

On the Role of Textiles
in Art and Society

Hand
out

Ver-
strickungen

zur Rolle des Textilen
in Kunst
und Gesellschaft



Antje Engelmann
Hermann Glöckner
Renate Göritz
Asta Gröting
Barbara Klemm
Käthe Kollwitz
Reinhard Mucha
Sabine Pank
Helga Paris
Judith Raum
Rosemarie Trockel
Franz Erhard Walther

An exhibition by ifa



Institut für
Auslandsbeziehungen

Entanglements: On the Role of Textiles in Art and Society

12 April – 3 August 2025
Kunstbahnhof Flöha

Positions from the Art Collection of the ifa – Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen, with works by Antje Engelmann, Hermann Glöckner, Renate Göritz, Asta Gröting, Barbara Klemm, Käthe Kollwitz, Reinhard Mucha, Helga Paris, Judith Raum, Rosemarie Trockel and Franz Erhard Walther in dialogue with the history of textiles in the Chemnitz region with works by Sabine Pank. Curated by Susanne Weiß (ifa)

Within the framework of the PURPLE PATH of the European Capital of Culture Chemnitz 2025, the Train Station of Flöha, freshly renovated as a centre for the arts, is re-opening its doors. The great hall of the train station serves as site for the ifa exhibition *Entanglements*, in which the ifa – Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen shows artists from its collection in dialogue with local history.

At the invitation of Purple Path curator Alexander Ochs, the ifa exhibition is presenting art works that relate to the history of textiles and explore their economic and societal entanglements. In fabric, not only do we encounter a give-and-take between tradition and innovation, we gain insight into various aspects of production, work and raw materials, of patterns and readings, which shape the world in which we live.

Textile traditions and modes of production are woven like a red thread into the fabric of the region surrounding Chemnitz: the city of Flöha, too, was an important manufacturing site for textiles from the period of the region's industrialization through the beginning of the 1990s. Napoleon's "Continental blockade" of 1806 and the import duties it entailed compelled weavers in the Chemnitz region to wean themselves of dependence on imported British yarn. The rivers Flöha and Zschopau in the Erzgebirge provided an ideal site for the planned weaving mills, which required significant hydropower. The first cotton-spinning mill was built in 1809. Through 1904, the complex continued to develop at a rapid pace, becoming one of the largest cotton mills in Saxony. During the GDR period, over one thousand workers passed through the Flöha train station every day on their way to the surrounding factories. The state-owned company "United Cotton Spinning and Doubling Mills" was the city's largest employer. A few years after German Reunification, in 1994, the cotton mill closed its doors. Despite its transformation into a stock corporation in 1991, it was unable to adapt to the new conditions of the market economy. Today, the grounds of the "Old Cotton Mill" are protected as a heritage site and are developing into a new city centre.

The Exhibition will bring together art works from the unique collection of the ifa, which travels all over the world. As its historic starting point, the Exhibition takes the six-part series *A Weavers' Revolt* by Käthe Kollwitz. Kollwitz is counted among the most important protagonists of Critical Realism, and her cycle documents the precarious working conditions, the penury, and the resistance of the weavers' guild like no other work of art. Hermann Glöckner found his way into the art world through an apprenticeship as pattern-maker in Dresden in the early 20th century. During the GDR period, he became one of the most prominent representatives of concrete art, regularly commuting between East and West. The artist Renate Göritz counted as one of the GDR's most prominent artists working in the medium of collage. Like Helga Paris, she lived in East Berlin and with her work helped shape the art scene there. Her large-format assemblages and collages, which, again like the photographs of Paris, come from the inventory of the "Zentrum für Kunstausstellungen der DDR" (GDR Centre for Art Exhibitions, or ZfK), are to be shown here for the first time since the ZfK was dissolved at the end of the year 1990. Helga Paris, after studying to be a fashion designer, taught herself to photograph in the workers' and artists' milieu of Prenzlauer Berg. Her portraits of female textile workers in the state-owned company "VEB Treffmodelle" go far beyond the simple representation of the twelve women who were her subjects. Rather, her images reflect that which characterizes a life: experiences, longings, and hopes. A little less than ten years later, in 1994, the West German photographer Barbara Klemm visited the very same place in Prenzlauer Berg. Klemm, as photo journalist, has become a chronicler of societal upheavals. Besides popular demonstrations and official political meetings, she documented the last day of work at the "VEB Treffmodelle." Her two photographs powerfully evoke empathy and despair, but also pride and community.

In the midst of the conceptual trends of the 1960s, Franz Erhard Walther expanded the notion of art into the performative, using textile spaces and procedural

instructions. The audience enter into a relationship with his fabric sculptures and thus become sculpture themselves. Before Reinhard Mucha studied art, he worked in a railroad supply company. This gave rise, among other things, to his great affinity for train stations with six-letter names, like Aachen or Weimar. His found mattress *Biblis* evokes associations with the city that made a name for itself through a series of accidents in the operation of its nuclear facility. Together, these two elements become a storage medium for history, a reference to something that once occurred. The artist Rosemarie Trockel gained fame in the “wild years” of the 1980s with her conceptual panel pictures of knitted fabric. Her over-sized plaid handkerchief stands in Flöha for the notions of arrival and departure, but it also draws into question traditional conceptions of who performs what trade, and how art is produced. The sculptor Asta Gröting uses what appear to be everyday objects and transforms them into images subject to ambiguous interpretation. Her *Monkey Dance I* picks up on the paradoxes of the fashion industry by tracking the transport of leather from Turkey as a by-product of the meat industry; but her leather-jacket sculpture also stands for an image of “behaving,” which knows no beginning and no end.

The artist Judith Raum, in two video works, addresses the hierarchies present at the Bauhaus in Weimar and Dessau. She focusses on the development of commercial fabrics in the textile workshop of the Bauhaus: the collective work of the (female) artists on the loom is seen, by the outside world, as anonymous authorship. Judith Raum’s artistic research traces the biographies and œuvres of designers Otti Berger and Gunta Stölzl and also narrates a story informed by the grave political cæsuras caused by the National Socialists in the period of the Weimar Republic. The autobiographical investigation of Antje Engelmann likewise sheds light on the ramifications of these crises. In her film *Instructions for altering the past*, the artist holds the magnifying glass to her own family history. Migration and tradition are in the DNA of the Danube Swabians. The tracht, a traditional dress forms a link between generations, was like a second skin to her great-grandmother Hermine. At the end of her film, the artist herself slips into a traditional dress, in order to question the cycle of passing it on.

Likewise included in the Exhibition is the four-part textile collage *Landscape, Dressing, Doubling, End Product*, which Sabine Pank created in 1982–83 for the Boardroom in the executive administration building of the cotton spinning mill in Flöha. Pank articulates artistically the path of cotton as it is transformed into yarn, using silk collages. Upon liquidation of the Sächsische “Baumwollspinnereien und Zwirnereien AG” (Saxonian Cotton Spinning and Doubling Mills Ltd) by the Treuhandanstalt in 1991, the cycle was moved to the administrative headquarters of the Spinning Mill Venusberg. The convoluted history of the textile industry in this region also forms the subject of a display in the passageway to the train station’s tunnel. This work was conceptualized by Mike Huth and designed by Jakob Kirch. At the end of the year, the “Old Cotton Mill” will open a permanent exhibition on the history of the textile industry in Flöha. (SW)

On the ifa Art Collection

The art collection of the ifa – Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen currently comprehends approximately 24 000 works in various disciplines of modern and contemporary visual art: architecture, photography, and design have their place in it alongside monographic exhibitions of artists such as Rosemarie Trockel or Wolfgang Tillmans. About half the collection derives from works purchased for the ifa’s touring exhibitions, which curators developed starting in the 1960s to present outstanding artists from Germany, primarily in the form of monographic exhibitions. Another major focus lies with socio-politically charged projects, which reflect the trends and movements in contemporary art during the 20th and 21st centuries. As touring exhibitions, they are presented in international museums and cultural institutions, but not only in major metropolises. Currently, works from the Collection are being shown in 20 exhibitions worldwide, which, since the 2010s, have also been developed co-creatively.

The other half of the ifa art collection derives from the collection of the “Zentrum für Kunstausstellungen der DDR” (Centre for Art Exhibitions of the GDR), which the ifa took over in part in 1991. Since 2023, research into this collection is being conducted in cooperation with the Wüstenrot Stiftung. On its digital art platform, ifa Agora, ifa’s unique art collection is rendered visible and accessible: <https://agora.ifa.de/>

12 Sheets from the portfolio *Women in the textile factory Treff-Modelle* Silver gelatine print, 1984

Helga Paris grew up in Zossen in Brandenburg. In the early 1960s, she became a fashion designer in Berlin and, at the same time, taught herself to photograph. Her subtle images have shaped our visual memory of a country that has disappeared. People, years, lives. Her photos are consistently taken in black-and-white, with contrasts, with shadows, with poetic foggy zones, where the contours of cities and their everyday life appear to have leaked in.

Her aim has always been to capture the truth, whomever her camera set its sights on: common men and women from her own neighbourhood in Berlin's Prenzlauer Berg, passers-by in Halle/Saale (a depressing centre for the chemical industry in GDR times), Gypsies in Romania's Carpathian Mountains, or celebrities from the world of art, theatre and literature. She produced portraits of the garbage men and coal-carters, the baker and the butcher working on her street. Also people just hanging out in the bar on the corner.

The women textile workers portrayed in the series exhibited here worked in the state-owned company "VEB Treffmodelle" in Prenzlauer Berg. The factory was located only a block away from Helga Paris's apartment. She gained access through an official commission from the "Gesellschaft für Fotografie" (Society for Photography). In the catalogue for the ifa-exhibition *Travelling the World*, author and curator Inka Schube wrote of these photographs: "Paris captures a whole spectrum of diverse femininity, which asserts itself, each in its own way, at this same work-place and before the lens of this same photographer. The women's eyes, the way they hold their hands, their choice of work clothes, their

whole bearing bears witness not just to the role they play, to the image they have of themselves in this particular place. They also tell us something about the lives her subjects lead beyond the routine of work; their hopes, and their desires. In these photographs, Helga Paris portrays not workers, but women."

How did she manage to get so close to people, without getting on their nerves? Paris managed to square this circle, at least insofar as it touched her and her small-format camera, with empathy: She won the trust of her subjects and delved deeply into faces, postures, gestures, even conscious poses with a patient, quiet, encouraging touch, which never intruded. Helga Paris wrote photographic history in her own incomparable way. She died in February 2024 in Prenzlauer Berg. Today, her apartment continues to provide a home to her vast legacy. Her art of transforming the everyday into something very special, something precious, will remain. (IR)

This portfolio belonged to the holdings of the "Zentrum für Kunstausstellungen der DDR" (Centre for Art Exhibitions of the GDR) and was integrated into the ifa collection in 1991. Between 2013 and 2020, it toured as part of the exhibition *Travelling the World. Art from Germany. Artworks from the ifa collection, 1949 to the present*, which during that period was shown at 15 locations on three continents.

* 1938 in Gollnow (West Pomerania), today Goleniów (Poland),
 † 2024 in Berlin

Cycle: *A Weavers' Revolt*

Sheet 1: <i>Want</i>	1897, Lithograph
Sheet 2: <i>Death</i>	1897, Lithograph
Sheet 3: <i>Consultation</i>	1898, Lithograph
Sheet 4: <i>March of the Weavers</i>	1897, Etching
Sheet 5: <i>Attack</i>	1897, Etching
Sheet 6: <i>End</i>	1897, Etching

The weavers guild lived and worked precariously – and that not only from the age of industrialization on. It has always been caught in a complex web of abusive working conditions and global trade relationships. Deeply impressed by the private premiere of Gerhart Hauptmann's drama *The Weavers* on 26 February 1893, Käthe Kollwitz took sides in the very same year, beginning to work on her own empathetic and socially critical *Weavers' Revolt*. The result was a six-part cycle of works, which places the pain and the dignity of human beings squarely in its centre. She completed the series only four years later, in 1897, for the 70th birthday of her father: "My technical skill in etching was still so rudimentary that my first tries all failed. In this way, it happened that the first three *Weaver* sheets were lithographed, and only the last three etchings ... were adequate from a technical point of view."

With this graphic narration of revolt, Kollwitz succeeded in breaking through as an artist. Celebrated by the public and by art critics at the "Große Berliner Kunstausstellung" (Great Berlin Art Exhibition) of 1898, she was viewed as subversive and critical of the state by those in authority. The Emperor Wilhelm II refused to award her the medal she was meant to have for her *Weavers' Revolt*: for Kollwitz's weavers are not just victims of their circumstances. They turn themselves into men and women of action, who rebel – even if they tragically fail – against their fate.

Käthe Kollwitz's cycle shows the desperation and suffering of the weavers' families, from their resolute rebellion through to its brutal suppression by the military. Three scenes set in dark interiors are followed by

the joining of ranks and resistance in the full light of day, where women come to the foreground. Her six prints are thus not a historic reconstruction of the Silesian Weavers' Rebellion of 1844, but rather a fictive, contemporary adaptation, which focusses on the state of destitution and the urgency of resistance.

The unsparing immediacy of Kollwitz's etchings and lithographs has lost none of its power. Social inequalities, workers' struggles, and the battle for human dignity remain as urgent as ever and touch us today no less than they did nearly 130 years ago. (SW)

The works formed a part of the exhibition *Käthe Kollwitz: Graphics, Drawings, Sculpture*, which was shown in 229 cities on five continents between 1959 and 2009.

* 1867 in Königsberg (Prussia), today Kaliningrad (Russia),
† 1945 in Moritzburg (Dresden, Germany)

Last day of work, VEB Treffmodelle, Berlin

Digital print, 1992/2025

Last day of work, VEB Treffmodelle, Berlin

Silver gelatine print, 1992

Barbara Klemm worked for over forty years as staff photographer of the newspaper *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* and, with her images, helped shape the visual memory of Germany. To this day, she is regarded as one of the most important chroniclers of German history in the second half of the 20th century. Her photographs are always much more than mere documentations – they capture an atmosphere, tell stories, and thus become iconic artefacts bearing witness to their times. Especially famous is her photograph of the “brotherly kiss” between Leonid Brezhnev and Erich Honecker, or of the Wall dividing Berlin right before its fall.

Klemm travelled regularly to the GDR starting in the 1970s. There, with her camera, she captured everyday life and the political realities appearing behind the scrim of official propaganda. Her pictures show not only momentous political occasions, but also the quiet scenes of daily life in East Germany. After the Fall of the Wall, she documented the *cæsura* it produced in a reunited Federal Republic of Germany: the euphoria, but also the uncertainties of the post-Wall era. Her photographs of this phase bear witness to a deep understanding of the turmoil that shook both East and West, and vividly capture the atmosphere of the early 1990s.

In 1992, Barbara Klemm turned her attention to the final moments of the once bustling GDR company “VEB Treffmodelle”, Berlin. The photographs she produced show workers in the halls of the factory being abandoned, in the midst of machines, which the following day will fall silent forever. Coming eight years after Helga Paris’s portrait series of women working at “VEB Treffmodelle”, the two photographs of Barbara Klemm

capture a mood of tragic farewells – women caught between resignation and reflection, but also filled with a quiet pride in the work they have done. With her characteristic eye for the decisive moment, Klemm renders the profound economic and societal changes of the post-Wall era tangible and lends a face to the human beings experiencing the upheavals. (SB)

A new digital print of the portrait at the sewing machine was produced for this exhibition, as it is also being shown in the current ifa touring exhibition *Barbara Klemm. Light and Dark. Photographs from Germany*. That exhibition has been touring since 2009 and has thus far been shown at 30 locations on four continents.

The photo at the set table was taken on the same day as the portrait at the sewing machine. The silver gelatine print comes from Barbara Klemm’s archive.

Site-specific work for the Cotton Doubling Mill Flöha, 1982/83

Landscape

Silk, cotton thread

Dressing

Rayon ribbon sewn onto silk with cotton yarn

Doubling

Rayon ribbon sewn onto silk with cotton yarn

End product – Fabric

Silk, cotton thread

In what is today the Wasserbau (River building) of the Old Cotton Mill in Flöha, the so-called Direktionssaal (Boardroom) was once located. This was a central room for meetings of the management assembly. In the headquarters building, however, where the offices were, the company installed new, modernized rooms for management on the first floor. These included a new hall known as the “Social Gallery”. Besides contemporary furniture, the artistic planning of this space was accorded special importance. The Chemnitz artist Sabine Pank was thus commissioned to create, in 1982–83 – specifically for the space – the quartet of tapestries we show here.

The first collage, titled *Landscape*, shows large-scale cotton plantations in a sparse landscape. Cotton-growing depends on water and sun. Dark clouds stand here for the crucial precipitation, while the ripening plant needs lots of sunshine to ensure that the fibres in its bolls develop fully.

In the second collage, *Dressing*, the artist addressed the growth of the plants. The colour gradients emphasize the diversity of nature and the climatic conditions that influence cotton growers around the world. Differences in the length of the cotton fibres, their colouring, and their strength reflect the peculiar qualities of each region in which cotton is grown.

The third collage, *Doubling*, is consecrated to the transformation of the natural fibres into spinning yarn and twine. The harvested fibres are processed both by hand and by machine, in order to separate them as finely as possible, align them in parallel, and intertwine them. The results are threads from which spreads of textile can be produced – whether by weaving, hand-knitting,

machine-knitting, or felting. The orientation of the threads to one another is key. The network of seams here lies over the green patchwork surface as in a drawing and places the role of the yarn, and thus materiality, in the foreground.

The artist continues to pursue this web of relationships in the fourth collage, called *End product – Fabric*, in which the warm red hues come together to create an abstract collage. The chosen form of repeated squares allows the viewer, on the one hand, to see ahead to the further processing of the yarn, while on the other it reflects density and the infinite possibilities of form.

After the Treuhandanstalt resolved to close down operations of the “Sächsische Baumwollspinnereien und Zwirnereien AG” (Saxonian Cotton Spinning and Doubling Mills Ltd) in 1991, the company’s administrative headquarters were moved first to Mittweida, and later to the Spinning Mill Venusberg. Apparently, one of the company’s employees with an affinity for art was able to preserve the textile collages from destruction. Thus they can still be found today in the former administrative headquarters of the Spinning Mill Venusberg. They bear witness to an important chapter in the history of the textile industry of Saxony. (SB)

For his research and report on this cycle, which formed the basis for our text, we are grateful to Hubert Kösser of the Historical Association of Flöha. Thanks also to the Spinnerei Venusberg for their loan of the works. If you have contact to or more information concerning the artist Sabine Pank, please write us at: Kultur@floeha.de

À la Motte

1:00 min., Video, 1993

Pausa

1:18 min., Video, 1999

Untitled

Knitted wool, 2002

Textile crafts such as sewing and weaving were for a long time, before stereotypical divisions of labour warped our perception, practiced by both men and women together. During the era of the guilds, the textile professions were an explicitly male domain: hosiers, cloth makers, ribbon makers, tailors, embroiderers, dyers, weavers. In 1785, one travelogue from northern Germany reported: "Anyone and anything with hands knits here, farmer and farmer's wife, boys and girls, farm-hands and maidservants". The 19th century was the century of working from home. There were no gender-specific divisions for spinning and weaving. Only embroidery eventually came to be carried out principally by women and girls. In Germany's Erzgebirge, women, children, and men, too, worked together in lace-making, shoulder to shoulder and piece by piece, although the work was increasingly centralized in cottage industries and factories.

In the mid-1980s, Rosemarie Trockel appeared on the art scene with her conceptual knit images, also known as panels. Her first panels, knitted by machine, were characterized by minimalist grid patterns, at a time when brightly coloured, neo-expressionist canvases were in high demand on the global art market.

Her four-meter-tall knit panel *Untitled* occupies a central position in the exhibition. This greatly enlarged handkerchief stands for the notions of arrival and departure, for the space in-between. Her work, however, does not just refer to what might be a handkerchief or a wax tablecloth – something primarily associated with the private sphere – rather, it addresses artistic hierarchies and traditional divisions of labour: for the monumental work brings to the foreground a technique, which in the 20th century was denigrated as "women's work" and thus associated more with domestic diligence than with artisanal skill and knowledge passed on from generation to generation.

With her Super 8 film *À La Motte*, Rosemarie Trockel sketches a mischievous counter-image to her knit panels. The moth, as most inveterate enemy of all knitwear, here appears in a dual role: we watch it, in

close-up and in accelerated motion, leave behind a classic trail of devastation; but then, suddenly, it seems to regret what it has done and magically move backwards to knit back together what it has just eaten through.

In her second experimental short film, *Pausa*, we enter a scene, with actress Laura, that could be from the 1970s from the standpoint of its aesthetics and ambience. We see two things – on the one hand, a young woman who comes home to rest. But at the same time, a transformation takes place before our eyes: Her Chanel flokati skirt turns into a blanket and thus a reference to the life of a nomad. For in nomadic cultures, things have to be practical; often they must serve more than one function. Here, a time-out is accorded to the modern woman, who since the 1970s – at the latest – has had to fulfil more than one role in our society. (SW)

From 2003 to 2011, the work *Untitled* toured with the exhibition *Rosemarie Trockel. Selected drawings, objects and video works*, being shown at 23 locations on three continents. Then from 2013 to 2020, it was exhibited in the context of the exhibition *Travelling the World. Art from Germany. Artworks from the ifa collection, 1949 to the present*, which was shown at 15 locations on three continents. The works *Pausa* and *À La Motte* formed a part of the exhibition *Rosemarie Trockel. Selected drawings, objects and video works*, which, since 2003, has been shown at 43 locations on three continents.

* 1952 in Schwerte, lives and works in Potsdam

Monkey Dance I

8 Leather jackets on a wire frame, 1987

Filling Holes with Holes I

Glazed ceramic, 1992

Asta Gröting's *Monkey Dance I* represents a cycle, which has no beginning, no end, and no interruption. The source of this sculpture is an import-export store in Düsseldorf, where the artist found hundreds of these leather jackets. Reconstructing their provenance, she found that the leather – a by-product of the meat industry – came from Anatolian lambs, whose hides were quilted into leather patchwork fabric by tanners working from home. In the next step, in Istanbul, the material was sewn into fashionable jackets, which were then exported to Eastern Europe, where whole containers of jackets were exchanged for primary commodities. In a gesture towards closing this chain of production, Asta Gröting has upended the orientation of the jackets designed for upper bodies in an upright posture and made them walk in a circle, as if on all fours, one after another – each animal in the circuit endlessly pursuing the question of what value animals and commodities enjoy in our society.

The artist's second work also explores the question of having and being, that is of possession and status. Gröting's point of departure for the floor sculpture *Filling holes with holes I* are her reflections on the significance of a plate – if the plate is full, a person is well: he or she can provide for himself (herself) and others. Gröting's enlarged plates, however, have a hole in the middle: the soup plates, turned by hand on a potter's wheel and refined with a platinum glaze, are transformed into a symbol for the endless cycle of sustenance, but also for depth and incompleteness. The work's title refers to the paradoxical nature of problems: Can the absence of something be compensated for by another absence? Are we dealing here with a situation comparable to the rule of mathematics by which the multiplication of minus by minus equals plus? (SW)

The work formed a part of the touring exhibition *Embodied Logos. 14 Women Artists from Germany* and was shown at 15 locations on two continents from 1995 to 1999. Between 2013 and 2020, the sculpture *Monkey Dance I* toured with the exhibition *Travelling the World. Art from Germany*. Artworks from the ifa collection, 1949 to the present, which was shown at 15 locations on three continents.

* 1961 in Herford, lives and works in Berlin

Rings and disks on pink

Spatula, brush, tempera on paper, 1964

String prints in green on a grey-blue background

Colour imprint (tempera) of a string and tempera on paper, 1965

Imprints of string in white paper

Imprint on wet paper, 1970

Red spiral band, ending bottom right

Coloured chalk on paper, 1985

Hermann Glöckner found his way into artistic practice through the training he received in textile pattern design. In parallel to these studies (1904–07), he attended night-school classes at the Kunstgewerbeschule (School of Arts and Crafts) in Dresden. After returning from service in the First World War, he earned a living as fashion designer. In 1923, he matriculated at the Hochschule für Bildende Künste (Academy of Fine Arts) Dresden, but abandoned these studies a year later. He joined the Dresden Secession in 1932.

Tarnished as a “degenerate” artist during the Nazi regime, Glöckner moved deftly among the various possible approaches to his craft. His expert eye for forms, patterns, and composition influenced his abstract works and choice of materials.

The works on paper he produced during the 1960s have a playful character. We see the artist experimenting with the free fall of threads or with rudimentary printing techniques. These works produced something of a sensation, and attracted much criticism, in the GDR: Working alone or with just a few students during nearly all four decades of the GDR, Hermann Glöckner is often portrayed as a modernist recluse. His evasion of politics and his non-conformity with the strictures of socialist realism are often celebrated as a transgressive act of refusal. Nevertheless, even in this “inner exile”, he was by no means completely isolated from Western artistic trends. It is true that Glöckner had no exhibitions in the GDR over an extended period (as long as from 1954 to 1969 according to some accounts); but he regularly exhibited work in the FRG and visited major art events there, such as the first documenta (1955) or the Hamburg Picasso show of 1956.

During that same period, moreover, he completed state commissions for decorative works of sgraffito in the GDR. Starting in 1979, Hermann Glöckner became something of a regular commuter between East and West: he obtained a permanent exit visa that permitted him to travel without restriction to West Berlin and even to move his principal residence there in 1986. In 1984, he received the GDR National Prize, completing the reversal of his outcast legacy. His oeuvre forms an integral part of Germany’s post-war modernism. (TR)

The works formed a part of the touring exhibition *Hermann Glöckner. Works 1909–1985*, which was shown at 28 locations on four continents between 1993 and 2006.

* 1889 in Cotta (Dresden), † 1987 in Berlin (West)

Biblis

Mattress, 1993

“To be an artist means nothing other than a conscious, ever concentrated and ever limitless voyage of the finger on the map”. Thus spoke Reinhard Mucha in 1993, in an interview with the periodical *Kunstforum International*. The question of what art is and how it comes about is crucial to this scion of the Rhineland. Mobility, and the railroad system, also play a central role in his work (thus, for example, he created a monumental installation entitled *Waiting Room*. During the apprenticeship as blacksmith, which Mucha completed before studying art, he worked for railroad supply company. In this way, the theme of engine and railroad transportation slipped into his art work from the very beginning. Precision and freedom exist side by side in his art. It appears as though he is attempting – using “ready-mades”, i. e., pre-existing objects – to draw his own perfectionism into question.

With the mattress bearing the title *Biblis*, we have an item which he found somewhere in southern France. His title refers to the town of Biblis, which brings to mind, like no other place in Germany, accidents and leaks in a nuclear power plant. The nuclear reactor in the vicinity of Darmstadt was first connected to the power grid in 1974 and was closed down in 2011. Thus the mattress, as an image on the wall, functions as a memory field, which evokes very different local associations in Flöha: for it is here where mattress covers were produced in the GDR. Likewise, the train station today houses people in apartments, whereas it has always been a place of call, a place of waiting, a place of rest. (SW)

The work, between 1996 and 2007, formed a part of the exhibition *Town – Country – River*. Georg Herold, Martin Honert, Olaf Metzel, Reinhard Mucha, Hermann Pitz, Thomas Schütte and was shown in 16 cities on three continents. From 2013 to 2020 it toured with the exhibition *Travelling the World. Art from Germany. Artworks from the ifa collection, 1949 to the present*, which was shown at 15 locations on three continents.

* 1950 in Düsseldorf, lives and works in Düsseldorf

Instructions for altering the past

40:00 min., Video, 2011

“Remembering is a painful mixture of loss and possession”, says Antje Engelmann in her autobiographical essay-film *Instructions for altering the past*. The artist’s great-grandparents, as Hungarian Germans, were forced by the German Army and the Hungarian government to flee to the West from southern Hungary after the Second World War. Settling in Ulm, they continued to actively nurture their culture as Danube Swabians. For this reason, “home” to Antje Engelmann is not a fixed place, but rather a kind of action – for instance, joining and participating in the local club for traditional dress and dancing. Her decision to leave the club formed during her transition into puberty.

Does memory engrave itself into the body, like a movement or a rhythm? What role do personal histories, or places like archives, play in the construction of memory? The artist finds answers to these questions on several levels: Besides documentary recordings she has made over the past ten years, found footage, and Super 8 films or video material from her family archives, she has also conducted interviews with family members and with an ethnologist at the Danube Swabian Central Museum in Ulm. This is the place where her great-grandmother Hermine’s second skin – her *Tracht* or traditional dress – is now preserved. At the same time, the artist has travelled to a colony of Danube Swabians in Brazil – the last place in the world in which her great-grandmother’s dialect is still spoken.

In this way, she opens up a post-colonial perspective, which renders the migration of the Danube Swabians visible as part of a complex process involving the loss of home and the re-negotiation of culture. Borrowing from Homi K. Bhabha’s concept of a “third space”, Engelmann shows that identity is not a rigid construction, but rather can be understood as a hybrid, changeable structure.

In the final scene of the film, Engelmann invites her brother, who is active in a group that practices the traditional dance of the Danube Swabians, to dance with her in a Berlin discotheque. Thus the film intertwines past and present, tradition and re-interpretation. *Instructions for altering the past* is not just a film about memory, it is also about its changeability – it shows that history is not fixed, but can continuously be re-negotiated and re-written. (SW)

The work has recently been acquired to the video art collection of the ifa and is being exhibited for the first time in the context of *Entanglements*.

* 1980 in Ulm, lives and works in Berlin

Machine Subjectivity

15 min., Video, 2010

*Taking turns at the same loom.**Anonymous authorship at the Bauhaus*

07:55 min., Video, 2017

Discussion of Material

11:30 min., Video, 2017

*Dividing curtain of cotton and rayon
by Otti Berger, 1932*

New weaving: Ben Teuscher, 2021

B/W digital prints on cardboard, 2024:

*Wall upholstery of ramie ribbon**by Otti Berger, ca. 1934, Photo:*Ernst Nipkow, Harvard Art
Museum*Wall upholstery of tow yarn by**Otti Berger, 1933, Photo: Ernst*

Nipkow, Bauhaus Archive Berlin

*Textile flooring of ramie ribbon by**Otti Berger, ca. 1934, Photo: Ernst*

Nipkow, Bauhaus Archive Berlin

*Otti Berger fabrics for Wohnbe-**darf AG, in International Textiles 15**(1934), Photo: unidentified,*

Bauhaus Archive Berlin

practiced by Frankish home weavers in the 19th century – which demanded an ever-ready skill for improvisation, clearly visible in these artisans' equipment of their machines – as starting point for a reflection on the resilient potential of provisional gestures.

At the invitation of the ifa, Judith Raum began in 2016 to undertake an intensive study of the history of the Bauhaus Textile Workshop between 1919 and 1932. While her video work *Taking turns at the same loom. Anonymous authorship at the Bauhaus*, traces the phenomenon of the structural invisibilizing of the (female) creators of the Bauhaus fabrics, *Discussion of Material* renders palpable the textile œuvre of Bauhaus designer Otti Berger (*1898–†1944), drawing upon Berger's own theoretical texts on fabrics and with the aid of close-up images of original fabrics created by Berger, which Judith Raum photographed in various archives around the world. The artist carried out extensive research on Berger's work in particular and has produced numerous installations and performances drawing upon it.

One part of this artistic confrontation has, on several occasions, included re-weavings of fabrics designed by Berger, which Raum has commissioned based on her analysis of surviving, small-format fabric patterns. Berger designed the midnight-blue, heavy dividing curtain exhibited here for the last collection of woven curtain fabrics published by the Bauhaus, which was presented in the Spring of 1933, right after the National Socialists' seizure of power, at the Grassi Trade Fair in Leipzig. Otti Berger's fabrics are characterized by an especially consistent, highly functional way of addressing the finished qualities of the material, as well as her use of the weave to structure it. The marked, steep diagonals lend the heavy fabric an elegant drape and, at the same time, reinforce the subtle sheen of the rayon yarn. This is something which could not be appreciated in examining the extant, postcard-sized swatches, but can be seen very well in the re-weaving.

During her own lifetime, Otti Berger placed great weight on accurately documenting the understated elegance of her textiles with the camera and, for this purpose, commissioned the Berlin photographer Ernst Nipkow. Nipkow, using black-and-white photography, captured the peculiar qualities of each of her fabrics by draping and lighting them in the best possible conditions. Judith Raum turned time and again to Nipkow's photographs as a starting point for her own photographic approchement with Berger's textiles. (JR)

Judith Raum has devoted herself since 2010, in numerous artistic research projects, to textiles. What interests her is taking a critical look at the economic and social-historical aspects of textile production and the association of the textile medium with the work of women, together with the concomitant commonly accepted denigration of textiles as a mere craft. In her video work *Machine Subjectivity*, for instance, the camera, in close-up, carefully scans a number of historical looms taken from the milieu of home weavers. The artist takes the precarious form of entrepreneurship

The video *Machine Subjectivity* forms a part of the ifa touring exhibition *The Event of a Thread – Global Narratives in Fabric*, which has been on tour since 2017 and thus far shown at nine locations on three continents. The videos on the Bauhaus form a part of the *Bauhaus Room*, which was developed by Judith Raum for the ifa touring exhibition *The Event of a Thread – Global Narratives in Fabric*. The curtain and the black-and-white photographs are loans from the artist.

* 1977 in Werneck, lives and works in Berlin

Space for music and joy. On Ingeborg Bachmann

Mixed Media, watercolour, ink, 1980

Triad

Collage, 1984

Cheer, rejoice. On Johann Sebastian Bach

Collage, 1984–1985

Day – Dream – Feeling. On Claude Debussy

Collage, 1985

In one of her countless poetic texts about herself as painter, graphic designer, and object artist, Renate Göritz described her work as a kind of “wandering through dream landscapes”. Born in 1938 in Silesia, Göritz maintained lifelong – despite or perhaps rather as a result of the nightmarish experiences of war and exile that she lived through as a young child – a deeply personal, fantastic imagination, just brimming over with images. Having fled from Königsberg over Denmark to Schwerin in East Germany, the young girl early on, indeed almost automatically, as she recalls, began to “draw, write, scratch, scribble, hatch and paint”. This may have been a kind of hope-chest from her mother, who in 1963 – after long experience of penury and hunger – astonishingly permitted her daughter to study the penniless trade of art at the Kunsthochschule (Academy of Art) Weissensee. Here in East Berlin, Göritz first came into contact with art from around the world, but especially with the art of the 1920s, such as Expressionism.

Right after finishing her studies, however, the young artist first tumbled head-first into real life. She bore two children, and earned a living as book-illustrator. These illustrations gained her significant renown in the GDR. Only in 1975 did Renate Göritz first appear in the broader public eye with her own art-works. The exhibition *Collage in the Art of the GDR* in Berlin’s National Gallery included her sensitive yet frugal compositions, which recall the compositions of contemporary art. In this way, Göritz in the 1970s – along with male colleagues such as Günther Hornig, Robert Rehfeldt and Jürgen Schieferdecker – made a decisive contribution to perception of the medium of collage as a practice integral to contemporary art in the GDR.

Yet the artist, then living in the Southeast of Berlin, did not stop at experimenting with colours, forms, and materials in two dimensions. Intuitively, Göritz began to construct three-dimensional material pictures, objects and assemblages. These reveal both her extraordinary craftsmanship and her deep knowledge of the principles of harmony and aesthetics in art, as well as a spiritual longing to capture the fleeting moments of an ever fragile happiness.

Luckily, Göritz in the 1980s was able to take part, with her modern-mystical spirits, in the official scene of art in the GDR, where works such as these were no longer scorned as abstract foolishness, but viewed as an enrichment of the world view of “socialism as it is lived in the real world”. Renate Göritz, like so many female artists from the GDR both before and after the fall of the Wall, never experienced a great break-through. Nevertheless, she remained a searcher right up through her death in 2021. As early as the 1980s, Göritz wrote to her friend Erika Stürmer-Alex – who gained slightly greater visibility as an artist: “What seems important to me is not arriving, but travelling productively!” (SK)

These works belonged to the prints collection of the “Zentrum für Kunstausstellungen der DDR” (Centre for Art Exhibitions of the GDR, or ZfK) and were shown there, inter alia, in the exhibition *Music in the Visual Arts*. They were integrated into the ifa collection in 1991, following liquidation of the ZfK, and are being exhibited again here for the first time since then.

* 1938 in Königsberg (Prussia), today Kaliningrad (Russia),
† 2021 in Berlin

Black Sequence of Pillows

Black nettle [woven with cotton] and foam, 1963

Double position

Cotton fabrics and wood, 1984

In the 1960s, the concept of art was radically expanded. Not only did performance art fully join the scene, completely new definitions of what art, or an image, is appeared. This is precisely the question that fascinated the young artist Franz Erhard Walther, who completed studies at the Werkkunstschule in Offenbach (1957–59), the Städelschule in Frankfurt (1959–61) and the Kunstakademie in Düsseldorf (1962–64), then in 1967 traded the West German art scene for New York's. There, he found what he was looking for: people open to his idea of what art is. He discovered sculptural approaches which, like his own, placed the role of the viewer – specifically the viewer's interaction with the art work – in the foreground.

Thus Walther, during this period, not only incorporated everyday materials like pillows into his playful and experimental works, he also turned large-format textiles of nettles or cotton into the stuff of his art works.

Textiles have always constituted a kind of architecture – the one closest to people. For Franz Erhard Walther, however, what really counts is the experience viewers have in relation to his sculpture. Thus he opens his works to them: Viewer participation is essential – without it, you cannot fully appreciate his minimalistic constructions. In this spirit, we encourage you to stop and lean against the art work. Become a part of the work and feel its presence. (SW)

The works formed a part of the exhibition *Franz Erhard Walther – Workpieces, drawings*, which was shown at four locations on two continents between 1991 and 1993.

The exhibition *Entanglements: On the Role of Textiles in Art and Society* is taking place in cooperation with the Wüstenrot Stiftung and forms a part of the PURPLE PATH Art and Sculpture Trail of the European Capital of Culture Chemnitz 2025. The City Council of Flöha is partner of the project.

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Exhibition *Entanglements*

- Exhibition concept and production:
Susanne Weiß
 - Technical production: Stefano Ferlito
 - Graphic design: Lamm & Kirch
 - Type setting: Barbara Hoffmann, Jakob Kirch
 - Scenography: Oeken Schwindling
 - Texts: Susan Börner (SB), Sylvie Kürsten (SK),
Judith Raum (JR), Tobias Rosen (TR),
Ingeborg Ruthe (IR), Susanne Weiß (SW)
 - Proof-reading: Susanne Weiß, Darrell Wilkins
 - Translation from German to English: Darrell Wilkins
 - Installment: Stefano Ferlito, Frank Marks,
Keanu Sapadi, Karl-Heinz Ziegler
 - Research Assistant: Paulinus Burger
-

Exhibition display *The History of Cotton*

- Concept: Mike Huth
 - Graphic design: Lamm & Kirch
-

Acknowledgements

Our thanks goes first to Prof. Philip Kurz and Laura Puin of the Wüstenrot Foundation, without projects like this would not have been possible, and to Sylvie Kürsten for binding a tie to Alexander Ochs. Inka Gressel, Jakob Kirch, Marlene Oeken and Martha Schwindling for the valuable exchange of thoughts and Stefano Ferlito for his dedication. The PURPLE PATH team, the city council of Flöha as well as the Volunteer programme of Chemnitz 2025 for their active support. Further we would like to thank Afzal Mahmoud for his openness and generosity during the realisation of the exhibition.

Ill.: Helga Paris, *Women in the textile factory Treff-Modelle* (Detail),
1984, Silver gelatine print
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