



Arno Fischer – A Retrospective
5 November 2009 – 3 January 2010

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Exhibition Dates

Duration	5 November 2009 – 3 January 2010
Director	Robert Fleck
Managing Director	Bernhard Spies
Curator	Matthias Flügge
Project manager	Agnieszka Lulinska
Press officer	Maja Majer-Wallat
Catalogue / Press Copy	€ 25 / € 15
Opening hours	Tuesday and Wednesday 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. Thursday to Sunday 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. Closed on Mondays
Admission	
Standard / Reduced	4 € / 2,50 €
Family ticket	€ 7
Public transport	Subway lines 16, 63, 66 and bus lines 610 and 611 to Heussallee. There is a car and coach park on Joseph-Beuys-Allee behind the Art and Exhibition Hall
Press information	www.bundeskunsthalle.de Press file (German/English)
Guided group tours	Information and registration: Telephone +49 (0)228-9171-243 Fax +49 (0)228-9171-244 E-mail: paedagogik@kah-bonn.de
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KULTURPARTNER



Information on the Exhibition

Arno Fischer. Photographs A Retrospective

Arno Fischer is one of the most significant photographers of the second half of the 20th century. His pictures and his classes in Leipzig, Berlin and Dortmund have significantly influenced three generations of photographers in both East and West Germany.

Born in 1927 in Berlin's working class district of Wedding, Fischer served an apprenticeship as a pattern maker and studied sculpture before turning to full-time photography in 1950. A key experience for the young photographer was the 1955 *Family of Man* exhibition, in which Edward Steichen sought to demonstrate the humanistic potential of photography and to conjure the community of all men in a 'century of catastrophes'.

Arno Fischer's earliest body of works was produced in Berlin between 1954 and 1960, and with every passing year the significance of these photographs became clearer. Known under the title *Situation Berlin*, the broadly conceived series of pictures document the social, cultural and political situation in the 'Four Sector City'. The already announced publication of the photographs in book form was cancelled at the last moment by the GDR cultural bureaucracy when the construction of the Berlin Wall in 1961 led to the removal of the completed mock-up from the shelves from the Leipzig Book Fair. Fischer's early Berlin pictures paint a deeply poignant portrait of the city wounded by the Second World War and the hysteria of the Cold War. They form the first thematic focus of the exhibition.

In 1962 Arno Fischer began to work for the East German culture and fashion magazine *Sibylle* which employed many of the finest photographers and journalists who sought to escape the ubiquitous ideology-driven uniformity and to render the magazine competitive for the international market. Fischer's fashion photographs took the theoretical demands of the cultural concept established by the GDR leadership at their word. For him, fashion was not an expression of some overreaching design ambitions but of a way of life that provided an aesthetic corrective to the everyday life devoid of class barriers. His pictures are among the earliest examples of a style of fashion photography, still practised today, that eschews studio artificiality in favour of the idiom of street photography. The exhibition presents several of these works.

The next group of works provides an insight into Arno Fischer's multifaceted work as a portraitist. His early portraits focus primarily on the protagonists of film, music and the stage in post-war Berlin. Later, Fischer took every opportunity to portray international stars as well, among them Marlene Dietrich, Juliette Gréco and Yehudi Menuhin, to name but a few, but also a number of actresses, directors, dancers and artists whose names have since fallen into oblivion. Fischer invested the same sensitivity, empathy and keen interest into his portraits of unknowns. The portraits bear witness to the artist's background in figural sculpture: they are suffused with a sense of simplicity and calm, capturing the essence of the sitter in a fragile equilibrium between intimacy and distance.

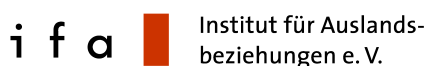
His career as a photographer allowed Arno Fischer to travel extensively, both in East Germany and further abroad. The fourth chapter of the exhibition is entitled *By the Wayside* and presents pictures taken in the GDR, the countries of Central and Eastern Europe as well as in India and Africa. The pictures testify to the photographer's keen power of observation. It is not the crucial moment of aesthetic tension that gives rise to their timelessness, but the story behind the image. 'If I take a picture of a man waiting for a bus at a bus stop, the picture must show more than a man waiting for a bus,' the photographer explained his artistic creed.

In 1978 and 1984 Arno Fischer travelled to New York. However, it was not until 1988 that 150 of his New York photographs could be published in the book *New York. Views* for which celebrated playwright Heiner Müller wrote the introduction. To this day, the pictures have lost none of their power to arrest the viewer. The intensity and acuity with which Arno Fischer captured people and situations in a city that

was at once alien and deeply fascinating remains as striking today as it was two decades ago. Vintage prints of many of these New York pictures are shown in the exhibition.

The final chapter of the exhibition is devoted to a series of Polaroids of Fischer's garden. In 1978 Arno Fischer and his wife, the photographer Sibylle Bergemann, acquired a modest farm house in Gransee north of Berlin. In the same year he began photographing still lifes and details of plants, stones, tools and furniture in his garden with an SX 70 Polaroid camera. These unique and unrepeatably pictures represent a concentration of his work on a very personal subject. Over the years, Arno Fischer spent more and more time in his retreat, transforming it into an enchanted refuge. The *Garden* series, which had to come to an end in 2007 when Polaroid film went out of production, comprises pictures from thirty years, arranged by the artist into a series of triptychs that show absolutely no respect for any form of chronological context. The three decades appear to converge into the single moment when the shutter button was released and to infuse that moment with timeless permanence.

An exhibition of the Institute for Foreign Cultural Relations (ifa), Stuttgart, in co-operation with the Art and Exhibition Hall of the Federal Republic of Germany, Bonn.



Information on the “Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen” (Institute for Foreign Cultural Relations, ifa)

The Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen (Institute for Foreign Cultural Relations, ifa) is the oldest intermediary organisation and leading German institution in the international cultural exchange operating worldwide to promote artistic exchange. Currently, the ifa is managing around 40 ongoing exhibitions of German art abroad. In this way, ifa promotes intercultural dialogue and art discourse, supports exhibitions and provides grants. The range of exhibitions, organised in co-operation with individual curators, is quite varied. Monographic and thematic exhibitions provide the public worldwide with information on all areas of 20th and 21st century German art: painting, photography, film, architecture and design. Its collection is composed of around 23,000 artworks. Intercultural dialogue is also promoted on location by artists and curators and through programmes accompanying the various exhibitions.

The exhibition on Arno Fischer has been created on the occasion of the 20th jubilee fall of the Berlin Wall and will be presented all over the world afterwards.

The ifa is funded by the German Foreign Office, the State of Baden-Württemberg and the City of Stuttgart.

Biography

Arno Fischer

1927

Born in Berlin

1941–1944

Worked as an apprentice pattern maker at the Borsig Works in Berlin

1944–1946

German Navy, held as a prisoner of war in England, released and returned to Berlin

1948–1953

Studies sculpture at the Berlin Weissensee School of Art and the Berlin State School of Fine Arts

1954–1956

Worked as a darkroom technician in a private radiography practice

1956–1971

Assistant lecturer, from 1957 senior assistant lecturer for photography under Professor Klaus Wittkugel at the Berlin Weissensee School of Art

1965–1966

Foundation of the photographers' group 'Direkt'

1971

Worked as a freelance photographer

From 1972

Travelled extensively for magazine and book publications, among his destinations were the Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Equatorial Guinea and the USA; in the 1970s and 80s he published a number of photo books devoted to cities

1972 – 1973

Teaching position at the Academy of Visual Arts, Leipzig

1975

Designed the commemorative steel stelae on the Marx-Engels Forum in East Berlin in co-operation with Peter Voigt

1981

Co-founder of the 'Photography Working Group' within the Association of Fine Artists of the German Democratic Republic

1983–1984

Teaching position at the Academy of Visual Arts, Leipzig

1985–1993

Appointed professor for photography at the Academy of Visual Arts, Leipzig

1985

Married the photographer Sibylle Bergemann

1986

National Prize of the German Democratic Republic, second class

1990–2000

Teaching position for photojournalism at the University of Applied Sciences and Arts, Dortmund

2000

Dr. Erich Salomon Prize of the German Photographic Association

2001–2006

Taught at the private photography school 'Fotografie am Schiffbauerdamm' in Berlin which he co-founded

Since 2006

Teaches at the Ostkreuz School for Photography and Design, Berlin

Arno Fischer lives and works in Gransee near Berlin.

Wall Texts

Situation Berlin

More than any other photographer, Arno Fischer succeeded in finding highly atmospheric and acutely observed images for the cultural and political situation of the ravaged metropolis of Berlin. With great sensitivity he captured the spirit of the era, oscillating as it did between depression and hope for a new beginning, reality and propaganda. He was particularly intrigued by the rift between the individual and society. From 1953, for a period of almost ten years, he took pictures in the eastern and western sectors of the divided city. He attended political demonstrations and rallies such as those accompanying the 'Birthday of the Republic' in the East as well as a meeting of expellees in the West. He found his subjects on fairgrounds, on the building sites along Stalin Boulevard and on Kurfürstendamm, where the West German economic miracle began to flaunt the joys of consumerism. Fischer tended to steer clear of carefully orchestrated pomp and circumstance, focusing instead on the fringe of events, where the careful staging peters out and masks are dropped.

New York

In 1978 and 1984 Arno Fischer travelled to New York. The second trip yielded a substantial body of work, which was eventually published in 1988 in the book 'New York. Ansichten ('New York. Views')'. The introduction by Heiner Müller ends with the words: 'Before we die, we should see New York, one of the great errors of the human race. MANY ARE THE WONDERS, AND NONE MORE WONDROUS THAN MAN.' Müller's apocalyptic perspective finds no echo in Fischer's photographs. Inevitably the pictures capture the enormous social contrasts that characterise the city. However Fischer had no preconceived agenda; his unhurried, succinct and keenly observed pictures bear witness to his sense of wonder and his fascination, but never let it take centre stage. Fischer screened the wealth of impressions through the filter of his selective gaze. The resulting pictures are street photography in the best sense of the term – detached and familiar in equal measure.

By the Wayside

'By the Wayside' was the title of an exhibition of pictures taken during Arno Fischer's travels. From the 1960s, his journeys took him to many different countries, chief among them were those of the East Bloc, but also Western Europe, India and Africa. Fischer not only published reports in magazines but also series of striking illustrated books: 'Poland's Capitals' (1974), 'Leningrad' (1981) and 'New Delhi, Old Delhi' (1983). Abroad, as at home, he stayed true to his principle of using photography as a creative medium of perception, largely eschewing the exotic and the picturesque in favour of subtle observation and narrative. Arno Fischer's has always been concerned with people, their everyday life and basic experiences, which renders the location of the shots almost irrelevant.

The Garden

In 1978 Arno Fischer and Sibylle Bergemann acquired a modest farm house some seventy kilometres north of Berlin, where they now spend most of their time. They planted a garden which has since grown into a prolifically exuberant artist's garden. Here, in his corner of paradise, Fischer has always worked with a Polaroid SX 70 camera. The pictures focus on the unspectacular: details of plants and roots, stones, tools and furniture. The eternal cycle of growth and decay became the leitmotif of the countless undated pictures taken over a period of some thirty years. Not until 2007, when Polaroid film finally went out of production and the series had to come to an end, did Arno Fischer exhibit a selection of these highly private pictures. Ignoring their chronological context, Fischer arranged them into triptychs that have since been widely exhibited and published in a book.

Arno Fischer about Photography

‘Photography is a technical means that allows creative people to express themselves.’

‘You don’t have to compose; the world is the composition.’

‘If I take a picture of a man waiting for a bus at a bus stop, the picture must show more than a man waiting for a bus.’

Catalogue

Arno Fischer
Photography
in German and English

Authors of the catalogue: Matthias Flügge, Thomas Martin

Museums edition: Softcover, 228 pages, 184 illustrations, therefrom 66 colour illustrations and 117 duplex illustrations, 24,5 x 28 cm
Price of the museum edition: 25,00 €

Trade edition: Hardcover with cover jacket
Publisher: Hatje Cantz Publisher, Ostfildern
ISBN: 978-3-7757-2548-4
Price of the trade edition: ca. 39,80 €

Preview 2009/2010
subject to alteration

James Cook and the Exploration of the Pacific
2010

till 28 February

The British explorer, navigator and cartographer James Cook (1728–1779) achieved world fame for leading three expeditions into the vast and uncharted waters of the Pacific Ocean. He was the first to survey and map New Zealand, Australia and the South Pacific islands, completing our modern image of the world and finally defeating the idea of a mythical southern continent.

The exhibition includes around 500 original exhibits presenting the voyages of James Cook and the international team of scientists and artists accompanying him. Their work during the European enlightenment period contributed new insights to a host of disciplines from navigation and astronomy to natural history, philosophy and art. It even led to the birth of a new science: the field of ethnology and ethnography.

As early as the end of the 18th century many of the ethnographic and natural history objects from diverse Pacific cultures, which were collected during the three Cook voyages, were spread into various collections all over Europe. Now, for the first time, they are being reunited for this exhibition in Bonn. Many of the objects are of incalculable value to art historians since such exquisite feather ornaments, wooden sculptures and other Oceanic artefacts can no longer be found in the Pacific region.

The ethnographic exhibits are supplemented by magnificent paintings and drawings by the artists accompanying Cook on his voyages. Their works offer a fascinating insight into the explorers' euphoric yet curious view of the exotic South Sea landscapes. Ship models, original sea charts and navigation instruments also provide a vivid introduction to the world of James Cook's voyages. The exhibition is a cooperation between the Art and Exhibition Hall of the Federal Republic of Germany in Bonn, the Kunsthistorisches Museum – Museum of Ethnology, Vienna (March to July 2010), and the Historisches Museum, Bern (August 2010 to January 2011).

Markus Lüpertz

Highways and Byways

A Retrospective. Paintings and Sculptures from 1963 until 2009
2010

till 17 January

Born in 1941, Markus Lüpertz is one of the most prominent and influential contemporary artists in Germany. The Art and Exhibition Hall of the Federal Republic of Germany is delighted to be able to build on its successful series of large-scale monographic exhibitions of German painters – among them Gerhard Richter, Sigmar Polke and Georg Baselitz – and to present the most comprehensive retrospective to date of the work of Markus Lüpertz. Covering some 2000 square metres, the exhibition showcases a representative selection of approximately 150 paintings and sculptures by the artist who has always cast himself in the role of the 'enfant terrible' and the 'painter prince'. Lüpertz's oeuvre spans a period of almost fifty years, evolving from Pop Art-related 'anti painting' of the 1960s to the re-examination of classical painting that defines the work of the last couple of decades. The exhibition sets out to explore Lüpertz's multifaceted oeuvre, his driving passion and intellectual rigour. It presents an artist who never felt bound to any one style, never believed in the merely representational purpose of art, an artist ceaselessly searching for what he calls the 'potential picture'.

Celebrating Twenty Years

since the Laying of the Foundation Stone of the Art and Exhibition Hall

till 3 January 2010

The foundation stone of the Art and Exhibition Hall was laid on the 17th of October 1989 – a time of great political turmoil in Central and Eastern Europe and only a few days before the fall of the Berlin Wall. A selection of previously unpublished photographs and original documents sheds light on this momentous period. The exhibition reconstructs the experimental project that gave rise to the current Art and Exhibition Hall – from the artists' initiatives of the 1970s to the architectural competition with 26 international contestants, and from the designs of the finalists to the celebrated building by Gustav Pechl.

Byzantium

Splendour and Everyday Life

26 February – 20 June 2010

A wide-ranging selection of magnificent and historically important works of art brings to life the fascinating history and art of the Byzantine empire. The exhibition provides a comprehensive survey of the 'Byzantine millenium' which began with the foundation of Constantinople by Constantine the Great in 324 AD and ended with the conquest of the city by the Ottomans in 1453. The exhibition focuses on the period of Byzantium's greatest glory from the time of Justinian I (527–565) to the sacking of Constantinople at the hands of Christian crusaders in 1204.

More than 400 loans from European and American museums – precious ivories, spectacular icons and manuscripts, architectural fragments, sculptures and everyday objects – are presented in their original contexts. Digitally reconstructed sites (e.g. Constantinople or Ephesus) address key questions about the Byzantine state, its art, culture, society and economy and offer visitors an unprecedented insight into everyday life in the Byzantine empire.

An exhibition of the Art and Exhibition Hall of the Federal Republic of Germany, Bonn, in cooperation with the Roman-Germanic Central Museum, Mainz

Liam Gillick

1 April – 8 August 2010 (new date)

The English artist Liam Gillick is internationally acclaimed as an artist whose practice investigates the continuation of radical Modernism into the present. He has been appointed to represent Germany at the 53rd Biennale in 2009 – the first non-German artist to be honoured with a one-man exhibition in the German Pavilion. The Art and Exhibition Hall is delighted to be able to bring the artist to the attention of a wider audience in Germany after the conclusion of the Biennale. Focusing on the interaction between the critical potential of Gillick's art and the aesthetic qualities of his works, the exhibition traces the development of the artist's practice with important groups of works that shed light on the themes he addresses.

Afghanistan – Rediscovered Treasures

The collection of the National Museum Kabul

11 June – 3 October 2010

In the late 1970s archaeologists working in Afghanistan discovered the remnants of an ancient cemetery dating from around the time of Christ's birth. Some of the graves yielded large numbers of spectacular gold ornaments of incalculable artistic and cultural value. The legendary finds bear witness to the ancient kingdom of Bactria, situated at the crossroads of a wide range of Eastern and Western cultures. Conceived by the Musée Guimet in Paris, the exhibition presents some 220 works that have miraculously survived the decades of war and destruction that have ravaged Afghanistan.

Thomas Schütte

15 July – 7 November 2010

Internationally acclaimed as one of the most significant German artists, Thomas Schütte participated in several of the *documenta* exhibitions and won the prestigious Golden Lion at the 51st Venice Biennale in 2005. Schütte's sculptures address a wide range of subjects and are characterised by a multifaceted formal vocabulary. His work encompasses voluminous sculptures that reflect the life of ordinary people in everyday situations, architectural models, memorial sites, drawings and watercolours. The exhibition was planned in cooperation with the Museo Reina Sofia, Madrid, and continues the Art and Exhibition Hall's series of monographic presentations of leading German artists such as Gerhard Richter, Sigmar Polke, Georg Baselitz and Markus Lüpertz.

Vibración - Modern Art from Latin America

17 September 2010 – 23 January 2011

The exhibition presents an overview of 20th-century abstract art in Latin America, an unknown continent as far as classical Modernism is concerned. The display draws on the holdings of the Cisneros Fontanals Art Foundation, which caused a sensation when the collection first opened in Miami in 2005 and which now makes its first appearance in Europe. The exhibition focuses on three European émigré artists whose work had a decisive impact on abstract art in Latin America: the German photographer Grete Stern, the German sculptor Gertrude Goldschmidt (Gego) and the Swiss Mira Schendel.

Napoleon and Europe

Dream and Trauma

17 December 2010 – 25 April 2011

During the near-twenty-year span of his reign, Napoleon Bonaparte (1769-1821), more than any other historical figure, revolutionised the political, social and cultural landscape of Europe and wrought changes that can be felt to this day – both positively and negatively. The Art and Exhibition Hall has been able to secure outstanding loans from all over Europe in order to draw a comprehensive picture of Napoleon and his time. Painting and sculpture reached new heights of excellence in the Napoleonic era – both in the propaganda paintings by David, Gérard and Ingres and in the work of those who opposed the French emperor, among them Goya and the German romanticists. Under Napoleon's aegis the Louvre was opened as the first 'modern' museum of fine arts. The exhibition will also shed light on the large-scale plundering of art collections in the countries occupied by Napoleon.

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