WHO WE ARE
Reflecting a Country of Immigration
28 May to 8 October 2023

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Exhibition Information

Duration   28 May to 8 October 2023
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Curators    Johanna Adam
Lynhan Balatbat-Helbock
Dan Thy Nguyen
Curatorial assistance  David Muñoz
Elizabeth Namwanje
(volunteers of the ICP – Intercultural Change
Program)
Team DOMiD   Timo Glatz (public relations)
Beate Rieple (collection)
Katrin Schaumburg (scientific collaboration)
Mara Teutsch (scientific collaboration, collection)
Concept    Johanna Adam, Mark Terkessidis
Scientific editing   Massimo Perinelli
Consulting   Ibrahim Arslan
Isabel Enzenbach
Manuel Gogos
Kamik Gregorian
Kutlu Yurtseven
Combined ticket for all 13 €/reduced 6,50 €
exhibitions  All visitors up to and including 18 years of age have free admission
Cooperation partner  DOMiD (Documentation Center and Museum of Migration in Germany)

With support from De-Zentralbild

Media partner arte

Cultural partner WDR
General Information

Director
Eva Kraus

Managing Director
Oliver Hölken

Opening Hours
Tuesday 10 a.m. to 7 p.m.
Wednesday 10 a.m. to 9 p.m.
Thursday to Sunday 10 a.m. to 7 p.m.
Holidays 10 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Public Transport
Underground lines 16, 63, 66 and bus lines 610, 611 and 630 to Heussallee / Museumsmeile
Deutsche Bahn / UN-Campus:
Lines RE 5 (Rhein-Express), RB 26 (MittelrheinBahn), RB 30 (Rhein-Ahr-Bahn) and RB 48 (Rhein-Wupper-Bahn)

Parking
There is a car and coach park on Emil-Nolde-Straße behind the Bundeskunsthalle.
Navigation: Emil-Nolde-Straße 11, 53113 Bonn

Press Information (German / English)
www.bundeskunsthalle.de
For press files follow ‘press’.

General Information
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(German / English)
www.bundeskunsthalle.de

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What is it that gives rise to the sense of ‘we’ in a society? Is it only possible to achieve it by setting oneself apart from ‘the others’? Is it possible to arrive at a shared and comprehensive sense of ‘we’ in our society?

The exhibition Who We Are puts critical questions to Germany as a country of immigration, a term that politicians have long resisted and one that should now seem self-evident. Migration is nothing out of the ordinary, on the contrary, it is the normal state of affairs. Experiences of racism and discrimination, however, are still the order of the day for people who are denied membership of the ‘we’. Their paths through life are marked by resistance, but also by success.

The exhibition looks at the structures of our society: Who is allowed to join the conversation and have a say? Who is visible in politics and the media? Who We Are takes a look at the struggle for equal coexistence – the achievements along the way as well as the problems and hurdles that still litter the path. The exhibition shows works by contemporary artists and combines them with personal testimonies and documents relating to migration and history.

An exhibition of the Bundeskunsthalle and DOMiD (Documentation Center and Museum of Migration in Germany).
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<td>Cana Bilir-Meier</td>
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<td>Vlassis Caniaris</td>
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<td>Manaf Halbouni</td>
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<td>Mona Hatoum</td>
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<td>Nadira Husain</td>
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<td>Daniel Josefsohn</td>
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<td>Cem Kaya</td>
<td>Carrie Mae Weems</td>
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<td>William Kentridge</td>
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Exhibition texts

Who we are
Questions on a Country of Immigration

How does a sense of “we” develop in our societies? Do we have to separate ourselves from “the others” in order to achieve such a thing? How can we create a diverse “we” that includes all people?

Germany is an immigration country. Politicians have long resisted that label. Today, it should be a matter of course. Today, migration is the normal state of affairs, all over the world and at any given time.

The people who have migrated to Germany have always faced difficulties in trying to become members of society. For many people, racism and exclusion are parts of everyday life – no matter whether they were born here or not. Their paths are marked by resistance and painful experiences, as well as by solidarity and success.

In this exhibition, we take a look at the structures of our society. Who is allowed to have a say and participate? How accessible are education, work, housing, and culture? Who is covered in the political arena and in the media? And, who is allowed to speak?

The WHO WE ARE exhibition asks critical questions. How far are we on the path to a together ness in which everyone has the same rights?

An exhibition by the Bundeskunsthalle and DOMiD (Documentation Center and Museum of Migration in Germany) in cooperation with De-Zentralbild

Migration – everywhere and always

Migration is not a state of emergency. People have always traveled across the world – both short and long distances. People migrate to work elsewhere. Others are forced to flee their home countries or are displaced. Others follow love or seek adventure.

Many of them decide to stay in the new places that they call home. Time and time again, there are new paths, starting points, and destinations to be found. That will also be the case in the future.

Through migration, people meet and exchange ideas. We have to ask ourselves: How do we want to live together? One thing is certain: Migration moves our society.
Who or what is German?
For a long time, Germany was not thought of as an immigration country. Today, that idea seems strange. After all, immigration has existed for centuries. In the past, it was always organized and controlled – in part, by the government.

Migration influences all areas of our society. Today, more than a quarter of the people who live in Germany have a history of migration. It might be their own history, or that of at least one parent. Many people are still not considered to be members of society.

Labour for guests?
Work is important. You have to earn money to be able to afford housing, food, and clothing. A job also guarantees participation in social life, which is associated with prestige and social status. Work is one of the most important reasons why many people migrate.

Germany has long had a shortage of labor. That is still the main reason why the government promotes immigration. Applicants are judged according to whether they are “useful”. Immigrants are often forced to work in low-paid jobs, for example in factories or in care-giving positions. However, people do not simply surrender to their fates. They fight for better conditions – and for basic rights.

Learning within a class society?
Education is a prerequisite for many things, for example, for a job or a career. Our knowledge helps to determine how highly respected we are. “Educational capital” is also something that we often speak about. It refers to the opportunities that are created through school, training, and study programs. People who have a large amount of educational capital have better chances of having financially secure lives.

Schools are important places for social inclusion. However, our school system separates children from one another. Certain groups are disadvantaged in the process. “Middle-class” education is the only one that counts. It has become an instrument of exclusion. It is often considered bad to speak one’s mother tongue in the schoolyard if it is not German. The experience and knowledge that children of migrants have are not often recognized.

Where does living take place?
Housing is a human right. Private space serves as an important place of retreat. For many people, having their own apartment is a matter of course. That right is often systematically denied to migrants. One’s last name is reason enough for rejection when looking for an apartment. Yet, Basic Law states that skin color, origin, and religion must not play roles.

However, one’s living space does not only consist of an apartment. Public space is also important. That includes streets and squares as well as restaurants, cafés, clubs, museums, theaters, concert stages, and much more. We should ask ourselves: Who has access to those places? Who is excluded?
Who is the people?
Who is allowed to participate in elections? Who writes reports and speaks in the media? Who is portrayed in the media and in what way? Whose interests are represented? Whose rights are protected and defended?

West German policy in the 1980s was increasingly directed against immigration. In 1990, a restrictive Aliens Act was passed, and in 1993 the right to asylum was massively limited. On the other hand, people fought for foreign residents to be allowed to vote in local elections.

At the end of the 1980s, GDR citizens shouted: “We are the people!” That’s how they showed their resistance to the government. Then, the Wall came down, and more and more people shouted: “We are ONE people!” That slogan was directed against everyone who was not considered German (enough). Right-wing voices gained influence. That was reinforced by a few parties as well as the media. It was a seed that produced extreme excesses of racist violence.

Who is a member of society in Germany? That was a central question at the time. It was not until the turn of the millennium that politicians also came to the realization that Germany was an immigration country.

Racist violence
Arbitrary, yet targeted murders. Violence against innocent and defenseless people. Families fearing for their lives. Fear that their own houses will be the next to burn.

Hoyerswerda, Rostock-Lichtenhagen, Mölln, Solingen, and Lübeck – those places were home to a wave of right-wing violence that left its mark on the newly reunited Germany at the beginning of the 1990s. Many people were killed, seriously injured, or traumatized. There were acts of racist violence before that time, and there have also been some since then. That, however, was a time of days-long pogroms and nightly arson attacks. It was a time of every day fear for many people. They knew that even the police, the authorities, and politicians offered little protection when the victims were considered “foreigners”.

In recent years, too, right-wing extremists have carried out numerous attacks and murders. It is well known that right-wing extremist networks and organized terror exist. The NSU (National Socialist Underground) has recently proven that fact. Nevertheless, there is frequent talk of “individual cases” and “lone criminals”. Racist violence continues.
Fighting for remembrance and understanding
For decades, victims of racist violence have been fighting to have their crimes solved. There are still unanswered questions: Why were so many victims made suspects? Why were investigations into the radical right-wing faction often delayed or not carried out at all?

The victims and their families demand the right to shape how those acts of violence are remembered themselves. For too long, the people affected have not been heard. Commemorations have been organized without them. Suspicion and the lack of support have felt like additional attacks.

Those who are affected, along with solidarity initiatives, are fighting together for education and equal rights. They organize demonstrations and found associations. They denounce racism at tribunals. They visit schools and inform people about what happened. As a result of their commitment, the affected families are better listened to today. Their experiences with racism count. They are also able to show us how to build a life in Germany and how to defend it against all odds.

Society of the many
Our society has changed as a result of migration. It has become more diverse, more dynamic, and also more characterized by solidarity. A society of the many is based on such solidarity. Racism is directed against such a community. Its purpose is to devalue people. That often happens in hidden ways – via structures and habits.

Only recently has the public begun to talk about issues such as racism and colonialism. Groups that previously had virtually no lobbying power at all have now found their own voices. It is also about having a say in history and the culture of remembrance. The history of migration reminds us of our fundamental right to have rights.

Today, we think more critically about language and images than we did before. Institutions have become more diverse, which we can see when we look at the media or at our politicians. Inclusion and equal opportunity have become more and more central: They are the foundations of a democratic society. We have to agree on how we want to live together, because this society – this “we” – can only be created by talking with each other and creating things together.
A publication accompanies the exhibition.

Published by the Art and Exhibition Hall of the Federal Republic of Germany. In cooperation with DOMiD (Documentation Centre and Museum on Migration in Germany).

**Concept**
Johanna Adam

**Authors and editing**
Johanna Adam, Massimo Perinelli, Katrin Schaumburg, Mara Teutsch

**Size and format**
Softcover, 22 x 28 cm
80 pages, approx. 190 illustrations
In German language
Exhibition guide: 9 €
Almost 50 years ago, 40 men and one woman met in the Steigenberger Hotel in Bonn to initiate the planning of an art gallery for the Federal Republic. At the same time, a promise was made in (West) Germany with the New Cultural Policy: Art and culture for all!

The two-day festival THE [new] WE gathers artists, activists and theorists at the Bundeskunsthalle to renegotiate this promise. All over Germany, cultural institutions are trying to involve the super-diverse urban society in their programmes, audiences and staff. Together with experts and contemporary witnesses, we will take stock of what we can learn from the past decades and what we need to correct. Together with the visitors, actors from art and culture will draw up plans for a new democratisation of society. Two days of panels and performative assemblies on belonging(s) and communities in new institutions, on diversity and diversity critique, on the history of democratic cultural politics and on spaces and formats of coming together.

The festival is curated by Michael Annoff and Nuray Demir, in collaboration with David Muñoz Aristizábal and Elizabeth Namwanje.

Michael Annoff works curatorially, anthropologically and mediating. Nuray Demir works curatorially, artistically and choreographically. Together they curate performative formats in the performing and visual arts, as well as in history, design and natural history museums. Since 2018, they have been documenting the intangible heritage of post-migrant society in the long-term project “Kein schöner Archiv”. Individual works from the archive have been on view at the Haus der Kulturen der Welt, HAU Hebbel am Ufer and the Museum für Kunst & Gewerbe Hamburg, among others. They also publish essays and teach at various universities, for example on diversity and diversity criticism in the arts.

www.keinschoenerarchiv.xyz

David Muñoz Aristizábal and Elizabeth Namwanje are volunteers of the programme Intercultural Change, which was initiated by the director of the Bundeskunsthalle in 2019. The programme aims at the intercultural opening and diversification of the cultural sector in personnel, audience and programme. It is based on the concept of a traineeship, as a training and further education programme for academics from various museum-relevant courses of study. The aim is to involve migrant people in the structures of the Bundeskunsthalle.

Text: Michael Annoff, Nuray Demir
Educational Programme

GUIDED TOURS

Audio guide
An audio tour with interviews by the curators
German, German Sign Language, English, audio description
Free of charge via the Bundeskunsthalle app
www.bundeskunsthalle.de/app
Artistic concept and production: tonwelt

Future workshop in the exhibition
Designing a city model
Future City
Every Saturday and Sunday, 11-17 h
Inspired by the work Future City by the artist Mohammed Kteish, we will create a model of a future city in which peace, diversity and sustainability are lived.
Between shots and falling bombs, Mohammed Kteish dreamed of a better future for his city of Aleppo. He built a city model out of paper, which not only served as a beacon of hope and for preserving very personal city stories, it also gave courage to overcome fears and conflicts with creativity.
Included in the entrance fee

Curator tours
With Johanna Adam, Lynhan Balatbat-Helbock and Dan Thy Nguyen, curators of the exhibition, 60 minutes each.
Friday, 26 May, 2 pm, with Lynhan Balatbat-Helbock (English)
Friday, 26 May, 2 p.m., with Johanna Adam (German)
Wednesday, 7 June, 3 p.m., with Lynhan Balatbat-Helbock (English)
Wednesday, 7 June, 3 p.m., with Johanna Adam (German)
Friday, 9 June, 5 pm, with Lynhan Balatbat-Helbock (English)
Friday, 16 June, 5 pm, with Dan Thy Nguyen (German)
Saturday, 17 June, 3 pm, with Dan Thy Nguyen (German)
Sunday, 18 June, 3 pm, with Dan Thy Nguyen (German)
Sunday, 25 June, 3 pm, with Johanna Adam (German)
Friday, 30 June, 5 pm, with Johanna Adam (German)
Saturday, 1 July, 3 pm, with Dan Thy Nguyen (German)
Wednesday, 13 September, 3 p.m., with Lynhan Balatbat-Helbock (English)
Wednesday, 13 September, 3 p.m., with Johanna Adam (German)
Friday, 22 September, 5 pm, with Johanna Adam (German)
Sunday, 24 September, 3 pm, with Johanna Adam (German)
3 €/reduced 1,50 €, plus admission to the exhibition
Tickets are available at the box office or via bundeskunsthalle.de/tickets.

Information in the exhibition
Sundays and public holidays, 12-17 pm.
During opening hours, there is a contact person at the exhibition. You are cordially invited to ask questions and to exchange ideas with us about what is shown and the topics in the exhibition.
Detailed descriptive tour for visually impaired and blind people
Who we are Questions for a country of immigration
With Uschi Baetz
Sunday, June 25, July 30, September 17, 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m. each day
Who belongs to the "we" in Germany? How do the mechanisms that create exclusion and relegation work? Has Germany become an immigration country?
The exhibition poses critical questions about everyday life in a country characterized by migration, racism and inequality. Only recently have patterns of discrimination been recognized and discussed as a structural problem: The reality of life and the ideals of our society seem to drift apart.
Where does contemporary art production stand in this context? Works of contemporary artists are linked with contemporary testimonies from the context of migration and history and stimulate an intensive exchange!
Even though the presentation cannot offer any objects that can be touched, the art mediator Uschi Baetz would like to open up the essential works to you during the tour by means of detailed descriptions and selected tactile objects and integrate them into the cultural-historical context.
We look forward to an intensive exchange with you!
3 € guide fee, plus admission to the exhibition
Written registration required: buchung@bundeskunsthalle.de

Group tours
60 minutes, 70 €
90 minutes, 90 €
plus admission ticket 13 €/reduced 6,50 € per person
Written registration required: buchung@bundeskunsthalle.de

Offer for integration and language courses
Culture_language_art_getting_acquainted
During a joint tour, the language learners discover our exhibition. Afterwards, they can all engage in artistic-practical activities.
The offers can be adapted to the respective language level.
Dates freely bookable
120 minutes, 2 € per person (integration courses)
Written registration required: buchung@bundeskunsthalle.de

Exhibition tour for intercultural groups
Meet & Speak
Dialogical guided tour for people with and without a refugee and migration background
Intercultural groups can discover the exhibition together, get into conversation with each other and ask questions.
Come by, bring friends and your languages!
Bookable free of charge for intercultural groups
Max. 15 persons/group
Written registration required: buchung@bundeskunsthalle.de
EVENTS

Culture Slam
Interkultureller Poetry Slam
Sunday, October 1, 5:30 pm
Who are we? Who are you in the we?
During a two-day writing workshop in our salon in Bad Godesberg, the participants will deal with the questions and topics of the exhibition and present their self-written texts in a poetry slam.
In cooperation with Netzwerk politik|atelier e.V.
Written registration required: buchung@bundeskunsthalle.de

Conversation in the lounge
Give us the good life! "Guest workers" between work, love and poetry
Friday, June 23, 7 p.m.
"Gastarbeiterinnen" (guest workers) in the Federal Republic of Germany: they worked, went on strike, lived, loved. They set out in search of the good life - sometimes with family, sometimes alone. But what exactly was everyday life like for these courageous women? How did they live? What were their working conditions like? What did they do in their free time? Through stories, photos, documents and music, we want to talk to the migrant women of that time about work and resistance, about leisure, love and poetry. Visitors are invited to bring their own mementos.
A moderated conversation with contemporary witnesses as part of the exhibition Who We Are. Questions to a country of immigration. Idea & moderation: Aurora Rodonò
In cooperation with DOMiD (Documentation Center and Museum on Migration in Germany).
Admission: 5 €/3 € (without visiting the exhibition).
Tickets are available at the box office or via bundeskunsthalle.de/tickets.

Panel discussion in the Forum
"Who we are" - Migration in the field of tensions of German museums
Friday, September 15, 7 p.m.
More than 21 million people in Germany have an international history. Nevertheless, for a long time their diverse stories were not heard in the German museum landscape and were relegated to niche programs and special exhibitions. In the meantime, a change in awareness has been ushered in: diversity and cultural participation are on everyone's lips. But is this a sustainable development? In this expert discussion, experts from the museum landscape and migration research will discuss how migration can be transferred to museums and how true participation in the migration community can be achieved.
Moderation: Prasanna Oommen (inquired)
In cooperation with DOMiD (Documentation Center and Museum on Migration in Germany) and ICOM.
13 €/reduced 6,50 € (incl. admission to the exhibition before 7 pm).
Tickets are available at the box office or via bundeskunsthalle.de/tickets.
Current and Upcoming Exhibitions

1920s!
In the Kaleidoscope of Modernism
until 30 July 2023

The 1920s are generally considered a decade of upheaval and experimentation in the modern western world. Even now, the feverish radicality of this period continues to lend it a remarkable timeliness and pertinence to our present. Like a kaleidoscope, the exhibition brings together the myriad different images and voices to create new constellations, sharpening the viewer’s gaze to focus not only on the singularity of the individual events but also on potential analogies to the present day. Riven by deep inner conflict, the decade of the 1920s was also driven by a firm faith in progress and an unprecedented surge of innovation in all areas of life. Far-reaching artist networks, social upheavals, political divisions, mass communication and mobility contributed to the formation of urban, multicultural avant-gardes. It was a period of contrasts and conflicts.

The exhibition is organised around three thematic complexes: the phenomenon of the metropolis as a biotope and caricature of the modern world; the debate about the New Man and the New Woman; and the construction and perception of the new ways of life. The focus is on the defining phenomena of this era: globalisation, speed, the love of experimentation, the interrogation of gender roles, urban lifestyles, mechanisation.

In the kaleidoscope of modernism, we recognise differences and astonishing parallels between today and the events of the 1920s.

JOSEPHINE BAKER
Freedom – Equality - Humanity
until 24 September 2023

Josephine Baker is an icon. She was an international star, a champion of liberty and the civil rights movement and the struggle against racism. Singing and dancing, she captivated audiences around the world and used the stage to promote the message that peace, liberty and equality are a universal human right, regardless of skin colour, religion, nationality, gender or sexual orientation.

Born in St. Louis, Missouri, in 1906, Josephine Baker experienced segregation and racial violence as a child. In 1925, her show talent took her from the USA to liberal Paris, then the creative epicentre of Europe. There she became a star, the highest-paid revue dancer and the first female superstar with African American roots.

Our exhibition sheds light on the foundations of Josephine Baker’s success and how she transformed the ostensible stigma of her skin colour into a strength by using her fame to liberate others: As a member of the Resistance during World War II, as a mother of twelve adopted children of diverse backgrounds, as an ambassador for humanity and a committed champion of the American civil rights movement.

For her lifetime achievements, Josephine Baker became the sixth and the first non-white woman to be inducted into the French Hall of Fame, the Panthéon in Paris, on 30 November 2021, and has been officially considered a national heroine ever since.
INTERACTIONS
until 15 October 2023

The Bundeskunsthalle organises an interactive summer programme that unfold around the museum building and complement the works of art already in place in the outdoor space, among them the Circular Appearing Rooms water pavilion by Jeppe Hein, which graces the square every summer, the Bonn Slide by Carsten Höller, which spirals down the façade, and The Curve by Bettina Pousttchi, which is also dedicated to movement. Interactions will take over and enliven various sites in the public space of the Bundeskunsthalle. From the roof garden to the foyer, the inner courtyard to the plaza, selected works of art and performances are presented to invite visitors to engage in interactive play and to think about visual language, dance, performance, music or sound as universal forms of communication that transcend borders. Interactions, interventions, perhaps even irritations are designed to give visitors the opportunity to participate in art in a playful way. They are conceived as an open invitation that can be experienced both individually and collectively – fostering a sense of togetherness in which roles are questioned and openness, tolerance and sensitivity are promoted.

EVERYTHING AT ONCE
Postmodernity, 1967–1992
29 September 2023 – 28 January 2024
Media conference: Thursday, 28 September 2023, 11 a.m.

The year 1967 marked the beginning of our present: Modernism, which had presumed that everything could be sorted out through equal housing, furniture and rights for all, was abandoned, and from its ruins a bizarre, eccentric world was born. Architects declared the amusement park the new ideal city; designers shook off the yoke of good taste, and the conflict between the two dominant political systems gave way to the struggle for self-realisation. New media synchronised the globe, and images became the arena in which contests for style and recognition were waged. Showcasing spectacular examples of design, architecture, cinema, pop, philosophy, art and literature, the exhibition chronicles the dawn of the information society, the unleashing of the financial markets, the great age of subcultures, disco, punk and techno-pop, shoulder pads and Memphis furniture. It also chronicles the sudden surge in the construction of museums, the new temples of art and culture, to which we owe the largest exhibit, the Bundeskunsthalle itself. When the Bundeskunsthalle opened in 1992, the Cold War was over, and Francis Fukuyama published his famous book, in which he proclaimed 'the end of history' as such. Thirty years later, it is clear that history did not come to an end, and Postmodernity is once again a matter of considerable debate. Holding up a mirror to the present, the exhibition homes in on our current conflicts – from right-wing populism to identity politics. It allows us to ask, from the distance of a generation, what time we are actually living in. Is Postmodernity really over – or are we in the middle of it?

Subject to change
Status: May 2023