

PRESS RELEASE

***MENSCHENBILD – der expressionistische Blick***

**16 February to 18 June 2023**

**Stiftung Kunstforum Berliner Volksbank  
Kaiserdamm 105, 14057 Berlin-Charlottenburg**

*MENSCHENBILD – der expressionistische Blick* (the expressionist view) illustrates how central ideas of German Expressionism were further developed in the visual arts. The focus here is on figurative works created in West Berlin and East Germany in the 1980s and 1990s. Loans from the Kunststiftung Michels provide additional insights into artistic positions of the early 20th century.

Works by Paula Modersohn-Becker, Max Pechstein and Alexander Gerbig as well as by Käthe Kollwitz, Ernst Barlach, Georg Kolbe and Otto Gleichmann show the image of modern men and women reorienting themselves in a society changed by industrialisation and later by the First World War. Whether in a sketchy nude study on paper, which appears angular and slightly distorted, or in a sculpture cast in bronze, which illustrates the bodily ideal of a graceful female figure: the artists of the first and second generation of German Expressionism elevate the human figure as a medium reflecting manifold emotions. The sculptures by Barlach and Kollwitz in particular, illustrate the traces that the drastically changed times have left in people.

The Expressionism of the early 20th century also had an impact on art after 1945. While East German artists worked with expressive stylistic means that were, among other things, critical of the postulate of Socialist Realism, West German artists such as Markus Lüpertz, Bernd Koberling, Max Kaminski and Georg Baselitz developed a new figuration characterised by expressive temperament, with which they positioned themselves against the dominance of abstraction and Art Informel.

Following on from the models of classical Expressionism and its further developments, emotionally charged, expressive works emerged in the 1980s in both East and West, in which the human figure conveys the artists' individual attitude to life. The works of the so-called *Neue Wilde* (roughly "new savages"), including the West Berlin artists Rainer Fetting, Salomé and Elvira Bach, are characterised by colour intensity and a focus on the exploration of the self: the female and male figures tell of the emotional state and life realities of their creators.

The human being, his or her emotions and experience, is also the focus of the East German artists, who used expressive stylistic means at this time. The works of Werner Liebmann, Angela Hampel, Hartwig Ebersbach, Hans-Hendrik Grimmling and Ellen Fuhr bear witness to a critical examination of the image of man and the world propagated by the state.

Artists have never stopped rethinking the connection between figuration and expressivity based on their own interpretations. The main image of the exhibition *Untitled* by Norbert

Bisky from 1993, with its powerful appearance characterised by intense colour and expressive brushstrokes, summarises the inspiration that artists draw from the human condition.

Featured artists include, among others:

Elvira Bach, Georg Baselitz, Norbert Bisky, Claudia Busching, Luciano Castelli, Hartwig Ebersbach, Rainer Fetting, FRANEK, Ellen Fuhr, Sighard Gille, Otto Gleichmann, René Graetz, Hans-Hendrik Grimmling, Angela Hampel, Max Kaminski, Bernd Koberling, Georg Kolbe, Käthe Kollwitz, Werner Liebmann, Markus Lüpertz, Wolfgang Matheuer, Paula Modersohn-Becker, Max Pechstein, Pablo Picasso, Neo Rauch, Salomé, Rolf Sturm, Max Uhlig, Barbara Quandt and Andreas Weishaupt.

You are welcome to find out more about the dates of the exhibition tours and other events on our [website](#).

Here you can download [press information](#) and [photos](#) of the exhibition.

Your press team

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**MENSCHENBILD – der expressionistische Blick (the expressionist view), 16 February to 18 June 2023**

Tuesday to Sunday 10 a.m. – 6 p.m., Monday closed

Admission 4 euros / 3 euros (reduced), free admission to children and teens younger than 18 years

An accompanying publication will be published.

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