

HUNG & DRAWN

ART NEWS EDITED BY NICK HACKWORTH

Teutonic trends: BERLIN ART



Berlin's role as Europe's most exciting city for emerging art shows little sign of wavering.

The city is virtually bankrupt, unemployment is sky-rocketing and swathes of warehouses and factories lie dormant across post-industrial East Berlin, so naturally the city's population of 5,000 or so artists is thriving. And despite having been labelled as the hot new art centre for the last few years – typically a fatal development for any scene – Berlin's energy shows no signs of dissipating. A decade after the emergence of the Leipzig painters encouraged wealthy US collectors to fly over to Germany in their Lear Jets, Berlin remains one of the best, in fact one of the only cities in the world where you can find an abundance of great young painters. Much of the city's buzz is generated by foreign artists, attracted by the nightlife, numerous galleries and promise of cheap studio space. Demographic pressure has seen the art zone expand from Mitte – its centre for the last decade – north into Wedding and east into the old industrial sector of Treptow. The collectors have continued to come too. *Art Forum Berlin*, the city's art fair that took place in early October broke

all attendance and sales records. However about 40 per cent of the city's galleries survive on profits as low as 50,000 a year, which would just about buy you a nice painting over here. The city's current artistic success is partly due to Berlin's complex history. During its days as an island of the West, when the city was surrounded by East Germany, government-funded programmes drew in artists from all over the world, creating a vibrant cultural scene designed to make all those communists jealous. When the Wall came down, the grants stopped, but young artists from all over Germany and Europe flocked to the empty houses and properties of the eastern part of the city, to live largely for free. Even now, 15 years after reunification, Berlin is still adjusting to the change. New state galleries, like the massive Contemporary Art Museum, are due for completion by the end of the decade, but Berlin's unique combination of ingredients may soon change. So if you're reading this in an overpriced Hackney shoebox, you'd better get over there quick sharp.

Image from Feeling Berlin © Prestel Verlag.

Dreamweaver: MARTIN EDER



The unbearable visions of a leading Leipzig painter.

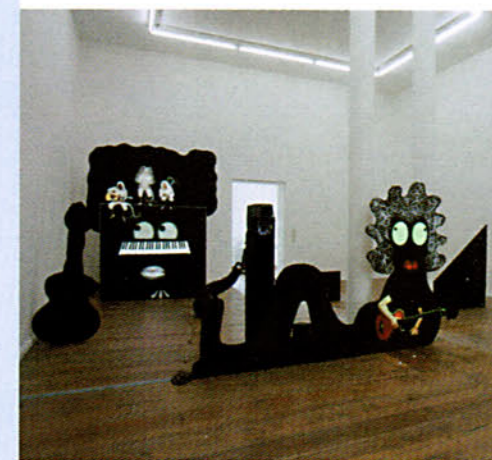
Since rising to fame as one of the Leipzig painters, Martin Eder's work has become an inspiration to many of his contemporaries and the younger generation of German artists now emerging on the scene. He was born in 1968, lives and works in Berlin's Wedding area, and shows with the influential gallery Eigen + Art. Here, he gives *Dazed* a bizarre insight into his strange and mysterious work. "The unbearable thing about pictures is that they are at a standstill and remain like that throughout the years, beyond our lifetimes. Mysteries are never solved, and we will never know the specifics. Just the fact of being a picture is fatalistic; the brutal thing, the cruel thing about its existence. There is no sequel telling the continuing story, unlike with movies or comics. You have to imagine it yourself. When I choose colours, I think about highway rest stops and the rubbish lying in the bushes nearby. There is almost nothing more terrible than seeing a single sports shoe lying on the road. Or a pink shirt with 'happy' written on it, left in the bushes, full of holes and covered by beer cans. Nature, alongside artificial colours – the dirt, the dust from thousands of cars, and weathering. These things inspire my colours. The space my works inhabit is the trash heap of impressions that we take in. Watercolours haunting a dark room, installations that remain incomprehensible. My world is this life on earth. The dreams I process are daydreams."

Sidewalk slogans:
BERLIN STREET ART

Not content with confining their art to a gallery space, Berlin's young creatives have started to use the streets as their canvasses. As an introduction to the work, publishers Prestel have produced two books celebrating the city's vibrant street art scene, featuring graffiti, flyposters and spray-on slogans.

BERLIN STREET ART AND FEELING BERLIN ARE OUT NOW. WWW.PRESTEL.COM

BERLIN'S BEST GALLERIES



Künstlerhaus Bethanien

A huge former deaconess's home in Kreuzberg that has been going strong since 1974, this venue houses and exhibits the work of a clutch of up-and-coming resident artists who typically end up being the next year's hot new things.
GMBH MARLANNENPLATZ 2, D-10997 BERLIN
TEL: +49 30 61 69 030, WWW.BETHANIEN.DE

Galerie Michael Schultz

In the genteel environs of Charlottenburg, Michael Schultz shows some of the best young painters and sculptors around.
MOMMSENSTRASSE 34, D-10629 BERLIN
TEL: +49 30 32 41 591, WWW.GALERIE-SCHULTZ.DE

Camerawork

Named after the legendary photography by pioneer Alfred Stieglitz, Camerawork shows classic works by greats like Man Ray and Leni Riefenstahl alongside new names including Robert Polidori and Mona Kuhn.
KANTSTRASSE 149, 10623 BERLIN
TEL: +49 30 31 00 773, WWW.CAMERAWORK.DE

Kioskshop Berlin

German artist HN Semjon's "Product Sculpture" is a weird and wonderful permanent installation which displays everyday items like milk cartons and newspapers preserved inside a layer of transparent beeswax. And as the objects can be purchased, the venue serves as both gallery and shop.
SCHRÖDERSTRASSE 1, 10115 BERLIN-MITTE
TEL: +49 30 78 41 291, WWW.KIOSKSHOPBERLIN.DE

Christian Nagel

One of Berlin's top new galleries, Nagel is known for showing artists who reflect the spirit of the time. Accordingly he exhibits young creatives with a strong abrasive vibe to their paintings and installations.
WEYDINGERSTRASSE 2/4, 10178 BERLIN
WWW.GALERIE-NAGEL.DE