



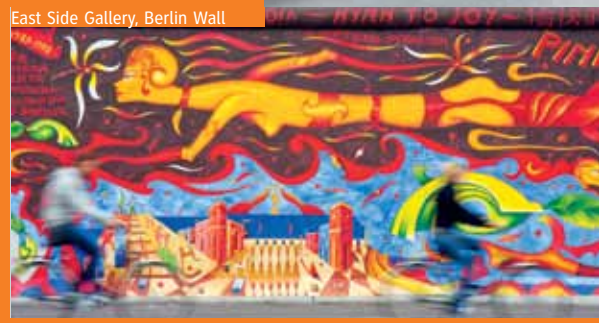
Art Berlin Contemporary 2010 Opening



Paste-up street art



Capitain Petzel



East Side Gallery, Berlin Wall



Stencil by X0000X



Gallery Klosterfelde



Alexandre da Cunha, "Monolith," Sommer & Kohl Gallery



Neue Nationalgalerie

BERLIN'S

EVOLVING ART SCENE

Berlin's contemporary art world is a perpetual work in progress. Hip galleries appear and then move on to bigger or trendier spaces almost before the paint is dry. The hottest players rotate with the seasons. But a few things always stay the same, like edgy ideas and constantly expanding frontiers in a city with a seemingly endless supply of spaces to reclaim. The art world here is unpretentious and easy to access—you might just meet Berlin's next art star along the way.

By Kimberly Bradley



THE ART SCENE: THEN AND NOW

Gallery Weeekend 2011 Opening

The art scene has exploded in the past decade, evolving from a local community of dealers and artists to an international urban art center. Emerging artists of the 1990s, like Olafur Eliasson and Tacita Dean, remain in Berlin, despite having become international stars. And while a true “Berlin School” doesn’t exist, the admittedly fragmented scene shows a strong tendency toward conceptual and performance art. Artist collectives also tap into the city’s collaborative spirit.

EXPANDING FROM THE CENTER

In recent years the scene has evolved in ways no one could have predicted. What used to be two centralized art hubs—the edgy, experimental Mitte in the east and established, blue-chip Charlottenburg in the west—have multiplied throughout the city. Galleries have opened, often in clusters, far beyond Mitte’s original main drag of Auguststrasse, to Heidestrasse behind the Hamburger Bahnhof museum, Lindenstrasse and the area around the Jewish Museum on Mitte’s southern edge, and most recently Potsdamer Strasse near the New National Gallery.

ART FAIRS

Two recently founded events now bring in the well-heeled international crowd: **Gallery Weekend Berlin** (🌐 www.gallery-weekend-berlin.de) in April and **Art Berlin**

Contemporary (🌐 www.artberlincontemporary.com), which began as a rogue sculpture exhibition in 2008 and is now the city’s only large-scale fall art fair.

RECESSION AND REBOUND

Berlin’s art scene has not been immune to global issues. There were about 500 galleries in Berlin before 2008’s financial crash, and the number has gone down to a bit more than 400 since then as galleries are forced to close. Still, a few truly top-notch venues have since settled into architecturally interesting spaces: **Sprüth Magers** (🌐 www.spruethmagers.com) shows art stars in a vast gallery, **Capitain Petzel** (🌐 www.capitainpetzel.de) exhibits large-scale work in a modernist East German building that resembles a glass cube, and **Koch Oberhuber Wolff** (🌐 www.kow-berlin.info) takes up three floors of a striking new concrete building by local architect Arno Brandlhuber.

LOOKING FORWARD

Berlin being Berlin, the underground is never far away. Curators here throw innovative party-shows in garages and nightclubs around town, like **Tape** (🌐 tapeberlin.de) and **Autocenter** (🌐 www.autocenterart.de). Young artists are settling into the city’s newest art neighborhood, Neukölln, in the southeast, and project spaces and new galleries can’t be far behind.



ART OUTSIDE THE BOX

Left, The East Side Gallery, Berlin Wall. Right, stencil street art.

Museums and galleries are merely the tip of Berlin’s art-world iceberg.

STREET ART

Street art abounds in the German capital. Tags (symbols identifying individual graffiti artists) adorn walls everywhere, but the areas around Köpernickler Strasse or Schlesisches Tor in Kreuzberg are especially thick with expertly executed paste-ups (posters) and stenciled art. Building-size murals can be seen around the Schlesische Strasse area on the border between the Kreuzberg and Treptow districts, and in 2011, a sanctioned art project invited major international bombers (graffiti artists) to paint murals on blank firewalls in Berlin’s Wedding district.

Take note of the **yellow bananas** marking gallery spaces; they are artist Thomas Baumgärtel’s seal of approval, which he has been bestowing on worthy locations since 1986.

For curated exhibitions featuring works by artists with street-art backgrounds, head to **Circle Culture Gallery** (📞 [275817886](tel:275817886) 🌐 circleculture-gallery.de) in Mitte. For online insight into the scene, see 🌐 urbanartcore.eu.

PRIVATE COLLECTIONS

Following in the footsteps of the **Sammlung Hoffmann** (📞 [30873626](tel:30873626) 🌐 sophiegips-hofe.de) in *Sophie-Gips-Höfe, Aufgang C, Sophienstr. 21* 📞 2849/

9120 🌐 www.sammlung-hoffmann.de 📞 €8), several private collectors have opened their own mini-museums. Inside an ominous war bunker in Mitte is the **Boros Collection** (📞 [Reinhardtstrasse 20 27594065](tel:27594065) 🌐 sammlung-boros.de 📞 €10), which highlights early work by some of Berlin’s finest artists, like Olafur Eliasson. Christiane zu Salm’s **About Change, Collection** (📞 [Am Kupfergraben 10](tel:30873626) 🌐 about-change-collection.de) lies atop a sleek building designed by David Chipperfield, just off Museumsinsel. **Sammlung Haubrok** (📞 [Strausberger Platz 19](tel:1722109525) 📞 1722109525 🌐 sammlung-haubrok.de) mounts exhibitions using the collection of Barbara and Axel Haubrok, who own more than 500 works by mostly European artists. And Thomas Olbricht’s **me Collector’s Room** (📞 [Auguststrasse 68](tel:86008510) 📞 86008/510 🌐 www.me-berlin.com 📞 €6) displays his admittedly kitschy art and his collection of curiosities, like shrunken heads and ivory carvings.

TOURS

AlternativeBerlin (📞 16281/98264 alternativenberlin.com) offers workshops and tours of street art. For a customized art tour of the city, no one beats **Go Art!’s** (📞 [Potsdamer Str. 81B](tel:30873626) 📞 3087/3626 🌐 goart-berlin.de) Miriam Bers, a Berlin art-world veteran.

GALLERY WALK: POTSDAMER STRASSE

Berlin's galleries are notorious for playing musical chairs, and since 2009, a critical mass of excellent art venues have convened in—surprise!—former West Berlin, which represents a shift away from the hipper eastern district. The somewhat nondescript area on and around Potsdamer Strasse, not far from Potsdamer Platz, is now home to both Berlin stalwarts and highbrow newcomers. But you wouldn't necessarily see them from the street; most galleries here are in second-floor apartment-like spaces or tucked away in courtyards.

PLANNING

Two to three hours is plenty of time for a gallery overview, but you may want to spend more time looking at the art. If you only have an hour, limit your tour to these blue-chip best bets: Esther Schipper, Isabella Bortolozzi, Blain|Southern, Klosterfelde, and Helga Maria Klosterfelde Edition. Galleries are generally open Tuesday to Saturday, noon to 6. ■ **TIP** → For current exhibition information, download the **EYEOUT Berlin app** or pick up a copy of the **Index gallery guide**.

POTSDAMER STRASSE TO SCHÖNEBERGER UFER

Start at the **Neue Nationalgalerie** at Potsdamer Strasse 50. Architect Mies van der Rohe's impressive glass box—his only museum project—has been up for more than 50 years, and



Neue Nationalgalerie

it often mounts blockbuster shows by artists like Thomas Demand or Jenny Holzer.

Cross the canal, turn right, and walk along **Schöneberger Ufer** to see the **Galerie Verein Berliner Künstler** in a lovely townhouse at No. 55. Founded in 1841, this is Germany's oldest artist-run association, and the exhibition halls are dedicated to showing members' work.

At No. 61, **Galerie Isabella Bortolozzi** exhibits some of the city's edgiest artists, including brilliant Vietnamese artist Danh Vo, whose conceptual work explores the overlap between public and private life. The gallery has an unconventional interior with dark, wood-paneled rooms.

One of Berlin's top dealers, **Esther Schipper**, moved to her second-floor gallery and sleek courtyard at No. 65 in 2011. Her star-studded roster includes multit talented Young British Artists star Liam Gillick, Belgian artist Carsten Höller, who is famous for his audience-participation art, and Thomas Demand, whose still photographs subtly criticize modern society.



Galerie Giti Nourbakhsh

BISSINGZEILE TO KURFÜRSTENSTRASSE

Backtrack along the canal to Potsdamer Strasse and turn right. At No. 70 is **Nymphius Projekte**, a project space often featuring themed group shows, such as the art of the 1980s. Across the street at Nos. 77–87 is the impressive **Blain|Southern**, which opened in a vast space that was once the printing room of the *Tagesspiegel* daily newspaper, in spring 2011. Created by the original founders of international power-gallery Haunch of Venison, Blain|Southern brings a formidable artist roster from its base in London. Other galleries have crept into spaces in the same courtyard, like the excellent **Nolan Judin Berlin** next door, which favors artists who are master draftspeople, like Danica Phelps, and **401 Contemporary** in the brick building across the yard. Berlin fashion pioneer **Andreas Murkudis** also moved his exclusive stores, with carefully curated women's and menswear, here in July 2011.

Poke into the huge, brick-lined back courtyard at No. 91 to the **Freies Museum Berlin** (Free Museum of Berlin), a 175-square-meter artist-run space that hosts conceptual shows and sponsors artistic research. The low-key **Walden** gallery is also on site.



Art Opening at Sprüth Magers

At No. 93, climb a set of curved stairs to **Klosterfelde**, whose interlocking rooms and ceiling moldings evoke the gilded age and are a far cry from the gallery's former big white box space. Owner Martin Klosterfelde's roster includes hot international artists like John Bock, whose messy installations and offbeat performances long ago earned him an *enfant-terrible* reputation. Downstairs, in a former stationary store with antique fixtures, is **Helga Maria Klosterfelde Edition** (No. 97). This smaller exhibition space featuring works on paper and prints is named after Martin's mother. A bit farther, past bakeries and second-hand clothing shops, is **Galerie Cinzia Friedlaender** (No. 105), which shows funky, sometimes lighthearted work by artists like Sunah Choi.

KURFÜRSTENSTRASSE TO BLUMENTHALSTRASSE

Continue to Kurfürstenstrasse and turn left. In the courtyard of No. 12 is **Galerie Giti Nourbakhsh**, an early supporter of some of Berlin's now best-known artists, like Anselm Reyle, whose large-scale sculptures and paintings are a riot of texture and color, as well as a cofounder of Gallery Weekend Berlin. Next door, the lovely **Sommer & Kohl** gallery (No. 13) represents some of the international art scene's most promising young talent in a for-



mer featherbed factory. Down the street at No. 5/5a, see what's on at **Reception**, a collaborative project between Zurich gallerist Victor Gisler and curator Christine Heidemann. Cross the street and make a quick detour onto the quiet tree-lined Blumenthalstrasse to check out a small, bright space belonging to **Galerie Sassa Trülzsch** (No. 8). Back on Kurfürstenstrasse at No. 156, in a former corner pub, **Tanya Leighton**—who has curated at the Whitney Museum in New York—not only mounts fascinating conceptual exhibitions but also hosts lectures and events that explore art's wider meaning.

QUICK BITES

Head to **Joseph-Roth-Diele**, a cozy reading room-cum-restaurant at 75 Potsdamer Strasse, for German comfort food. Or, pop into the chic **Victoria Bar** at 102 Potsdamer Strasse for a cocktail.

Gallery Weekend Opening

