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Brainstorming 2024: January

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Continuity in 2024

The Russian aggression continues on Ukrainian territory also in 2024. Based on false allegations and stories about a supposed Russian heritage based on Ukraine territory the ongoing war is once again fought more about the past than the present. The future is entirely disregarded by Russia as if it is clear to them that they do not have a future of the dictatorial regime. If a country does no longer care about future perspectives or future generations even, this country is likely to become very dangerous for neighboring countries and beyond because of the high discounting which implicitly applies to all its investments. Western companies who moved out of Russia had immediately high losses. At the same time Russia continues on a daily basis to destroy lives and property. We just shall not stop to support the fight for freedom and democracy in Ukraine as long as it takes. It fighting for our future rather than demons of the past.



Berlin 2023-12-30

Survivors

The survivors of war have experienced unimaginable violence and suffering. Once fighting ends the horrors of war live on in the memories of all survivors irrespective of which side they have been fighting. Almost all have lost someone or something they cherished before the outbreak of war. [Käthe Kollwitz](#) has depicted these horrific experiences in many examples of her art work. They speak to us today just as much as in the past. Berlin is a great place to learn more about her art. The image below is an extract from a drawing in poster form edited by the International Trade Union Federation from 1923 shown in the Brücke Museum in Berlin Dahlem in 2023.



Kollwitz
DIE ÜBERLEBENDEN

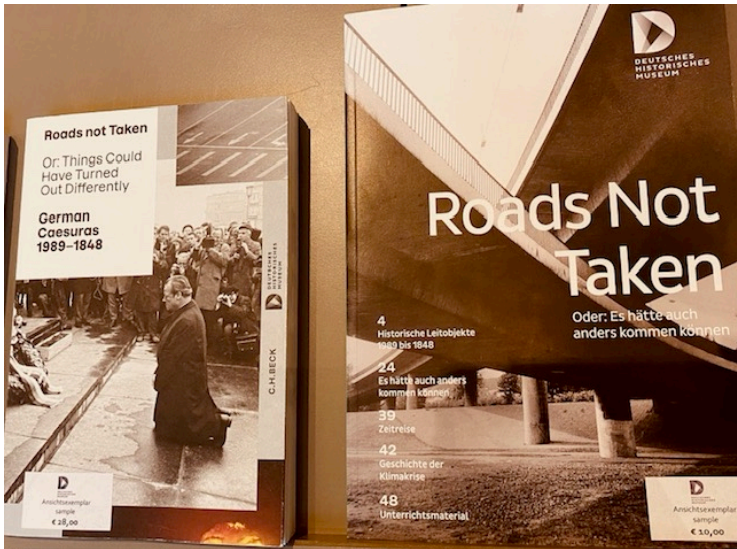
HERAUSGEGEBEN VOM INTERNATIONALEN GEWERKSCHAFTSBUND

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Memory Management

It seems a strange combination of words: memory management. In computing it has the function to allocate sufficient memory to specific tasks and has substantial implications for software performance (Yves Younan et al. 2010). It is also a security issue as what is stored somewhere might get accessed from other persons or programs with harmful intentions. Historians have a completely different approach to the issue. Individual as well as collective memories are frequently subject to memory management and manipulation. Therefore, it is necessary to critically deal with neglect and purposeful management of collective memories. In Germany we had numerous incidents of rectifying collective memories about the role of diplomats or the Wehrmacht during the Nazi period. Huge efforts were necessary to correct wrong representations of professions during and immediately after the 2WW. They are still necessary today. All children have to learn the concept of time, the past times and the concept of future. Periods after wars particularly generate a narrow focus on the present and the bare necessities of survival in societies. Dealing with and reworking the past and cherished memories is rarely attempted. It appears to be a paradox that without a coherent concept of the past the imagination about the potentials of the future are narrowed down. 'Burned fingers' cause additional restrictions. Literature for children and young adults has an important role to open up fictional spaces or laboratories for imagination. Freeing yourself from past restrictions while being aware of responsibilities due to the past allows a conscious way forward and human development. Sebastian Bernhardt (JuLit 3/2023) emphasised this and the Deutsches Historisches Museum had an exposition on this topic as well. Memory

Management is a bit about the past but much more about the future. This is why we have to address it.



DHM 2024 Futures

Flotow Hund

F. v. Flotow hat seine letzten Jahre in Darmstadt verbracht. Seine Kompositionen und Aufführungen seiner Werke haben ihm ein hinreichendes Auskommen an seinem Lebensabend ermöglicht. Als früher Streiter für Autorenrechte an kompositorischer Arbeit wusste er wie wichtig solche Bezüge im höheren Alter waren. Für viele in der damaligen Gesellschaft galten Komponierende als Künstler mit hohem Verarmungsrisiko. Bis kurz vor seinem Tod hat Flotow noch neue Werke komponiert. Das Lied „[Der blinde Musikant von 1884](#)“ wird als das letzte veröffentlichte Werk bezeichnet. Den sterbenden Musiker begleitet sein Hund, der ebenfalls Teil der Aufführungspraxis war. Die einleitende und abschließende Komposition im 3/4 Takt hat eine tänzerische fast humoristische Prägung, die vielleicht eine [Anspielung auf seinen Hit „Die letzte Rose“](#) darstellt. Eine irische Melodie zu einem vom Hund getanzten Begräbnis hätte eine opernhafte Leichtigkeit erzeugt, die nicht vielen im Angesicht des Todes gegönnt ist. Hunde mag ich nicht, aber den da schon. Flotow vertraute sicherlich selbst bis zu seinem Tod auf [die Macht der Musik](#). Sich selbst dabei nicht zu ernst zu nehmen, nachdem sein [Freund Jacques Offenbach](#) kürzlich vorher verstorben war, lässt sich hier erkennen. Da bleibt ein gewisser ironischer Begleitton oder zumindest ein Augenzwinkern. (Image [Digitale Sammlung der Staatsbibliothek Berlin](#) Auszug Flotow Musiknoten 2024-1).

Sleeping

Sleep is a process. That is why it is best to talk of sleeping rather than sleep. There exists abundant research on sleep and more and more acknowledge the process-like characteristics of sleep. The medical literature deals a lot with [sleep apnoea](#), which constitutes a serious health condition. [Time use surveys](#) establish links between daily activities and sleeping for example. The social context is another influence on sleeping. Friends and family co-determine sleeping patterns as well. The latest better understood impact on sleeping depends on the use of technological devices before and during sleeping. Smart phones reveal themselves as not so smart if it comes to the quality of your sleep. At least this the result of the study on „[bedtime technology use on sleep quality and excessive daytime sleepiness](#)“. It yet another field in which technology is slowly creeping under our skin and we have to learn how to handle negative side effects before they endanger our physical as well as mental health. Bedtime routines or reading without a screen before falling asleep appears to be a worthwhile way to improve sleeping. Worth trying out again and again.



Museum Orga

The cathedrals of modernity are under permanent scrutiny. The discussion in Germany was sparked by a [recommendation of the scientific advisory council to the federal government \(Wissenschaftsrat\)](#) to separate the Prussian heritage museums and institutions (SPK) in Berlin into separate entities that have higher autonomy to shape their individual profiles. Too much hierarchy blocks innovation and openness to new approaches that might not fit an overriding instance of decision making. The arts and sciences as well as their libraries need substantial degrees of freedom to flourish in their specific cultural and societal environment. The same [discussion is currently occupying Paris and France](#), since overall the visitors after the Covid-19 crises have not yet come back to the same levels. Digitalization has opened up new opportunities and potentials to reach new audiences. This needed new resources even at a time of budget constraints. Museums have started to take their social functions more seriously besides their role to preserve the cultural heritage. Economic thinking in terms of scarcity of art works, competition between museums and cities or countries for tourism have entered the stages as well. Prices of entry and quantities of visitors have become additional concerns in the organization of the museum landscape. A lot to cope with and to balance multiple policy targets. Accessibility of those treasures is key. Opening up to broader audiences is costly but crucial to provide the justification of the public funds allocated. Great to see more complementary private investment in this exciting field. The [prominent archers](#) in front of the Berlin museums have moved ahead into a new round of competition in the organization of museums.




Renewables

Renewable energy has reached for the 1st time a share of more than 50% in Spain and Germany in 2023. This is an astonishing milestone in the energy transition of both countries. For Spain a report from Red Energy Espanola attributes the Spanish success story to the expansion of mainly wind energy ([Link](#)). The increase of renewable energy in Germany is due to a more rapid expansion of solar energy ([Link](#)). In any case a continued expansion of both forms of renewables allows to reduce the share of fossil fuel even more rapidly than previously estimated. Good news for the planet particularly to phase out energy from coal due to its highly polluting side effect. Countries with faster trajectories shall serve as examples that it is feasible to manage the energy transition also for large countries. Political instability might be a price worth paying considering the positive effects for future generations. Managing the transition in a just way which means to assist poorer households, ensures the respect of social policy targets at the same time. With this in mind the energy transition can be perceived by all as an opportunity rather than a threat to their welfare and wellbeing.



Richter

Gerhard Richter ist kein Richter. The painter Gerhard Richter is of cause not a judge. But somehow he is. In the representation of his 100 works for Berlin in the Neue Nationalgalerie he judges the horror beyond imagination of the Nazi concentration camps, reflects on the role of his own family in this and finds his own way to deal with it. Colors cover the black and white documentary fotos as if a new imaginary has to grow again to overcome the painful memories. He deals with the most difficult kind of confrontation with evil in an astonishing way. The horror as underlying fact remains present in our mind and at the same time we open up to light at the end of the tunnel and abundance of colors. Color is the way forward. Underneath, we tend to or like to forget about the many killing fields. Scratch a bit on the surface and you'll find lots of unresolved issues again. All those fancy colors might just cover up the demons of the past and present. Maybe this is a grossly biased interpretation of his Auschwitz Buchenwald series of paintings, but only time will tell if we are successful in 2024+ to stem the tide of right wing extremism (again).

<p>„Abstrakte Bilder sind fiktive Modelle, weil sie eine Wirklichkeit verschaulichen, die wir weder sehen noch beschreiben können, auf deren Existenz wir aber schließen können.“</p> <p>Gerhard Richter</p>		<p>Gerhard Richter, Dresden 1957 Foto: David Lauder</p> <p>Vier Gemälde und die damit aufgerufenen Kontexte werden von Spiegel zurückgelesen, sondern auch wir selbst. Wir, die Betrachenden, werden damit selbst zu den Inhabern und dem was wir sehen bringt.</p> <p>Die Vielschichtigkeit eines Abbilds oder einer Darstellung, die mit diesem Zyklus aufgerufen wird, beruhen Grundlagen der Malerei, wie sie uns über alle Zeiten hinweg beschäftigt: Der „Blickens“ Zyklus, wie auch die anderen in der Ausstellung versammelten Kunstwerke, rufen das Spannungverhältnis von Abstraktion und Figuration, zwischen Fotografie und Malerei auf, das Richters gesamtes Schaffen prägt. Dieses Verhältnis wird auf einer anderen Ebene auch in der Serie des Übermalten Fotos verhandelt, die Richter seit 1980 schuf. Es handelt sich meist um kleinformatige Fotografien, oft in Format 9x13 Zentimeter, die der Künstler aus seinem eigenen, privaten Fundus sorgfältig Fotos von Museumsbesuchern, Kindern, Spaziergängern oder der Familie. Trotz ihres kleinen Formats haben sie einen besonderen Stellenwert in Werken des Künstlers: Wie keine andere Werkgruppe verkörpern sie die Schnittstelle zwischen der Darstellung fotografischer Bildstoffe und abstrakter Malerei. Die übermalten Elemente können das Bild aus und verbinden es gleichzeitig. Es ist dieses methodische Verhältnis zwischen Abbildung und Abstraktion, mit dem es Richter gelingt, aus dem Bekannten das Unbekannte zu gestalten.</p> <p>Maria Stöckung und Ina Schabert</p>	
<p>wurde sie erst nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg, Benetton 1967 hatte Richter eine dieser Fotos in seinem „Atelier“ aufgehängt. Denn mit der Veröffentlichung der Aufnahmen in Georges Didi-Hubermans Buch „Bilder trotz allem“ (2006), in dem der französische Philosoph sie zum Anlass einer Analyse über die Darstellung des Holocaust nahm, galten bei Richter das Anstößige, sich erneut mit dem Thema zu beschäftigen.</p> <p>In der Folge überlagert Richter die vier Malerei mit Köpfe und Ohren auf einzelne Leinwände und anschließend, diese abstrakt zu übermalen. Mit jeder neuen Farbschicht erschwebende die gemalten fotografischen Vorlagen etwas mehr, bis sie schließlich für die Betrachenden nicht mehr sichtbar waren.</p>	<p>Richter vollzog damit einen Abstraktionsprozess, aus der Übertragung heraus, dem unfaßbaren Grauen des Holocaust mit einer gegenüberstellenden Abbildung nicht gerecht werden zu können. Seine abstrakte Malerei bietet Form- und Farblösungen, die insbesondere durch die zahlreicheren schwarzen grauen Flächen eine melancholische, nachdenkliche Stimmung erzeugen. Das Abstrakte schafft eine Figurative dabei nicht aus, sondern entsteht in dem Versuch ein Raum zwischen Zeigen und Nicht-Zeigen der ein Feld an Reflexionen eröffnet.</p> <p>Den vier „Blickens“-Gemälden gegenübergestellt ist ein großer, vierseitiger grauer Spiegel. Fast von Anfang an legten die Idee- und Spiegelfarben Richters Malerei, mit denen er auf vielfältige Weise die Grenze zwischen „zeitlichem“ und „außerzeitlichem“ Abbild auslöst. Die Spiegel verhalten dabei auf eine subtile Weise und ermöglichen allen im Raum eine persönliche Reflexion. Denn nicht nur die</p>		
<p>Gerhard Richter, Köln 1964 Foto: Susanna Ochs / BildKunst, Bonn 2022</p>			

Neue Nationalgalerie Berlin 2024-1

Time6

Time that has passed, is subject to evaluation and re-evaluation. Our memories work continuously on various representations of time in our mind. Memory management is one such example. Artists have also coined a phrase for a particular form of time management. “The assault of the present on the rest of time” Alexander Kluge had chosen this as the title of a movie on film-making and Katya Inozemtseva had chosen this as the title for the exhibition in Berlin 2023-24. Pieces of art may serve as evidence in court as testimony for war crimes. This is one of the challenging issues of this exhibition. The present uses evidence from the past to illustrate what happened. Re-interpretations are part of this process as well. It is not too rare, that in the present a reframing of the past may occur. Some try to alter the representation of the past (crimes committed long ago) as of minor importance. Such intentional misrepresentations represent the assault of the present on the past. It may equally be attempted to limit the scope of future options. The diesel engine is not the best technical solution for mobility of 8 billion people living on this planet in 2024. The reflection on time needs to take care of the “back shadow” and “forward shadow” of the present. On the individual level, today’s action might be largely determined by past events, experiences and transitions, but they pre-determine to some extent also future events.

Conditionalities shall occur and accumulate, for some more than for others. Some call this scar-effects, others the narrowing down of options. Life reviews may apply a reframing exercise, sometimes even to liberate yourself from the boundaries of the past to open up new or more future options. The time-space subject which ranges from experience to fiction is the matter of literature and cinema.

Some people seem to choose to live in a fictional world for whatever reasons. Rather than a linear concept of time, the artists appear to imagine time in some form of a spiral: from the present you turn backwards in time to project yourself into the future. Maybe, we are caught up in some unresolved narration of the past, to try another projection into a different future. We see one or many movies grow out of this fictionalisation of the present.

The study of the life course remains a formidable challenge. Testing the reliability of sources to separate fact from fiction has overriding importance. Biographies derived from facebook or instagram entries over decades have to deal with this fictionalisation of the self even more than we were used to from other data sources. The basic challenge of the representation of time throughout the life course, however, remains the same.

Source: Kluge, A., Evans, T., & Liebman, S. (1990). The Assault of the Present on the Rest of Time. *New German Critique*, 49, 11–22. <https://doi.org/10.2307/488371> (Image: Exhibition Brücke Museum, Lea Grundig, Unterm Hakenkreuz: die Hexe 1935, Zentrum für verfolgte Künste, Solingen).

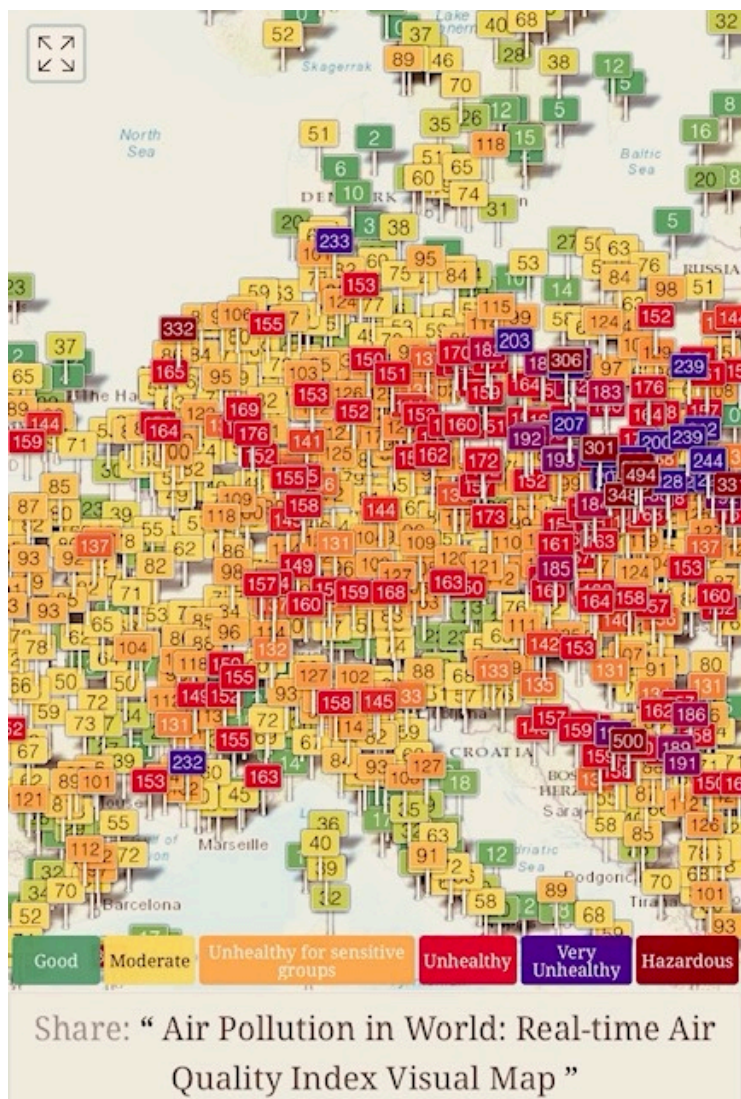


Throne

In continental Europe some people say they are going to sit on their throne for a while if they are going to the toilet. Previous furniture built for that purpose almost resembled a throne. Nowadays the comfort has increased and most households have an excellent WLAN connection in the tiny place, automatic ventilation and heating comfort. Linked to the throne, the issue of the smart home comes back into our mind. Besides the increased comfort we generate abundant amounts of data. Sensors of all kinds can track lots of information that may reveal quite intimate details which we did not intend to share. The movement pattern of mounting your throne might be easily identifiable by your smartphone. Such data could be added to assess your health status in your dedicated health app. Anonymized data could give early warnings about a local outbreak of diarrhea. Do we want this? Probably not. In countries where thousands die from diarrhea, probably yes. It is a matter of balancing the pros and cons. [Health data](#) are thought to be particularly sensitive information about us. It certainly is the new luxury to keep your health data private. Even if you measure and capture a lot of information in your smart home, make sure your smart home is sufficiently secure. For the benefit of all of us.

Air quality EU

On some days of the year there is a cumulative effect of bad influences on air quality in Europe. Cold winter temperatures increase emissions from heating. Outdated heating with coal, still important in Eastern Europe, causes high amounts of extra particles in the atmosphere. In January 2024 a train conductor strike in Germany irrespective of the good reasons for it, makes people take their cars. Road blockades by opponents to reducing diesel subsidies to agri-business add to the pollution situation on a specific day. Overall the population suffers and breathes additional amounts of cancerous particles. Particles settle as dust on crop producing soil, of which we all feed ourselves. This is a vicious circle, which we need to break in the interest of all of us, particularly for the more fragile people and children. The latter start to crowd the medical doctors with sometimes lacking the delivery of crucial medicines for this target group. Where do we go from here? Compromises are key, security of supply chain and allowing, not too much, time for transition periods.



source aqicn.com 2024-1-10

On Justice

Justice is a topic a bit like [democracy](#). Most people deem it possible to simply state something is just or unjust, democratic or undemocratic, black or white. Rather than such a binary perspective it is often more helpful to take the pains to differentiate the [many facets of each term](#) and the complexity to categorize or to subsume a case under one or the other label.

Additionally, there is an evolutionary perspective on these topics. Individual cases evolve in form of trajectories. The binary view of justice or no justice might become more clear or more blurred. The [exhibition of the “Topography of Terror” in Berlin](#) offers a well established and documented view of the NS-terror during the years 1933-1945. The examples of horrific injustices throughout the exhibition are abundant. To [perform justice is a much more difficult exercise](#) and encounters lots of impediments.

In January 2024 Christl Wickert presented her extensive research in archives which she published in the Metropol Verlag 2022 under the title [“Keine Gerechtigkeit. Die ungleiche Unterstützung des KZ-Überlebenden Fritz Bringmann und des SS-Mannes Walter Filsinger nach 1945”](#). ([engl. title](#) and image below). Christl Wickert follows the life courses of the young Fritz Bringmann, prisoner in KZ Sachsenhausen and Neuengamme as of 17 years of age, and the life course of the SS member as of 17 years of age and SS soldier Walter Filsinger. Their life courses crossed at the concentration camp Neuengamme near Hamburg and perhaps later again in Hamburg Bergedorf. Whereas Fritz Bringmann had to struggle to get compensation for his injuries during imprisonment, Walter Filsinger managed through multiple manipulations of documents and dubious support from administrators as well as medical doctors to

obtain war victim benefits.

From life course research we know that early disadvantages are hard to compensate throughout the following decades. This juxtaposition of 2 cases localised in the neighbourhood of Hamburg demonstrates this with full force. Injustice at the early stage of the life course is not compensated but rather magnified through the handling of each case through the proceedings of “administrative justice” in the institution building in the first few decades of the Federal Republic of Germany. The “thick description” as a scientific method is a lesson in unfolding as well as later on unravelling injustice.



Ethics of posterity

We have not inherited the earth from our ancestors; we are borrowing it from our descendants. (native American saying). Adeline Johns-Putra (2019) states this early in her book on “Climate change and the novel.” Her concern is how to think and write about the ethics of posterity. Approaches of ethics in the sense of parental care (for the planet) or motherhood environmentalism do not suffice in view of overpopulation of our planet. Shifting our identity away from toxic production and consumption is advocated in many novels. Science and science fiction offer many dystopian examples.

De Shalit (1995) wrote early on why posterity matters. It is not the standard of living of contemporaries that matters but we should consider ourselves as a part of a transgenerational community. The time horizon of our decisions matters. In pursuing arguments by John Rawls who re-established a contractualist perspective on justice, we have to include future generations into our contractual obligations. Following this approach we might arrive at Brundtland’s perspective on the ethics of posterity which is called sufficientarianism in opposition to simple utilitarianism. In sufficientarianism we owe future generations a just and decent living or at least the possibility to have similar starting conditions. Shifting beyond the apocalyptic view of environmental disasters Adeline Johns-Putra (2019) brings to the forefront that we have to substantially lengthen our time horizon both for consequences of climate change and for dealing with it, albeit the fact that most destructive practices operate much faster than the re-establishing of greater biodiversity.

P.S.: Thanks to the curators of the Lese Lounge Staatsbibliothek Berlin for ease of access to the literature.

(Image: Natur & Kultur in “Extreme tension: Art between Politics and Society” Collection of the Nationalgalerie 1945-2000“ . 2024-1)



Water fountain

We are lucky that in Berlin not all water fountains have disappeared from the public space. Some might remember that in schools it was usual to have a source of water free of charge for refreshments during breaks. Others cherish public places where there was a water fountain nearby.

Rather than looking where to buy refreshments, usually in plastic bottles nowadays, it was easy to hydrate yourself or the whole family from such a public source. Of course, these sources became the enemies of private companies cashing in extra profit margins the higher your urgency for water is. Hygiene is manageable, if [a little bit of care is exercised](#). In periods of [droughts](#) such sources become an asset [beyond the benefits for human beings](#) (see image below, bees refreshing). In France, a law which prescribes that public institutions who receive visitors have to offer a point of access to fresh, drinkable water, is badly respected ([Link to study](#)). The result is more water in plastic bottles and the [transport of those to inner cities](#). Plastic bottles contain thousands of micro- as well as nanoparticles of plastic which we are likely to digest ([LINK to PNAS study](#)). Having your own device ready to be refilled from a public source in inner cities is a healthy alternative.

[Sustainability science](#) has studied the issues and delivers solutions. It is societies and policies that have to (re-) implement these solutions. Here again we are back to political science and public health coordinators to raise awareness for these “blue solutions”.



Flooding

Flooding after abundant rain fall is an almost worldwide phenomenon. This is why research has taken up the issue for some time now. 2 recently published papers hint at direct and indirect consequences of excessive rain and flooding which usually are not taken into account. The Lancet respiratory medicine has highlighted the second round effects of flooding which consists in the latent danger of mould creeping into buildings even after the immediate effect of the flood has vanished. It is the mould with its longer duration that causes major respiratory health and safety hazards on top of the instantaneous casualties and epidemic health risks ([Link to study 2024](#)).

The second study focuses on “the need for more systematic understanding of how societal structures and vulnerabilities moderate disaster risk” ([Link to study](#)). In wealthy countries the flood mortality is substantially lower than in comparatively poor countries. More sophisticated anticipation systems play a major role in reducing casualties. Flood-induced displacements remain hard to predict despite a reasonable explanatory power of the statistical model as the authors point out. Additionally it remains an important question to estimate the share of people who (want to) return after being displaced due to flooding. The frequency of flooding plays a role in combination with the severity of flooding. Climate change might be an additional hazard in the sense that more frequent flooding will change the propensity of people to permanently relocate rather than returning after displacement. Social networks, support and solidarity with the victims of flooding as well as reconstruction efforts will play a crucial role in dealing with these environmental hazards.

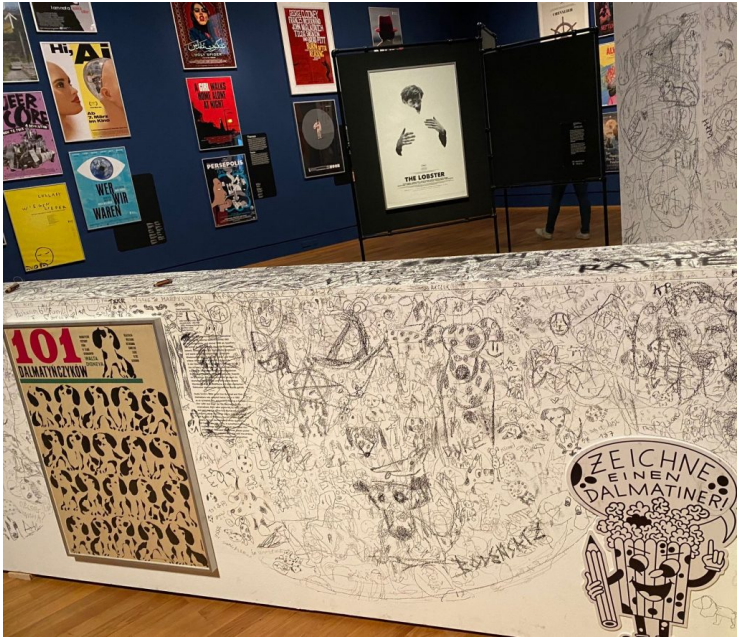
Building higher dikes is a worthwhile solution in regions that

can afford them ([Rotterdam example](#)). It is hardly a solution for countries with little resources to invest in protection in face of an already suffering and displaced population. Dealing with mould after the flooding only adds yet another health hazard to an already difficult situation.



Poster Design

The effective use of posters in [visual communication](#) is a specific craft. Artists have been associated with poster design for more than a century. Cinemas continue this practice. For each movie produced there is an announcement posted in print or digital form. In combination with the [Berlinale 2024](#) film festival the [Kunstbibliothek](#) in Berlin shows milestones of the history of movies and their representations in form of posters. Besides the historical approach there are many hints how to interpret the design language of posters throughout the 20th century. The encouragement to try to produce one yourself not only reserved to children is an additional activating feature of the exhibition ([Link here](#)). Cats and dogs will always catch attention and the playful approach chosen might be a start into a graphic design interest. Overall the exhibition offers a low threshold entry into the world of art and design. Instagramable image on posters evolved into short preview clips, just like instagram paved the way to tiktok video clips. In retrospect posters also provide shortcuts for our [memories](#) to recall whole movies that have accompanied us [growing up](#) and [growing older](#).



Stock taking

From time to time it is necessary to take stock of production and to review the material that has accumulated. As I have been working in archives, official book depositories and libraries for years, it comes almost naturally to deal with questions of how to keep track of all that content. Digital solutions are excellent devices in this regard. I do not have to deal with digitalisation, a huge issue for all historic archives and many recent small museums as well. I have to deal with backups at regular instances. To be sure, each engineer will assure you, better make a backup of your backup Yes, I do this as well. Now the ultimate backup of digital work is ? Got it, a printed copy of your digital work. The best advice I received on this comes from a computer magazine “[ct](#)” gadget mug with imprint advocating “[No backup, no mercy](#)“. To facilitate my printed archive I start with monthly collections of blog entries (Link to pdf-file December 2023 ->[Brainstorming 23-12](#)). The simple conversion yields 63 pages, a printer friendly version 56. Hence the expected yearly volume (60*12) will be somewhere near 720 pages. That is for the archive only or in case my eyes do no longer support online reading on screens for too long.

Digital archives have, of course, many other advantages. It is possible to reassemble my collection of entries by subject through a more thorough editing. Specific edited volumes will surface from this, which I have in my mind but only careful long-term followers of the entries might see already. Political economy and sociology are obvious candidates. Public health, labour, the world of arts and music could constitute other edited volumes. Lots of branches grow out of the trunk of content.



100 x 100

It is the horrible tragedy that Hamas terrorists after more than 100 days hold still more than 100 hostages. We shall never forget. Just like the terrorists taking hostages 51 years ago during the Munich Olympic games 1972. I believe it is about time to remember Winston Churchill's famous words with a few changes, if I maybe allowed: "We shall never surrender. We shall fight terrorists on land and on sea. We shall fight them in the air and underground, in space if we need to." This is part of not forgetting terror and staying alert to looming risks. For some the painful memories last their whole life long. Others, far too many, just forget, or worse, deny the facts.



Drogen Rausch

Bereits in 2015 hat Norman Ohler die Ergebnisse seiner Recherchen zu Drogen in der Zeit des Nationalsozialismus vorgelegt. Der Spiegel Bestseller liegt in 2023 in der 12. Auflage vor. Methamphetamin war demnach bereits vor dem 2. Weltkrieg eine Volksdroge. Die unter dem Namen Pervertin gehandelte Droge war nicht nur unter Medizinstudenten wegen der aufputschenden, wachhaltenden Funktion bekannt. In den ersten beiden Kriegsjahren, oft wegen der schnell voranschreitenden Nazi-truppen, als Blitzkrieg bezeichnet, wurde die Droge gezielt eingesetzt. Abhängigkeiten waren im Anschluss häufig und bereits am 12.6.1941 wurde im Reichsopiumgesetz Pervertin als Betäubungsmittel erklärt (Ohler, 2023 S. 137). Die Kontrolle und Verschreibungspflicht wurde demnach erheblich verschärft. Bis in die höchsten Ebenen bestand das Drogenproblem- und die Abhängigkeit von der bewusstseinsverändernden Wirkung. Selbst Hitler wurde damit von seinem Leibarzt versorgt. Um die sich abzeichnende Niederlage, aber dennoch die Motivation der Nazigefolgschaft aufrecht zu halten, kamen weiterhin Drogen zum Einsatz. Drogenkonsum stellt in keinsten Weise eine Entschuldigung für die Verbrechen dar. Ohlers betont in seiner Schlussfolgerung (2023, S. 303) „die pervertierte Welt des Dritten Reiches, die so umfassend den Kontakt zu einer lebenswerten Realität verlor und derart viel Leid schaffte“. Wenn nur noch der Rausch durch Drogen als Ausweg dient, dann ist die Menschlichkeit, die in Empfindsamkeit besteht, bereits weitestgehend verloren. Auf viele traf die bekannte „Faustsche Formel“ zu:
„die ich rief, die Geister
Werd’ ich nun nicht los“.

Der totale Rausch

Drogen im Dritten Reich



SPIEGEL

Bestseller

Jetzt als Taschenbuch

Flotow CH

Noch 20 Jahre nach seinem Tod wurde Friedrich von Flotow recht prominent aufgeführt. Im Stadt- und Aktien- Theater der Stadt St. Gallen stand seine Oper "[Martha](#)" an einem Mittwoch 26.4.1905 auf dem Programm (Anfang 8 Uhr präzise), gefolgt von [Mozarts](#) Zauberflöte 2 Tage später. Was für eine Konkurrenz. Das Plakat zur Aufführung ist in der Digitalen Bibliothek der [Kunstabibliothek in Berlin](#) anzusehen ([Link](#)).

Die [Geschichte des Theaters in St. Gallen](#) ist aus ökonomischen, gesellschaftlichen und architektonischen Gründen interessant. Das Tagblatt berichtete in 2007 über den Abriss der historischen Städte und den sehr verspäteten Neubau einer moderneren, größeren und wirtschaftlicheren Spielstätte. Damals zu Beginn des 20. Jahrhunderts schon standen populäre Werke wie die Martha und die Zauberflöte auf dem Spielplan. Die Aktionäre des Stadt- und Aktien-Theaters der Stadt St. Gallen haben wohl schon immer etwas mehr auf das Geld geschaut, auch wenn es um Kunst geht. Mehr Zuschauende und Zuhörende ist demokratisch und nebenbei gut für's Geschäft. Der Abriss war beklagenswerter Weise im Jahr 1971. [Ein Neubau an anderem Ort startete bereits 1968](#). Dieser Bau musste ebenfalls nach 40 Jahren Spielzeit grundsaniert oder abgerissen werden. Heute findet sich darin ein lebhaftes [Programm mit Musicals als ausgezeichnetem Schwerpunkt](#) und beispielsweise des [Theaterstücks „Gott“](#) von [Ferdinand von Schirach](#). Die Stadt und die Aktionäre sind wohl aus der finanziellen Verantwortung, aber das Kanton St.Gallen und der Lotteriefond sind eingesprungen.

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Suchergebnisse



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Martha. Der Markt zu Richmond

Plakat
1905

Kunstbibliothek 
Sammlung Grafikdesign

Unbekannter Künstler, Entwerfer*in

Bildquelle und [Großansicht Kunstbibliothek SPK Berlin](#).

Benchmarks

The physiological benchmarks of VOPs (Very Old Person) has been lifted by an Irish athlete recently. The 92 year old person has been examined with state of the art physiological measurements to better demonstrate the training efforts and health outcomes of the VOP. In fact the cardiovascular fitness is comparable to a much younger person without much exercise. In differentiation to a sedentary lifestyle the VOP has a daily 40 minutes rowing routine plus 2-3 times resistance training, meaning weights. 20 years without injury made him indoor rowing champion repeatedly. Physiological benchmarks have been extended due to the surprising late onset of the training only at 73 years of age. Starting late with physical exercise allows to reap enormous benefits as well. For physiological fitness it is not only “use it or lose it” but “use it and extend it”. Almost irrespective of age the novel findings suggest a cardiovascular plasticity that was believed to be impossible. The descriptive account in “The Journal of Applied Physiology” allows no causal inference. Many cardiologists would probably even advise against such high intensity training without careful medical examination before, during and after some months. From a statistical or epidemiological point of view this statistical outlier will likely lead to adjustments of algorithmic potentials of human performance in older age. Handle with care, I would suggest. Working against resistance regularly remains an interesting perspective for an aging person and aging societies.



Ideal City

Ideal City

Even beyond humans the issue of what constitutes the ideal city is a matter of historical as well as experimental significance. Science has recently uncovered a city like organization of habitats in the Amazon region ([Link Science.org](#)). The organization of the [Greek city states](#) has been the model for the development of democratic ideation. The [Roman imperialism](#) has thrived through the splendor of its cities and city lifestyle. No surprise that this continues to be a constant concern for humanity.

[Rapid urbanization continues in Africa and Asia](#). Europe also struggles to keep pace with infrastructure development in every growing cities. Whereas the ideal city in the early Italian Renaissance was imagined without trees, we witness a [renewed interest to bring back nature-like environments and architecture back into cities](#). Combining the best of 2 worlds seems possible. Redesigning inner cities remains a continuous challenge. It is much more than thinking about bricks and mortar. It is mostly about how we want to live, work and communicate together. Therefore, it concerns all of us. Paintings help us along in our ideation about where and how we want to live together. The linear views of the Renaissance appear hardly convenient after the experience of the [20th](#) century.

(Image Gemäldegalerie Berlin, 2024-1, Raum XVIII, Ident Nr. 1615 "[Ideal city" from ca 1490](#) attributed to Francesco di Giogio Martini and next to well-known ideal "[Venus" painting by Sandro Botticelli 1490](#)").



Clausewitz 3

As the Russian aggression in Ukraine continues it is interesting to [re-read Clausewitz again](#). In his major work on strategy in warfare we rediscover lots of strategies that Putin's army applies in the war against Ukraine. But equally, the successful defence strategy of Ukraine with a sizable difference in the size of the army, they both let us better understand the theoretical considerations and [relevance of Clausewitz until today](#). For example, the overriding importance of the size of an army in comparison to the opponent was discarded by [Clausewitz \(p.111-112\) already. He refers to the battles at Rossbach and Leuthen in the Seven Years' War 1756-1763](#). Frederic the Great won 2 battles despite having armies of half the size or even less at his disposal ([Tempelhoff](#)). Training and morale of the armies is an important part of the explanation of a later outcome. In terms of strategy Clausewitz mentions surprise and wit in chapters as well. The next 3 chapters are devoted to (in modern words) distribution and mobility of forces in space and across time including additionally a strategic reserve. The "classical warfare" which Clausewitz transforms into a theory of warfare is followed with horrific resemblance by Putin's Russia in the 21st century. "War is an instrument of politics" writes Clausewitz 200 years ago (p. 467-8). The painters or theorists that attempted to go beyond this rationale have had a hard time to convince politicians otherwise. The idea that law and courts will replace the atrocious power play of nations is silenced again for some years, only to come back with more force eventually. (Image Extract from Nationalgalerie and Digital Collection of Gemäldegalerie 2024-1 by [Adolphe Menzel "Ansprache Friedrich des Großen an seine Generale vor der Schlacht bei Leuthen 1757"](#) [unvollendet](#).)



Shrinkflation

Shrinkflation is a hybrid term that combines “to shrink” with “inflation”. The trick is to keep prices at the same level for a product, but to reduce the weight or amount sold at a constant price. The intention of producers is to indirectly increase prices without touching at price tickets on products. As consumer you are likely to remember the price tag of a product, but much less the unit costs. However, the unit price is the basis for fair comparisons. In supermarkets there is an obligation to print also unit prices (€/kg or €/L) next to price labels. Comparisons allow information irrespective of package size. In shrinkflation the higher unit costs of a product will drive the official measure of inflation (Destatis, 2024). In Germany inflation for food had the top inflation rate in 2023, surpassing even price rises for energy.

On the one hand, shrinkflation is cheating on consumers to sell them less for the same price. On the other hand, oversized products that solicit higher consumption are part of the health and environmental problems we face. The obesity pandemic is part of the XXL consumption hype the food industry and supermarkets have created. In this respect, more expensive food (Eurostat info) potentially may trigger the rethinking of consumption and nutrition. “Eating better instead of less” has always been more expensive.

Besides the profit-maximising logic of shrinkflation, there is at least a small hope that behavioural changes might be triggered to consume less, to use less detergent in washing, less sugar drinks, smaller size pizza and so on. Shrinking our food intake is part of the solution for many problems. In the end cutting out most convenience food will save you a lot of money. As a side effect of such behavioural changes, eventually prices are likely to come down some time later again.



Zwangsarbeit

Die Annäherung an das Thema Zwangsarbeit ist nicht einfach. Auch heute prangern wir zu Recht Zwangsarbeit egal wo auf der Welt an. Die mit weitem Abstand grausamste und umfangreichste Durchführung von Zwangsarbeit haben die Nazis in Deutschland und von ihnen besetzten Gebieten vollzogen. Neben den Schrecken der Konzentrationslager mit dem millionenfachen Mord an Menschen jüdischer Abstammung ist die Aufarbeitung der Verbrechen in Zusammenhang mit der Zwangsarbeit lange in den Hintergrund getreten. Selbst die Zeitzeugen wie Francois Cavanna (2020, S. 10-11) vertraten die Ansicht, dass im Vergleich zu den Ermordungen und Kriegsoptionen ihre Erfahrungen und Leiden im Zusammenhang mit der Zwangsarbeit in den Hintergrund traten. („... cela me rendit plus modéré dans l'expression de mes souffrances. ... nous ne pouvons que fermer notre gueule. Ce que je fais. »).

Neben der systematischen Ermordungsmaschine der Konzentrationslager in der NS-Zeit verdient das millionenfache Leid und die Terrordrohungen und Anwendungen der Nazi gegenüber den ZwangsarbeiterInnen eine angemessene Bedeutung. Das [Dokumentationszentrum NS Zwangsarbeit](#) in Berlin Schöneeweide bietet dafür eine hervorragende Ausgangsbasis. Die Ausstellung ist für alle Altersgruppen geeignet. Behutsamer Einstieg für Schulklassen ab der 5. Klasse und zum Nachdenken anregend für Erwachsene mit Informations- und Lerninteresse. Das Ausstellungskonzept mit seinen [vielfältigen biografischen Materialien von Zeitzeugen](#) erleichtert, neben der Faktenfülle, einen emotionalen Zugang zum Thema. Online lässt sich beispielsweise die Verteilung der Zwangsrekrutierten die Arbeitsdienst leisten mussten je nach Stadtviertel oder sogar Straße verfolgen ([Link](#)

Datenbank und Map).

Die Löhne für deutsche ArbeiterInnen und Ost-ArbeiterInnen aus den osteuropäischen besetzten Gebieten waren fast zehnmal höher. Die in westlichen Besatzungsgebieten zwangsverpflichteten Personen oder selbst anfänglich mit scheinbar höheren Löhnen als vor Ort (Organisation Todt) üblich angeworbene Personen erfuhren die spätere Abwertung ihrer Entlohnung. Es bleibt die Betonung auf Zwang, Terror und Einschüchterung bei der Zwangsarbeit meistens in menschenunwürdigen Massenbaracken aus industrieller Massenproduktion. Einstieg in die Erfahrung: NS Zwangsarbeit Dokumentationszentrum.



Zwang durch Terror

Durch den Terror der Willkürherrschaft mit rassistischer Doktrin wurde aus Zwangsarbeit eine lebensgefährliche Arbeit. Überzogene Sanktionen bei Diebstahl, Plünderung oder Sabotage wurden von den Nazis mit öffentlichen Hinrichtungen (Erhängen, Gruppenschießung oder Guillotine) geahndet (siehe Katalog zur Ausstellung Alltag Zwangsarbeit S.44-45). Straflager und Verlegung in Konzentrationslager gehörten ebenfalls zur regelmäßigen Erfahrung.

Die Zwangslage der dort zur Arbeit gezwungenen Menschen ist kaum vorstellbar und fassbar in unserem System der Beschreibung von Arbeit. Totale Subordination kann vielleicht in Ansätzen verdeutlichen wie diese Situation auf die Personen gewirkt haben muss. Fluchtversuche waren fast ausgeschlossen. Selbst die Verbindung zu den meist deutschen Frauen in Fabriken war unter hohe Strafe gestellt und intime Verhältnisse (bezeichnet als Rassenschändung) wurden für beide Seiten lebensbedrohlich oder endeten für die Zwangsarbeiter oft tödlich. Der Terror in dieser Zeit bestand in der kontinuierlichen Gefahr und Angst tatsächlich oder vermeintlich eine Anklage zu erhalten, die unkontrollierbare, weil selbstherrliche, Strafen nach sich ziehen konnte.

Image: Ausstellung Alltag Zwangsarbeit 2024-1 in Dokumentationszentrum NS-Zwangsarbeit, Berlin Schöne weide.



Zwangsarbeit
in Polen
1940



Polnische Zwangsarbeiterinnen auf einem Acker
im besetzten Ostpolen, ohne Arbeit
Polish forced labourers in a farm field
in occupied Poland, no work
© Deutsches Institut für Fernstudien



Polnischer Zwangsarbeiter am Prager Ring
verbotenen Umgangs mit einer deutschen Frau,
Eisenach, 15. November 1940
Polish forced labourer in the streets for
prohibited contact with a German woman,
Eisenach, 15 November 1940
© Deutsches Institut für Fernstudien

AI and We

Research is beginning to provide empirical evidence and experimental modelling results on the widespread use of generative AI. First results by [Doshi and Hauser](#) point at the individual benefits of using artificial intelligence but the widespread use of it is likely to narrow the scope of novel content. This research is particularly interesting because it deals with the micro level to macro level aggregation effects. [It is fine for me to use AI](#). If it becomes a mass phenomenon, we expect in sum a negative outcome for society as a whole. The example at hand deals with the capability to innovate or to come up with novel content. As more and more texts or newspapers are published with extensive use of genAI, the real element of creation will remain the domain of humans for quite some time.

In my opinion this is due to the difficulties for algorithms to differentiate between the positive and too risky negative aspects of innovative solutions. A query for AI might ask to come up with an innovative solution for auto-mobility of short distances. A human being might propose walking due to the additional health effects the AI might propose helicopter lifts. The not so stupid machine would need a lot of additional information about circumstances to generate useful solutions. Therefore it is not surprising that sometimes public transport apps propose to walk short distances rather than waiting for “delayed or unreliable services“ they provide themselves. Personal circumstances like mobility with children, other dependents or luggage are usually beyond the scope of the information base of the algorithms.

On the other hand, if the AI knows that 50.000 persons after an event want to take public transport at the same time the indication to walk or wait solves an aggregation problem of

individual preferences to adapt to available capacities. Lots of issues to solve for AI and us or better yet, us and AI.

(Image creation: AI using Microsoft Dall-E Image creator: Prompt: a person with notebook in profile and in front of 5 other persons in Office with windows 26.1.2024, 8:24 PM)



AI or I

Generative AI receives a lot of attention. One of the main issues is, to study [how AI interacts with humans](#). The hiring decision by managers or an AI algorithm is an interesting application. According to [Marie-Pierre Dargnies et al. \(2022\)](#) the preference for human decisions remains strong despite reasonably unbiased performance of an algorithm. The main issue is with the transparency of the algorithmic decision-making. As a worker or as a hiring manager the preferences continue to sit with the person rather than the AI. It is a worrying outcome, however, that if the rule of gender equality is removed from the algorithm both workers and managers tend to prefer the algorithmic outcome. I interpret this as a latent preference of study participants for gender bias, which could lead them to expect a more favoured outcome in case the AI makes the decision. Knowing what decision-making rules have gone into the hiring algorithm has an impact on all persons involved.

[A new managerial competence is to be able to assess tasks carefully](#), whether you should perform the task yourself or delegate to AI. In this sense the old question: to do the task yourself or to delegate has simply been enlarged by an additional delegation option. The decision-tree goes from (1) To delegate or not to delegate, and (2) if I want/need to delegate, [should I delegate to AI or somebody in person](#) (not allowed to use AI).

I opted to use AI for image creation rather than to take a photo myself or by one from a professional photographer. (Image creation: [NEUROFLASH](#) AI – Image-Flash 2024-1-26)



Memory Struggle

The struggle of memory is also the memory of a struggle. The exhibition in the [Palais Populaire in Berlin](#) doesn't leave spectators untouched. It is a struggle to recover memories which were attempted to be eradicated. This is the universal message of this exhibition. The colonial past and crimes are part of the struggles of artists from these cultures to re-establish their rights to their own views, traditions and [memories](#). Grass and plants may cover the shelled soil and people, but traces or mortars are often left behind. Light from different angles needs to be shed on these places to reveal the shadows of the wounds. The atrocities and exploitation linked to colonialism and imperialism keeps us struggling with those memories. Just before we jump to the conclusion that it is a memory of a past struggle, we are reminded that consequences are still haunting the present and with the [Russian aggression in Ukraine](#) we have to realize the fight against imperialism continues in the 21st century. Thanks for memorable moments and impressions in view of a global arts and history experience. (Image of art work installation by Sammy Boloji, untitled 2018, exhibition Palais Populaire, Deutsche Bank foundation)



Sammy Boloji, untitled 2018 exhibition Berlin 2024

Modernism

More and more people move into cities. A modern way of living is more accessible there. Besides abundant car traffic public services of transportation like buses and underground are within easy walking distance. Culture, science and education offer attractive opportunities for learning, working and leisure. Diversity is an additional asset most people appreciate of cities. The chances to live your very own way of life are much easier to achieve and thrive in as in remote or rural communities. “Birds of the same feather flock together “. It is easy to find likeminded people among a million people than among a hundred particularly if you’re a bit off the mainstream or avantgarde. The excitement of birds passing the city can reach the emotional force of Hitchcock’s famous movie “The birds”. Even in the modern world we not quite sure what these creatures are up to. Is it a swarm of drones? Are they out of control? Modernism has brought us many amenities, we have to make sure that we really are still in control.



Berlin Kleistpark 2024-1

