

Press Release

7 September 2018

Akademie Picture Cellar Open to the Public for the First Time Opening Event on 29 September 2018, 5 pm

Akademie der Künste, Pariser Platz

On 29 September the Akademie der Künste is opening its "Picture Cellar" to the general public. A series of murals, which were created in 1957 and 1958 for two *Faschingsfeste* (Carnival events), have been preserved in the former coal cellars of the Akademie building on Pariser Platz. Painted by Manfred Böttcher, Harald Metzkes, Ernst Schroeder and Horst Zickelbein – former master students at the Deutsche Akademie der Künste – they are the only original remnants in the historic building apart from the exhibition halls. First photographed in 1989, the works have since been published and carefully preserved. And now, after nearly 30 years, they can be seen for the first time. On view are unique testaments to a younger generation of artists' opposition within East Berlin painting. The potential for conflict at that time contained in these works is still palpable.

A successor of the Preußische Akademie der Künste (Prussian Academy of Arts), the Akademie in the GDR continued its long tradition of training *Meisterschüler* (master students). Under the supervision of members, this programme offered artists the chance to work relatively independently over a two-year period in the studios located at Pariser Platz 4. During the culturally and politically explosive era in the 1950s and 1960s bitter debates grew up around the master student generation; it was a proxy war against members of the Akademie. Among them was the sculptor Fritz Cremer, who initiated an exhibition of works by young artists shortly before construction of the Berlin Wall in 1961 – one that led to a cultural-political scandal. Cremer resigned as director and Otto Nagel, the president of the Akademie, had to leave as well – for "health reasons" – according to official statements. The murals clearly show that the generation of artists born around 1930 aspired to something other than state-approved Socialist Realism. These artists would play a major role in the formation of the "Berlin School", and their "black paintings" were defamed by officially-sanctioned art criticism as outmoded, decadent and formalist. The pressure they felt from the outside world brought them closer together, encouraging them to react to one another in their paintings. Moreover, the creative freedom surrounding the *Fasching* designs at the Akademie released an urge for the artists to experiment with works that could not have been exhibited.

At the Opening Event of the cellar interview films with Jürgen Böttcher | Strawalde, Matthias Flügge, Dieter Goltzsche, Harald Metzkes and Werner Stötzer will be shown, insights into the work of the conservators will be given, sound documents of the former disputes can be heard and guided tours will be offered. Access to the Picture Cellar is only possible on a guided tour.

Press and Public Relations

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Event Information

Picture Cellar

Akademie der Künste, Pariser Platz 4, 10117 Berlin

Further information: www.adk.de/bilderkeller

As part of Berlin Art Week 2018

Opening Event: 29 September 2018, 5 pm

Guided tours, talks, films, sound documents

with Matthias Flügge, Angela Lammert, Carolin Schönemann

Tours through the Picture Cellar: 29 and 30 September 2018

with Angela Lammert and Carolin Schönemann

hourly from 10 am – 7 pm, Free admission

Limited number of participants

Please note: On 29 September 2018, access to Pariser Platz may be restricted or blocked off. Please access the Akademie building through the Behrenstraße 72 entrance.

Journalists' Tours at the Berlin Art Week Press Conference:

17 September 2018, 9:45 am and 11:45 am

Reservations required: press@berlinartweek.de

From 3 October to 19 December 2018

Tours on Wednesdays at 6 pm

Limited number of participants, € 5/3

Tickets must be purchased in advance; sold at Akademie cash desks:

Pariser Platz 4 and Hanseatenweg 10, open daily 10 am – 8 pm

as well as in the Webshop: www.adk.de/tickets

Press tickets: Tel. +49 (0)30 200 57-15 14, presse@adk.de

Press photos: <https://www.adk.de/de/presse/pressematerial.htm>

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