues were staged in Circus Busch and the variété theatre Scala. The Wintergarten offered programmes of acts featuring world famous artistes and international dance stars. Great clowns like the three Fratellinis, Grock, and the Rivel family took to the stage at the variété theatres. Quick-change artist and photographer Max Grünthal took highly expressive advertising photographs of many of his fellow artists, signed "Mac Walten Berlin", in his studio at Friedrichstraße 91-92. As a Jew, he fled to the Netherlands in 1936 to escape the National Socialists.

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## Keeping in Time

The revue extravaganza mirrored attitudes to life in the twenties. Oriented entirely on sensory stimulus and effects, it enabled its audiences to forget their everyday cares and abandon themselves to pleasant dreams. After conversion by Hans Poelzig in 1919, the Großes Schauspielhaus provided ideal conditions for shows of this kind. Director Erik Charell used every conceivable trick of stage technology for his ingenious productions. He also engaged a jazz orchestra, which played orchestral formats as well as well-known hits. Stars like Claire Waldoff and Wilhelm Bendow appeared alongside up-and-coming talents such as Curt Bois and Marlene Dietrich. Dance was especially important in the revues. The English Tiller-Girls became Charell's hallmark: sixteen dancers of similar height, build and hair colouring performing their uniform movements with extreme precision. Thousands visited the three revue palaces on Friedrichstraße every day: the Großes Schauspielhaus, the Theater im Admiralspalast, and the Comic Opera. As early as 1921, James Klein brought extravagant revues based on the French model to the stage of the Comic Opera. The naturalistic ballet of the small revues was notorious. Hermann Haller was even more innovative in the Admiralspalast. A visit to one of Haller's revues was on the programme for every Berlin visitor – a real tourist attraction. His international reputation was founded on perfect harmony between the stage-sets, lighting and costum.

## DESCRIPTIONS | 2<sup>nd</sup> FLOOR

### Amusement

The pleasures of music and dancing were part of the popular lifestyle during the Weimar Republic. Released from the pressures of the war years and a ban on dancing implemented at that time, the Berliners abandoned themselves to such long-missed revelry without restraint after 1919. Nightly pleasures compensated for the daily hardships and cares of the inflation era. The newly introduced eight-hour day opened up novel leisure opportunities. Following the American example, a recreational market for all tastes and purses developed in the city of four million. New types of sporting events generated huge excitement. One sensation was the six-day races in the Sportpalast. Modern mass media like radio and music records were making culture more and more democratic. Dance halls, cafés and luxury hotels advertised with famous orchestras and the latest rhythms. Fashions in ballroom dancing changed rapidly. The foxtrot was followed by the shimmy in 1921. After a phase of hot jazz, all of Berlin could be found dancing the Charleston as from 1925. The uninhibited movements of these new dances reflected a striving for freedom and individuality in the anonymity of the big city. The five o'clock tea was popular among ladies; at such events, they could amuse themselves even without a chaperone. Berlin developed into an entertainment metropolis with its new, cosmopolitan dance halls and cafés. At its centre was the Kurfürstendamm, a boulevard radiating modernity and elegance. Addiction to pleasure and new sexual freedom were expressed in the audacious and often salacious lyrics of the latest hits. As early as 1928, however, melancholy tangos suggested that the glamour of the “Golden Twenties” was beginning to fade.

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## Beautiful and Chic

In the twenties Berlin was Europe's leading city of the clothing industry. Clothes and textiles of all kinds were produced here, from expensive and fashionable garments to cheap, off-the-peg items. Berlin's clothing industry operated according to the putting-out system. The main employer gave out work to small, very small businesses or home workers. He did not run his own factory or workshops. This system could react flexibly to changes in fashion but also resulted in a considerable degree of exploitation. In 1925 there were 101,419 people, most of them women, working for starvation wages in 60,616 companies. Fashion magazines like *Die Dame*, *Elegante Welt* or *Modenspiegel* showed the latest trends. As fashion photography was still in its infancy, most of their illustrations were drawings. Playfully-delicate designs by famous artists such as Gerd Hartung and Lieselotte Friedlaender reflected the attitude to life during the period. Fashions changed several times during the Weimar Republic. In the post-war era, lavish, softly falling dresses with high waists became modern. Around 1925 the waist was straight, belts were worn on the hips, skirts were short, and women wore their hair in a pixie cut. At the end of the twenties, fashion became more feminine once again. Initially, evening and dance dresses developed swinging, often tapered skirts. By 1930 the line had been completely transformed: longer skirts and accentuated waists put in a fresh appearance.

## The Pixie Cut is Fashionable

The old plaits have been cropped and the New Woman wears a pixie cut: she is modern, life-affirming and physically aware, and she goes out to work. She combines household and job: girl, vamp and emancipated woman all rolled into one. This ideal of womanhood became a mass phenomenon due to illustrated magazines, film, and the stage during the mid twenties. The sculpture *Die Herbe* by Milli Steger represents, in an exemplary way, the increased self-confidence and physical awareness with which many young women were appearing in public. Better education and greater opportunities in the world of work but also legal foundations like the vote for women granted in 1919 promoted women's emancipation. A new labour market for lesser-qualified women also emerged in the service sector and factories. The cosmopolitan, fashion-conscious, sporting girl developed into a type; in the evenings she went to the cinema, theatre or dancing. Her short skirts and loose-fitting clothing allowed more movement but also revealed her legs, which would be wearing fine, shimmering stockings. Now they were made of artificial silk, meaning that almost everyone could afford them. Eroticism was realized more freely, women permitted themselves love before marriage, and same-sex partnerships were displayed quite openly. Increasingly, women were conquering "male" territories, and smoking became a symbol of these changes. The short period between the two world wars represented an era of departure for a generation of young women. As from the late twenties, however, the traditional values of the housewife and mother were re-emerging already. Women's presence in society declined and their pixie cuts grew out: hair was worn longer again, and curled.

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## Those on the Bright Side

The “Golden Twenties” are legendary. At that time Berlin was a pulsating metropolis with more than four million inhabitants. Loud, animated restlessness characterized attitudes to life in the world’s third biggest city. Following the outcome of the war and the beating of inflation, people abandoned themselves to amusement of every kind. Those on the bright side – those who could afford it – indulged in excessive luxury. After nightfall, the promenade districts around the Memorial Church and Friedrichstraße truly glittered. Besides those who had profited from war and crises and were now parading their wealth, the “top ten thousand” included intellectual have-nots and well-situated citizens with a sense of the aesthetic. The art and cultural scene met in the Romanisches Café, “in the brightness” of the public eye, where they rejoiced in their avant-garde lifestyle. In all social dealings, the private and the public became less and less distinct. Society periodicals enabled insights into prominent citizens’ homes and so into the wide spectrum of modern architecture and contemporary living. The most important architects and interior designers included the co-founder of the German Werkbund, Bruno Paul. Craftsmen like Siegmund Schütz and Theodor Bogler, as well as sculptor Alexander Archipenko made good form popular by cooperating with the Royal Porcelain Manufactory (KPM) and the earthenware factory Velten-Vordamm.

## New Building and Radio

After the First World War, Berlin was regarded as the most densely populated metropolis of the era. Much of the population lived in extreme poverty and there was a massive housing shortage. Amalgamation into the united municipality of Greater Berlin in 1920 and the victory over inflation in 1924 made it possible to implement building measures on a larger scale. One committed Berlin architect and municipal building councillor, Martin Wagner, lent an enduring impetus to this building work in collaborative agreement with the Lord Mayor, Gustav Böß. Neues Bauen (New Building) became the defining structure and expressive form of many different construction assignments, although it incorporated various trends. Shaping the city image even to the present day are the Borsig Tower, dating from 1922, Berlin’s first high-rise structure, an expressionist steel-skeleton construction, and the more objective Shell House built by Emil Fahrenkamp in 1931. Besides office, commercial and transport buildings, it was the socially engaged, mass housing construction in particular that helped to found Berlin’s reputation as a centre of modern architecture. This was associated with names like Walter Gropius, Bruno and Max Taut, as well as Hans Scharoun. Six of their housing estates were added to the Unesco list of world heritage in 2008. On 29th October 1923, Berlin’s “Funk-Stunde” began broadcasting regularly from the Vox-Haus at Potsdamer Str. 4. The rapid success of the new medium, radio, was expressed architecturally in the broadcasting tower (Funkturm), built by Heinrich Straumer from 1924–1926, and the Haus des Rundfunks by Hans Poelzig, built from 1929–1931. The National Socialists took over power in 1933, which led to the ideological gleichschaltung of broadcasting. The protagonists of New Building were persecuted or went into inner emigration. The city’s future development into the proclaimed world capital Germania culminated for Berlin in a desolate sea of ruins.

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## The Night is not just for Sleep

No other German city is linked as closely to the mythically profligate and shady nature of the Weimar Republic as its capital, Berlin. The young democracy allowed previously unimagined liberties, which went hand in hand with sexual debauchery, prostitution, and drug-induced excesses. Free sexual morality, far distanced from former bourgeois values, captured society in the midst of political power struggles, between economic upswing and decline. In this period many women and men, including lesbians, gays and transvestites, experimented with their sexuality and enjoyed Berlin's liberal-minded night-life. As a consequence, sexual diseases became common, even to a perilous extent. During the Empire, a debate had already begun regarding countermeasures in health policy and in 1927 these measures, as well as a reform of prostitution, were implemented in law. While Paris was viewed as the city of love, artists like Michel Fingesten, George Grosz, Christian Schad and Rudolf Schlichter shaped Berlin's reputation as a sink of iniquity. They themselves experienced free sexuality, sometimes to the point of excess, bringing together social and erotic aspects in their works on the subject. Their images reflected not only the “professional”, the “lady of ill-repute” or the war-damaged punter – but even the sex murderer.

## The Best Society

Berlin did not succeed in generating a bourgeois society during the Weimar Republic. Instead, reference was always made to circles: ex-court circles, stock-exchange circles, white-collar circles or blue-collar circles. A mix of snobs, profiteers and speculators could be found among the “best”, politically predominantly reactionary or even chauvinistic, milieu of the “top ten thousand”. George Grosz dissected Weimar society; his hatred of the ugliness of the German petit-bourgeoisie erupted in some highly provocative images. The portfolio work *Gott mit uns* brought him a court case for defamation of the Reich army. In the *Räuber* portfolio underlain with quotations from Schiller's drama, *The Robbers*, Grosz transferred his criticism of the military to the bourgeoisie. Max Beckmann's portfolio work *Berliner Reise* conveys an impression of Berlin's post-war society. Here, we encounter representatives of the “best society” as individuals disappointed with political conditions or, in other cases, anxiously seeking distraction. Fred Knab's caricatures for the magazine *Ulz* draw their humour from confrontation between social parvenus and the milieu from which they actually originated. The *Ulz* certainly responded in an immediate way to current political events, but it was the publication's more general barbs that reflected the often curious behaviour of the “best society” most amusingly.

## The End of the Republic

Throughout its existence, the Weimar Republic was subject to attack from both right and left. Its downfall began in 1925 with the death of Reich President Friedrich Ebert and the election of 77-year-old Paul von Hindenburg as his successor. A general field-marshal in the First World War, he was responsible for the stealthy depletion of democracy. In the end he appointed Hitler as Reich Chancellor. The foreign minister of the Reich, Gustav Stresemann, died on 3rd October 1929. By contrast to Hindenburg, he had supported the democratic constitution of the Reich with conviction. His policies were oriented towards understanding with the victorious powers of the First World War, and he was able to elicit their agreement to Germany joining the League of Nations at the Locarno Conference in 1925. Together with his French counterpart, Aristide Briand, he received the Nobel Peace Prize for his reconciliation work in 1926. Another caesura came with the death of Albert Steinrück, a member of Max Reinhardt's ensemble, on 10th February 1929. His friend Heinrich George organised a benefit performance for the family, at which almost all Berlin's famous actors could be found on stage at the Schauspielhaus on Gendarmenmarkt. Portraits in memory of Steinrück were painted by Karl Hofer and Alfred Sohn-Rethel. But the paths of those participating diverged only a short time later. While many had to flee Germany after Hitler took power, others were able to continue their careers at theatres now oriented towards the National Socialist ideology.

## Under the Swastika

Adolf Hitler's appointment as Reich Chancellor on 30th January 1933 triggered the implementation of National Socialist ideology in all parts of the "national community" throughout the Reich. The burning of the Reichstag on 27th February 1933 provided a pretext for the restriction of citizens' rights. The Reich Ministry of Popular Enlightenment and Propaganda headed by Joseph Goebbels was responsible for directing the media and culture. An administrative tool for forced political alignment was created in the Reich Cultural Chamber. In 1937/38 more than 20,000 artworks were confiscated as "un-German". In 1937 the Munich exhibition Degenerate Art presented the first outcome of this "purification of the temple of art". The defaming show was hosted in Berlin in 1938. Artists were hit with varying severity by such political restrictions. One widespread phenomenon was taking refuge in "inner emigration". But a great many artists also faced life-threatening persecution for political or "race" reasons and were compelled to emigrate. In their works, Otto Nagel and George Grosz reflected the way in which the conditions of life and art were being thrown into question by National Socialism. Artists had already begun to caricature National Socialism before 1933. One special case was Klaus Richter. As president of the Verein Berliner Künstler, officially he followed the National Socialist line. In his portraits of Göring and Hitler, however, he opposed the force of evil: the works are psychograms of a megalomaniac and a lunatic. As from 1938, Magnus Zeller developed a complex anti-fascist oeuvre in concealment.

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**Artist register**

Ackermann, Max	Fabian, Max	Jaeckel, Willy
Amberg, Charles	Felixmüller, Conrad	Johansson, Eric
Anto	Fenneker, Josef	Kabus, Georg Richard Arthur
Antoine, Otto	Feuss, Irmgard	Kainer, Ludwig
Archipenko, Alexander	Fingesten, Michel	Kamelhard, Gustav
Axster-Heudtlaß, Werner	Fratellini, François	Kamm
Baluschek, Hans	Friedlaender, Lieselotte	Karsch, Joachim
Barlach, Ernst (Heinrich)	Fritsch, Ernst (Paul Max)	Knab, Fred
Bató, József	Frost, Martin	Köster, Arthur
Beck, Ernst Louis	Gessner, Richard	Kolbe, Georg
Beckmann, Max	Gibson, Percy	Koller-Fischer, Ilse
Bernath, I	Gies, Ludwig	Kollwitz, Käthe
Biehahn, Erich	Gorn	Krain, Willibald
Birkle, Albert	Graetz, Gerd	Kraus, August
Bloom, Otto Karl Martin	Grosz, George	Krayn, Hugo
Blossey, Hans (Wilhelm Emil)	Großmann, Rudolf	Küchenmeister, Heinrich J.
Böttger-Steglitz, Bruno	Grünthal, Max: siehe Mac	Kuzelowsky, R.
Bogler, Theodor	Walten	Laserstein, Lotte
Breitsprecher, Wilhelm Karl	Grunwaldt, Paul	Lehmbruck, Wilhelm
Friedrich Brennert, Hans	Guzinski, Gertrud	Leonard, Robert L.
Brüning, (Bruno) Max	Hänsch, Johannes	Leptien, Rudolf
Brust, Karl Friedrich	Hartung, Gerd	Lesser, Rudi
Büttner, Erich	Hasler, Bernhard	Lex-Nerlinger, Alice
Burri, Werner	Hasse, Sella	Liessner-Blomberg, Elena
Byk, Suse	Haupt, Karl Hermann	Mac Walten
Conny (eigentlich Conrad Neubauer)	Heckendorf, Franz	Mäschle, Robert
Cremer, Fritz	Heldt, Werner	Mammen, Jeanne
Cürlis, Hans	Herrler	Marcus, Otto
Dely, Otto (auch Dely-Erdely)	Herzig, Willy	Marquardsen, Otto
Diemenstein	Heymann, León	Matejko(w), Theo
Dix, (Wilhelm Heinrich) Otto	Höch, Hannah	Meidner, Ludwig
Döblin, Alfred	Hoeniger, Paul Isaak	Melzer, Moritz
Dörr, Elisabeth	Hofer, Karl	Miehe, Walter
Dreßler, August Wilhelm	Holtz, Karl	Missmann, Max
Edzard, Dietz (Dietrich Hermann)	Hubbuch, Karl	Möller, Otto
Ehlers, Alfred Walter Georg	Hübner, Ulrich	Moholy-Nagy, László
Ehrlich, Georg	Huth, Willy Robert	Nagel, Otto
Encke, Eberhard	Ilgenfritz, Heinrich	Nerlinger, Oskar
	Isenstein, (Kurt) Harald	Neumann, Paul
	Jacobi, Annot	Oehme, Oscar

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Oppenheimer, Max	Stenbock-Fermor, Lenore
Oppler, Alexander	Maria Gräfin
Orlik, Emil	Stern, Ernst
Ortmann, Theo	Stiller, Carl
Ortmann, Wolfgang	Taut, Bruno
Paeschke, Paul	Szadurska-Ehinger, Kasia von
Pahl, Georg	Teschemacher, (Karl) Erich
Paul, Bruno	Tessenow, Heinrich
Pirchan, Emil	Toller, Ernst
Pohl, Max	Trier, Walter
Rágóczy, Joachim	Ury, Lesser
Richter, Klaus	Völker, Karl Adolf
Richter-Berlin, Heinrich	Wauer, (Hermann Ernst)
Ritz, Erich	William
Röhrich, Wolf	Wolff von Gudenberg,
Schad, Christian	Freiherr
Schaefer, Egmont	Wunderwald, Gustav
Scharff, Edwin	Zeller, Magnus
Schelhasse, Heinrich F. A.	Ziegler, Richard
Schläfke, Paul	Zille, Heinrich
Schlichter, Rudolf	
Schmidt(-Berg), Heinz	
Schmidt-Caroll, Erna	
Schneider, Ernst	
Schoff, Otto	
Schütz, Siegmund	
Schwerdtfeger, Wulf Konrad	
Seidenstücker, Friedrich	
Sintenis, Renée	
Slevogt, Max	
Sohn-Rethel, Alfred	
Sonns, Friedrich Louis (F. L. Sonns)	
Spiro, Eugen	
Stahl, Emil	
Steger, Milly	
Stein, O.	
Steiner, (Paul Erich) Hans	
Steinert, Willi	
Steinhardt, Jakob	

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