



BERLIN IS A CITY in flux. Since German reunification in 1990, the contours of the city have been shifting, with cranes a permanent feature on the skyline. The infrastructure has undergone dramatic improvements, linking the East and the West, and Mitte, once again, is the upcoming centre of activity. Always an artists' city, new galleries have flourished, and many international giants have opened branches in the German capital. But the trending focal point of artistic attention seems very much to be photography. With over 25 (in *brennpunkt* listings) museums, galleries, salons, collections, archives and collaborations dedicated to the medium, aficionados need look no further than the city on the Spree.

Firstly, there are the obvious candidates, the **Museum für Fotografie**, celebrating its 10th anniversary, being intelligible even to non-German-speakers. Located right behind **Zoologischer Garten** station (that's **Bahnhof Zoo** of **David Bowie** fame) the imposing state-funded building, housing the Art Library's photographic collection in its *Kaisersaal*, is also home to the **Helmut Newton Foundation**, archive for works by and ephemera associated with Germany's notorious scallywag of 20th century fashion shoots and more. When I visited, the rooms of naked (ought I to say nude, or is that reserved for the tastefully exposed?) women, erotically and provocatively posed, were countered, if not counterbalanced, by a tiny accompanying temporary exhibition of works by **Greg Gorman**,⁽¹⁾ comprising nude male dancers, entwined and embracing, sensual, erotic and emotive.

Another longstanding key player on the Berlin scene is the private, not-for-profit foundation **C/O Berlin**, which is currently moving location from the **Postfuhrant** on **Oranienburgerstrasse** in Mitte to **Amerika Haus**, completing a grand triumvirate (along with the Museum für Fotografie and the Helmut Newton Foundation) at the east end of **Ku'damm**. Since its opening in 2000, the foundation has been busily presenting a lively and international cultural programme, showcasing the work of established and emerging artists. Its ethos centres on the wish to promote photography independently of commercial interests. A highlight in its history to date is the 2009 **Annie Leibovitz** retrospective, which enabled the three founders to pay back their initial funding loan.

Across town in **Auguststrasse**, another new artistic cluster centred on a former Jewish girls' school, a little northwest of **Alexanderplatz**, is the home of another exalted German photographer's foundation, the **Alfred Ehrhardt Stiftung**. In subject matter and style, he couldn't really be much

PAST PRESENT FUTURE

The emerging eurocapital of contemporary art is seeing photography come to prominence over the traditional accent on painting.

TEXT ANNA McNAY

PERISCOPE

TERMINAL

PhotoWerkBerlin Competition 2014

Politicians and so-called experts have long been debating the use and future of Berlin's three airports: Tempelhof, Tegel and Berlin-Brandenburg. For PhotoWerkBerlin's 2014 competition, photographers were invited to submit works offering their own artistic standpoint on the subject. Works were to concern one or more of the three airports but could be documentary, staged or conceptual in style. Alongside monetary rewards, the best works selected by an international jury will be included in a group show at the Project Space | PhotoWerkBerlin to coincide with the *European Month of Photography* in November 2014.

www.photowerkberlin.com/photocontest

Camera Work Exterior view © Camera Work



more different from Newton, preferring to concentrate on nature and its phenomena, in particular the strip of land, or mudflats (*das Watt*), where the German coast borders the North Sea. Largely funded by Ehrhardt's successful investment banker son, **Dr. Jens Ehrhardt**, the foundation, with its academic orientation, seeks to promote the study of its subject's work, both in photography and film, through curating exhibitions on and offsite, producing catalogues, selling works, and caring for the archive. While only one quarter of the exhibitions show works by Ehrhardt himself, those of other artists must always be related to him either by direct influence, theme or method.

Just around the corner is **Koppenplatz 11a**, a private home and *salon* space belonging to **Petra Rietz**. From 2006-2009, she ran the *salon* in her living room, but events soon became too popular, with 70 odd guests becoming a bit of a squeeze. She therefore acquired the ground floor space as well and now runs it as

a *salon-gallery*, open only to a select audience, interested specifically in photography. 'People who are interested in photography are distinct from those who are interested in art and painting,' Rietz explains. 'You can look at a painting and see it immediately as a picture and an artwork, but people look at a photograph and say "Yeah, and? I could do that".' Rietz no longer wants to waste her time trying to educate such people and thus hosts invite-only events and dinners. Her opening nights, nonetheless, remain open to all, and are usually really busy. She even earned herself a mention in *Das Bild* recently. Works are for sale,

but she is not driven by the commercial side of things; exhibitions reflect her personal interests and tastes. Her income comes instead from a day job with an advertising agency. On the side, she also works as a coach, advising young photographers and helping them improve their work. The first task she sets is always to produce a portrait of her – this is a way of getting to know artists to work with, as well as a handy means of growing her own collection!

Further establishments worthy of mention in the vicinity include Kicken (one of the oldest photography galleries in Germany)

and new arrival Podbielski Contemporary. **Kicken** began life as **Galerie Lichttropfen** in Aachen in 1974 and moved to Berlin in 2000, via Cologne from 1979. It was in Cologne that the venture headed by **Rudolf Kicken** (who sadly passed away on 17 June this year) really took off, becoming the leading gallery for art photography in Germany. Looking after the estates of **Ed van der Elsken**, **Heinrich Kühn**, **Rudolf Koppitz**, **Anton Josef Trcka**, **Umbo** and many others, the gallery also represents a great number of seminal names, including **Man Ray**, **László Moholy-Nagy** and **Alexander Rodchenko**. It was through Kicken



Daniela Wagner Portrait of Norbert Wiesneth
PhotoWerkBerlin

Top left
Helmut Newton *Monica Bellucci, Monte Carlo 2001*
© Helmut Newton Estate

Norbert Wiesneth *Potsdam Suite 2013*
PhotoWerkBerlin



PLACES

that Helmut Newton first gained recognition on the international art market. The gallery hosts four large-scale exhibitions a year, as well as participating in many international fairs. **Podbielski Contemporary**, at just three years old, is also a key player in the international arena, having recently participated in London's **Art 14**. Specialising in Balkan and Middle Eastern photography with a political slant, its founder, **Pierre André Podbielski**, himself an architect and art dealer, seeks to promote transnational work and merge art dealing activities with academic research.

Similar in ethos to Rietz's *salon* model is **Marc Barbey's Collection Regard**, located a stone's throw away at **Steinstrasse 12**. He describes his undertaking as something between a museum and a gallery, with emphasis on Berlin and German photography and black and white works, hosting approximately two and a half exhibitions per year. Founded in 2011, the collection is open for just four hours a week on a Friday afternoon, during which time it typically attracts 25 visitors. Outside of these hours, appointments may be made, and its openings are grand affairs with up to 300 guests. The collection is funded through the sale of works and Barbey himself has a day job in software. His aim is to really promote the photographers he shows, and for these to be lesser-known artists, with small outputs, not of great interest to large galleries and museums, but, nevertheless, of high quality. Although not trained in art or photography himself, Barbey grew up with a love of the subject, and his mother was caretaker for the estate of a well-known **Nabi** painter. His uncle **Bruno Barbey** was a photographer, and the young Marc found himself intrigued not so much by the work as by the lifestyle. He now also looks after the estate of **Hein Gorny** and, although the collection doesn't yet bring in



Portrait of **Petra Rietz**
© Petra Rietz Salon Galerie

enough money to acquire new works, Barbey is confident of what he is doing and wouldn't one day mind owning a **Man Ray** or an **André Kertész**.

While the Museum für Fotografie is state run, there are also some city-funded establishments in the German capital, most notably the **Berlinische Galerie** on **Alte Jakobstrasse**, which, although holding the second most important photographic collection in Berlin, does not solely work in this field. **Camera Work** is another formidable power that ought not to be overlooked. Since 2012 it can boast two galleries in town, the original, located to the west in **Kantstrasse**, and the little brother, **CWC Gallery** (Camera Work Contemporary), housed directly in the aforementioned girls' school building in the trending **Auguststrasse**. The Camera Work consortium owns one of the world's largest photo book and photograph collections,



Hein Gorny *Im Morgengrauen beginnt die Arbeit (Kavallerieschule Hannover)* c.1936 © Hein Gorny /Collection Regard



Norbert Wiesneth *Laut* 2002 C-print, 60x70cm from the series *Interior Monologues*

including vintage works by renowned artists such as **Diane Arbus**, **Richard Avedon**, **Louis Feurer**, **Robert Frank**, **Dorothea Lange**, **Peter Lindbergh**, **Helmut Newton**, **Irving Penn**, **Man Ray** and **Paul Strand**. It also owns the **The Kennedys Museum** in Berlin.

For practising photographers, the one key point of call, however, is **PhotoWerkBerlin**. Headed by **Norbert Wiesneth**, and co-founded by **Sebastian Seidel**, this photographic platform has been running workshops since 2012. Attracting

international photographers from across Europe and further afield, the specialist *ateliers* are all about art, concept and technique. In April this year, PhotoWerkBerlin began a collaboration with the **Kommunale Galerie** in **Charlottenburg** (the bourgeois quarter to the west of **Tiergarten** and north of **Ku'Damm**, home to the largest surviving royal palace in town, and its adjacent museums, including the **Berggruen** and **Scharf-Gerstenberg** collections) allowing them to host exhibitions as well. With these key players, many more established locales, new sites opening up at an almost



Bjoern Albert *Reichstagskuppel*, from the Berlin project 1991-2001



Alice Springs Helmut Newton, Monte Carlo 1987 © Alice Springs, courtesy of Helmut Newton Foundation

‘You can look at a painting and see it immediately as a picture and an artwork, but people look at a photograph and say “Yeah, and? I could do that”.’

Petra Rietz

unmonitorable rate, four photography schools and numerous prestigious auction houses, Berlin truly is a *Fotostadt* and a central contender in this autumn’s biannual **European Month of Photography** (16 October – 16 November 2014).

The varying approaches make Berlin’s photographic scene as eclectic and exciting as its topography and history, and for any serious photo fiend, the German capital is a treasure trove just waiting to be explored.



Roselyne Titaud *Sans titre—Arrangements* 2003 © Roselyne Titaud, courtesy of Collection Regard

CURRENT EXHIBITIONS

Museum für Fotografie

Michael Ruetz: The Complete Landscape

4 July – 5 October 2014

100 large-format photographs of vast landscapes of mountains, sweeping valleys, forests, meadows, and scattered hamlets and farmsteads.

Jebensstrasse 2, 10623 Berlin

Helmut Newton Foundation

Helmut Newton / Alice Springs:

Us and Them

Helmut Newton: Sex and Landscapes

5 June – 16 November 2014

To celebrate its 10th anniversary, Newton’s widow and president of the foundation June Newton (a.k.a. Alice Springs) has chosen to recreate the two exhibitions with which the museum first opened its doors, selected by Helmut shortly before his death.

Jebensstrasse 2, 10623 Berlin

Alfred Ehrhardt Stiftung

WILD - Animals in

Contemporary Photography

5 July – 14 September 2014

Individual perspectives demonstrating how people identify with animals, including collecting them as trophies and turning them into food. The notion of *wild* is addressed in various ways, and the varied photographs depict animals in zoos, in dioramas, and at the taxidermist.

Auguststrasse 75, 10117 Berlin.

Collection Regard

Roselyne Titaud: Visites

11 April – 26 September 2014

Charmingly composed still lifes of Berlin apartments with feelings, memories and emotions inscribed in them.

Steinstrasse 12, 10119 Berlin.

Projekttraum | PhotoWerkBerlin

Lost in Interiors: Photographic Positions on Political Arrest 25 Years after the Fall of the Wall

3 July – 12 October 2014

Exhibition presenting the work of six photographers of differing generations, marking the 25th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall on 9 November 1989. For many, this was a turning point that gave them the freedom to travel. During the years of the GDR, those seeking to leave the state would more often than not end up enduring horrendous psychological torture in the Stasi prison in Hohenschönhausen. Today, the memorial site can be visited and the archives there are open to all. The photographs in this exhibition were all made on site, mostly during the past two years.

**c/o Kommunale Galerie Berlin
Hohenzollerndamm 176,
10713 Berlin.**

FORTHCOMING

C/O Berlin

I Fell in Love with the City

opening 30 October 2014

C/O Berlin is set to open its new doors at Amerika Haus on 30 October 2014.

The inaugural exhibition will feature American photographer Will McBride, who was one of the first artists to be exhibited in Amerika Haus in 1957.

His new exhibition, which will include previously unseen images, will focus on Berlin since World War II.

**Hardenbergstrasse 22-24,
10623 Berlin**