
Lauren Richman
Southern Methodist University, lauren.c.richman@gmail.com

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“SILENT SALESMEN,” SKEPTICAL CONSUMERS:
AMERICAN IMAGES IN A DIVIDED
BERLIN, 1949-67

A Dissertation Presented to the Graduate Faculty of
Meadows School of the Arts
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Lauren Richman
M.A., Art History, Southern Methodist University
B.A., Art History, Vanderbilt University

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This dissertation analyzes the visual language of American cultural images disseminated in Cold War Berlin and investigates how such institutional, lens-based media played a role in the country’s grappling with its postwar identity. Divided Berlin, with porous borders from 1949 to 1961, embodied a “final frontier,” “Western showcase;” a synecdoche of larger American geopolitical interests during a time when information and images defined the Cold War. Existing art historical studies of Cold War-era visual propaganda emphasize the prototypical East/West, communist/capitalist dichotomies, but often do not focus on the impact of the United States as Germany’s most prolific western occupier.

Across three chapters, this dissertation investigates the US government’s visual framing and staging of American life and culture through sponsorship of renowned social documentary photography exhibition, *The Family of Man* (1955); the establishment of “border cinemas” and their dissemination of Hollywood teen tropes; and mass consumer goods exhibitions staged to equate capitalism with “modern living”. Advocating for American-style democracy, capitalism, and mass consumerism, these popular cultural initiatives provoked explicit German responses. In both West and East Berlin, large-scale photography exhibitions by Karl Pawek, and Rita Maahs
and Karl-Eduard von Schnitzler utilize *The Family of Man*’s malleable, humanist framework to serve their own ideological agendas and politics, prompting a group of East German photographers to use images as a means for quietly subverting a despotic regime. After seeing such Hollywood films as *The Wild One* (1953) and *Rebel without a Cause* (1955) at cinemas opened on the border of West Berlin, a subculture of young, working class Germans emerges called the *Halbstarken* (“rowdies” or “hooligans”), who use the iconic American style seen on film to challenge and differentiate from the older, wartime generation. Linked by their concept of “Capitalist Realism,” artists Manfred Kuttner, Konrad Lueg, Sigmar Polke, and Gerhard Richter produce storefront demonstrations as a commentary on the alienating effects of the American-style consumption embraced during West Germany’s “economic miracle”. By challenging the common Cold War binary, this dissertation both questions and expands conceptions of German and American identity. The camera lens is investigated as both an ideological tool, but also a subjective and interpretive vehicle through which skepticism and doubt converge.
**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

LIST OF FIGURES viii
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS xxii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS xxv

INTRODUCTION: “SOCIAL HIEROGLYPHS” 1

Chapter

1. CODED HISTORIES: *THE FAMILY OF MAN*’S LEGACY IN DIVIDED GERMANY 26
   - 1.1 “THE SHOW YOU CAN SEE WITH YOUR HEART”: A TEMPLATE 30
   - 1.2 STEICHEN, THE USIA, AND THE “WESTERN SHOWCASE” 42
   - 1.3 OBSCURED FASCISM: KARL PAWEK AND THE STEICHEN MODEL 57
   - 1.4 PHOTOGRAPHIC CULTURE ACROSS THE EASTERN BORDER 66
   - 1.5 THE SOCIALIST *FAMILY OF MAN* 71
   - 1.6 URSULA ARNOLD AND EVELYN RICHTER’S DOUBLE-CODING 80

2. "OPIUM FOR THE PEOPLE!": HOLLYWOOD AT THE BORDER AND YOUTH REBELLION 91
   - 2.1 ATROCITY FILMS AND THEIDEOLOGICAL SPACE OF THE CINEMA 96
   - 2.2 OCCUPATIONAL REWIRING: THE US GOVERNMENT, HOLLYWOOD AND THE GERMAN FILM INDUSTRY 102
   - 2.3 “EASY ENTERTAINMENT”: THE *GRENZKINO* INITIATIVE 108
   - 2.4 THE AMERICAN REBEL MEETS THE GERMAN *HALBSTARKE* 116
   - 2.5 *HALBSTARKENPROBLEM*? OR THE DANGERS OF ROCK ‘N’ ROLL DANCING 122
2.6 HALBSTARKEN ON SCREEN

3. “THE CHILDREN OF MARX AND COCA-COLA”: ART, CONSUMPTION, AND UPHEAVAL

3.1 FABRICATING THE “AMERICAN WAY OF LIFE” IN DIVIDED BERLIN

3.2 THE “IDEAL HOUSE” AS TABLEAU VIVANT

3.3 ARTISTIC RENEWALS AND THE LATENT COMMODITY IMAGE

3.4 ILLUSIONS OF ABUNDANCE? DEMONSTRATING THE ECONOMIC MIRACLE

3.5 CAPITALIST REALISM’S SHELF LIFE

CONCLUSION

FIGURES

BIBLIOGRAPHY
LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Amerika Haus Bookmobile at the Soviet Zone border, March 1960. Allied Museum, Berlin. 198

Figure 2: Evelyn Richter, Traumland, 1972. Evelyn Richter Archiv der Ostdeutschen Sparkassenstiftung im Museum der bildenden Künste Leipzig. 199

Figure 3: Wolf Vostell, You Are Leaving the American Sector, 1964. Spray paint on silkscreen print on photo canvas. 48.5 x 177 ¾ inches. Museum Folkwang, Essen. © 2016 VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn. 200

Figure 4: Wolf Vostell, We Were A Kind of Museum Piece (Wir waren so eine Art Museumsstück), 1964. Spray paint on silkscreen print on photo canvas. 47 ¼ x 177 inches. Berlinische Galerie, Berlin. © VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn. 200

Figure 10: Installation view, World Exhibition of Photography: What is Man? (Welt Ausstellung der Photographie: Wer ist man?). Academy for Creative Arts (Akademie der bildenden Künste, AdK), West Berlin, 1965. AdK Archives. 204


Figure 12: Schedule for “East screenings” (Ost-Tages) and crowds in front of Camera-Lichtspiele. Nachlass Friedrich Wilhelm Foss. 206

Figure 15: View of “ideal house” from catwalk in We’re Building a Better Life (Wir bauen ein besseres Leben). George-Marshall-Haus, Exposition Park, West Berlin, September 1952. RG 286-MP GER 2222, NACP. 208

Figure 16: Installation view of Room No. 1 (Living Room) at Living with Pop: A Demonstration for Capitalist Realism (Leben mit Pop: Eine Demonstration für den kapitalistischen Realismus). Möbelhaus Berges, Düsseldorf, 11 October 1963. © 2014 ARS, New York/VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn. Photograph by Reiner Ruthenbeck. 209

Figure 17: Konrad Lueg, Coathangers, 1963. 210

Figure 18: Ursula Arnold, 1. Mai, Berlin, 1965. Berlinische Galerie, Berlin. 211

Figure 19: Film still from The Red Balloon. Directed by Albert Lamorisse. 1956. 211

Figure 20: Nadar (Gaspard Félix Tournachon), Félix Nadar in Gondola of Balloon, c. 1863. The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles. ARTstor. 212

Figure 22: Exhibition catalog cover design, *The Family of Man (Wir alle)*, 1955. University of the Arts Archive (UdK; formerly Höchschule der bildende Künste, 1945-75), Berlin.

Figure 23: Cover design, *Coca-Cola Overseas*, December 1958. Edward Steichen Archive (ESA), V.B.i.58. MoMA Archives, NY.

Figure 25: Exhibition catalog cover design, World Exhibition of Photography: What is Man? (Welt Ausstellung der Photographie: Wer ist Man?), 1965.

Figure 26: Exhibition catalog cover design, *On the Happiness of People (Vom Glück des Menschen)*, 1967.

Figure 27: Wayne Miller, Untitled (Birth of Miller’s son, David B. Miller), 1946. In *The Family of Man*, 1955.


Figure 30: Ralph Morse, Untitled (American soldier kissing his English girlfriend, Hyde Park, London), 1944. In *The Family of Man*, 1955.

Figure 31: Jaroslav Guth, Czechoslovakia, n.d. In *World Exhibition of Photography: What is Man?*, 1965.

Figure 32: B. Petzold, Untitled, n.d.. In *On the Happiness of People*, 1967.


Figure 34: Edward Steichen, Aerial View of Vaux, France, 1918. ARTstor.

Figure 35: Installation view, *Road to Victory*, MoMA, 21 May – 4 October 1942. Photographic Archive, MoMA Archives, NY. IN182.7. Photograph by Albert Fenn. Installation by Herbert Bayer.


Figure 40: Floor plan and description of *The Family of Man*, MoMA, NY, 1955. Published in *Popular Photography*, May 1955, 148.

Figure 41: Herbert Bayer, Diagram of Extended Field of Vision, 1930. ©2007 Artist Rights Society (ARS), New York/VG Bild-Kunst Bonn.
Figure 42: Herbert Bayer, Installation view, German section of the Exposition de la société des artistes décorateurs, Paris 1930. ©2019 Artist Rights Society (ARS), New York/VG Bild-Kunst Bonn.

Figure 43: Installation view, *The Family of Man*, MoMA, 1955. Photographic Archive, MoMA Archives, NY. IN569.3. Photograph by Ezra Stoller.


Figure 50: Henri Cartier-Bresson, *Bali, Indonesia*, n.d. Magnum Photo Agency.

Figure 51: Lynching of “Bootjack” McDaniels. Winona, Mississippi, April 1937. Photograph removed from *The Family of Man*, MoMA, 1955.

Figure 52: Detonation of test bomb *Mike*, Operation Ivy, Enewetak Atoll, 31 October 1952.

Figure 53: Test bomb detonation. In *The Family of Man (Wir alle)*, The Municipal Gallery, Munich, 19 November-18 December 1955. Records of USIA, RG 306-FM, NACP.

Figure 54: Wayne Miller, Miller’s family standing in front of a color transparency of test bomb *Mike*. In *The Family of Man*, MoMA, 1955.

Figure 56: Installation view, *The Family of Man (Wir alle)*, HBK, West Berlin, 1955. Records of USIA, RG 306-FM, NACP.

Figure 58: Installation view, *The Family of Man (Wir alle)*, HBK, West Berlin, 1955. Records of USIA, RG 306-FM, NACP.

Figure 59: Installation view, *The Family of Man (Wir alle)*, HBK, West Berlin, 1955. Records of USIA, RG 306-FM, NACP.

Figure 60: Edward Steichen (L) posing with US Ambassador to Berlin James B. Conant (R), *The Family of Man*, HBK, West Berlin, 1955. Records of USIA, RG 306-FM, NACP.


Figure 62: Visitors at *The Family of Man*, HBK, West Berlin, 1955. Records of USIA, RG 306-FM, NACP.

Figure 63: Visitors at *The Family of Man*, HBK, West Berlin, 1955. Records of USIA, RG 306-FM, NACP.
Figure 64: Installation view, *The Family of Man*, HBK, West Berlin, 1955. Records of USIA, RG 306-FM, NACP.

Figure 65: Wolfgang Albrecht, *Leipzigerstraße during East German Uprising*, 17 June 1953. AP.

Figure 66: Ralph Crane, East Berliners attempt to enter British Sector to retrieve aid packages, *Life Magazine*, 31 July 1953. © Time, Inc.

Figure 68: *Telegraf*, 17 June 1953. Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, Zeitungslesesaal.

Figure 69: Postage stamp memorializing Wolfgang Albrecht’s photograph from the 17 June 1953 Uprising.

Figure 71: Bertolt Brecht, *Kriegsfibel* (War Primer), Berlin: Eulenspiegel Verlag, 1955.


Figure 73: Anonymous, Jews forced out of Warsaw Ghetto, n.d.

Figure 74: Anonymous, Young boy surrenders in Warsaw Ghetto, n.d.

Figure 75: Roman Vishniac, *Warsaw (The Cheder, Slonim)*, 1938.

Figure 76: Margaret Bourke-White, *The Talmud Class*, Czechoslovakia, 1938. *Life Magazine* Image Archives.

Figure 77: Visitors viewing Warsaw Ghetto photographs, *The Family of Man*, Munich, 1955. Records of USIA, RG 306-FM, NACP.

Figure 78: Visitors viewing Warsaw Ghetto photographs, *The Family of Man*, Munich, 1955. Records of USIA, RG 306-FM, NACP.

Figure 79: Visitors viewing Warsaw Ghetto photographs, *The Family of Man*, Munich, 1955. Records of USIA, RG 306-FM, NACP.

Figure 81: A Mother and her child appear in a state of shock, 1945. Courtesy of Shogo Yamahata and Bonhams.

Figure 84: Installation view, *What is Man?*, Academy for Creative Arts (Akademie der bildenden Künste, AdK), West Berlin, 1965. AdK Archives.


Figure 87: Otto Steinert, *Luminogram II*, 1952. Estate Otto Steinert, Museum Folkwang, Essen.

Figure 88: Georg Lotter, “Newly wed[s] (sic) in Munich”, n.d. In *What is Man?*, 1965.

Figure 89: Jürgen Vollmer, “Paris,” n.d. In *What is Man?*, 1965.


Figure 91: Richard Peter, “Returned P.O.W.,” Germany, 1946. In *What is Man?*, 1965.
Figure 92: Richard Peter, “The corpse of German air-raid warden was found in the beer-cellar of a restaurant in the old part of Dresden,” March 1946. In *What is Man?*, 1965. 257

Figure 93: Charles Moore, “Race riot at Birmingham, Alabama,” n.d. In *What is Man?*, 1965. 258

Figure 94: Charles Moore, “Race riot at Birmingham, Alabama,” n.d. In *What is Man?*, 1965. 258

Figure 96: Hartmut Vogler, “African Teacher in German Family,” n.d. In *What is Man?*, 1965. 260

Figure 97: Juxtaposition of Max Jacoby, “Platform for cameramen opposite the Schöneberger Rathaus in Berlin during President Kennedy’s address,” 1963 and Yael Joel, “Baby-food test carried out by an American food company,” n.d. In *What is Man?* exhibition catalog, 1965. 261

Figure 98: President John F. Kennedy at Rudolph-Wilde-Platz in West Berlin, Germany, 26 June 1963. Cecil Stoughton. White House Photographs. John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum, Boston. 262

Figure 99: Erich Schutt, *Help for the Buddies*, ca. 1955/1960. 263

Figure 101: Jo Gerbeth, *A Toast to the City of Moscow*, 30 April 1957. Bild 183-46223-0001, Bundesarchiv-Bildarchiv. 264

Figure 102: Günter Weiß, Visitors to *On the Happiness of Man*, IAP, East Berlin, 1 November 1967. Bild 183-F11-1-0001-011, Bundesarchiv-Bildarchiv. Image redacted to comply with Bundesarchiv-Bildarchiv copyright regulations. 265

Figure 103: Giso Löwe, Visitors to *On the Happiness of Man*, 4 January 1968. Bild 183-G0105-0007-001. Bundesarchiv-Bildarchiv. Image redacted to comply with Bundesarchiv-Bildarchiv copyright regulations. 265

Figure 104: Günter Weiß, Visitors to *On the Happiness of Man*, IAP, East Berlin, 1 November 1967. Bild 183-F1101-0001-010, Bundesarchiv-Bildarchiv. Image redacted to comply with Bundesarchiv-Bildarchiv copyright regulations. 266

Figure 105: Martinek, Visitors to *On the Happiness of Man*, 27 May 1968. Bild 183-G0527-0016-001. Bundesarchiv-Bildarchiv. Image redacted to comply with Bundesarchiv-Bildarchiv copyright regulations. 266

Figure 106: Exhibition catalog double-page spread featuring Yosuke Yamahata, A woman breastfeeds her baby amid the rubble, 1945 (R). In *On the Happiness of People*, 1967. 267

Figure 108: D. Hyronimus, Military police socializing with citizens, n.d. (L). In *On the Happiness of People*, 1967. 268

Figure 110: Karl Marx quotation: “The best for man is man himself. Consequently, one must destroy all relationships, all ties in which man is a depressed and enslaved being.” In *On the Happiness of People* exhibition catalog, 1967. 269
Figure 111: Walter Ulbricht quotation: “...Socialist culture is characterized by real humanism and an optimistic view of life and the world. In it all the good, the true and the beautiful, which humanity has produced, are cultivated and become the living source of the full development of all spiritual and moral powers of men.” In On the Happiness of People exhibition catalog, 1967.

Figure 112: View of Berlin Wall at Brandenburg Gate, c. 1961.

Figure 113: *action fotografie* meeting with Professor Widmann (HGB Leipzig). Clara-Zetkin-Park, Leipzig, 1956. Photograph by Roger Rössing, Museum der bildenden Künste (MdBK), Leipzig.


Figure 115: Installation view. *action fotografie* ’57, Leipzig, 1957. Photograph by Roger Rössing. SLUB Dresden/Deutsche Fotothek.

Figure 117: F.O. Bernstein mounting the entrance sign for *action fotografie* ’56, Leipzig, May-June 1956. Photograph by Roger Rössing. SLUB Dresden/Deutsche Fotothek.

Figure 118: Installation view, *action fotografie* ’56, Leipzig, May-June 1956.

Figure 119: Installation view, *action fotografie* ’56, Leipzig, May-June 1956.

Figure 121: Günter Rössler, *Solarisation*. In *action fotografie* ’56 exhibition catalog, 1956.

Figure 123: Excerpt from *action fotografie* ’57 exhibition catalog displaying “D” classifications. Leipzig, 1957.

Figure 126: “Übergabe eines Beutels” (Handing over a bag), Observation, n.d. Der Bundesbeauftragte für die Unterlagen des Staatssicherheitsdienstes der ehemaligen Deutschen Demokratischen Republik (Federal Commissioner for the Records of the State Security Service of the former German Democratic Republic, BStU), Berlin.

Figure 127: Fotos zum Beobachtungsbericht (Photos of the observation report), 1984. BStU, Berlin.


Figure 132: Boris Vladimirski, *Roses for Stalin*, 1949. ARTstor.


Figure 134: Henry Ries, Landing of the Candy Bombers at Tempelhof Airport, 1948.

Figure 135: Guanajay IRBM Launch Site 1 with Probable Nuclear Warhead Storage Site, 22-56N 82-39W, 17 October 1962. NASM-NASM-9A09003, Dino Brugioni Collection, National Air and Space Museum.
Figure 136: Film still from Abraham Zapruder’s video of JFK’s assassination, Dealey Plaza, Dallas, 22 November 1963. © 1967 The Sixth Floor Museum, Dallas, TX.


Figure 138: Bernd Feuerhelm, Halbstarke dressed in leather jacket and cropped blue jeans with a ducktail plume. Privatarchiv Bernd Feuerhelm.

Figure 139: Camera-Lichtspiele, Potsdamer Platz, West Berlin. Nachlass Friedrich Wilhelm Foss.

Figure 141: Promotional lobby card for The Wild One. Directed by Laslo Benedek. Culver City, CA: Columbia Pictures, 1953. 79 min., 35mm. Heritage Auctions.

Figure 144: Promotional poster for Rock Around the Clock. Directed by Fred F. Sears. Culver City, CA: Columbia Pictures, 1956. 77min., 35mm.

Figure 145: Halbstarken wearing leather jackets, Levi jeans, and Elvis coifs working on a motorbike. Photograph by Will McBride. Bildarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz.

Figure 146: Halbstarken wearing leather jackets, cuffed jeans, pomaded ducktail plumes and carrying a lunchbox decorated with James Dean’s face, c. 1959. Photograph by Martin Schmidt. Deutsches Historisches Museum.

Figure 148: Film still from Berlin – Ecke Schönhauser (Berlin – Schönhauser Corner). Directed by Gerhard Klein. East Berlin: DEFA, 1957. 81 min., 35mm. DEFA Stiftung Filmdatenbank.

Figure 149: Film stills from KZ (Death Camp). Produced by the United States Office of War Information (OWI). Welt im Film 5/1945. 20 mins., 35mm. Bundesarchiv-Filmothek.

Figure 150: Film still from Welt im Film (World in Film). Produced by the United States Office of War Information (OWI). Bundesarchiv-Filmothek.

Figure 151: Film still from Todesmühlen (Death Mills, USA). Directed by Billy Wilder. US Department of War, 1945. 22 min., 16mm.

Figure 152: Lee Miller, “Believe It,” Vogue, 1 June 1945.

Figure 153: Margaret Bourke-White, “German civilians made to face their nation’s crimes,” Buchenwald Concentration Camp Liberation, April 1945.

Figure 155: Film still from Nuit et Brouillard (Night and Fog, FR). Directed by Alain Resnais, 1956. 32 min., 16mm.

Figure 156: Film still from unfinished film, German Concentration Camps Factual Survey (Memory of the Camps, USA/UK). Directed and produced by Sidney Bernstein and Alfred Hitchcock for American and British Army Film Units, 1945. 16mm. Imperial War Museum, London. UCLA Film and Television Archive.

Figure 157: Film still from Die Mörder sind unter uns (Murderers Among Us, GDR). Directed by Wolfgang Staudte. East Berlin: DEFA, 1946. 85 min., 35mm.
Figure 159: Promotional poster for *Here Comes Mr. Jordan*. Directed by Alexander Hall. Culver City, CA: Columbia Pictures, 1941. 94 min., 35mm.

Figure 161: East Germans invited across the border to watch Western television, 17 August 1951. Records of the Agency for International Development, RG 286-MP GER-1148, NACP.

Figure 163: “Brückenplastik” Award, 2 November 1954. Deutsche Kinemathek – Museum für Film und Fernsehen Archiv, Berlin.

Figure 164: Oscar Martay accepting the “Brückenplastik” Award, 2 November 1954. Deutsche Kinemathek – Museum für Film und Fernsehen Archiv, Berlin.


Figure 167: Berlin: Zones of Occupation Map, 1945. Compiled and drawn by the Office of Strategic Services. Central Intelligence Agency.

Figure 168: Camera-Lichtspiele (Grenzkino) ticket stub. Nachlass Friedrich Wilhelm Foss.

Figure 169: Couple standing in front of Vox-Lichtspiele (Grenzkino). Flimmern auf dem Eisernen Vorhang: Die Geschichte der Berliner Grenzkinos 1950 bis 1961 (exh. cat., 2011).

Figure 170: Bali-Lichtspiele (Grenzkino) program, June 1954. Deutsche Kinemathek – Museum für Film und Fernsehen Archiv, Berlin.

Figure 171: Map of West Berlin Grenzkinos. Organized by Andreas Döhler, Anna Krenz, Susanne Quehenberger, Bianca Schemel, and Jacek Slaski. Berlin: WIR e.V., 2011.

Figure 172: Camera-Lichtspiele promotional material. Nachlass Friedrich Wilhelm Foss.

Figure 173: Atlantic (Grenzkino), West Berlin. Mitte Museum/Bezirksamt Mitte von Berlin.

Figure 174: Examples of western film posters depicting sexualized women. In *On the Happiness of Man* exhibition catalog, 1967.

Figure 176: West German promotional photograph for *The Wild One*, 1954.

Figure 178: Marlon Brando on set for *The Wild One*, 1953.

Figure 181: Promotional photograph depicting Johnny and his gang. In *The Wild One*, 1953.

Figure 182: Film still depicting Jim and a gang of peers. In *Rebel without a Cause*, 1955.

Figure 183: Intertitle warning in opening credits for *The Wild One*, 1953.

Figure 184: Intertitle warning in opening credits for *Blackboard Jungle*, 1955.

Figure 185: Johnny grabbing Kathie’s blouse. Film still from *The Wild One*, 1953.
Figure 186: Group of male students catcalling Mrs. Hayes. Film still from *Blackboard Jungle*, 1955.

Figure 187: Sexualized depiction of Mrs. Hayes in promotional material for *Blackboard Jungle*, 1955.

Figure 189: Youth reading pulp fiction dime novels in postwar Germany, 1950. Photograph by Gerd Minigram. Bildarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz.

Figure 190: “Dr. Dietrich Manicke, Amerika Haus music program manager, illustrates use of new American Haus record listening cabins to Frau Frieke, youth librarian, and Frau Mueller, secretary.” Amerika Haus, Berlin, 5 June 1957. Allied Museum, Berlin.

Figure 191: Gathering under the S-Bahn in East Berlin. Film still from *Berlin – Ecke Schönhauser*, 1957. Photograph by Siegmar Holstein and Hannes Schneider.

Figure 193: Film still of wall in the opening credits for *Die Halbstarken* (Teenage Wolfpack), 1956.

Figure 195: Horst Büchholz on set for *Die Halbstarken* (Teenage Wolfpack), 1956.

Figure 196: Opening shot of Karin Baal as Sissy. *Die Halbstarken* (Teenage Wolfpack), 1956.

Figure 197: Film still from opening scene. *Die Halbstarken* (Teenage Wolfpack), 1956.

Figure 198-199: Film stills of Mr. Borchert arguing with his son Jan and Jan after Mr. Borchert strikes him on the face. *Die Halbstarken* (Teenage Wolfpack), 1956.

Figure 200: Film still of rock ‘n’ roll foot work. *Die Halbstarken* (Teenage Wolfpack), 1956.

Figure 201: Film still of hip-swinging. *Die Halbstarken* (Teenage Wolfpack), 1956.

Figure 203: Film still of Freddy in shiny leather pants. *Die Halbstarken* (Teenage Wolfpack), 1956.

Figure 204: Film still of Freddy mocking the John Philips Soussa march music by marching his group of friends out of the bar. *Die Halbstarken* (Teenage Wolfpack), 1956.

Figure 205: Film still of Sissy grabbing arm of the chair in pleasure. *Die Halbstarken* (Teenage Wolfpack), 1956.

Figure 206-207: Film stills of Sissy at the beginning of the film versus the end of the film. *Die Halbstarken* (Teenage Wolfpack), 1956.

Figure 208: Film still of Kathie seductively caressing Johnny’s motorcycle. *The Wild One*, 1953.

Figure 209-210: Film stills of Berlin’s border and crossing into the western sectors. *Berlin – Ecke Schönhauser*, 1957.

Figure 211-212: Film still of industrial work zone and rubble where Dieter works in East Berlin. *Berlin – Ecke Schönhauser*, 1957.

xvi
Figure 213-214: Film stills of Karl-Heinz in his “frivolous leather jacket” and a bolo tie after getting injured. Berlin – Ecke Schönhauser, 1957.

Figure 215: West Berlin newspaper seller with cover story discussing NATO. Berlin – Ecke Schönhauser, 1957.

Figure 216-217: Kohle crossing into the western sector to go to the cinema. Berlin – Ecke Schönhauser, 1957.

Figure 218: View of Marilyn Monroe poster on bunk-bed at East German transit camp prior to legal immigration into West Germany. Berlin – Ecke Schönhauser, 1957.

Figure 219: Ursula Arnold, Schönhauser Allee, Berlin 1981. BG-FS 017/02, 11, Berlinische Galerie, Berlin.

Figure 220: Soviet Panzer in front of City-Lichtspiele one day after the Berlin Wall is constructed, 13 August 1961. Ullstein Bild.


Figure 223: Karel Appel, Deux grandes têtes (Two Large Heads), 1960. Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York. 2018 Karel Appel Foundation / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York.

Figure 225: Gerhard Richter, Faltbarer Trockner (Folding Dryer), 1962. Atelier Gerhard Richter.

Figure 226: Gerhard Richter, Atlas, Sheet 10, 1962. Newspaper, magazine, and album photographs. Städtische Galerie im Lenbachhaus, Munich.

Figure 228: Visitors at Wie wohnt Amerika (How America Lives). Central Decimal Files: Germany: Expositions, Exhibitions, and Fairs, RG 59, 862A.191 BE/11-850, NACP.

Figure 230: Man standing outside the model home, America zu Hause (America at Home), October 1950. Central Decimal Files: Germany: Expositions, Exhibitions, and Fairs, RG 59, 862A.191 BE/11-850, NACP.

Figure 231: Crowds of visitors lined up outside the model home, America zu Hause, October 1950. Central Decimal Files: Germany: Expositions, Exhibitions, and Fairs, RG 59, 862A.191 BE/11-850, NACP.

Figure 232: Visitors peering through the windows of the model home, America zu Hause, October 1950. Central Decimal Files: Germany: Expositions, Exhibitions, and Fairs, RG 59, 862A.191 BE/11-850, NACP.

Figure 233: Visitors crowding into the model home, America zu Hause, October 1950. Central Decimal Files: Germany: Expositions, Exhibitions, and Fairs, RG 59, 862A.191 BE/11-850, NACP.

Figure 234: Kitchen inside model home, America zu Hause, October 1950. Central Decimal Files: Germany: Expositions, Exhibitions, and Fairs, RG 59, 862A.191 BE/11-850, NACP.

Figure 238: Entrance to Better Life explaining the importance of the Atlantic Community, September 1952. RG 286-MP GER-2224, NACP. 354

Figure 239: Installation view of Good Design exhibition at MoMA, 21 November 1950-28 January 1951. Curated by Edgar Kaufmann, Jr. Photograph by Leo Tractenberg. IN463.1A, MoMA Archives, NY. 355

Figure 241: Aerial view of Levitt and Sons houses in Levittown, Pennsylvania, 1952. Special Collections Research Center, Temple University Libraries. The Encyclopedia of Greater Philadelphia. 356

Figure 242: Display of objects at Better Life, September 1952. RG 286-MP GEN-1976, NACP. 357

Figure 243: Galleries of objects and furnishings for sale at Better Life, September 1952. RG 286-MP GEN-2353, NACP. 357

Figure 244: Visitors peer inside the “Ideal House” at Better Life, September 1952. RG 286-MP GEN-1902, NACP. 358

Figure 245: “Housewife” actress demonstrating the bathtub at Better Life, September 1952. RG 286-MP GEN-1888, NACP. 359

Figure 246: Aerial view of “Ideal House” at Better Life, September 1952. RG 286-MP GEN-2394, NACP. 360

Figure 247: Soviet Premier Nikita S. Khrushchev and US Vice President Richard M. Nixon during their “Kitchen Debate” at the US exhibit at Moscow’s Sokolniki Park, 24 July 1959. AP Photo. 361

Figure 250: Installation view of children playing with toys at Better Life, September 1952. RG 286-MP GEN-1903, NACP. 363

Figure 253: Jeff Wall, Dead Troops Talk (a vision after an ambush of a Red Army patro, near Moqor, Afghanistan, winter 1986), 1992. Light transparency in lightbox. © Jeff Wall. 366

Figure 254: Visitors look inside windows of “ideal house” through passageways at Better Life, September 1952. RG 286-MP GEN-1879, NACP. 367

Figure 256: Final gallery at Better Life with adjoining sign discussing the average German worker. Stuttgart. RG 286-MP GEN-1974, NACP. 368

Figure 257: Galleries of objects and furnishings for sale at Better Life, September 1952. RG 286-MP GEN-1899, NACP. 368

Figure 258: Exterior view of Maison sans Frontières, Paris. RG 286-MP GEN-2346, NACP. 369

Figure 259: Exterior view of expanded Deplirex trailer used for the Caravan of Modern Food Services. RG 286-MP GEN-1959, NACP. 369
Figure 260: Floorplan of exhibition at the *Caravan of Modern Food Services*, France. RG 286-MP GEN-1949, NACP.

Figure 262: Interior view of supermarket display inside the *Caravan of Modern Food Services*, France. RG 286-MP GEN-1988, NACP.

Figure 264: Screening room at *Caravan for Modern Food Service*. RG 286-MP GEN-1996, NACP.

Figure 266: Visitors to “Supermarket USA” claiming gratis bags of groceries. Records of the ITA, RG 489-OF, NACP.

Figure 267: Günther Uecker, *Das gelbe Bild* (Yellow Painting), 1957-58. Nails and oil on canvas. 34 ¼ x 33 ½ inches. Archiv Günther Uecker.

Figure 269: Aerial view of Berlin, 1945. Granger Historical Picture Archive.

Figure 270: “Trümmerfrauen” clearing the rubble, Berlin 1945. Bild 183-Z1218-315, Bundesarchiv-Bildarchiv.

Figure 271: Walter Sanders, “What Cigarettes will Buy,” December 1946. Time/Life Picture Collection.

Figure 274: Gerhard Richter, *Lebensfreude* mural, 1956. Deutsche Hygienemuseum, Dresden. Destroyed.

Figure 276: Isaak I. Brodsky, *Lenin on a Rostrum*, 1927. Oil on canvas.

Figure 278: George Segal, *The Dinner Table*, 1962. ARTstor.

Figure 280: Tom Wesselmann, *Great American Nude, No. 29*, 1962. Mixed media and collage on board. 36 x 80 inches. Tom Wesselmann Estate.

Figure 281: James Rosenquist, *The lines were etched deeply in her face*, 1962. Oil on canvas. 66 x 78 inches. Collection of Meryl and Robert Meltzer. James Rosenquist Studio / VAGA, New York.

Figure 282: Andy Warhol, *Bonwit Teller*, 1961.

Figure 284: Two invitations for Kaiserstr. 31A Sonderausstellung, 11 May 1963. Collection Tobias Kuttner, Berlin.

Figure 285: Manfred Kuttner, *Heiliger Stuhl* (Holy Chair), 1962. JOHAN KÖNIG Berlin.

Figure 286: Installation view at Sonderausstellung, Düsseldorf, 11 May 1963. Archiv Kuttner. Photograph by Manfred Kuttner.

Figure 287: Konrad Lueg, *Der OMO-Vertreter* (The Omo Rep), 1963.

Figure 288: Midcentury OMO print advertisement.

Figure 289: Example of a “Persilschein” denazification certificate. 3 December 1946.

Figure 290: Midcentury Persil detergent boxes, “Persil nichts pflegt besser—nichts wäscht weisser!” (“Persil: Nothing cleans better—nothing washes whiter!”).

Figure 294: Gerhard Richter, *Eisläuferin* (Skater), 1963. Atelier Gerhard Richter.
Figure 295: Installation view at Sonderausstellung, Düsseldorf, 11 May 1963. Archiv Kuttner. Photograph by Manfred Kuttner.


Figure 299: Installation view of Room No. 1 (Living Room) at Living with Pop. Möbelhaus Berges, Düsseldorf, 11 October 1963. © 2014 ARS, New York/VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn. Photograph by Reiner Ruthenbeck.

Figure 301: Konrad Lueg, Four Fingers, 1963. Oil on canvas. Presumably destroyed.

Figure 304: Gerhard Richter, Mund (Mouth), 1963. Atelier Gerhard Richter.

Figure 306: Gerhard Richter, Hirsch (Deer), 1963. Atelier Gerhard Richter.

Figure 308: Wayne Thiebaud, Salad, Sandwiches, and Desserts, 1962. Sheldon Museum of Art, University of Nebraska—Lincoln. VAGA, New York, NY.

Figure 311: Police inspecting fire damage caused by RAF at Kaufhof, Frankfurt. 3 April 1968. Deutsche Presse-Agentur.

Figure 313: Sigmar Polke, Socken (Socks), 1963. The Estate of Sigmar Polke / VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn.

Figure 315: Cover design of magnum: Die Zeitschrift für das moderne Leben. “The Society in which we Live,” No. 12 (April 1957).

Figure 316: Depictions of shopping in West Germany. Double-page spread in magnum. No. 12 (April 1957).

Figure 318: “Herbstliche Visionen!” (Advertisement for Living with Pop). 5 October 1963. Der Mittag.


Figure 324: Cover of Grafik des Kapitalistischen Realismus (Graphics of Capitalist Realism), 1968/71.

Figure 327: Reichsadler (Imperial Eagle) with American shield and painted head, Tempelhofer Feld, West Berlin, 1948.

Figure 328: Cover design illustrating violent demonstrations in front of Amerika Haus Berlin, Agit 883, issue 60, 1970.

Figure 329: Rolf Ficker’s letter published in Agit 883.

Figure 330: Incendiary device deposited in Amerika Haus Berlin, 12 December 1969.
Figure 331: Demonstration against the US marching into Cambodia and the unlawful deaths of four Kent State students five days earlier. Amerika Haus Berlin, 9 May 1970.
## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AKD</td>
<td>Akademie der Künste, Berlin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AND</td>
<td>Allgemeiner Deutscher Nachrichtendienst</td>
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<tr>
<td>AIZ</td>
<td>Arbeiter Illustrierte Zeitung</td>
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<tr>
<td>BDA</td>
<td>Berlin Filmverleiherverband</td>
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<tr>
<td>BND</td>
<td>Bundesnachrichtdienst</td>
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<tr>
<td>CCF</td>
<td>Congress for Cultural Freedom</td>
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<tr>
<td>CDU</td>
<td>Christlich-Demokratische Union Deutschlands</td>
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<tr>
<td>CIA</td>
<td>Central Intelligence Agency</td>
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<tr>
<td>DIVO</td>
<td>Gesellschaft für Markt- und Meinungsforschung m.b.H., Frankfurt/Main</td>
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<tr>
<td>DEFA</td>
<td>Deutsche Film Aktiengesellschaft</td>
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<tr>
<td>DM</td>
<td>Deutsche Mark</td>
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<tr>
<td>DSF</td>
<td>Gesellschaft für Deutsche-Soviet Freundschaft</td>
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<tr>
<td>ECA</td>
<td>Economic Cooperation Association</td>
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<tr>
<td>EDC</td>
<td>European Defense Community</td>
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<tr>
<td>ERP</td>
<td>European Recovery Program</td>
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<tr>
<td>FDGB</td>
<td>Freier Deutsche Gewerkschaftsbund</td>
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<tr>
<td>FDJ</td>
<td>Freie Deutsche Jugend</td>
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<tr>
<td>FRG</td>
<td>Federal Republic of Germany (BD, Bundesrepublik Deutschland)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Abbreviation</td>
<td>Full Form</td>
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<tr>
<td>PAD</td>
<td>Public Affairs Division</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pf</td>
<td>Pfennig</td>
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<tr>
<td>POW</td>
<td>Prisoner of War</td>
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<tr>
<td>PWD</td>
<td>Political Warfare Division</td>
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<tr>
<td>RIAS</td>
<td>Rundfunk im amerikanischen Sektor</td>
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<tr>
<td>RKF</td>
<td>Rote Armee Fraction</td>
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<tr>
<td>RM</td>
<td>Reichsmark</td>
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<tr>
<td>SAPMO</td>
<td>Stiftung Archiv der Parteien und Massenorganisationen der DDR</td>
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<tr>
<td>SDS</td>
<td>Sozialistische Deutsche Studentenbund</td>
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<tr>
<td>SED</td>
<td>Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands</td>
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<tr>
<td>SMAD</td>
<td>Sowjetische Militäradministration in Deutschland</td>
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<tr>
<td>SPD</td>
<td>Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands</td>
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<tr>
<td>SS</td>
<td>Schutzstaffel</td>
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<tr>
<td>UFA</td>
<td>Universum Film Aktiensgesellschaft</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNESCO</td>
<td>United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>USIA</td>
<td>United States Information Agency</td>
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<tr>
<td>USIS</td>
<td>United States Information Service</td>
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<tr>
<td>USSR</td>
<td>Union of Soviet Socialist Republics</td>
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<tr>
<td>WEU</td>
<td>Western European Union</td>
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<tr>
<td>ZKF</td>
<td>Zentrale Kommission Fotografie</td>
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</table>
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unwavering belief in my abilities—both as a scholar and an individual—undoubtedly propelled me throughout my doctoral education; it is to them that I dedicate this dissertation.
INTRODUCTION: “SOCIAL HIEROGLYPHS”

Dated March 1960, one year before the construction of the Berlin Wall, this anonymous photograph depicts an Amerika Haus bookmobile parked meters from the Berlin-Hermsdorf border leading into East Germany (Deutsche Demokratische Republik, GDR) (fig. 1). A police guard and customs official appear at the end of the sidewalk, standing at attention and acknowledging the photographer. Operating as an official US Information Center since 1947, Amerika Haus had devised a bookmobile service since the institution’s earliest days as a US military public library. On the surface, the image provides information about the institution’s overarching mission: to mobilize the “reeducation” of East and West Germans (Bundesrepublik Deutschland, FRG) following the censorship and oppression of the Third Reich; however, looking to Louis Althusser’s theory of the Ideological State Apparatus (ISA), the image actually functions as an ideological lens. ISA’s—schools, churches, cultural institutions, mass media—are institutions that function primarily by ideology, rather than repression. With an almost literal

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2 Berlin-Hermsdorf is the northernmost border between the American Sector of West Berlin and Soviet-operated East Germany, namely Potsdam. Interestingly enough, this location is quite proximate to the Glienicke Brücke, a bridge used primarily by the Allies to exchange operational military information to Potsdam liaisons. Later referred to as, “the bridge of spies”, the Glienicke Brücke also served as an exchange point for detained spies between the Americans and the Soviets.
toeing of the border-line and the visual confrontation of a ‘slanted message’, the photograph makes transparent its Foucauldian apparatus in which “the play of signs defines the anchorages of power.”

Althusser posits that “ideology is a ‘representation’ of the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence.” In other words, ideology is a fiction; one which references the conditions of reality, but remains constructed by a governing or dominant body and a notion of the visual that is fundamentally inseparable from the ideological. Standing in the James-Simon-Park and gazing toward Alexanderplatz in East Mitte, Evelyn Richter (b. 1930) captures a poignant moment: the momentary passing of the “Traumland” ship down the Spree River (fig. 2). Translated to “Dreamland”, the ship functions as a mobilized merchant of dreams as fictions, moving from east to west. The focal point of the image is the ship’s starboard moniker, the clean black letters in sharp focus as the depth of field disintegrates into the Berlin Cathedral in the background. This haziness, in addition to the shoreline presence of an older man and young child hand-in-hand, invokes a dream-like quality. Richter’s message is one of irony: her critical view on everyday life in the GDR communicates as anything but a dreamland.

Analysis of Richter’s prolific oeuvre and personal politics reveals her consistent attempt to quietly destabilize State Socialism’s utopian narrative. Applying Jock Young’s subcultural theory, Traumland communicates “subterranean” value, or that which coexists alongside “the

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5 Althusser, “Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses.”
overt or official values of society…[and]…are a product of or a reaction to social forces existing in the world outside.” Though not considered deviant, the subterranean implicates a subtle subversion of the dominant, or in Richter’s case, the imposed values of East German society.

The concepts of the subterranean and the ideological lens can offer insight into how German agency is constructed once the country is occupied by Allied forces and separates into two states. Gayatri Spivak’s seminal postcolonial text “Can the Subaltern Speak?” (1988) functions as a metaphorical methodological framework for my study. Germany is a subaltern or colonized nation; the Western country’s historical imperialism and Fascist dictatorship only solidify this point. However, knowledge, like a commodity, has the capacity to be exported for reasons of political, economic, and cultural prowess and development. Spivak’s essay can aid in drawing attention to divided Germany’s contested status during the Cold War: Is there a German voice under occupation and after? How is it reconstructed and what does it say?

Through careful looking at institutional imagery and the explicit German responses they conjure, this project investigates the phenomenon of cultural reprise after crisis and occupation. Each chapter opens with the examination of a cultural initiative established by the US military or

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6 Jock Young, “The Subterranean World of Play,” in *The Drugtakers: The Social Meaning of Drug Use* (London: MacGibbon and Kee, 1971), accessed 29 August 2015, http://www.drugtext.org/The-Drugtakers/6-the-subterraneanworld-of-play.html. Young’s theory analyzes drug-taking as a leisurely pursuit in a free, capitalist, and modern industrial society. For the purposes of this dissertation, Young’s idea of “subterranean” must be altered in order to apply it to the GDR, a society in which freedom and privacy were subject to the State Socialist government and realistically, impossible (not to mention dangerous) to uphold. Thus, one should consider Young’s “pursuit of leisure” as analogous to figures pursuing autonomy from official East German government.

7 Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, “Can the Subaltern Speak?” in *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, edited by Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988). Spivak maintains a skepticism about the method by which one can study the third world, specifically India, when the act of research itself can require defining dominant and subordinate, or Other.
civilian government in Berlin as embodiments of newly-introduced and imposed ideologies and performances of culture. Given the extremity of censorship throughout the Third Reich, followed by the sudden liberation from those binds, image-making acts as a form of social engagement and social making in postwar-Berlin. Although the ideological lean of an institution can create a visual culture which can suppress agency, this dissertation argues that it can also give way to subtle, subjective moments of subversion. One might expect discussions of works like Wolf Vostell’s *You are Leaving the American Sector* (fig. 3, 1964) and *We Were A Kind of Museum Piece* (*Wir waren so eine Art Museumsstück*, fig. 4, 1964). These décòllage’s not only combine images of and relevant to East and West Berlin, but also images of American politicians, celebrities, and cultural events. With the addition of dripping spray paint splotches and newspaper clippings, these multimedia works address the complications of the country’s division and occupation; however, they do so conspicuously and without hesitation, even echoing Robert Rauschenberg’s silkscreen paintings, including *Barge* (fig. 5, 1962-3) and *Skyway* (fig. 6, 1964). Instead, this study addresses cross-media German exhibitions, films, and installations that illuminate the simultaneous embrace and exploitation, embrace and alteration, and embrace and recantation of American images.

Through the metaphor of a mediating lens, this study demonstrates that there is a dynamic model of reception and reprocessing of American culture at play beyond a simple reductive dichotomy. Lens-based media, as a didactic tool, is easily implemented for political work; the US government was certainly not alone in valuing its strengths. By focusing on lens-based media, this study draws attention to their capacity to manipulate, conceal, and make transparent socio-political messages through a capacity to “reproduce reality”. Such pedagogical properties aid in the recording of social lives, from the adoption of subcultural style to the
documentation of exhibitions, films, and activism. With images of “the American way of life” and culture is in constant negotiation, the 1950s marks a period of identity reconstruction in the wake of dictatorship.

Berlin—as the divisor and halfway-point between the Eastern and Western Blocs—becomes a battleground of information and images between 1949 and 1968, arguably the breaking point in Cold War conflict. Situated about a hundred miles into the GDR, the US government considered West Berlin a ‘final frontier’ western political enclave, the loss of which would have meant catastrophic damage to American military credibility. Often made to showcase western democratic values while under constant threat of proximate state socialism, this study considers West Berlin as a synecdoche of larger American Cold War interests.

Considering the absence of physical combat, information and images and the manufacturing of fear and paranoia were central to Cold War conflict. Even after the official 1955 termination of Allied military occupation in divided Germany, President Eisenhower called for the development

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8 With Joseph Stalin’s death (1953) and Nikita Khrushchev’s Kremlin takeover, USSR/US relations became increasingly tense. In the US, leadership shifts from Dwight D. Eisenhower to John F. Kennedy until his assassination in November 1963. The Vietnam War breaks out in 1955 followed by the Hungarian Uprising one year later. Khrushchev begins making nuclear annihilation threats in 1957 the same year that the USSR launches the world’s first intercontinental ballistic missile, as well as Sputnik, the first Earth satellite. The failed Bay of Pigs invasion (1961) followed by the Cuban Missile Crisis create worldwide paranoia and anxiety about the very real possibility of nuclear holocaust. Not only can this can be traced through the mass media, but also through artistic production, especially film. The filmic version of Nevil Shute’s novel, On the Beach, is one such example. The narrative follows survivors of the Third World War as they suffer in the wake of global nuclear warfare. Faced with the rapidly approaching radiation cloud, the protagonists—played by big Hollywood stars of this period: Ava Gardner, Gregory Peck, Anthony Perkins—ultimately commit suicide with the aid of government-distributed cyanide pills. The Eisenhower Administration produced a series of reference guides for politicians when approached by the media for film commentary to offset anxiety and moral panic induced by the film. The fabricated questions and answers relied on false notions of safety and inaccurate scientific data in order to maintain public complacency.
of new forms of propaganda without “the ‘propaganda’ tone.” With carefully researched and organized application, these initiatives often brought attention to the city, attracting East Germans to cross the border to learn about life in the West. Above all, the early Cold War period is the historical moment during which Germany underwent the most comprehensive overhaul of cultural and national identity. Rapidly transitioning between dictatorship, occupied nation, divided nation, and finally, two sovereign nations, the period brings an unprecedented influx of cultural activity, much of which is employed by foreign nations. This moment is critical for steering divided Germany away from totalitarian impulses and toward democratic ones that mirrored the rest of Western Europe and the United States.

Methodology

To date, there has been no comprehensive study of lens-based media or institutionalized “ways of seeing”, as sponsored by the United States government, and its effect on postwar German visual culture. Scholarship examining the immediate postwar period of occupation often limits discussions to denazification efforts or the evasion of wartime trauma. Similarly, studies of Cold War propaganda largely concentrate on the binary of the US and Soviet Union, failing to investigate America as occupier.

This dissertation challenges Althusserian notions of ideology as they relate to the lens-based image by examining cross-cultural promotion and reception of political rhetoric through visual material. Across three chapters on distinct media, this text conducts a macroscopic, yet nuanced reading of those images elevated during and after American occupation, as well as

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German reactions that respond to and refigure them. These examples look to both the forlorn return to ‘parent culture’ and pre-WWII models of Germanness, as well as challenge definitions through the application of art historical, economic, psychological, and sociological models from such scholars as, Noam Chomsky and Edward S. Herman, Dick Hebdige, Michael Fried, and Michel Foucault. This study also utilizes contemporaneous psychological and sociological studies conducted by the US Information Agency (USIA) and other related government subsidiaries.

In historicizing Germany’s postwar period, it is necessary to acknowledge that a “monodimensional” response nor reaction to particular works, texts, events, or images, is wholly inaccurate. The concept of a comprehensive postwar amnesia is likewise too simple a determination with an historian’s hindsight. Rather than fall into these patterns, this dissertation seeks the historical resonance of images and objects, as well as their political contemporaneity in an effort to engage with period conditions. In historian Peter Reichel’s discussion of Vergangenheitsbewältigung, or to come to terms with the past, he argues that the concept embodied a more practical purpose for the East and West German states to deal with those citizens harboring genocidal pasts. With the pressure of the Cold War, divided Germany errs even more radically toward their respective anti-fascist stances. The GDR’s governing body, the

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10 Paul B. Jaskot, “Gerhard Richter and Adolf Eichmann,” Oxford Art Journal 28, no. 3 (2005): 457-478. Jaskot’s article details this flattening notion writing, “…the evasion of the Nazi past was neither as complete nor as monodimensional as is usually assumed. Art historians are able to maintain the illusion of a lack of debate by limiting their interests to questions of aesthetic strategy, biography, and the internal development of the avant-garde.” Ibid., 459.

Socialist Unity Party, (Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschland, SED) is well-known for implementing socialist policy in order to contest responsibility for the conditions that allowed fascism to prosper. Inundated with the American, British, and French Allies, West Germany rapidly turns toward democracy, capitalism, and mass consumerism as weaponry against both encroaching communism of the East and the economic desperation of the early-1930s. This study both examines official events, objects, and exhibitions, but also elevates those creative and cultural voices less recognized in sweeping generalizations about postwar Germany.

In a similar light, the notion of “Americanization” breeds significant methodological problems for this study. Discussions of the term either err on the side of excessively positive or radically negative. The former assumes economic modernization and political and cultural democratization as wholly beneficiary; the latter makes the adverse history of American imperialism its principal focus. Instead assuming one such extreme position, this dissertation reduces intellectual blind spots by examining complex processes of reception, experience, acceptance, and rejection of imported American culture. For this reason, the notion of national identity is central to the study; however, just as “Americanization” is polarizing, “national identity” is organic in nature and in constant negotiation and flux. Through the investigation of such varied primary source materials as exhibition ephemera, internal memos, government documentation and surveys, editorial letters, and oral histories, American culture’s active and multifaceted role in divided Berlin emerges more lucidly.

Discussions of “propaganda” also require a clear definition, especially in relation to its diverse integration in American scholarship and official government and military documents. Dating back to the nineteenth-century, popular use of the term described potentially inaccurate ideas or information used to advance political statements. Usage with reference to official political bodies and wartime information dissemination first appears in the United States during the First World War. The term often described the spread of accurate, if biased, information, but did not possess negative connotations until the Second World War and the Cold War. Within US government documents between 1945 and 1965, propaganda is used interchangeably with “cultural diplomacy”, “public diplomacy”, “information”, and even “psychological warfare”. Depending upon context, it is discernible whether or not the term designates anodyne or malignant meaning and usage. In the context of this dissertation, the term propaganda delineates information and images imported to foreign nations to advocate for American-style capitalism, mass consumerism, and democracy. Noam Chomsky and Edward S. Herman define their concept of the “propaganda model” as the production and circulation of information by the mass media in direct alignment with the interests of political and economic elites. They posit that the mass media is responsible for inculcating individuals with beliefs and codes of behavior that reflect the institutional structures of capitalist society. Here, propaganda describes official governmental

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13 According to Merriam-Webster Dictionary, the term propaganda dates back to the 17th century, during which Pope Gregory XV employed the term to refer to a Catholic missionary organization called “Congregatio da propaganda fide”.

14 Edmund Gullion, Dean of the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University and a distinguished retired foreign service officer, coined the term “public diplomacy” when he established the Edward R. Murrow Center of Public Diplomacy in 1965. After the establishment of the US Information Agency (1953), a new term for “information” and “propaganda” was deemed necessary given the terms’ hollow or negative connotations, respectively.

narratives that contain an ideological filter; however, I argue that the agency of the individual remains in-tact. Throughout this text, figures emerge who act outside the boundaries of official narratives and confront the concerns of their political present.

State of the Literature

This dissertation threads together the exported institutional usage of American photography and film, in order to ground them in postwar German artmaking and socio-political context. As previously mentioned, literature examining postwar Germany is immeasurable, but most often concerned with the “German question,” trauma, cultural memory of the Third Reich, as well as Germany’s reconciliation with Nazi war crimes. Literature on divided Germany is similarly comprehensive, especially in German scholarship; however, it most often addresses the memory of the World Wars, masculinity and gender identity, or East Germany’s political structure and its relation to the USSR. Although reconstruction was clearly a priority, the 1950s and early-1960s exemplify the moment in time in which culture and the creative impulse is regenerating. These years provide an indispensable foundation for the political thaw that arrives in the two Germanies with the 1970s and 1980s and reunification.

Eric Sandeen, Jörn Glasenapp, Tim Starl, Sarah E. James, Sarah Goodrum, and Shamoon Zamir are among the very few scholars who have examined the West Berlin mounting of *Family of Man*, or the resulting German exhibitions at any length; a comparison of all three has not been performed and the idea that humanist social documentary was utilized as a common, elastic model was not discussed. Few art historical studies address early Cold War photography in Germany; the most significant include Sarah James’ *Common Ground: German Photographic Cultures Across the Iron Curtain* (2013) and Karl Gernot Kuehn’s *Caught: The Art of*
Photography in the German Democratic Republic (1997). Both studies conduct groundbreaking research on photography in divided Germany; however, they fail to address the complex effect of Allied influences upon a new generation of German artists and audiences. James argues that The Family of Man had a profound impact on Germany, citing Karl Pawek’s first World Exhibition of Photography: What is Man? (1965), yet she does not discuss the almost identically constructed East German exhibition, On the Happiness of People (1967) by Rita Maahs and Karl-Eduard von Schnitzler. Additionally, her study does not conceptualize Steichen’s humanist exhibition as a malleable model in which a political or social representative or body can insert a distinct agenda. The Family of Man is emulated and refigured for both half-hearted West German reconciliation and East German socialist politics. Kuehn’s text is one of the first studies of East German photography in English-language literature. He investigates a wide spectrum of photographers working under similar conditions; however, he does not address the subversive intricacies of the photographs themselves. Close readings of Ursula Arnold (1929-2012) and Evelyn Richter’s photographs reveal a very careful agitation of GDR political policy.

Sarah Goodrum’s article on Rita Maahs and Karl-Eduard von Schnitzler’s exhibition, “A Socialist Family of Man,” is really the only study in its existing secondary literature. It is possible that her larger dissertation project offers further insight into the larger GDR photography exhibition programming during these years; however, it has been made inaccessible to researchers, even by personal request. Goodrum acknowledges the exhibition’s reference to Steichen’s show, but does not recognize the ways in which On the Happiness of Man deflates The Family of Man’s humanist mission. By instituting a transparent socialist framework, Maahs’ and von Schnitzler expose the exhibition model’s capacity for political rhetoric.
Uta G. Poiger is one of few scholars to address the influence of American Jazz and Rock ‘n’ Roll music on East and West German youth groups. She posits that the youth generation’s interest in American culture signifies shifting postwar conceptions of gender and race. Poiger concludes that the teenage attraction to American Jazz and Rock ‘n’ Roll engendered conflict with the parent generation based on the musical genres’ foundation in African-American culture.

Poiger does not examine the role of Grenzkinos at any length and limits her discussion of popular Hollywood film to its relationship with music, as with Rock Around the Clock (1956), starring Bill Haley and His Comets. Heide Fehrenbach, on the other hand, examines the political role of film in post-fascist negotiations of gender and race in divided Germany. She seeks to dispel popular myths of “Americanization” associated with Germany’s postwar film history, by clarifying the US government and Hollywood’s—reiterating that these two institutions were not always in agreement—relationship to a recovering national film industry. Fehrenbach posits that the US’s presence is not one imperialist takeover, but rather one that transformed Germans into more American-style consumers and stunted domestic redevelopment.

In Capturing the German Eye: American Visual Propaganda in Occupied Germany (2009), Cora Sol Goldstein discusses the issue of visual reeducation in Germany; however, her research concludes in 1949 with the country’s division into the GDR and FRG. She addresses American atrocity propaganda, films and the visual arts, with emphasis on political caricature. Ultimately, Goldstein argues that with the commencement of the Cold War, the United States abandoned their “confrontation policy…to create collective [German] guilt” for war crimes to instead focus on American-West German alliance. There is some truth to this conviction; however, it is during these years that the United States amplifies its cultural diplomacy efforts, focusing specifically on West Berlin as a center for cultural attention and showcasing.
Underlying messages in this visual work becomes more covert as time advances and the threat of Eastern bloc communism elevates to paranoiac levels. Where Goldstein’s narrative ends, Serge Guilbaut commences his monumental study of the shifting dynamics of a post-WWII art landscape and the political function of art. In recognizing the US’s own economic stability, Guilbaut posits that the destruction of Paris leaves the center of the art world vulnerable to change. Through his investigation of the Congress for Cultural Freedom (CCF), he posits that the US government politicized Abstract Expressionist painting to enact a paradigm shift and elevate the country’s cultural capital. However, Guilbaut does not account for the implementation of lens-based media in strategies of “reeducation” and truth-telling. Rather, he focuses his study on painting of the immediate postwar period and its radical abandonment of dogma.

Such scholars as Benjamin H.D. Buchloh, Dietmar Elger, Rosalind Krauss, Christine Mehring, and Robert Storr approach the subject of Richter’s envelopment within Socialist Realism and confrontation with the “alien” modernist paradigms in the West; however, none explore the role of the Wirtschaftswunder (“economic miracle”)—as it relates to American governmental exhibitions on capitalism and mass consumerism—in West Germany. Additionally, some scholars view Richter’s early work as mere “reinterpretation” of the modernist achievements of Mark Rothko, Frank Stella, and Andy Warhol. Although the

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literature on Gerhard Richter is expansive, the comparison between the four artists associated with “Capitalist Realism” and the economic effects the Marshall Plan (MP; or European Recovery Program, ERP)\(^\text{18}\) and Germany’s economic miracle has not been examined at length. This dissertation places governmental consumer goods exhibitions in conversation with Capitalist Realism, demonstrating that these artists were responding to a much wider socioeconomic experience than merely the internal dynamics of the art world. Their histories with oppressive regimes, new experiences of Western capitalism, and demonstrations of their subterranean realities deserve examination in greater detail.

Period Context

With the surrender of the National Socialists in April 1945, the threads of totalitarianism had been severed by Allied democracies and Nazism’s fascist ideology had been both disproven and abolished. The absence of a stable German government resulted in the nation’s division into

four Allied sectors occupied by the United States, Great Britain, France, and the Soviet Union. After the Berlin Blockade in 1949, the Soviet Union declared a zone of occupation, the GDR or East Germany, leading the Allies to declare West Germany. With the physical rubble of war and the division of a nation, also came cultural and psychological detritus: can one locate Germanness in a moment when Germany was, as filmmaker Roberto Rossellini put it, at “year zero”?\(^{19}\) Germany, Year Zero (1948)’s tragic end—a young boy commits suicide after assisting his father with his own suicide—paints a bleak picture of maintaining hope, seeking employment and medical care, and conceptualizing an attainable image of the future (fig. 7). Rossellini’s film bemoans the tragedy of the postwar era through the eyes of an innocent child conflicted by “utopian” persuasions and a false sense of heroism. In 1952, after limited release in Munich, the film garnered such negative reviews that it was not screened again in Germany for twenty-six years. This speaks critically to the psychological state of the divided country in the years following the war.

Merely one postwar example, Germany, Year Zero demonstrates the innate power of the mechanical image, as well as the widespread necessity for new messages and perspectives.

\(^{19}\) Germany, Year Zero (1948) is the final film in a war trilogy by Italian Neorealist filmmaker Roberto Rossellini. Filmed on-location in the devastated postwar Berlin landscape, Rossellini constructs the narrative around the frail, thirteen-year-old Edmund Kohler, who is on a quest to understand the events of the war and keep his family alive. Approached by a former school teacher and some classmates, Edmund is persuaded to sell a recording of a Hitler speech to occupying soldiers in order to earn some money. Eventually, Edmund realizes that Mr. Henning and the students are practicing Nazis and Nazi Youth, respectively. Conflicted by his involvement with the sympathizers and their continual attempts at indoctrination, Edmund decides to focus on taking care of his ill father, who laments lacking the courage to end his own life. Edmund proceeds to steal poison and eventually serves it to his father to end his life for him. Deeply disturbed by his own actions, Edmund walks the destroyed city and ends up witnessing the removal of his father’s coffin from their family home. Climbing to the top of a bombed-out building, Edmund jumps to his death.
Under the guise of syncretic politics, National Socialism had indoctrinated photography and film, and implemented affective strategies to shape and manipulate their state for nearly twelve years. National Socialist propaganda filmmaker Leni Riefenstahl’s (1902-2003) *Triumph of the Will* (*Triumph des Willens*, 1935) and *Olympia* (1938) continue to conjure lauded recognition to present day, despite their very clear political aims.\(^\text{20}\) With mass censorship of art and literature of Jewish practitioners, many prewar German and Western European practices were unknown to new generations of German artists.\(^\text{21}\)

In reaction to the slow rehabilitation of European economies due to Germany’s collapse and resulting debt, the United States loaned over thirteen billion US dollars to Western Europe, a portion of that to Germany, its industrial powerhouse. From the perspective of the US government, Marshall Plan aid not only assisted the reestablishment of capitalist economies, but also provided the opportunity to develop educational programs on pan-European integration and instill democratic ideals in the face of Communism. Faced with the task of national reconstruction, the Allies agreed that the “de-Nazification” and “reeducation” of German citizens was not only a necessity but should be undertaken with urgency. Much of this work included the use of film and photography; from published photo-stories to documentary newsreels. Berlin, as an artistic center, was essentially non-existent and could not support the renewal of the German

\(^{20}\) Among other examples, Riefenstahl was honored as a “Documentary Filmmaker” at the 75th Academy Awards (2004) in the “In Memoriam” section. This incited much debate within the Hollywood film community.

\(^{21}\) Syncretic politics refers to politics that exists outside of the traditional left/right political spectrum. This type of politics is disguised as neutral in comparison to left and right-wing politics, and critical of them. Hitler’s fascism was presented as a neutral, “Third Way” solution in the face of traditional models but actually combines contradictory radical ideas from both ends of the spectrum. See Stanley G. Payne, *A History of Fascism: 1914-1945* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1995).
art market. The 1950s serves as a period of rethinking the indoctrination of the past and redeveloping autonomous visions for the future amidst Germany’s occupation and division. As the years progress, attention wanes from the “problems” of divided Berlin, instead shifting focus to larger geopolitical conflicts, including the Vietnam War. As German attitudes about America evolve from generally positive or benign, to increasingly critical and even hostile, the cultural initiatives so integral to the 1950s seemingly fade into the background or disappear. The Soviet Union begins to experience economic destabilization at the end of the 1960s, entering the “Era of Stagnation,” and over time, it becomes less of a threat to American policy and counter-initiatives.

Chapter Outline

The first chapter investigates Edward Steichen’s *The Family of Man*, sponsored by the USIA and then *Coca Cola Overseas* for its foreign tour, and two photography exhibitions explicitly modeled after Steichen’s mounted in divided Berlin years later. In September 1955, *The Family of Man* made its first international stop at the Hochschule für Bildende Künste (Academy of Fine Arts, HBK) in West Berlin, attracting 44,000 visitors (twenty-five to thirty percent of those visiting from East Germany) in just over a month (fig. 8-9). With most images pulled directly from the archives of illustrated weekly, *Life* magazine—which had reached peak circulation in the 1950s—*The Family of Man* presents a prototypical postwar American perspective and Steichen’s own brand of humanism. To embolden what social scientists of the time termed the “democratic personality,” the varied image size, hanging installation method, 

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22 This was the monthly publication disseminated by the beverage corporation.
and journey-like galleries reflect an encouragement of individual expression while creating an awareness of unity amongst visitors from diverse backgrounds. Beyond hugely successful attendance, especially in West Berlin, critical reception of the exhibition ranged from Roland Barthes’ biting critique of the “suppression of history” to East German photography theorist Berthold Beiler’s attack on its “formalist decadence.”

Nearly ten years later, Karl Pawek, Austrian curator and the former editor of German illustrated magazines *magnum* and *Stern*, opened an even larger photographic exhibition called the *World Exhibition of Photography: What is Man?* (fig. 10). Purporting direct influence from Steichen, Pawek’s version instead emphasized a narrative approach also specifically with Germany’s Nazi history and Cold War conflict. Whereas *The Family of Man* was interpreted as ahistorical and lacking context, Pawek provided historical frameworks and prioritized jarring juxtapositions of images, similar to those found on the pages of his magazines.

Two years later, *On the Happiness of People (Vom Glück des Menschen)*, originally titled *The Socialist Family of Man*, opened in East Berlin (fig. 11). Curators Rita Maahs and Karl-Eduard von Schnitzler constructed a similar visual narrative through broad milestone categories and included movable panels in a photo-essay style. In a published statement, Maahs attacks Steichen’s exhibition for its exclusively “rose-tinted” view of the world. However, like Steichen, Maahs and von Schnitzler fail to address the Holocaust and other WWII atrocities and instead

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24 Pawek’s exhibition was so close to Steichen’s that it was rejected from traveling to Kunsthalle Baden-Baden on those grounds. See letter from Karl Pawek to Dr. Mahlow, 21 May 1964, Akademie der Künste Archiv, Berlin (AdKA Berlin).
25 “Protokoll Nr. 33/65, Sitzung des Sekretariats des ZK vom 3.5. 1965,” Bundesarchiv Berlin (BArch), Stiftung Archiv der Parteien und Massenorganisationen der DDR im Bundesarchiv (SAPMO), DY 30/J IV 23/1073. Discussion of the exhibition planning appears in the protocols of SED Central Committee meetings in 1965, but the selection of images began as early as 1963.
focus on the October Revolution, US bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and American violence in Vietnam. Such an unexpected official East German response emerging over ten years after *The Family of Man*’s tour speaks to the fraught and complex mediation of American culture in divided Germany.

The second chapter considers the cultivation of motion picture film by the American government and its subsidiaries and the resulting cultural reprocessing by German youth. The discussion begins with the forced viewings of atrocity films, sponsored by the Information Control Division (ICD) and Office of War Information (OWI) at the first postwar cinemas reopened in 1945. Attendance rates started out high; however, overt denazification and reeducation efforts were too accusatory to maintain attendance. Initiated by the Film Committee of the US High Commissioner for Germany (HICOG) and bolstered by the effort of US Department of Foreign Affairs official Oscar Martay (1920-1995), the first border cinemas (*Grenzkinos*) opened in 1950 (fig. 12).

Strategically located along the border between East and West Berlin, border cinemas screened primarily American films, offered subsidized tickets and special screenings for over 180-million East Berliners, and benefited from tax deductions given by the West German government until the Berlin Wall’s 1961 construction. Studies conducted by the United States

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26 In October 1950, Oscar Martay proposed the Berlin International Film Festival (also known as Berlinale), with support from HICOG, the Senate of Berlin, and members of growing West Germany’s film industry. The festival’s premiere took place in 1951 at Potsdamer Platz’s Titania-Palast. Once again, subsidized ticket prices were available for East sector residents. After Martay left the US military, he worked in film production and married German actress Renate Barken; they also founded the *Zenit-Film Ingeborg Martay* film company in 1957.
Information Service (USIS)\textsuperscript{27} and the Motion Picture Export Association of America (MPEA) reveal that like atrocity films, Marshall Plan-style documentaries were “too obviously depicting American conditions,” but also that such Hollywood films as \textit{Rebel Without a Cause} (\textit{...denn wissen nicht, was sie tun}; 1956 FRG; 1955 USA, fig. 13), \textit{The Wild One} (\textit{Der Wilde}; FRG and USA 1954), \textit{Rock Around the Clock} (\textit{Außer Rand und Band}; FRG and USA 1956), and \textit{Blackboard Jungle} (\textit{Saat der Gewalt}; FRG and USA 1955) were commercial successes. Shortly thereafter, both East and West Berlin witnessed the emergence of the \textit{Halbstarke} (“half-strong”), a subculture of primarily working-class males modeled on the film images of James Dean and Marlon Brando. Press in both Germanys criticized the subculture for vulgarity linked directly to the ‘dangerous’ decadence of American-style consumerism and sexuality, often attacking the border cinema as central to the conflict. The \textit{Halbstarken} selected from images of American popular culture the “Elvis-quiff”, blue jeans, and black leather jackets, yet congregated in spaces understood as specific to postwar Germany: bombed out buildings, abandoned public pools, basements. Between 1956-1957, two films dramatizing the youth subculture were released by both East and West German filmmakers, including Georg Tressler’s \textit{Die Halbstarken} (\textit{Teenage Wolfpack}, 1956, fig. 14) and Gerhard Klein’s \textit{Berlin – Ecke Schönhauser}, huge box-office hits in postwar Germany.

\textit{Die Halbstarken} follows a motley crew of young West Berliners as they navigate the seduction of vice during the “miracle” years. Although their socio-economic backgrounds differ, the young teenage men band together to dance to rock ‘n’ roll and make fun of the stiff military

\textsuperscript{27} The difference between the USIA and the USIS is insignificant. In general, the USIA was tasked with domestic projects and the USIS organized international objectives; however, they are sometimes used interchangeably in the literature.
culture so idiosyncratic to Germany. Among them is Freddy—who emerges as West Germany’s answer to the American James Dean—the risk-taking leader who plots to rob a postal service van for money. Tressler shot the film on location in Berlin, as much as possible. Pushing the narrative beyond the bourgeois family central to traditional German *Heimat* films, spectators are given access to the street corners, basements, and bombed out industrial hangouts of youth culture. Similarly, *Berlin – Ecke Schönhauser*, follows a group of East Berliners, as they test the police, dance, and participate in illegal activity based in the accessible western sector of the city. Ultimately resulting in tragedy, the film depicts American-influenced youth culture of the Eastern sector as they explore the variances between east and west, restriction and autonomy.

The third chapter places Marshall Plan (1948-1952) ‘household’ exhibitions in conversation with the emergence of so-called Capitalist Realism, an informal moniker associated with the early work of Manfred Kutter, Konrad Lueg (later Fischer), Sigmar Polke, and Gerhard Richter. To bolster Marshall Plan effort during occupation, the US State Department and the Office of Military Government, US Zone (Germany) (OMGUS) sponsored a series of household exhibitions across West Germany to showcase the image of American life, conflating the image of democratic freedom with private consumption. In 1952, *We’re Building a Better Life* (*Wir bauen ein besseres Leben*, fig. 15) opened in West Berlin, featuring for the first time, over 6000 consumer products directly incorporated into a single-family model home. Visitors were escorted to a second-story catwalk facilitating an aerial view of the topless home and nuclear family of actors inside. Drawing over 500,000 visitors, of whom forty–percent were from the East, the success did not belie the fact that the ideal image was still unattainable for most of Germany. However, over the next ten years the West German economy boomed, buttressed by the
proliferation of American-style television and print advertising found in such popular German magazines as Stern and magnum, both modeled on Life.

The provincial existence of 1950s Berlin forced artists to seek education and opportunities elsewhere in West Germany. Shortly after Richter’s escape to Düsseldorf in 1961, his paintings reflect a newfound interest in the commodity image’s relationship to both consumer desire and photography’s objectivity, making specific use of Stern and magnum. In January 1963, Lueg shared an issue of Art International with classmates Richter, Polke, and Kuttner, featuring photographic reproductions of work by Roy Lichtenstein, Claes Oldenburg, and Wayne Thiebaud among others, marking their first exposure—mediated through photography—to American Pop art. First used by Richter in April 1963, “Capitalist Realism” later appeared in the title of group action, Living with Pop: A Demonstration for Capitalist Realism, staged at the Berges furniture store in Düsseldorf on 11 October 1963 (fig. 16). Visitors followed a strict choreography for the event that included taking numbers, entering a waiting room, greetings from papier-mâché guests of honor, gallerist Alfred Schmela and President John F. Kennedy. Eventually, visitors entered an “average living room” where they discovered Lueg and Richter lethargically slumped in plinth-mounted furniture in front of a live television broadcast of the Chancellor’s resignation. Richter and Lueg’s painted works were hung throughout the remaining showrooms, masterfully integrated into the fabricated domestic setting like décor. These paintings depicted such commodities as sausages and socks, as well as imagery sourced directly from half-tone photographic images in illustrated magazines.

Although the demonstration is often dismissed in the literature on these artists, this chapter investigates its apt entanglement with mass consumption, popular culture, art, and politics—both foreign and domestic. Lueg and Richter’s intervention in the capitalist space of
consumption is not an accident, nor was it a simple reaction to the sundry obstacles of young artists, as the literature often implies. Although the artists distanced themselves from their early demonstrations, as well as the term “Capitalist Realism,” West Berlin gallerist René Block homed in on its relevance in the divided city. Block organized a series of successful exhibitions and associated catalogs for the four artists, in a way, providing a solid foundation that led to their collective commercial success. With two of the four artists emigrating from East Germany to West at a critical moment in their respective economic histories, this chapter demonstrates the legacy of the US government’s push to turn the West German consumer into the American one. However, unlike American Pop figures including Andy Warhol and Roy Lichtenstein, Lueg and Richter’s paintings agitate the relationship between commodity, commodity image, and consumer. The result is figurative work that either suffers violent intervention by blood-red pigment, or slashes and sutures to the canvas; or, bears almost no resemblance to the pictured object, verging on abstraction, as with Konrad Lueg’s *Coathangers* (1963, fig. 17). Thus, their oft designation as the first “German Pop artists” is unfit given their major departures from both the Independent Group and American Pop.

On the eve of Tate Modern’s major retrospective of his work, Gerhard Richter first revealed the significant influence of Edward Steichen’s blockbuster photography exhibition, *The Family of Man*, on his painting practice. Richter recounts his visit to the 1955 West Berlin mounting as one of few trips beyond the Iron Curtain before his 1961 escape from Dresden. Not only did Richter find the exhibition shocking in the face of implemented Socialist Realist

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28 *Gerhard Richter: Panorama* (2011) was open at the Tate Modern, London from 6 October 2011 to 11 January 2012. It also traveled to the Neue and Alte Nationalgalerie, Berlin and Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris.
painting of East Germany, but also as the first time he grasped the narrative of “modern life” as
told through the camera lens. Ultimately, Steichen’s show revealed to Richter what he referred to
as “the power of photography,” encouraging him to look beyond the familiar medium of
painting. Richter’s anecdote about his exposure to and mediation of newly accessible foreign
lens-based images serves as a metaphor for the larger project. As intended, The Family of Man
operated as a critical “contact zone” for Richter: “a social space where cultures meet, clash, and
grapple with each other, often in contexts of highly asymmetrical relations of power.”29 Pushed
and pulled between two ideologically-strained Cold War environments, Richter recalls the
exhibition’s influence on his conceptualization of the reproducible image and its later translation
into paint.

As this dissertation will attest, The Family of Man, Hollywood films, and consumer
goods trade fairs had a similarly complex impact on artists, civilians, and photographers working
in divided Germany. Germany’s division and occupation fosters a unique context in which artists
“generate revealing patterns of interference”30 that speak to broader notions of national identity
amidst national instability. The work of these figures attests to our mediated visual experience, or
as Norman Bryson identifies it, “visuality.” He argues that “between the retina and the world is
inserted a screen of signs, a screen consisting of all the multiple discourses on vision built into

revolves around Inca writer, Guaman Poma, and she argues that Poma’s text bears witness to his
own adaptations and appropriations from his colonizers. The complex power dynamic is
instrumental in shaping the methods by which Poma selects, revises, and expresses his cultural
interests, rather than simple imitation or reproduction. The same is true of all German figures
discussed in this study.
30 Thomas Crow, Emulation: Making Artists for Revolutionary France (New Haven, CT: Yale
University Press, 2006), 300-301.
the social arena.\textsuperscript{31} For the German cultural producers discussed, this visuality is central to their filtration and acceptance of, and skepticism about American visual culture. The mediating lens exists as both a vessel for photographic production, but also a vantage from which German artists can respond to the problems of visual culture in the postwar period.

Chapter One

CODED HISTORIES: THE FAMILY OF MAN’S LEGACY
IN DIVIDED GERMANY

“[The Family of Man – Wir alle] opens the great family book of humanity comprising all countries and races and we recognize ourselves in every episode of life with so much wonder as if we were discovering ourselves—inexplicably—for the first time this very moment.”

Weltbild reviewer, September 22, 1955

In Berlin, May 1 (1965, fig. 18), East German photographer Ursula Arnold depicts a young boy holding a white balloon at the annual labor parade. Easily discernible, his expression of fatigue—perhaps displeasure—is unmistakably distinct from others in the crowd. Facing the photographer in a carved-out void, the child makes direct eye contact with viewers, both acknowledging and reciprocating visual recognition. Evoking film stills from Albert Lamorisse’s 1956 French short, The Red Balloon (fig. 19), or Nadar’s 1860s photographs from a hot air balloon (fig. 20), one can imagine him floating above the city, balloon in hand, observing urban space dissociated from the entangled politics of Germany’s division below. However, completely enveloped by the claustrophobic crowd, the boy’s piercing, returned gaze keeps viewers firmly grounded. As if preserved, he exists in a small, subjective space. In the background, a young figure peers from the crowd toward the central subject, appearing almost envious of his disengagement. On the left, a child hand-in-hand with a maternal figure proudly waves a flag overhead, one goose-step from trampling the balloon’s shadow; a striking image twenty years

after the war. Arnold exposes not only the weight of performing a political identity, but also its heightened posturing in front of the camera. With negative space so central to the composition, Arnold suggests a chilling isolation; the figure of the lone boy—a symbol of his burgeoning generation—intimating a disquieting future.

A decade earlier, Arnold played a central role in *action fotografie*, a Leipzig-based photography group dedicated to a new style of social documentary image-making influenced by Edward Steichen’s record-breaking humanist photography survey, *The Family of Man* (1955, fig. 21). Following overwhelming success at New York’s Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) and recognizing its diplomatic potential, the newly-established United States Information Agency (USIA) purchased five exhibition replicas for international tour. The exhibition made its European debut on September 17, 1955 at West Berlin’s Academy for Creative Arts (fig. 22).33 Located about a hundred miles inside of East Germany, West Berlin engendered a geopolitical cache for the United States. In government documents the city is referred to as the “last rampart of the free world” or a “Western cultural showcase,” later becoming a holding site for hundreds of American nuclear missiles.34 The capitulation of West Berlin by the state socialist German Democratic Republic (GDR), the Soviet Union’s German proxy, would mean catastrophic damage to the United States’ political, economic, and military credibility.

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Organized and implemented by USIA and co-sponsored by Coca-Cola Overseas, the corporation’s monthly newsletter, *The Family of Man* circulated to thirty-seven countries over eight years (fig. 23-24).35 By 1965, the USIA estimated that nearly nine million people had seen the exhibition and roughly five million had purchased the catalog worldwide. For an agency founded “to persuade foreign peoples that it lies in their own interest to take actions which are also consistent with the national objectives of the United States,” and—in the words of President Eisenhower—to “penetrat[e]...the Iron Curtain,” *The Family of Man* engendered deeply-embedded ideological value.

What could not be predicted, however, was the emergence of two analogous German photography exhibitions on either side of the 1961-constructed Berlin Wall. Very few studies examine Karl Pawek’s *World Exhibition of Photography: What is Man?* (West Berlin, 1964, fig. 25) or Rita Maahs and Karl-Eduard von Schnitzler’s *On the Happiness of Man?* (East Berlin, 1968, fig. 26), both of which were large-scale exhibitions modeled explicitly on *The Family of Man*. Although each exhibition serves its own partisan politics, this chapter argues that both utilize Steichen’s utopian exhibition concept as a common vessel for ideological messaging. Concurrently, former action fotografie members Arnold and Evelyn Richter adopt Steichen’s relatively innocuous social documentary style for state-commissioned projects, but instead mutate it into a subtle form of political resistance. Considering photography’s simultaneous representation and obfuscation of reality, the medium’s own contradictions are at the center of

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this elastic model. This chapter strives to complicate long-held notions of the Cold War’s “driving binary logic”\textsuperscript{36}—or, the acute differentiation of Eastern and Western geopolitical and cultural perspectives—and instead, investigate their underlying likenesses. The close comparison of the exhibitions reveal several striking similarities in photographs, including doctors delivering newborns (figs. 27-29) and lovers embracing in the grass (figs. 30-32). Steichen’s malleable exhibition concept and format provided a vessel for ideological messaging, accommodated a broad application, and incidentally gave rise to cultural iconoclasm.

Through all three exhibitions’ enlistment—both covert and overt—and politicization of a humanist photographic framework, the Cold War’s binary logic is put into question. It is the malleability of Steichen’s large scale, social documentary photography exhibition that both attracted its ideological utility, accommodated its broad application, and influenced a more subversive use by GDR practitioners. In this sense, just as Steichen’s model operates as a template for practitioners, so too do the images of Arnold and Richter. In their work, they provide an opportunity for a German viewer reception that is not necessarily the primary or intended meaning; in their case, it is the commissioned, propagandistic message in the GDR. As image-receivers of American propaganda like \textit{The Family of Man}, Arnold and Richter’s photographs speak to the complex process of an ideological lens shift; through their adoption of this tactical engagement with images, they are essentially able to operate as autonomous political agents amidst punitive surveillance policies. To better understand the East and West German reprocessing of and debts to Steichen’s concept, it is essential to perform an in-depth analysis of \textit{The Family of Man}, its cultural and political impetuses, and its many criticisms.

1.1 “The Show You Can See with Your Heart”: A Template

In a closing review for the *New York Times*, photography critic Jacob Deschin captures the chaos of the exhibition viewing situation: “there were too many pictures (503) to the point of weariness, both visual and emotional…one could agree the walls were crowded and that fewer pictures would have had the same if not greater effectiveness and offered less strain on the visitors’ capacities to absorb and understand.”37 The stakes of such an overwhelming volume of photographs is a point rarely made in *The Family of Man* literature. For an average visitor touring the exhibition whilst being trailed by crowds of eager visitors, this volume of images likely encouraged quick, superficial readings. Without proper captions or label information, spectators were not likely to stop in front of images for extended periods of time. The extremely high number of photographs in conjunction with the unique hanging style of the images was emulated by Pawek, and Maahs and von Schnitzler. One should understand this type of looking as parallel to the hasty browsing of magazine or even window-shopping. This point is crucial for understanding the methods by which Steichen’s model was co-opted for diverse ideological and propagandistic uses.

Before becoming a curator, Steichen was an active participant in London-based Pictorialist group, the Linked Ring. Close collaboration with Alfred Stieglitz led to their foundation of the Photo-Secession movement, the *Camera Work* photography publication, and Gallery “291.”38 Rejecting the mechanical and the new proliferation of Kodak ‘snapshot’

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38 The gallery’s full name was “Little Galleries of the Photo-Secession”. Stieglitz also published quarterly magazine, *Camera Work*, out of Gallery 291. See William Innes Homer, *Alfred Stieglitz and the Photo-Secession* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1983) and Sarah Greenough and Juan
cameras, Pictorialists stressed labor-intensive printing processes to achieve soft focus, exaggerated tonal qualities, and an atmospheric moodiness (fig. 33). The international movement valued photographers as craftsmen and considered photography a fine art akin to painting and sculpture. Three years after the First World War broke out, Steichen joined the Photographic Section of the American Expeditionary Forces. As chief, he was responsible for executing, adapting, and interpreting aerial photographs for the purpose of intelligence gathering. This period of Steichen’s career is often overlooked; however, by deciphering light and shade and generating symbolism, the photographer better grasped how the medium could encode information (fig. 34). In later years, Steichen discussed this transformation:

The wartime problem of making sharp, clear pictures from a vibrating, speeding airplane ten to twenty thousand feet in the air had brought me a new kind of technical interest in photography…Now I wanted to know all that could be expected from photography.

Steichen spent 1923-1938 as chief photographer for Condé Nast, also working in freelance advertising. Appealing to a new audience—the consumer—Steichen both generated and engaged with images that encouraged desire and necessity. Steichen briefly returned to military photography in 1941, as Director of the Naval Photographic Institute, while simultaneously organizing two photography exhibitions for MoMA: Road to Victory (1942, figs. 35-36) and Power in the Pacific (1945, figs. 37-38). Both exhibitions were part of the wartime effort to


Pictorialism emerged in late-nineteenth century United States, Europe, and Australia. Generated and fueled by camera clubs, international salons, and published journals, the aesthetic movement viewed the mass cultivation and simplification of the medium as damaging to its role in personal expression. For further discussions of Pictorialism, see Alison Nordstöm, ed., Truth Beauty: Pictorialism and the Photograph as Art, 1845-1945 (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 2008) and Maria Morris Hambourg and Pierre Apraxine, eds., The Waking Dream: Photography’s First Century (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1993).

uphold morale and disseminate information regarding the Allied military and its efforts to defeat the enemy. The use of photography in these exhibitions enmeshes Steichen’s prior military and advertising experience to produce effective political propaganda. Critical reception of these exhibitions, especially by leading photographers of the time, was not positive; Ansel Adams wrote Beaumont Newhall threatening a “window breaking spree” due to Power in the Pacific’s capacity to “simply hypnotize the mass of spectators.” In 1947, Steichen both abandoned his own photographic practice and accepted the role of MoMA’s Curator of Photography, causing internal chaos. Steichen’s appointment led to Beaumont Newhall’s departure, given what he viewed as their oppositional approaches to the medium. Newhall pursued “the art of photography,” and Steichen cultivated “the illustrative use of photography, particularly in the swaying of great masses of people.” For many, Steichen’s appointment marked a change in the museum’s approach toward the medium and the use of photography itself.

Requiring years of intensive image-mining, Steichen and his assistant and fellow photographer, Wayne Miller, selected 503 photographs from a mythic two to six million (fig. 39). Steichen sought images that he felt communicated universal, humanist tenets: reaching beyond cultural difference to make a statement about the kinship of mankind; one that would inspire an emotional, if sentimental, viewer response. Organized into broad life stages, the

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42 In 1935, Beaumont Newhall began as a librarian at MoMA, but after curating the impressive Photography: 1839-1937 at the invitation of then-Museum Director Alfred H. Barr, he was named the first Curator of the newly established Department of Photography in 1940.

narrative exhibition engaged with such themes as love, childbirth, education, work, religion, human suffering, and death (fig. 40). Decontextualized aphorisms in the form of Biblical verse and quotations from philosophers, authors, and indigenous communities stood in as captions, accompanied only by each of the 273 photographers’ names.

To create a metaphoric visual consistency, all photographs were enlarged, reprinted in black and white directly onto inexpensive paper stock, and left unmatted and unframed. Influenced by Bauhaus artist/designer and Steichen’s former MoMA colleague, Herbert Bayer, the exhibition displayed images layered atop others, cropped, suspended from or affixed to the ceiling, or floor. Bayer’s “extended field of vision,” a modern exhibition technique adjacent to El Lissitzky’s faktura, called for photographs to “penetrate and leave an impression” on the visitor, and they should “explain, demonstrate, and even persuade and lead [the visitor] to a planned and direct reaction,” comparable to “the psychology of advertising” (fig. 41). Bayer had developed this concept for the German section of the Exposition de la société des artistes décorateurs in 1930, featuring layered images and angled hanging (fig. 42). Undoubtedly, this

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44 Following his education at the Bauhaus under the mentorship of Paul Klee and Laszlo Moholy-Nagy, Herbert Bayer fled Germany in 1938. For more information on Bayer’s design techniques, see Jeremy Aynsley, “The Case of Herbert Bayer,” in Graphic Design in Germany: 1890-1945 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000). On Bayer’s collaboration with Steichen, see Kristie La, “Enlightenment, Advertising, Education, Etc.”: Herbert Bayer and the Museum of Art’s Road to Victory,” October 150 (Fall 2014): 63-86.


strategy of total enclosure rewards a swift glance over a contemplative interlude, not unlike a casual perusal of a magazine (figs. 43-46). Although it may not appear innovative to contemporary eyes, images were arranged in the manner of a photo-essay, not unlike W. Eugene Smith’s renowned “Country Doctor” (fig. 47). This is hardly surprising because illustrated magazines such as Life enjoyed peak circulation in 1950s America. As Fred Turner posits, the exhibition’s installation methodology, places emphasis on individual viewer agency. He aligns this with both wartime propaganda efforts and postwar behavioral psychology and mass communication studies on how to cultivate “the democratic personality” in opposition to Theodor Adorno’s “authoritarian personality.”  

Thus, absent of original prints and contextual cultural information, Steichen demonstrated photography’s strength as a mass medium and celebrated its pedagogic capacity for storytelling.

Considering the breadth of its tour, extraordinary attendance, and standing achievement as the highest grossing photography book of all time, literature on The Family of Man is unsurprisingly vast. Early responses to the exhibition, both in the United States and West Germany, were emphatically positive. In the shadow of a World War, and in the midst of a decade muddled with aims of renewal and the high stakes of a deeply fraught political reality, The Family of Man provided critics and visitors with a visual model of oneness; the alleged methodology for establishing an—arguably fictional—cultural kinship between individuals of diverse experiences, traditions, and perspectives. However, the delicate intertwining of this hopeful narrative was not without ruptures. According to Deschin’s exchanges with audience

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members, there was a collective feeling that the theme was too vague and that “people are not the same all over.” Deschin argues that Steichen’s absent recognition of individual photographers renders the *Family of Man* “not really a photographic show.” The critic concludes that the exhibition, “‘sold’ photography to the public as nothing had ever done before on a scale so grand and effective, that Mr. Steichen emerges as photography’s most convincing salesman.” To commodify the photographic medium as a product of mass consumerism speaks to its capacity for adaptation. Although Deschin does not necessarily paint this as a negative consequence, it foreshadows the critical reception of the *Family of Man* as a tool of American imperialism.

Many critics, most notoriously Roland Barthes, have addressed both Steichen’s gendered framework and his reductive racial dichotomy. In several instances, Steichen removed photographs both with the impending concern for negative reactions or previous experience with such responses. One such censored image depicts photographer Harry Callahan’s pregnant, bare-breasted wife (fig. 48); amidst a multiplicity of images displaying women of color nude, it is clear that so long as the body exists outside the context of the Western hegemony, the audience’s gaze is justifiable (figs. 49-50). Steichen would likely have attributed this to diverse cultural norms and expectations; however, within the context of early twentieth-century modernist photography, the nude female subject (overwhelmingly white), was not only common, but both celebrated and exhibited. In 1948—seven years before *The Family of Man*—Steichen curated an exhibition at MoMA featuring female nudes by Bill Brandt, Callahan, Ted Croner, and Lisette Model. Given Steichen’s background in Pictorialism, it is possible that he cultivated two separate

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48 Deschin, “Family’s Last Day.”
49 Ibid.
50 Ibid.
schools of thought with regards to how photography can be used. The nude, when depicted in the context of fine art, is and historically had been socially acceptable. In the context of photography as a mass medium and as a pedagogic or therapeutic tool, the rules were different.

Barthes, however, viewed Steichen’s conceptual framework and the “appeal of the pictures” as “an ambiguous myth of the human ‘community,’ which serves as an alibi to a large part of our humanism.” Barthes posits that the exhibition’s persistent exoticism projects the idea of a pluralistic world and from this, an inexplicable, posturing unity surfaces. Injustices are masked as differences. Summoning the urgent racial inequalities of the time, Barthes implores Steichen to “ask the parents of Emmett Till...what they think about The Great Family of Man?” The lasting impact of and dependence upon this short, but biting critique has been unwavering; however, recent readings posit that much of the successive scholarship on the exhibition depends too heavily upon Barthes’ essay as a foundation, rather than the individual images, installation method, or the contemporaneous socio-historical context. While overreliance upon Barthes’ critique is undoubtedly true, he understood the problematic emptiness of some of Steichen’s claims in a decade perhaps not yet ready to acknowledge their problematic framing.

Ten years after Barthes, Susan Sontag writes, “by purporting to show that individuals are born, work, laugh, and die everywhere in the same way, ‘The Family of Man’ denies the

52 According to Steven Weisenburger, Emmett Till’s father had been executed for the rape of an Italian woman, while serving in Italy during the Second World War. Steven Weisenburger, written message to the author, March 26, 2019.
53 Barthes, “The Great Family of Man.” While visiting Mississippi from Chicago in 1955, 14-year-old African-American Emmett Till, was brutally beaten and murdered by a group of white men. It was alleged that Till whistled at a white woman in front of her family’s grocery store; this was later disproven. Till’s murder, in addition to his mother’s decision to hold an open-casket funeral, galvanized the emergent Civil Rights Movement.
determining weight of history – of genuine and historically embedded differences, injustices, and conflicts.”

Allan Sekula condemns its “profoundly corporate image of the world Coca-Cola utopia,” positing that the driving force of the USIA’s endorsement was to reinforce the then-damaged bourgeois nuclear family. Abigail Solomon-Godeau criticizes the exhibition’s blatant American perspective, arguing that it embodies the “ultimate ‘bad’ object” in its flattening universalization of humanism and photography. Viktoria Schmidt-Linsenhoff carefully scrutinizes Steichen’s extrication of explicit Holocaust imagery, suggesting that the avoidance is in fact a repression of its traumatic anxieties. Monique Berlier claims that historians too often evade analyses of individual images and instead rely too heavily on the written record. Most recently, Gerd Hurm, Anke Reitz, and Shamoon Zamir, argue for a historic reappraisal of The Family of Man, by recovering the “sense of cultural and social urgency,…[or] crisis content” and reexamining the driving forces of the exhibition and its response. In this sense, the national and cultural anxieties of the six years following the Second World War’s conclusion, should be central to discussions of this exhibition, those that follow, and their images. Often publicly

54 Sontag compares the celebration of The Family of Man’s humanism to the discomfort with Diane Arbus’ images for her 1972 retrospective at MoMA. She argues that Arbus “undercuts politics in a similar way, but instead highlights humanity’s isolation, feeling alien, ugly, monstrous. Whereas Steichen presents the warmth, Arbus accesses the darkness; most importantly, neither provide a rigorous historical framework.” Susan Sontag, On Photography (New York: Anchor Books, 1977), 25-26.


declaring *The Family of Man* as having “no propaganda intention of any kind,” Steichen seemed to believe that the exhibition possessed the virtue to suture a gravely divided world.

According to a letter authored by MoMA’s President of the Board of Trustees, Nelson Rockefeller, Steichen was at work on the exhibition since at least November 1950. Rockefeller, who would soon become the top psychological warfare advisor to future President Eisenhower, wrote Henry Ford II to request financial sponsorship from the Ford Foundation. Rockefeller castigated the US Government for “spend[ing] no money on exhibitions of American artistic achievement in foreign countries.” He argues that international tours would highlight the “growing cultural vitality” of the United States—echoing Henry Luce’s “American Century”—which is “virtually unknown to the great majority of people throughout the world.”

Experienced in WWII counter-propaganda, Rockefeller would later persuade President Eisenhower to establish an autonomous agency, the USIA, for foreign propaganda campaigns. Eisenhower would eventually select Rockefeller to replace former Time-Life Vice President, C.D. Jackson, as his personal advisor on psychological warfare programming overseas a year before *The Family of Man* opened.

More blatantly, the *New York Times* criticized “America’s foolish disregard for the ‘cultural offensive.’” Unbeknownst to many, meetings of the Congress for Cultural Freedom...
(CCF), a group now well-known for its covert link to the CIA, began as early as June 1950. Though the story first broke in 1966, the New York Times posited that the CIA had been supporting “anti-communist…[and] liberal organizations of intellectuals,” including the CCF, Encounter magazine, several publishing houses, and even the “secret, support of American scholars.” With quickly metastasizing anti-Western campaigns surfacing in the USSR and other Eastern Bloc countries, then-President Truman established the “Campaign of Truth,” a re-envisioned propaganda operation and revival of psychological warfare directed at mitigating communist threats. A year after Rockefeller’s letter, MoMA director René d’Harnoncourt wrote Ford with an amended exhibition outline now tentatively titled Image of America. “Designed to show the human values of the American way of life,” the exhibition would “become a tool for freedom and social progress” by employing the “warm terms of a universal language of human dignity, joy and sorrow.” D’Harnoncourt’s outline rallies praise of Steichen’s wartime photography exhibitions, Road to Victory and Power in the Pacific, citing both the Office of War Information’s use of them abroad and the effectiveness of photography as “pictorial

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63 The CCF was founded in West Berlin at Titania-Palast cinema to sponsor publications, lectures, and presentations in various countries as an oppositional tactic against communism’s championing of culture. According to the NYT’s follow-up story in May 1967, Encounter’s editors Stephen Spender and Frank Kermode were unaware of the C.I.A.’s financial support for over 10 years. They claimed Melvin Lasky purposely withheld this information from them. See “C.I.A. Tie Confirmed by Cultural Group,” New York Times, 10 May 1967.


65 “Image of America (Working Title): Outline of an Exhibition, June 25 1951,” RdH, VII.85, MoMA Archives, NY.
exposition.”66 Somewhere between Steichen’s original *Family of Man* conception and d’Harnoncourt’s letter, the exhibition focus shifted to a cultural study of the United States.

Eschewing propagandistic intent further, d’Harnoncourt stated that the exhibition would also show the “darker sides of American life,” however, *Family of Man* was sanitized of images depicting racial inequality and violence, American-instigated military aggression, or political corruption. Gerd Hurm posits that Steichen employs subtle subversions; one example is a quotation from Lillian Smith, author of *Strange Fruit*,67 a 1944 bestselling novel that examines then-forbidden theme of interracial love. Hurm calls her “one of the most then-controversial mid-century American writers,” and although her book was banned for “three lines of sexual phraseology,” the ban was lifted almost immediately with the intervention of close friend, Eleanor Roosevelt and then-President FDR.68 Although briefly controversial, with the endorsement of the President and over ten years later, Smith’s appearance in the exhibition would not have caused dispute, especially considering the quotation has no discernible connection to race politics: “…deep inside, in that silent place where a child’s fears crouch…” Decontextualized, this citation bears no progressive message.

Despite Steichen’s initial inclusion of an anonymous photograph taken in Winona, Mississippi of lynching victim “Bootjack” McDaniels, he swiftly removed it during opening

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66 “René d’Harnoncourt’s summary of *The Family of Man*, no date,” RdH, VII.85, MoMA Archives, NY.
67 Smith was one of the first white, Southern liberals to openly oppose racism and criticize segregation in the United States, continuing her work as an activist for years to come. She named her book after Billie Holiday’s song of the same name, which laments the rampant lynching of African-Americans in the American South.
week after receiving unfavorable attention from visitors and the press (fig. 51). With racial
tension in the United States escalating, the civil rights movement intensified after the May 1954
_Brown v. Board of Education_ ruling that upheld school segregation. Rosa Parks’ valiant refusal
and the supporting Montgomery bus boycott would happen in December 1955, almost a year
after the _Family of Man_ premiered. Steichen’s efforts to treat every country as equal in forming
one unified ‘family of man’—equality amongst all—fell short when it came to showing
examples of shameful historical legacies in the United States.

Although the final image at MoMA shows test bomb _Mike_ detonating (fig. 52), visual
allusions to the United States or to their role in the illness, injury, and death caused in Japan are absent. Wayne Miller had even visited Hiroshima in October 1945 and photographed survivors of the bomb.  

For the exhibition’s overseas venues, Steichen either removed this image or supplemented it for a different test bomb image in black and white (fig. 53). Rather than exhibit it separately in its own gallery as was done at MoMA, Steichen incorporated this image—on a much smaller scale—into the rest of the exhibition. In light of earlier Marshall Plan ‘reeducation’ and contemporaneous USIA intentions of Atlantic Community alliance, this action communicates a purposeful distancing of the United States from conflict. In a moment when the US was determined to solidify the strong and stable alliance of West Germany, images highlighting injustices committed by the US were undoubtedly deemphasized. Directly related to

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this goal and after failed attempts at forcing mass guilt, Steichen and the USIA were vigilant about unleashing and overly accusatory tone in the FRG, where building a positive conception of America was critical for Cold War geopolitics.

1.2 Steichen, the USIA, and the “Western showcase”

*The Family of Man*’s successful co-option and presentation of humanism can be attributed to two primary achievements: first, its ability to transcend borders of a so-called post-nationalist world without flagrant exaltation of American subjectivity; and, second, its charge to assuage ‘push-button’ hysteria with the comforts of a family-centered domesticity. Given that MoMA’s final photograph—the test bomb Mike’s billowing cloud of hydrogen toxins—was installed in its own gallery as a six-by-eight-foot color light transparency (fig. 54), Steichen was well aware of the global geopolitical stakes. The abstracted threat of total annihilation allowed all viewers to temporarily dissociate from national histories, compelled to reach for broad, homogenous universals and as Blake Stimson characterizes, even “take pleasure in the abolition of political identity.”71 The imagery’s banal subject matter seduces the viewer into moments of facile self-recognition; however, the show’s cyclical structure and overwhelming object count encourages viewers to rapidly look and compulsively repeat. Stimson calls this “the pleasure of psychosis,” or taking pleasure in a superficial self-identification.72 It is the mundane appearance

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72 Ibid., 2, 95. Stimson’s analysis first reviews Freud’s distinction between Oedipal and narcissistic identification. Oedipal identification implies the object identifies with their ideal, but also understands itself as different; “he both aspires to and is subject to the [ideal’s] law”. Narcissistic identification implies that the object frees himself from the ideal’s law by *becoming* that law. However, upon doing so, the object exposes itself to the rule of a new ideal; in this case, the cycle repeats indefinitely. Freud introduces the concept of the Oedipus Complex in
of these images—and their encoded historical framing—that allow the exhibition to thrive across so many cultures and ideologies, despite its clear, mid-century American origins and geopolitical aims. This pseudo-therapeutic effect was both commensurate with the USIA’s agenda and even embedded into their very language of operation: “prophylaxis, diagnostic task, therapy, recovery.”

As will become apparent in later discussions of What is Man? and On the Happiness of Man, this framework proved explicitly useful in divided Germany where the post-WWII crisis of national history and identity was arguably at its peak.

In only twenty-five days, the USIA’s West Berlin mounting attracted 44,000 visitors, a large majority of whom visited at least two or three times (figs. 55-59). Presented as part of the fifth Berlin Cultural Festival and in the first and only recorded instance, the USIA offered free admission. The USIA had supported an extensive and costly marketing campaign, which included posters and radio air time, but also advertisements in movie theaters. The exhibition was not only popular amongst housewives, students, and blue-collar workers, but also amongst the West German intellectual community and press, often endorsing it as a “must” see (figs. 60-63). Positive reviews often recycled MoMA and USIA press releases, but the overwhelming majority concurred with Steichen’s thesis.


73 “Communications Research and USIS Operations, USIA special report S-65-59,” Records of the USIA, RG 306, NACP.

74 Werner Sollors remembers that the advertising campaign included all Frankfurt movie theaters. Sollors, “The Family of Man: Looking at the Photographs Now and Remembering a Visit in the 1950s,” in The Family of Man Revisited, eds., Hurm, Reitz, and Zamir, 157.

75 Ibid.
Despite Steichen’s efforts, the USIA decided the exhibition would make no stops in East Germany, given that the United States did not officially recognize the country. Although there was no East German press campaign, the USIA’s advertisements seeped through divided-Berlin’s then-porous borders, resulting in roughly one-third of the total audience visiting from the GDR. Some attendees, who had been forced to “sign a statement that they would not visit the city’s Western Sector,” attended in disguise, including a group of physicians from the East wearing sunglasses throughout the exhibition. Undoubtedly facilitating intelligence-gathering, USIA statistics specify that at least half of the audience crossed over from the GDR on October 7th, the national holiday celebrating East Germany’s 1949 naissance called “Day of the Republic.” Although the United States did not grant the GDR diplomatic recognition until the early-1970s, Steichen included two images from the June 1953 East German Uprising, a pointed dyad of very few depictions of recent and identifiable political events.

The first: two youths launching paving stones at Soviet panzers (figs. 64-65). This photograph depicts a tense day during which 20,000 Soviet troops (350 tanks in Berlin alone) took to streets across as many as 500 towns in East Germany to control protesters. A new condition had been instated for GDR laborers in which their pay was cut if they did not meet their work quotas. On 16 June 1953, East Berlin construction workers marched down Stalinallee (now, Karl-Marx-Allee) towards the governing political party, Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschland (SED) official buildings; this quickly spiraled into a mass demonstration. The next day, 40,000 protesters were gathered in the Eastern sector, increasing with each passing hour.

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77 Sandeen, “‘The Show You See With Your Heart,’” 105.
78 Hixson, Parting the Curtain, 71n50.
With conflict heating up along Unter den Linden and Potsdamer Platz, the increased military and police presence lead to open fire, chaos, arrests, injuries and the deaths of 125 people. The second: hordes of GDR citizens crushed against a human barrier of West Berlin police (fig. 66). Taken on July 1, 1953, it shows their attempt to acquire packages from the Food Project Program, a fifteen million dollar State Department and CIA joint initiative. James B. Conant, American High Commissioner to Germany, counseled that the “best possible propaganda is food itself.” Thus, more than seventy-five percent of East Berlin’s population received American food parcel aid through Eisenhower’s program. For Berliners, the ubiquitous signs informing residents of zone borders (“You are now entering the British Sector,” for example; fig. 67) would stand out behind the mob of people, especially considering it shows a segment of the Union Jack. Permitted for exhibition by the USIA, both images would have been immediately recognizable considering the action’s origins in Berlin, its devastation, and ubiquitous press coverage (fig. 68) and subsequent memorialization (fig. 69). Although not yet a historical event, this coded reference to both the oppression, but also intrepid rebellion of East Germans expressed an undeniably American statement on the current political landscape.

79 C.D. Jackson, former Time-Life Vice President and wartime Deputy Chief of Psychological Warfare had previously proposed that the CIA intervene in the uprising by supplying weapons to striking East Berlin laborers; however, the government instead focused on the “Eisenhower Package” food campaign instead. Over the course of two months, 75% of the East Berlin population had received parcels. US Officials saw the program as successful given its pairing of humanitarian aid and “political-psychological objectives,” but also did not offer permanent solutions to the GDR’s economic condition. See Christian F. Ostermann, ed. Uprising in East Germany 1953: The Cold War, the German Question, and the First Major Upheaval Behind the Iron Curtain (Budapest: Central European University Press; New York: The National Security Archive, 2001), 320-328; Hixson, Parting the Curtain, 72-73n51, 53, 55.

80 James B. Conant, “Telegram from US High Commissioner for Germany to Department of State, July 31, 1953, 6PM,” 862B.49/7-3153, National Archives, College Park, MD, http://history.state.gov.historicaldocuments/frus1952-54v07p2/d739.
Although there is no guest book associated with the exhibition, it is certain that one particularly renowned East German visited the exhibition: Bertolt Brecht (fig. 70). Captured in a student’s snapshot, the playwright and East Berliner toured the exhibition a month prior to the publication of his photo and poetry book, War Primer (Kriegsfibel). While exiled in Scandinavia and the USA, Brecht collected wartime images from the popular press, including Life magazine. Through violent image juxtapositions and accompanying (often biting) four-line poems, Brecht’s “photoepigram” probed the ideological bias of the lens (fig. 71). The poems describe something loosely related to the subjects of the photographs, thus creating a further politicized space between image and text. War Primer engages his personal contempt for Nazism, the obstacles of processing wartime conflict, and an unbounded critique of senseless violence. In his 1931 article for Arbeiter Illustrierte Zeitung (Workers’ Illustrated News, AIZ), Brecht acknowledged his mistrust of photography and its capacity to function as a “weapon against truth.” He believed that the medium allowed a certain level of subjectivity to color what would otherwise be an objective image. Brecht’s concern beyond the surface of the photograph related to his conviction that reality was, in itself, a construct. This is a far cry from the stated

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81 Brecht completed War Primer in 1947, eventually sending the manuscript first to a West German publisher who rejected it and then to Volk und Welt, a communist East German publishing house. They stipulated that Brecht redact some of the content to make it more politically acceptable in the GDR. The manuscript was sent to East German government censor authorities until 1950. They swiftly rejected it based on its lack of criticality toward the western Allies and lack of attention paid to the Soviet Union. With Josef Stalin’s death in 1953, there was a minor loosening in censorship and Brecht submitted the manuscript again and found success. An East German satirical magazine called Eulenspiegel published the photo-book in December 1955. See Roy Scranton, “The Shipwreck of History: Bertolt Brecht’s ‘War Primer’,” review of War Primer, by Bertolt Brecht, LA Review of Books online, 4 June 2017, accessed 5 October 2018, [http://lareviewofbooks.org/article/the-shipwreck-of-history-bertolt-brechts-war-primer/](http://lareviewofbooks.org/article/the-shipwreck-of-history-bertolt-brechts-war-primer/).  
82 Sandeen, “‘The Show You See With Your Heart,’” 105.  
83 Brecht’s perspective on the pliability of meaning in photography is the centerpiece of many discussions on the medium. In particular, scholars including Susan Sontag, Sara Blair, and Eric
apolitical intentions of Steichen and the resulting flattening of cultural topography and emotional provocation of the exhibition. Although Brecht’s reaction to *The Family of Man* is unknown, one can imagine that he was both familiar with the types of American archival images in front of him and likely analyzed their relationships amongst each other and the added text. Regardless, both Brecht and Steichen had already spent years considering the ways in which images can be employed as political commentary, especially during wartime. It is possible that despite diametrically opposed results, in *War Primer* and *The Family of Man*, these two figures had more in common than the surface appearance.

Even though the majority of reviews speak to a positive reception, German reviews were not absent of criticism. These reactions substantiate that German audiences were not simply spellbound by the exhibition’s prowess and aesthetic experience, but, in some cases, grasped the manipulative qualities of its structure. West Berlin’s *Der Tagesspiegel*, which catered to highly educated readership, focused on the exhibition’s sentimentality arguing that “quotes appear everywhere in the exhibition and support its preaching, philanthropic intent…” In particular, the repetition of one image of a Peruvian flute player arguing that, “it is to state an untruth to say that life consists only of sweetness and eternal youth and lovely, friendly melodies.” Clearly, a selection of viewers felt the cloying pull of certain images and sections, as well as its American roots. Hamburg’s *Der Mittag* noted the overall lack of captions and commentary, evidencing a


84 “Jackie Martin (USIS Berlin) to USIA, Washington, DC, 20 October 1955,” RG 306-FM, NACP.

85 Ibid.
desire for a more elevated understanding of the imagery. Belated critical reception in the GDR included renowned photography theorist Berthold Beiler’s attack on its “formalist decadence” and failure to recognize the class struggle. Beiler praises Steichen’s focus on people, over the more expected “garbage and rubbish” of (Western) experimental photography; however, he is quick to state that the curator’s vision of humanity is only a “half-truth.” Beiler argues that Steichen’s humanism is “more or less unfinished,” given that the curator fails to address the democratic political project as the underpinning of the conflict represented. This charge, although clearly bolstered by his own socialist convictions, pokes real holes in the proliferating postwar humanist agenda backed by the United States. Beiler ultimately concedes, however, by reiterating one of Steichen’s major philosophies: photography has the unique ability to unite people.

As such, the exhibition’s colossal success is credited to humanist, social documentary photography’s vast relatability and emotional mirroring, even including an actual mirror for visitors to see themselves amongst the photographed subjects (fig. 72). Given these ideas, the notable absence of accusatory imagery. Two anonymous images taken in the Warsaw Ghetto—submitted as evidence during the Nuremberg Trials—only allude to National Socialist war crimes (figs. 73-74). Both photographs depict groups of people raising their arms in gesture of surrender as they’re forced out of the burning Ghetto—likely to their executions—by SS

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87 James, “A Post-Fascist Family of Man?,” 324.
89 Steichen included a mirror at the MoMA mounting of the exhibition; however, removed it later. He felt the idea was too on the nose.
officers. Additionally, two images of prewar European Jewish life harmonize with others of worship and education, neglecting to engage with the near erasure of these communities (figs. 75-76). West German photographers Helmut and Gabriele Nothelfer recalled that the German public was relieved to walk through the exhibition without being confronted by atrocity images (figs. 77-79). While most press reviews ignore the images in question, Süddeutsche Zeitung critic Wolfgang Koeppen, confronts one Warsaw Ghetto image directly. Rather than contend with why there are allusions only to German atrocities, he vocally demonizes the SS-Officers pictured. In parallel, Public Affairs office Joseph Phillips recalls overhearing a professor encouraging his students to internalize the message of these photos:

I don’t know how much more I can impress upon you...that this is something we should never forget...Some of you perhaps will soon be in uniform [with the FRG army] and I want you to remember this: Always keep in mind that the army that points guns at little children....has lost the fight before it ever began.

Yet, despite these isolated anecdotes of the palpable effect on viewers, only eight percent of spectators at the Munich exhibition mentioned these images at all.

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90 Both images originate in the Stroop Report, an album of photos compiled by an unknown SS Officer, eventually becoming part of Time-Life’s photographic archive. Polish authorities used the image of the young boy with raised arms to track down SS-Rottenführer Josef Bloesche, leading to his execution in 1969.

91 This point was first made by Schmidt-Linsenhoff. She argues that by “devaluing cultural differences to the level of an irrelevant, superficial phenomenon in a ‘family of man’ whose members are identical to oneself, it became possible to interpret the annihilation of Jewish culture in Europe as the ‘individual fate’ of a family member that leaves the ‘river of life’ undisturbed.” Viktoria Schmidt-Linsenhoff, “Denied Images. The Family of Man and the Shoah,” in Back and Schmidt-Linsenhoff, eds., The Family of Man 1955-2001: Humanism and Postmodernism, 91.

92 Ibid., 89.


94 Joseph B. Phillips (Public Affairs Officer, Munich) to unspecified, “ICS/USIA Exhibit – The Family of Man,” n.d. RG 306-FM, NACP.
US government agencies were familiar with the failure of graphic representation to produce effective denazification and re-education results. Testing this on German audiences in the wake of the war, OMGUS enforced newsreel screenings featuring footage from concentration camp liberations at commercial cinemas. Likewise, Steichen was openly wary of explicit imagery based on his experience with the previously mentioned wartime photography exhibitions, *Road to Victory* (1942), *Power in the Pacific* (1945), and later *Korea: The Impact of War in Photographs* (1951). As Steichen describes, these exhibitions did not build the anti-war message that he desired and as such, failed viewers. At first spurring repulsion, the discomfort of violent imagery could be later assuaged by the natural distancing of time. However, as the Munich survey suggests, Steichen’s conviction that time acted as a method of forgetting had faults. Inexplicably, the eight percent of the surveyed audience members who mentioned the Warsaw Ghetto images, increased to twelve percent after at-home interviews were conducted a few days later. This delayed response could be related to the effects of absorbing images over time, or perhaps to the privacy of one’s own home to discuss difficult subjects. Although

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95 *Welt im Film* (The World in Film) was a weekly newsreel produced by OMGUS and the Control Commission for Germany – British Element (CCG/BE) from May 1945-June 1952. They were used as a reeducation tool to drive the message home that the atrocities of the Holocaust were a direct result of fascism. In two newsreels featuring explicit footage of the camps, it stated, “Das ist Fascismus, das ist National Sozialismus.” Additionally, the Information Control Division (ICD)’s Documentary Film Unit produced such films as *Todesmühlen* (Mills of Death), which were lengthier and more comprehensive. The British withdrew from the program in 1949, but the Americans continued. In July 1952, it was sold to Neue Wochenschau GmbH who retitled it *Welt im Bild* (The World in Pictures). As is well known, the Allies forced local German and Polish citizens to walk through the camps after liberation, confronting the atrocities in person. See Brigitte J. Hahn, *Umerziehung durch Dokumentarfilm? Ein Instrument amerikanischer Kulturpolitik im Nachkriegsdeutschland (1945-1953)* (Munster: LIT-Verlag, 1997).
scholarly discussions about the Holocaust were surfacing across divided Germany, the subject remained a social taboo for everyday Germans.

Even though the images included lacked both graphic violence and an explicit depiction of a Holocaust narrative, some viewers felt a gross violation of their national identity. Some German interviewees argued that it was “onesidely [sic] anti-German,” “tendentious,” and unfair, given that “atrocities committed by other nations weren’t published.” The USIA Munich survey indicates that German aversion to such photographs is both “a psychological refusal to face the facts of life … and resentment at the reminder of the black marks in German history from 1933 to 1945.”

If Steichen or the USIA were interested in projecting a moralizing statement about the Holocaust, they could have easily incorporated graphic photographs taken at concentration camp liberations reproduced in so many publications including Life and Vogue; however, this tone would counteract attempts to secure German alliance in the Cold War. Discussion of possible exclusion of a Warsaw Ghetto photograph (“a photo showing the Jews being chased out of the Warsaw Ghetto”) appears in a memo circulated between USIS Foreign Service officials; however, it was ultimately decided by “Mr. Phillips” to leave it in the show.

USIA memos indicate that officials removed images from various exhibitions abroad, proving that the agency could exercise power of influence over the show’s content; however, revisions were deemed “aesthetical” and appear overwhelmingly benign. In Berlin, most images

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98 “USIA Exhibit ‘The Family of Man,’ Omitted from Berlin showing,” Berlin folder, Records of the USIA, RG 306-FM, NACP.
retracted from the exhibition were landscape or group portraits, except for Wynn Bullock’s *Child in Forest* (1951, fig. 80). A letter from Jackie Martin indicates that Steichen relayed to her “an interesting story concerning the use of the Warsaw Ghetto photo in the Berlin showing,” and she expresses her satisfaction that the photograph was not excluded.99 Irene Noelte, a representative of the Academy of Fine Arts Berlin, indicates that one visitor was angered by the inclusion of the image out of national pride, but Noelte concludes that “national pride has no place here.”100 Selecting the two anonymous Warsaw Ghetto images was a choice to delimit casting blame upon a country with whom the United States was attempting to secure an alliance.

Steichen primarily portrayed the United States strong, just, and heroic; however, there was a historically significant “misunderstanding” regarding photographs of Hiroshima and Nagasaki on view at various Japanese presentations.101 A letter from René d’Harnoncourt to Director of the USIA, Theodore Streibert, indicates that Steichen visited Japan in fall 1955 to work with Japanese photographers in selecting images for the exhibition. During this visit, Steichen was shown a photobook depicting the effects of the atom bomb on Nagasaki, which “impressed him deeply.” D’Harnoncourt explains that the Japanese organizers mistook this interest as approval for exhibition. The photographs were ultimately displayed and later covered by a curtain for the Japanese Emperor’s visit to the show. In a series of telegrams, Steichen requested the immediate removal of the “added bomb photographs.” Despite Chief Editor of *Nihon Keizai Shimbun (The Japan Times)* Jiro Enjoji’s insistence that their removal would cause

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99 “Jackie Martin to Dorothea von Stetten, 22 November 1955,” RG 306-FM, NACP.
100 “Irene Noelte (Hochschule für Bildende Künste) to Edward Steichen (MoMA), 16 September 1955,” RG 306-FM, NACP.
further controversy, Steichen argued that they “contradicted the basic meaning of the exhibition.” In his public statement, he contended,

…[that] the FAMILY OF MAN [sic] is concerned with the presentation of the joys, aspirations and sorrows of mankind as a whole and no event no matter how moving or significant can be given detailed coverage in it without distorting its universal meaning…the treatment of specific events in a topical manner through a series of photographs has been consistently avoided in order to make sure that the presentation of universal human problems would not be overshadowed by the impact of an event and its associations.

Steichen reiterates the absence of specific events; however, this chapter has already discussed several instances of coded historical references; whether they were meant to be legible or illegible depends upon the event and its impact. In his previous wartime exhibitions, Steichen witnessed what he felt was a rapid process of forgetting on the part of the audience, despite the inclusion of more graphic images. It is probable that he believed in the capacity of explicit images to overpower and flatten the meaning of the photographs, as well as negatively affect their lasting power.102

This is why images depicting the effects of nuclear destruction are notably absent, save for Yosuke Yamahata’s photograph of a young Japanese child spattered with the ashes and detritus of Nagasaki (fig. 81).103 Given Steichen’s decisions to forego captions, the context

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102 It is also possible that Steichen possessed a sensitivity to explicit wartime imagery given his experience of the First World War, perhaps the twentieth-century’s most violent conflict.

103 Military photographer Yosuke Yamahata was traveling to photograph war progress on the southernmost island of Kyushu, when he learned of the US atomic bomb detonation in Hiroshima. After the second bomb dropped on Nagasaki only three days later, the Japanese military ordered him to record its aftermath. Yamahata photographed the scene just twelve hours after detonation; however, following General Douglas MacArthur’s direct order to seize any press materials depicting explicit destruction in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, an unidentified US military official confiscated Yamahata’s film. After the Peace Treaty in April 1952, official censorship ended and some images were published in the September 29 issue of Life, including the photo selected by Steichen. See Barbara Marcoń, “Hiroshima and Nagasaki in the Eye of the Camera: Images and Memory,” Third Text 25, no. 6 (November 2011): 787-797.
would not have been immediately discernible for visitors. As is true with other examples in the
show, this image was cropped from a larger photograph, which depicts the child’s mother in a
traditional kimono, bloodied and bandaged, and deeply dissociated (fig. 82). The complete image
would have added the necessary contextual information for visitors, implicating the US in their
decision to engage in nuclear warfare and destroy families, the very focal point of this exhibition.
With the US occupation of Japan, direct military orders ensured these images were censored
from mainstream media for nearly seven years. It is uncertain whether or not the uncropped
image surfaced after official censorship was abolished in April 1952, or if it, like many others,
emerged almost seventy years later. Steichen, whether intentionally or not, included the cropped
version, understanding the absence of its historical context. As previously discussed, this
omission promotes an America excised from its conflicts and traumas, rather than one that is able
to deliberately engage with them.

As Abigail Solomon-Godeau arduously calculated, more than a third of Steichen’s
images had already been processed through the American media, the majority of which came
from Life and Look magazines. 104 Despite so many photographs depicting other countries, it is
clear that the United States and the country’s Cold War objectives subsisted beneath the surface
of its superficial diversity. Even the US military-sponsored German magazine Heute, an integral
tool for early postwar re-education efforts, had ties with the exhibition. After monthly
publication in Ladies Home Journal in May 1948, “People Are People the World Over”, enjoyed
a year-long spread in Heute (fig. 83). Ladies Editor and future Magnum Photos Executive Editor

104 Abigail Solomon-Godeau, “‘The Family of Man:’ Refurbishing Humanism for a Postmodern
Age,” in The Family of Man 1955-2001: Humanism and Postmodernism, eds., Back and
Schmidt-Linsenhoff (Marburg: Jonas Verlag, 2004), 37.

54
John G. Morris, conceptualized the photo-essay as a series that “would show families in countries every month, as they went about their quotidian business and engaged in the common preoccupations of humankind.”

…the family is still the basic building block of society…While the world community waits upon the anxious maneuvers of diplomats, life on the familiar level of hearth and home continues with the constancy of the tides.

The central message confirming an unstable, anxious day-to-day reality in the hands of diplomats, and the critical presence of the nuclear family. Steichen was familiar with the series and it later served as a major influence for *The Family of Man*. Humanist models had been set in place and already inculcated to, at the very least, a German audience. Although the structure of the postwar German family was compromised, there was a desire to return to that family hearth, the homeland (*Heimat*), in the midst of reconstruction. Given its mid-century currency and Steichen’s penchant for the banal, it comes as no surprise that the majority of his selections came directly from the archives of the illustrated weekly, *Life*. Although Steichen had embarked on a 1952 European tour to collect images from international photographers, camera clubs, and photo agencies,—many of which were included in the exhibition—a greater number

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108 *Heimat* translates to home, or homeland. It can take the shape of a physical native country, or the idea of a spiritual homeland. In visual culture, *Heimat* meant the idealized depictions of a national, pastoral landscape that doubled as a form of nostalgia for the prewar era. *Heimatfilme* were desired in the postwar era due to their depiction of an economically and culturally robust, independent Germany. For a more detailed discussion of *Heimat* and its role in postwar film, see second chapter.
were taken in foreign countries by American or US-affiliated photographers, driving American perspective.

A USIA-commissioned German survey organization (DIVO) reported that ninety-eight percent of Munich visitors had favorable reactions to the exhibition, with only two percent reporting any propagandistic objectives.\(^{110}\) Munich’s Office for Cultural Affairs noted that “none of the Berlin reviews directly associates it, qua exhibit, with something significant in American culture,” and most reviews make no mention that “the US Government was responsible for its showing in Berlin.”\(^{111}\) Despite this, when asked which country in the world does the most to realize the ideal expressed in the exhibition, forty percent answered the United States and seventy-three percent of visitors remarked that the United States is trying to promote understanding across nations.\(^{112}\) According to the USIA, *The Family of Man* “created highly favorable attitudes towards the United States,”\(^{113}\) and they posited that “through its indirect approach [sic], the exhibit was especially exemplary and effective.”\(^{114}\) Regardless of intention, *The Family of Man* presented a prototypical American perspective of the Cold War milieu, one that incidentally prioritized a democratic agenda in order to correct the authoritarianism of the past and counter communism in the present day.


\(^{111}\) “Cable, USIS Berlin to USIS Bonn, 21 November 1955,” Munich folder, RG 306-FM, NACP.


\(^{113}\) Ibid., iii.

\(^{114}\) Ibid.
1.3 Obscured Fascism: Karl Pawek and the Steichen Model

The same year that The Family of Man concluded its eight-year tour, Karl Pawek, Austrian curator and editor of popular illustrated weekly, Stern, opened an even larger photographic exhibition in West Berlin, entitled The World Exhibition of Photography: What is Man? (figs. 84-85). Curiously, Steichen had contributed to a 1952 exhibition that went by the same name: Weltenausstellung der Photographie sponsored by UNESCO. This exhibition, which opened in Lucerne, had similar goals to what would become The Family of Man. Most critically, Steichen was responsible for organizing national submissions, potentially catalyzing his interest in the global, humanist narrative. Purporting direct influence from Steichen’s show and despite its rejection from Kunsthalle Baden Baden based on its extreme likeness, Pawek’s exhibition was not a simple translation or imitation.\(^{116}\) The Family of Man contained coded American underpinnings and although the exhibition confronted certain national histories, it left others buried in service of a homogenous identification amongst viewers. Pawek provided slightly more defined historical frameworks and more readily confronted the politics of the present. The exhibition’s presentation, layout, and catalog, however, almost directly reformulate Steichen’s photo-essay style. So too did Pawek select 555 images from over 20,000, highlighting the representation of 264 photographers from thirty countries. The curator also gave precedence to images sourced in magazine and exhibition sponsor, Stern, just as Steichen did with Life. In the

\(^{115}\) Stern (Star) is a popular weekly news magazine which emphasizes images. In 1950, the occupying British military banned the magazine because it criticized allied aid for wasting funds. In 1983, the magazine would come under close scrutiny for its purchase and publication of the “Hitler Diaries”, later ousted as forgeries created by Nazi-sympathizer Konrad Kujau, between 1980 and 1983. Kujau had a history of selling Nazi paraphernalia and various petty crime convictions. Stern’s reputation suffered greatly after this incident.

\(^{116}\) Letter to Karl Pawek from Dr. Mahlow, 21 May 1964, Akademie der Künste Archiv, Berlin.
opening text of the exhibition catalog, Pawek cites Steichen’s “memorable” exhibition directly, positing that his “magnificent concept” must be “kept alive.”

*What is Man?* traveled across West Germany and embarked upon an international tour quite similar to the *Family of Man*. Attracting three-and-a-half million visitors over four years of international tour, the exhibition’s success led Pawek to mount three additional versions in subsequent years, each engaging with a new theme. Before arriving at the successful concept for the *World Exhibition*, Pawek had a long and tumultuous career in journalism.

Pawek began his career as a writer and later rose to the role of Editor of *Die Pause* (1935-1944), an Austrian illustrated magazine dedicated to culture. The magazine, however, clearly defined its political allegiance. Rudolf Kremser’s article, “Der ewige Mensch und der moderne Staat,” (The Eternal Man and the Modern State) praised totalitarianism over democracy, given

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118 The exhibition was presented in Berlin, Hamburg, Frankfurt, Hannover, Munich, and Bochum; internationally it visited Basel, Copenhagen, Helsinki, Ljubljana, Milan, Paris, Rome, Stockholm, Tehran, and Zurich, as well as several venues in the UK and USA. In a personal communication, Curator of Photographs at the National Museum of American History (NMAH) David Haberstitch recalled that the exhibition visited NMAH; however, the photographic panels were so badly damaged and in such poor condition upon arrival that he believes the show was never mounted. David Haberstitch, conversation with author, June 29, 2018.
119 The 2nd and 3rd World Exhibitions of Photography were *Die Frau* (Woman, 1968) and *Unterwegs zum Paradies* (The Path to Paradise, 1973), and *Die Kinder dieser Welt* (The Children of the World, 1977), respectively. They followed a similar model and exhibition tour.
its capacity to solve what the author considered to be the “problems of today”: urbanization, loss of individuality. Furthermore, Kremser attacks American culture, suggesting that it is the culture of the enemy and one that is transient, at best. According to photographs depicting the United States were used to illustrate the essay and placed in stark contrast to images projecting the intellectual and cultural achievements of classical antiquity, primarily represented by sculpture.

Pawek’s personal contributions to Die Pause also confirmed these convictions; in a 1936 article he argued that the “theses of rationalism and democracy” were “fraudulent” and that those who identified with this ethos needed stronger “leadership.” He suggests that “national ideas” and an “awareness of the values of the homeland rooted in one’s native soil,” are the most effective actions to take toward rendering a more robust society. Pawek’s emphasis of and reliance upon nationalism clearly parallels the same language adopted by the National Socialist party during this time. His belief in nationalist ideals solidified after the 1938 annexation (Anschluß) of Austria (the region was then referred to as Ostmark) into Nazi Germany, arguing that racial and national categorization of man are “all that exists in the global order.” To express his political convictions, Pawek joined the army for a brief period of time, later taking on administrative duties due poor health. During this time, Pawek reported the political dissidence of three members of his regiment, abruptly leading to their executions. After the war, Pawek would be arrested and serve a three-year imprisonment.

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122 Rudolf Kremser, “Der ewige Mensch und der moderne Staat,” Die Pause 9, no. 8/9, 3-4.
Ultimately, like many other National Socialist party members and sympathizers, Pawek’s political views and imprisonment did not negatively affect the trajectory of his career. From 1949 to 1955, Pawek wrote for *Austria International: Österreichisches Journal für Wirtschaft und Kultur* (Austria International: Journal of Economics and Culture), another image-heavy illustrated magazine, and the publication from which he would establish *magnum: Zeitschrift für modern Leben* (Magnum: Magazine for Modern Life) in 1954.\(^{127}\) That year, *magnum* reached circulation amongst German-speaking readership of 10,000, quickly rising to 22,000 two years later, and finally 35,000 by 1960.\(^{128}\) Issues were most often dedicated to a singular theme, many of which Pawek ended up reusing and repeating for *What is Man?*. 

Clearly, Pawek’s journalistic opinions and his photographic exhibitions possessed thematic crossover. Over the course of his lifetime, Pawek authored three books on photography, all of which elevated what he viewed as the realism associated with the medium, as well as its capacity to challenge the contemporaneous visual culture through its manifold applications.\(^{129}\) In the *What is Man’s?* exhibition catalog, Pawek explicitly argues that each photograph signifies a word and when positioned together, they form sentences. The use of captions, he posits, merely


\(^{128}\) Starl, “‘Eternal Man,’” 123.

\(^{129}\) These included *Totale Photographie: Die Optik des neuen Realismus* (Total Photography: The Optic of the New Realism, 1960), *Das optische Zeitalter: grundzüge einer neuen Epoche* (The Optical Age: Foundations of a New Epoch, 1963), and *Das Bild aus der Maschine* (The Image out of the Machine, 1968).
“constrain” or force an image’s meaning. This method, perhaps presented at the service of avoiding distracting text, only further conceals the crucial contexts of each image. Calling this *life-photography*, Pawek built his model on “humanized, individualized photography” that directly corresponded to “the psychology of modern man” and “a more immediate, emotional response.” Pawek’s method was a version of Otto Steinert’s (1915-1978) *subjektive fotografie*, which emphasized the expression of the photographer’s inner psyche and experimental techniques, as seen in *Junge Schauspielerin* (1949/51, fig. 86) and *Luminogramm II* (1952, fig. 87). Steinert utilizes solarization and creates a variation on Man Ray’s photogram, that involves placing objects over light-sensitive paper prior to exposure. Similar to Steinert, an immediate emotional response is fundamental to Pawek’s model; however, in the same way that *The Family of Man* fails, hasty looking does not beget complex comprehension.

Pawek celebrates what he credits as Steichen’s leadership of the photographic medium from mere illustration to “a door for people to their reality, to their god, to their sacred things, to their history and significance.” Imbuing *What is Man?* with an even more acute sense of the humanist perspective, Pawek writes: “The photographs shown here would achieve their finest success, if after looking at this Exhibition people did not go away thinking about photography,

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131 Otto Steinert, *Subjektive Fotografie* (Saarbrucken: Brüder Auer Verlag, 1952), 22. Otto Steinert was responsible for establishing “subjektive fotografie” around 1949, though it was not called this at first; this style of photography valued inner creativity, including tactical operation of the camera in order to best capture the subject/object’s own expressive character, essentially Purist, formalist work. This genre also prioritized darker themes, resulting in hallucinatory or expressionistic images. Steinert established a series of three exhibitions under the same title between 1951 and 1958.
but about people.”\textsuperscript{135} \textit{What is Man?} largely belies cultural difference in service of a more idealistic humanist agenda; however, Pawek, unlike Steichen, employs sporadic instances of visual provocation to communicate the violence of war, comment on class difference, and critique American culture and politics. Pawek’s practice of formulating jarring juxtapositions has origins in his stylistic work for \textit{magnum}. In its coverage of topical postwar subjects (consumerism, religion, new ‘youth’ generation), \textit{magnum} prioritizes photography as the present day’s most compelling medium. Whereas Steichen found inspiration in \textit{Ladies Home Journal/Heute}’s “People Are People the World Over,” Pawek had already laid editorial groundwork for the exhibition through various thematic \textit{magnum} photo essays. Foregrounding Pawek’s later exhibition segments in \textit{What is Man?}, one photo essay was even called \textit{The Family of Man}.\textsuperscript{136}

Very few installation images of the West Berlin mounting exist; however, Pawek made the order of themes clear in both archival documents and the catalog.\textsuperscript{137} His penchant for the shocking juxtapositions across the photo-essay spread also filtered into the exhibition. Saccharine images of love and marriage (fig. 88-89) fill a section titled “Two People,” immediately followed by historically-specific depictions of apocalyptic destruction and death in

\textsuperscript{135} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{136} Sarah E. James, \textit{Common Ground: German Photographic Cultures Across the Iron Curtain} (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2013), 73.
\textsuperscript{137} The forty-two sections include: What is man?; Two people; Man against man; The making of man; The teeming masses; Analogies; The heroes; Race—the great misunderstanding; In the name of God; The humanity of men; Aphrodite; Partner of the machine; Partner of the soil; Childhood; Demons; A touch of madness; The boon of sleep; Siesta; The playfulness of man; Elegance; The recalcitrants [\textit{sic}]; The peaceful war; Man on the move; The other hemisphere; Young womanhood; The black man; Pillars of society; Fulfillment; Life is a stage; Women; The sorrows of the child; The agony of woman; This side of the hereafter; Man and money; Contrasts; Each unto his own needs; The sick; The big look after the small; Exit; The secret of faith; Man creates art; and What is man?.

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“Man against Man”. Wolf Strache’s depiction of an anonymous individual, concealed by the uncanny wartime camouflage of a gas mask and blanket, is a particularly apt point of departure from *The Family of Man* (fig. 90). Directly above this figure, the byline of a derelict Berlin cinema implores passersby to “journey into the past,” the suggestion being an impossible, escapist fantasy in the midst of an allied air raid. Although Pawek’s nascent historical legibility has been coupled with the passage of time, he still fails to address National Socialist atrocities, even as Germany’s historical amnesia had begun to fissure. By 1964/65, the period of German postwar history commonly understood as the “period of forgetting,” or the purposeful avoidance of wartime crimes against humanity, was nothing more than a myth. As previously discussed, Pawek and a large majority of *Stern* photographers, including Strache, shared the pervasive postwar stain of “problematic associations” with National Socialism. Against the backdrop of a decade of denazification and “coming clean,” Pawek clearly resisted. Sarah James rightly argues that in concert with Richard Peter’s returned German POW (fig. 91)—tattered and directionless—and the explicit desiccated remains of a Nazi soldier in uniform (fig. 92), these images could even be decoded as sympathetic to German victimization, a clear obstruction of the humanist agenda. Unafraid to depict violence, but selective in his decisions, these discrete historical ruptures appear in greater repetition as the exhibition advances.

A section titled, “Race—the great misunderstanding,” features multiple images of racial violence taken exclusively in the US, further distancing his own racial beliefs from what begins to appear as a moral narrative. Primarily captured by Charles Moore, the photographs display police brutality toward non-violent Civil Rights protestors, including the use of aggressive German Shepherds and fire hoses to disperse crowds (figs. 93-94). These photographs illustrate the depth of racial injustice in the United States, highlighting the police as central to the stunting
of civil progress. The following page displays Fred Blackwell’s photograph from a 1963 Woolworth’s sit-in in Jackson, Mississippi; three white subjects foreground the image, covered in ketchup, mustard, and sugar (fig. 95). Behind them sits an African-American woman, also covered in food, alert but listless. Of Blackwell’s many renowned photographs of this scene circulated by the media, this one fails to implicate the angry mob of white aggressors hulking over the protestors. In an alternative image by Blackwell, almost half of the frame is consumed by young, white males laughing, pouring sugar, and some observing covetously without direct participation; by all accounts, this photograph is objectively more narrative in presenting racial injustice and inequality, providing viewers with a more comprehensive picture of the action. Out of all of Blackwell’s photographs, Pawek’s selection does not grant the most sympathy toward the African-American participants, but rather toward those few white protesters in the foreground. Pawek’s choice of American photographs acknowledges the very real racial inequalities of the country, but also makes an argument about the country’s own hypocrisy in relation to German history.

Another image in this section mirrors this focal point and acts as an addendum to the section; the catalog caption: “African teacher in German family” (fig. 96). A young child outstretches his arms to touch the teacher’s face; his father carefully observes in the background, as if it is a scientific or psychological study. Once again, the white subject is at the center of the composition of this image and in this example, the child completely obscures the teacher’s face. If understood culturally, the image completely ignores the existence of the driving, racist pseudo-sciences of the Third Reich.138 Although none of these examples were photographed by Pawek, it

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138 The eugenics movement was founded by British explorer and natural scientist Frances Galton in the late-nineteenth century; the term was first implemented by Galton in 1883. Eugenics
is his selection that is most critical. On the surface, these images approach issues of race and representation; however, under the guise of and with the distinct elasticity of universal humanism, the residual racial politics of Pawek remain carefully coded.

Like *magnum*, the exhibition catalog for *What is Man?* features variegated image juxtapositions that prioritize graphic, abstract comparisons and encode messages. In the section titled, “The teeming masses,” Pawek positions Max Jacoby’s photograph of a cluster of press photographers crouching behind their cameras, above an image of three rows of food-covered infants in high-chairs taken by Yale Joel (fig. 97). Superficially, the images provoke dialogue based on their graphic similarities: the triangular bases of the tripods mirror the legs of the high-chairs. The catalog index reveals that the first image was taken at Berlin’s Schöneberger Town Hall (*Rathaus*) during President John F. Kennedy’s popular June 1963 speech (fig. 98). The infants below, smearing food over every surface available to them, were part of a baby food test implemented by an American business. The textual relationship—one of Pawek’s primary conditions for how to accurately read and understand images—elicits commentary on the spectacle of consumption: a media frenzy in concert with a surplus of children also performing

prioritizes pseudoscientific theories on racial superiority and advocacy for selective reproduction and sterilization. The belief is that these practices are a form of “social Darwinism” and will result in society’s evolutionary advancement. The movement was first popular in England and the United States; in 1906, the American Breeder’s Association opened their eugenics section and four years later, the Eugenics Record Office was established. Support of the eugenics movement grew exponentially by the 1930s and included involuntary reproductive sterilization of the handicapped and mentally ill in such states as California and Virginia. The National Socialist Party adopted American eugenic tenets and practices as central to their ideology on racial superiority, which they called *Rassenhygiene* (racial hygiene). Their strongly-held convictions that the Aryan race was “the master race” escalated to their attempted extermination of European Jewry during the Second World War. See Alison Bashford and Philippa Levine, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Eugenics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010) and Ruth Clifford Engs, *The Eugenics Movement: An Encyclopedia* (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 2005).
consumption. If one was aware of the photographs’ links to the United States, Pawek’s statement takes on a new critical dimension. Although it may not possess an overtly critical voice, given the lack of context provided for spectators, the image combination still projects a rather acerbic tone. This comparison exemplifies the innate malleability of social documentary photography in the context of massive, ‘humanist’ exhibitions.

1.4 Photographic Culture across the Eastern Border

In the December 1957 issue of GDR monthly photography magazine, Die Fotografie, an article states that, “photography is to be led out of a state of unconscious Weltanschauung (worldview) and political neutrality in order to have it, being an activity in accordance with party thought, consciously embrace the building of GDR socialism.” Erich Schutt’s Help for the Buddies (1955/1960, fig. 99) and Jo Gerbeth’s Sports for the Masses (1959, fig. 100) both embody the positive characteristics of labor and collectivism, became the desired photographic rubric in the GDR. Schutt’s image depicts a young subject in the foreground, smiling spiritedly as he poses on his pick-axe in front of his fellow workers. The remaining subjects—knee-deep in frozen earth—work diligently along a railroad track amidst an industrial wasteland. Regardless, each figure boasts a wide smile; the foregrounded figure, as well as the image’s title, welcome viewers into the scene. The image suggests a tourist snapshot of monumental architecture or a zoological curiosity, instead capturing labor as the sought-after and celebrated marvel. Gerbeth’s image differs vastly from Schutt’s. The graphic composition features hundreds of women

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engaging in sport activity from a particularly Riefenstahlian perspective. Harmonized arm movements create a dizzying depiction of militant unity, recalling newsreel footage of marches from Nazi Germany. Each pair of women don identical outfits and Indian clubs, and the individual features of their faces are either blurred or obstructed by the distant point of view. Negative space in the lower right corner makes it conceivable for the viewer to project herself as part of the spectacle of serialized bodies. Both Schutt and Gerbeth’s images demonstrate the centrality of labor and collectivism to the standardization of photographic content imposed by the SED’s governing bodies.

Under the leadership of the First Secretary of the SED (1950-1971), Walter Ulbricht, the party associated the democracy inherent in the flexibility and affordability of the photographic medium with its potential to promote a Marxist democracy: one rid of individual greed and instead focused on instilling collectivism. The GDR methodologically “abstracted and universalised [sic] fascism, casting it exclusively as a product of capitalism,”140 which was inherently polluted with NSDAP’s legacy. This resulted in the GDR’s appropriation of photography as a pedagogical tool of truth,141 absent of the decadence, experimentalism, and

140 James, Common Ground, 21.
141 Throughout the history of photography, there is considerable theory on the photograph as a vessel of truth. Of the many major figures present in this debate, Susan Sontag argues that photography’s dangerous reproduction of “reality” allows for bureaucratic interference and control; Roland Barthes posits that photographs represent a unique and truthful experience of a moment in time, though returning to these moments can symbolize a kind of death, as well; Charles Peirce posits that a photograph’s “indexicality” allows it to share a likeness with the physical world, but also an “iconicity” which differentiates it from a scientific object; Tom Gunning argues that photographs exceed the functions of mere signs. See Sontag, On Photography; Roland Barthes, Camera Lucida (New York: Hill and Lane, 1981); Charles Sanders Peirce, The Essential Peirce, vol. 2, eds., N. Houser, C. Kloesel, and the Peirce Edition Project (Bloomington, IN: University of Indiana Press, 1998); Tom Gunning, “What’s the Point of an Index? or, Faking Photographs,” in Still Moving: Between Cinema and Photography, eds., Karen Beckman and Jean Ma (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2008).
formalism associated with the failed modernist avant-garde. The unflinchingly factual appearance of documentary photography not only supported the GDR’s interest in employing “a didactic tool for imaging the utopian narrative,” but also served the greater effort to admonish capitalist bourgeois sensibilities from seeping through the Iron Curtain. The regime only recognized photography as a fine art in the early-1980s; 1982 marked the first year it was included in East Germany’s quadrennial National Art Exhibition in Dresden. Although photography and film were arguably the least ‘controlled’ cultural field in the GDR, the perfection of images was central to state-sponsored imagery.

According to a cultural ordinance passed in 1951, artists were encouraged to create work with ‘politically correct’ messages in exchange for stipends; however, in order to produce such political bolstering, photographers were granted certain liberties. Berthold Beiler argued that, “interfering with a gentle hand [could] turn possibility into reality…” and he stressed that, “it must not be visible in the finished work.” Jo Gerbeth’s A Toast to the City of Moscow (1957, fig. 101), exemplifies this quality of staging. A group of friends sit in a domestic setting, celebrating a free trip to Moscow awarded to them by the The Society for German-Soviet Friendship (DSF, Die Gesellschaft für Deutsch-Sowjetische Freundschaft). Yet, the bizarre shadow resulting from the artificial lighting announce the photograph’s construction. Positioned to showcase their expressions of excitement, the group’s staging leaves an entire side of the table.

143 Ibid., ix.
145 Painting and literature were held to stricter standards overall.
146 Berthold Beiler, Probleme über Fotografie: Parteilichkeit im Foto (Halle/Saale: Fotokinoverlag, 1959), 58.
open for viewers. Lacking any documentary veracity, this image presents a space of constriction and containment, wherein the viewer is corned into a small room and confronted with a table overwhelmed by USSR tourism materials. Beiler’s statement suggests that staging, cropping, manipulating, and altering images to project the socialist ideology was not only sanctified, but also ethical. In hindsight, the manipulation is so clear; however, in the late-1950s, this photograph was deemed believable.

The practices previously discussed inhabit the realm of the expected and desired documentary photography utilized as state propaganda, especially in such publications as *Die Fotografie*, produced by the Fotokino Archive in Leipzig.147 The magazine frequently published “one-person portfolios, group portfolios (frequently by worker’s brigades, but more often than not describing a particular theme or issue), instructional articles on scientific and ‘leisure’ photography (animals, nature, travel, etc.), articles by curators, letters to the editor (including a popular forum for readers to respond to images), and much more.”148 The publication was not only read by communist audiences within the GDR, but also disseminated internationally to capitalist countries. In the December 1957 issue of *Die Fotografie*, one article stated that “photography is to be led out of a state of unconscious Weltanschauung (worldview) and political neutrality in order to have it, being an activity in accordance with party thought, consciously embrace the building of GDR socialism.”149 Throughout the 1960s, articles were written primarily by the Central Commission for Photography (ZKF, *Zentrale Kommission*...
Fotografie), a sub-agency of the Kulturbund headed by Beiler.¹⁵⁰ Established in 1958, the ZKF closely monitored photographic content, coordinated exhibitions, and aided in elevating the medium’s social appreciation, which had not yet been properly recognized in the GDR. The editorial board of ZKF’s strict control over content promoted naturalism (i.e. socialist realism) over formalism. By seeking “ideological clarity,”¹⁵¹ the institution circumvented the “reactionary class function” that would lodge separation between practitioners and viewers alike.¹⁵² The ZKF believed this approach could aid the country in overcoming any intellectual gap between professionals and laymen.¹⁵³

Through this conviction, the Leipzig School for Graphic and Book Art (HGB, Hochschule für Grafik und Buchkunst) provided the only postgraduate education in photography and photo-graphics in the GDR.¹⁵⁴ Unsurprisingly, the Academy valued the social documentary style; fine art photography was neither discussed nor promoted until the cultural and political thaw of the late-eighties. Beyond government employment through GDR official photo-agencies General German Press Agency (Allgemeiner Deutscher Nachrichtendienst, ADN) or Panorama

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¹⁵⁰ Founded in 1958, the ZKF “coordinated the photographic work in the country, organized photographic exhibitions and supported the social recognition of photography, which then—unlike in the USA—still represented a peripheral phenomenon in society, culture and art.”
¹⁵³ Ibid.
¹⁵⁴ Academic instruction in photography was possible in Leipzig since 1893 through the Technical College of Photography and Photomechanic Production (Fachschule für Photographie und photomechanisches Vervielfältigungswesen), which became HGB in 1947. See Susanne Knorr and Kai Uwe Schierz, eds., The Other Leipzig School: Photography in the GDR, Teachers and Students of the Academy of Visual Arts Leipzig (Erfurt: Kunsthalle Erfurt and Kerber Verlag, 2009).
GDR Foreign Press Agency (Panorama DDR-Auslandspresseagentur GmbH), graduates often worked for illustrated magazines including Sibylle, Das Magazin, or Die Frau, or completed contract work. Although such magazines were not officially sponsored by the government, they were still closely monitored and subject to censorship. Subject matter deemed off-limits given cold war compulsions to “protect the social development of the GDR against interior and exterior enemies,” included military or security institutions, aerial images, or public transportation.

Prior to August 1961, travel between East and West Germany was legally possible and for the most part, manageable. With the ability to visit exhibitions and view publications banned in the GDR, practitioners exposed themselves to ‘western’ image-makers including Henri Cartier-Bresson and the Magnum group, but also Steichen and The Family of Man.

1.5 The Socialist Family of Man

Two years after Pawek’s first World Exhibition, On the Happiness of People (Vom Glück des Menschen)—originally titled The Socialist Family of Man—opened in East Berlin on the 200th anniversary of the October Revolution (figs. 102-103). The exhibition had been discussed in circulated memos of the SED’s Central Committee as early as 3 May 1965. Curators, or Autoren (authors)—as they are referred to in the catalog—Rita Maahs and Karl-Eduard von Schnitzler, already possessed local followings. An experienced photography curator for various

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155 Founded in October 1946, the ADN and Panorama DDR were the only registered news and picture agencies in the country, causing a monopoly over newspapers, radio and television content. In 1952, the Central Picture Office Berlin (Zentralbild) was established and by 1956, it was incorporated under the umbrella of ADN.


157 “Protokoll Nr. 33/65,” Bundesarchiv Berlin (BArch), SAPMO, DY 30/J IV 2/3/1073.
GDR agencies, Maahs also published on photography and worked as a photographer in her own right. Von Schnitzler was one of East Berlin’s most renowned journalists and televised news commentators; as early as 1957, his name topped a list of “recognizable personalities” in a USIS-conducted survey of East Berliners who crossed into the Western zone. Von Schnitzler was also the host for East German television series, *Der schwarze Kanal* (Black Channel, 1960-1989), a reactionary program to the West German show, *Die rote Optik* (Red Lenses/Viewpoint, 1958-1960). Both series disseminated political propaganda: the former dubbed over West German broadcasts with East German commentary; the latter analyzed East German television segments. Both Maahs and von Schnitzler already possessed significant experience with regards to the role images play in the fabrication or encoding of ideological messages.

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159 “*Der schwarze Kanal*” ran weekly, notorious for its attack of capitalism and causing political agitation against the west. The *Staatliches Komitee für Rundfunk* (State Committee for Broadcasting) monitored FRG broadcasts and record and transcribe relevant segments. The program was self-described as an instruction manual for understanding the truth behind West German programming. Its title, in juxtaposition with “*Die rote Optik*”, could also reference conservative and fascist color combinations (red and black), as well as Mussolini’s “Schwarze Brigaden”, a Fascist paramilitary group run by Italy’s Republican Fascist Party. “*Die rote Optik*” was hosted by Thilo Koch, and although it was programmed for West German citizens, it was intended to be accessible in East Germany via overlapping signals. See Kirsten Bönker, Julia Obertreis, and Sven Grampp, *Television Beyond and Across the Iron Curtain* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2016); Marc Levasier, ““Der Schwarze Kanal’ Entstehung und Entwicklung einer journalistischen Kontersendung des DDR-Fernsehens,” in *Journalisten und Journalismus in der DDR. Berufsorganisation – Westkorrespondenten – “Der Schwarze Kanal”*, ed., Jürgen Wilke (Cologne, Weimar, Vienna: Böhlau, 2007).
Maahs and von Schnitzler constructed visual narratives nearly identical to those of Steichen and Pawek, by organizing the exhibition around the concept of happiness as it applies to the following broad life themes: work, relationships, education, and peace (fig. 104). They had initially released a call for image submissions to 30,000 photographers: both amateur and professional, individual and organizations. They selected over 700 images from 23,000; a marked escalation in volume from the previously discussed exhibitions. In an interview with the curators, Die Fotografie Editor Alfred Neumann, draws attention to the “relatively large…almost unreasonable number” of photographs included in the exhibition. He argues that such a volume assigns to viewers an impossible task: to process 770 “individual, self-contained” images throughout a single visit. Maahs and von Schnitzler concede that the volume is large; however, they posit that no photograph is displayed individually, and that an individual image does not even possess the power to embody ample meaning. As a result, the curators combined complementary photographs on panels (Tafeln) to represent an entire thought (fig. 105). Maahs and von Schnitzler were adamant about the consumption of a group of images as a sentence; an identical strategy as Pawek’s. However, once again quotations appeared throughout the exhibition, instead of contextual captions; curiously, captions are also excluded from the catalog, making it nearly impossible to identify the photographs’ origins or historical contexts.

In relation to the photographic sentences, the curators label both the exhibition and catalog a Bilddichtung or “photo-poem” to express the legibility of image narratives. When Neumann questions the ethical and moral problems of combining unrelated images and contexts

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161 Ibid.
into the same ‘sentence’, Maahs and von Schnitzler present a clear justification of their specific image juxtapositions. They displayed J. Ducrot’s image of an American mother and baby side-by-side in a hospital next to Life-Foto’s image of a Vietnamese mother carrying her deceased child, who has fallen limp in her arms (fig. 106). Although the contextual details of the photographs would not have been provided in the exhibition, the curators point out that they’ve compared these images on purpose. They argue that it is “fair and legal” to present them together because “truth” must be understood in conjunction with happiness. They further maintain that it is the lens of the camera that carries bias, also implicating the photographer in this process given that they select a specific perspective. Maahs and von Schnitzler admit that they understand the employment of photography as propaganda. In a bizarre turn, however, they call for the relationship between photo editors and press photographers to change given the uniformity of images (i.e. propagandistic content) in the GDR. They state,

One is simply tired of seeing the impressive parade of 8, 10, 12, or 14 harvesters in every newspaper, magazine, and film report during the harvest—that’s what we know. There’s more behind it!...How true is it that art is the subjective reproduction of objective facts. Everyone is different, and everyone sees the same idea and the same object differently. What we demand in terms of the individual signature of the individual photographer is what we endeavored in our exhibition.

The kinds of images that had become standard practice in the GDR were suddenly uninspired, or lacking artistry and interest for Maahs and von Schnitzler. The curators are likely speaking about

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163 Ibid., 14.
such political portraits as Thomas Billhardt’s photograph of Walter Ulbricht reciting a speech (fig. 107, date unknown) or D. Hyronimus’ image of a member of the military police socializing with everyday citizens (fig. 108, date unknown). The low-angle perspectives were typical for these monumentalizing images of socialist leaders and officials; they bring the viewers into the image as followers and admirers and despite being included in the exhibition, they possess a much more expected composition than many of the others.

Furthermore, the curators fully acknowledge individuality—a concept central to democratic reeducation programming and behavioral psychology implemented in de-Nazification initiatives (i.e. “the democratic personality”164)—in image-making. This contradicts the otherwise socialist commitment to the photo agency, the exclusion of individual photo credits in publications or public presentations, and an overarching desire for group mentality. The curators also argued that display and scale were fundamental for understanding the exhibition’s message and that these combinations require the spectators to think critically. Movable panels gave viewers the opportunity to ‘read’ the exhibition from diverse vantage points. The curators acknowledge that visitors will move through the space differently; as an antidote to this more subjective experience, the curators added arrows and “psychological pointers.”165

Only very few installation images of this exhibition exist, presenting a challenge for the interpretation of precise image juxtapositions; however, the catalog can be understood as parallel to the exhibition, despite Maahs and von Schnitzler’s insistence that it is separate. As with the previously discussed exhibitions, On the Happiness of Man’s catalog reflects the photo-essay style flow and layout of the exhibition itself. Regardless, the curators state that the catalog is

164 See Turner, The Democratic Surround.
neither a book nor a catalog, but rather an independent work including more photographs than
displayed in the exhibition, many of which they wished they could have included in *On the
Happiness of Man*. The exhibition panels are meant to be read as a double-page spreads; this is
especially communicated through the low-angle, double installation method. Maahs and von
Schnitzler installed photographs flush onto the walls, but also added a separate, angled element,
as if an actual magazine, mimicking the designs of El Lissitzky and Herbet Bayer’s “extended
field of vision.” In this way, both the exhibition and catalog reproduce the spatial effects of the
photo-essay style utilized by both Steichen and Pawek, perhaps more successfully.

The goal, as Maahs and von Schnitzler describe it, is “not only to interpret the life of
man, but also to help it change, so that the dream of happiness becomes a reality for the whole
world.” However, as the catalog essay elucidates, this narrative would serve the socialist cause.
The exhibition toured other GDR cities including Dresden, Karl-Marx-Stadt, and Leipzig;
however, the East Berlin mounting attracted a unique visit from GDR General Secretary, Walter
Ulbricht, signifying both the city and the exhibition’s value (fig. 109). At the opening
ceremony after his tour, Ulbricht stated that the painters of the GDR should see the exhibition
not because painters should paint as one photographs, but because of its depiction of vital
perspective (likely, socialist perspective) and the connections made across imagery. The GDR
is consistently represented as modeled from the USSR and, as Sarah Goodrum argues, its mere
existence as a nation fulfills the ultimate goal of the October Revolution. Images of Vladimir
Lenin, Josef Stalin, and Walter Ulbricht are threaded throughout the exhibition, accompanied by

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166 “Umlauf-Protokoll (circulated memo),” BArch, SAPMO, DY 30/J IV 2/3/1297. This memo
from 5 May 1967 states that the photo exhibition was originally supposed to travel to every
district of the GDR, but instead has been shortened to the above list.
quotations from Karl Marx and Walter Ulbricht (figs. 110-111). Most of these photographs depict the political leaders speaking to fellow politicians, Party supporters, or rehearsing speeches. However, even with its overt political position, as opposed to the others exhibitions’ more restrained subtexts, On the Happiness of People follows the same formulaic framework as both Steichen and Pawek. From birth to death, Maahs and von Schnitzler flatten cultural difference, and both bury the scars and celebrate the triumphs of selective histories, or those histories that fit their own ideological mission.

When asked whether or not they looked to other photography exhibitions as models, Maahs and von Schnitzler mention both The Family of Man and What is Man?. They argue that they were influenced by these “negative” models, given their impact in photographic history. However, they posit that Pawek’s exhibition made an “anti-humanistic” statement. Although Maahs and von Schnitzler are likely pointing toward Pawek’s lack of socialist representation, it is striking that they should categorize the exhibition as ‘anti-humanist’. Maahs criticizes Steichen’s exhibition for its exclusively “rose-tinted” view of the world and his failure to get to the heart of the happiness of mankind. In an unpublished, unedited manuscript of this interview, Die Fotografie Editor Gerhard Ihrke writes in the margins, “War das die Ziel stellen von The Family of Man?” (Was this the goal of The Family of Man?). Maahs argues that if both Steichen and Pawek’s exhibitions were meant to be “World Photography Exhibitions,” then they both ignored the last fifty years by focusing solely on the capitalist world. However, like both

168 Ibid.

Steichen and Pawek, Maahs and von Schnitzler fail to address National Socialist atrocities and political complications within their own regime.

Discussions of the communist resistance to Nazism was a common narrative in the GDR and they saw no alignment between their country and Nazi Germany. In fact, the SED even claimed that the Nazi Party kept Germans “under occupation,” essentially powerless and without agency. The SED also claimed that the construction of the Berlin Wall was to be a “protective shell”—or “Anti-Fascist Protective Rampart”—against lingering fascism from the Nazi era, rather than a tactic to keep GDR citizens inside the country (fig. 112). On the Happiness of Man instead emphasizes the benevolence of the October Revolution, in contrast to the US bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and its gruesome aftermath, racial violence in the United States, and American military escalation in Vietnam. These charges are unsurprising given the

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170 It is essential to distinguish two concepts: the discussion of Nazism and the discussion of the Holocaust, including atrocities committed against Jewish and other marginalized communities. The former was discussed openly; however, the latter was not. In West Germany, the first “adequate” public expression on the memory of the Holocaust is often considered a speech by the World Jewish Congress representative, Nahum Goldmann. On 30 November 1952 at the former Bergen-Belsen camp, Goldmann spoke openly about Nazi barbarism and atrocities, aimed directly at the Jewish community. Although memorials had taken place at other camps, this one attracted the presence of FRG officials, including Theodor Heuss. See Jeffrey Herf, “Legacies of divided memory and the Berlin Republic,” Germany at Fifty-Five: Berlin ist nicht Bonn?, ed., James Sperling (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2004), 83-111.


172 Josef Stalin was actually in support of German reunification before his death in 1953. The first priority was to prevent West Germany from joining the Western alliance. However, keeping the GDR as a separate state could have been beneficial for the economic and material benefits, as well as the GDR’s proximity to Western Europe. Possible reasons for Stalin’s support of reunification include doubting the GDR’s long-term economic prospects and existence, expecting some kind of compensation for the GDR’s dissolution, and easing Cold War tension overall. See Victor Baras, “Stalin’s German Policy after Stalin,” Slavic Review 37, no. 2 (June 1978): 259-267.
context; however, the official East German response to Steichen’s exhibition nonetheless speaks to the fraught and complex mediation of American cultural diplomacy in divided Germany.

Surprisingly, the ideological overlap between humanism and socialism was discussed five years prior to Maahs and von Schnitzler’s first mention of the exhibition concept. In a 1960 essay for Die Fotografie, photography critic Gerhard Henninger outlines four strengths of the regime’s developing amateur photography movement. He posits that, first, new social organization in the GDR allows citizens to embrace photography as a hobby; second, the medium’s capacity to produce immediate effects on masses gives it political and social power even for the amateur; third, with more individuals behind cameras, the gap closes between amateurs and advanced “photoartists” influenced by “arrogant circles isolated from the life of the people;” and fourth, with amateur movements, art can assist in freeing the “new socialist human being” from capitalist exploitation. After lamenting the “virtual epidemic” of amateurs under the influence of “modern” art (exemplified by “the puddle and cobblestone motifs, the laundry line motifs, the window pane motifs..”), Henninger actually defends The Family of Man:

We forgot that it is best to begin with the artistic forming of those themes and subjects that the amateur can quickly learn, can best judge and evaluate: his own practice within production, his life in the brigade, within the family, his holidays, his recreation, his sports…Given these conditions, is it right to condemn the ‘family photograph’? A few years ago, the exhibition The Family of Man already pointed to the great possibilities which can be expanded significantly under the new social conditions of socialist life.\(^{173}\)

Henninger credits Steichen’s humanist employment of the photographic medium—specifically the type of family photograph utilized by Steichen—as a new method for representing everyday life under socialist governance. The author’s illuminates the blurring of boundaries between

humanism and socialism in the context of social documentary photography, exemplifying once again its innate malleability in this era.

1.6 Ursula Arnold and Evelyn Richter’s Double-Coding

The humanist agenda, as implemented by both Steichen and the USIA, unexpectedly replicates itself in the photographic cultures of both East and West Germany. Despite the close supervision of the ZKF, constellations of individuals emerged, challenging the state apparatus by both working within official spaces and utilizing these positions to yield inconspicuous subversions. Among many other GDR practitioners, Evelyn Richter has both referenced and credited the West Berlin mounting of *The Family of Man* for influencing her photographic practice; incidentally, she was also a participant in all four iterations of Pawek’s *World Exhibition of Photography*. It was only after exposure to Steichen’s show on a rare trip to West Berlin that Richter helped found *action fotografie*.

Made-up of Leipzig-based and educated photographers, *action fotografie* exemplifies the discreet exercise of agency under the regime. In response to state dictates and with a desire to explore the medium’s potential, *action fotografie* sought to combat what they viewed as “stale models of documentary photographic practice.”\(^{174}\) As one of the foremost advocates for new modes of photographic practice, Richter made her politics transparent to peers and professors. This resulted in her 1952 expulsion from East Germany’s only photography training program at Leipzig’s HBG on the basis of “political incongruity”. Richter regularly held discussions about photographic theory at her home on Kollwitzstraße and many GDR photographers recall first

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\(^{174}\) Founding members included Ursula Arnold, F.O. Bernstein, Christian Diener, Rosemarie Eichhorn, Kurt H. Hartmann, Gerhard Heyde, Volkmar Jaeger, Evelyn Richter, Renate and Roger Rössing, Günter Rössler, and Wolfgang G. Schröter, many of whom also attended HBG.
viewing the exhibition catalog for *The Family of Man*, which had opened a year prior to *action fotografie*’s debut exhibition (fig. 113). Steichen’s show proved to be a source of inspiration for both the group’s photographic subject matter and their exhibition design. Steichen’s show proved to be a source of inspiration for both the group’s photographic subject matter and their exhibition design. Steichen’s show proved to be a source of inspiration for both the group’s photographic subject matter and their exhibition design.  

*action fotografie*’s exhibitions (fig. 114) featured ceiling and floor-mounted panels; and uniform flush-mounted prints displayed without mats, frames, or protective glass, referencing the well-known exhibition designs of Herbert Bayer and *The Family of Man*. Photographs were also hung in the style of the illustrated magazine’s photo-essay—a narrative structure—another feature central to Steichen’s concept (figs. 115-116).

Although *action fotografie* did not publish an official manifesto, their mission centered on “free[ing] photography from the government’s oppressive dictates.” They voted democratically on image selections for exhibitions and held group discussions on available photography literature smuggled in from the West. In a feature on the group for *Die Fotografie*, the GDR’s foremost photography publication, author Helmut Grunwald states, “What does *action fotografie* want? Everything the name says! It wants to rid photography of the daily routine and stagnation.” Curiously, the group chose not adopt the German spelling for ‘action’.

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175 Although Arno Fischer and Sibylle Bergemann were not members of *action fotografie*, Fischer assisted with *The Family of Man*’s installation and Bergemann has discussed her visit to the show as influential to her work. Even the next generation of photographers working in the 1970s and 1980s, including Gundula Schulze-Eldowy, cite Steichen’s show as a source of inspiration. See Kuehn, *Caught*, 56-57; Astrid Ihle, “Photography as Contemporary Document: Comments on the Conceptions of the Documentary in Germany after 1945,” in *The Art of Two Germanys: Cold War Cultures*, eds., Stephanie Barron and Sabina Eckmann (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 2009), 186-205.


instead leaving both nouns in lowercase. This decision not only westernizes *action fotografie* by replacing the German ‘k’ with a ‘c’, but also might signal the group’s differentiation from Germany’s National Socialist past. The group’s determination to inspire a reevaluation of photography’s role in the depiction of everyday life was an active challenge of the limited and highly controlled edicts for photography established by the SED.

The photo group’s first exhibition, held on 3 June 1956 at Leipzig’s Petershof exhibition halls, featured 117 works by fifteen primary group members as well as eleven amateur photographers (figs. 117-120). This tactical decision, invoked by the Kulturbund, negatively intervened in the group’s political dynamic by forcibly adding amateur work inconsistent with that of the founding members. It is commonly accepted amongst the remaining figures of the GDR photo-community that these amateur photographers doubled as unofficial collaborators (IM, *inoffizielle Mitarbeiter*) for the government, tasked with observing and reporting on the political activities of the group. Design decisions made by *action fotografie*, such as hanging panels; and flush-mounted, unframed, and unmatted prints displayed without protective glass, reference the well-known exhibition designs of Herbert Bayer and *The Family of Man* from the

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178 “Aktion” was not only prominent in the code name for the total annihilation of European Jewry (“Aktion Reinhard,” named after Reinhard Heydrich), but also the word was included in a number of umbrella operations including, “Aktion Erntefest” and “Aktion T4”. The former being mass killing of 42,000 remaining Jews in Lublin, Poland and the latter being the forced euthanasia program during which the lives of over 70,000 people were terminated between September 1939 and August 1941. It is striking that *action fotografie* would distance themselves from the German spelling, over ten years after the war.


year prior. The evening of the opening, government censors toured the exhibition and removed sixteen prints citing “experimental transgressions” as their rationale. Censored images often displayed experimental processes, including solarisation, double exposure, or photo-montage, as was true in Günter Rössler’s Solarisation (fig. 121). Somehow, this image remained a part of the exhibition catalog despite its removal from the show.181 Undoubtedly influenced by Man Ray and Lee Miller’s avant-garde experimentation with the same process, exemplified in Primat de la matière sur la pensée (1929, fig. 122), Rössler’s image features a nude female subject standing in a body of water, her reflection visible below. Bizarrely, censored images—labeled with a ‘D’ in the catalog—were still available for viewing, though cordoned off in a separate room labeled “Discussion Room” (figs. 123-124).182 Despite these undesired stipulations, the group’s first exhibition was initially revered as a success from the over three thousand visitors.183 One spectator notes in the visitor’s book that action fotografie’s photographs were “liberating and inspiring.”184 The press responded positively and the images “struck a chord with the expectations of a sizeable majority of a public weary of the touched up, provocative, contrived style of official photographic reporting.”185 Despite the absence of overtly transgressive themes, the images provoked a new perspective on life in the GDR, working to counter the blanket optimism of socialist realism.

182 Ibid. Inexplicably, the exhibition catalog was only allowed to be reprinted and sold after the removal of the cover image: a cat. See Ulrich Dömrose, “action fotografie: Eine Gruppe sucht nach neuen Wegen in den 50er Jahren der DDR,” Bildende Kunst 10 (1989): 38.
In an interview for *Die Fotografie* a couple months after the exhibition, *action fotografie* member Volkmar Jaeger openly rejects the GDR’s allegiance to ‘truth’ questioning,

> Why only smooth, happy pictures? Everybody knows all too well that this perpetual self-satisfied smiling, this happy face, has never existed in any country or in any family. I ask: Are folk songs only happy? They come from the people, and they show all their moods.\(^{186}\)

Jaeger’s call for a less alloyed vision of life in the GDR touts the importance of reflecting everyday life as it really is experienced: both positive and negative aspects. His language reads slightly coded: “any country” and “any family,” when in reality, the limits of photography, as it applies to his daily experience, directly relate to the GDR’s implicit ideological goals with the medium.

The following year, *action fotografie* mounted a second exhibition at Leipzig’s Handelshof exhibition halls (fig. 125). The catalog for “action 57” states,

> It is not aesthetics, it is not experimentation with form and technique, it is also not escape to the idyll, rather it is life…The exhibition is dominated by photographs showing the life of man and his environment, realistic, unembellished, as it is comprehensible only with the camera.\(^{187}\)

The author emphasizes the illustration of “man and his environment” over aesthetic experimentation, also mirrored in *The Family of Man*’s overarching tenets; however, this could also be read as a public concession to the government’s anti-experimental position. Yet despite this elucidation, the official censors occupied stricter stances; ‘amateur’ work outnumbered that of the original members, resulting in group conflict. This new majority provoked internal destabilization and division, causing mass withdrawal from the group. Though *action fotografie*

\(^{187}\) “action 57,” exhibition catalog.
mounted a final exhibition in 1958, it was part of a larger, regional photography exhibition that received poor publicity and attendance. The heightened constraints on cohesive group vision, in conjunction with amplified surveillance by amateur members, caused action fotografie to officially dissolve.\footnote{In some respects, action fotografie paved the way for groups who shared similar goals for the photographic medium in the GDR to emerge. Between 1965-66, Sibylle Bergemann, Arno Fischer, Elisabeth Meinke, Roger Melis, Brigitte Voigt, and Michael Weidt founded a photographer’s group that would be known as Direkt by 1969. Direkt utilized experimental photographic techniques to depict social disillusionment, as well as those private spaces unavailable to official lenses. For further discussion on photographic activity across East Germany, see Knorr and Schierz, eds., The Other Leipzig School.}

After August 1961, surveillance enforced by the Ministry for State Security (Ministerium für Staatssicherheit, Stasi) became ubiquitous; it ultimately turned nearly one out of every thirty GDR citizens into informants.\footnote{Kuehn, Caught, 21. Founded on February 8, 1950, the Stasi—or secret police—institutionalized mass domestic surveillance and foreign espionage focused on state-socialist dissent. Modeled on the Soviet Union’s KGB (Komitet gosudarstvennoy bezopasnosti, or Committee for State Security), the Stasi’s Kommissariat 5 was known to engage in the kidnapping and execution of former East German officials. Eric Mielke, the agency’s most prolific director, had held office for thirty-two years when the operation collapsed in 1989.} By planting concealed cameras in post offices, flowerpots, even trench coat pockets, the Stasi’s prolific image collection consisted of over 1.3 million photographs, negatives, and slides (figs. 126-127).\footnote{By 1952, Stasi agents assigned to surveillance-oriented tasks were trained in the Observation Department (Section VIII). Here, they enrolled in special observation and photography courses, including the effective disguising of camera usage in public. The photographic medium, as per the KGB’s initial studies and theories, was considered a method for “fighting crime”. Today, the German government considers these images and documents illegally-obtained. Paul Betts, Within Walls, 194-95.} Michel Foucault’s theories on the automation of power through both visible and unverifiable signs of surveillance, exemplify this oppressive observation: “a field of perception: thousands of eyes posted everywhere…the play of
signs defines the anchorages of power.” The exponential proliferation of surveillance meant that photographers critical of the GDR’s limitations learned to exercise subversion with impeccable vigilance. Arnold and Richter embedded themselves into the very fabric of surveillance, synthesizing its invisible exercise of power often with their point-of-view, even without the verifiable visual signs of its omnipotence. They approach social documentary photography in two ways: first, to present quotidian images of labor and leisure suitable for publication and compensation under SED censorship mandates; and second, to employ compositional devices in these images that subtly confront the sanctions of “socialist truth”. In an ideal world, Arnold and Richter would have been able to completely enmesh their public production and private viewpoints; however, this was not a viable political reality in the GDR’s heavily-policed political and social landscape. Rather, their practices pivot upon such pictorial tactics as the returned gaze, visual and psychological distancing, and encounters with small, subjective spaces that both deny and exclude the government’s photographic and political gaze.

Another image of the labor parade taken by Arnold (1965, fig. 128) features an off-center composition, minimizing the visual interest of the crowd carrying signs adorned with the faces of SED leadership. In terms of official photography, an event that should have been presented as celebratory and grandiose, instead appears sluggish and dull. The disparate crowd blends into the surrounding architecture, flattening into the street’s geometric paving stones. Once again, negative space displays a void for the viewer: a barren political landscape amidst the political performance. In contrast to press photographs taken at JFK’s famous 1963 visit to Berlin (fig. 129), nearly three-quarters of the image is either unoccupied urban space or belongs to the

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slumping, insipid sky. Arnold photographs from within the street’s shadowed area—her camera emerging from a kind of cloaked darkness—indicating another small space of subjectivity where she is able to exert a more personal viewpoint. This type of intervention—both within the heart of state socialist labor celebration and in subtle opposition of its pageantry—is similarly employed by Richter, but often to an even greater degree.

*Women’s Conference, Leipzig* (1962, fig. 130), originates from a larger government-commissioned and supervised project highlighting East German women in the workplace and the nation’s industrial achievements. Richter juxtaposes a female subject raising an authoritative finger with a towering portrait of Walter Ulbricht. Though merely two-dimensional, Ulbricht’s dominance and stoic facial expression acknowledge his surveillance. In addition, viewers may locate inherent questions of gender inequality through the scale of his visual relationship to the female subject. Regardless of her powerful stance, Ulbricht’s surreptitious gaze eclipses it. As demonstrated with Arnold’s young boy at the parade, Richter focuses on the returned gaze of Ulbricht. The peculiar cropping of Richter’s photograph openly references the Weberian “cult of personality” readily enforced and instilled by the GDR, expressed by the reproduction of portraits as propaganda across public and private spaces. In the same way that Arnold minimized official portraiture in the desolate street scene at the labor parade, Richter returns to the function of these portraits again and again throughout her photographic practice. Officials rejected this cropped version of the photograph and instead approved a second version (fig. 131), which features a more rousing presence of children. Though they do not read as particularly obedient of the woman’s authority, they hold what appear to be roses, recalling the highly reproduced Soviet

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oil painting by Boris Vladimirski, *Roses for Stalin* (1949, fig. 132), in which a group of children present Stalin with a lush bouquet of roses. Despite the rejection of the former version, Ulbricht still casts the same staid, dictatorial purview over the crowd, instilling that the observation of public lives and the occupation of private ones are still at work for both subjects and spectators.

As part of the same project, *Textiles Factory, Leipzig* (1970, fig. 133) displays Richter’s impeccable attention to scale and cropping, as well as the subtle insertion of the returned gaze. Monolithic spools of thread dominate half of the composition, fusing with the sewing mechanism below. With careful observation, partial renderings of two female faces emerge from the patterned surface, dwarfed and obscured by the visual weight of industry. The woman on the left returns our observing gaze, acknowledging—perhaps challenging—the watchful eye of media, government, and informant. The tonal qualities of the machine obfuscate the identities of the women: the saturated black thread blends with their barely visible hair while the grainy whites and grays wash out their complexions, completely enveloping them in the factory apparatus. Richter’s image, which could be representative of one of any images of “work” or “labor” from the exhibitions discussed—graphic but somewhat banal, not overtly political—turns the intended socialist statement back at the viewer, asking if it is indeed as present as officially envisioned. In this light, Richter performs a double-coding of Steichen’s post-war aesthetic as a subtle act of subversion: from humanist to socialist, socialist to subversive. The historical conditions of life in the GDR in dialogue with Western influence, as is true with *The Family of Man*, spurred an unconventional photographic culture. The resulting social documentary practice both resisted SED notions of truth but also passed censorship officials. Arnold and Richter, unified by a shared disillusionment with the harsh policies and restrictions in visual language, publication, and exhibition, return their own gazes in the post-Wall moment. Through the tactical
internalization of the official narrative, Arnold and Richter succeed in negotiating a rhetoric of subversion that passed under the auspices of the governmental eye.

The arrival of Edward Steichen and *The Family of Man* to West Berlin played a major role in the reconstitution of photographic culture across the Iron Curtain, providing artists and curators with a framework that could easily be deployed for varied political usage. This humanist, social documentary style of photography not only lent itself well to the USIA’s blatantly American Cold War interests, but also as a means to conceal history and politics or potentially ‘hide them’ in plain sight, as is true in Pawek, Maahs, and von Schnitzler’s exhibitions, respectively. The ideological exploitation of the lens was central for competing political opponents and the definition of the war itself without physical combat. Henry Ries’ photograph of a US aircraft dropping life-saving food supplies to families at Tempelhof Airport (1948, fig. 134) became synonymous with the heroic American role during the 1949 Berlin Blockade; the National Photographic Interpretation Center (NPIC)’s interpretation of aerial photographs alleging Cuban missiles systems (1962, fig. 135) nearly catalyzed the final step before nuclear war; even Abraham Zapruder’s home movie from Dallas’ grassy knoll became critical source material for the investigation of JFK’s November 22, 1963 assassination (1963, fig. 136). Attention paid to the manner in which lens-based media could be manipulated for political and pedagogical needs would continue to develop as time progressed toward German unification. Insofar as images of political events amplified lens-based media’s postwar posture, so too did images of popular culture, including such mid-century Hollywood film tropes as the teen “rebel”. Adolescents across divided Berlin began adopting these styles as subterranean expressions, manipulating them to serve as rhetorical statements about youth identity in the postwar period. This purposeful culling of the rebellious American stereotype, in conjunction
with the physical occupation of cinemas on the border between Eastern and Western sectors, exemplifies an important historical and cultural method of differentiation from their parents’ generation.
Chapter Two

“OPIUM FOR THE PEOPLE!”[^193]: HOLLYWOOD AT THE BORDER AND YOUTH REBELLION

“The tradition of all dead generations weighs like a nightmare down on the minds of the living.” -Karl Marx[^194]

On June 17, 1953, youth demonstrations broke out across East Berlin, eventually spreading throughout the greater GDR. Primarily laborers protesting unfairly high quotas, the mass actions taken included the removal of the Soviet flag and other party propaganda, demonstration in the streets, and, in some cases, the assisted escape of prisoners and physical attacks upon Stasi agents. Soviet troops and panzer tanks opened fire on stone-throwing demonstrators in the Eastern sector, as is memorialized in the iconic photographs and ephemera discussed in the previous chapter. By the evening hours, conflict dissipated and the Soviet and GDR military government re-established order. Press coverage of the event in East German sources consistently mention “Texas shirts” (Texashemden, or t-shirts, sometimes featuring images of cowboys, fig. 137) and “Cowboy pants” (denim pants, fig. 138) worn by what they characterize as “West Berlin provocateurs,” both incorrectly identifying GDR youth as FRG youth and plainly aligning them with the “American way of life” through references to Texas.

[^193]: Mr. R.M. Bailey to A. Felguth, Berlin Element, “Border Theaters, 4 December 1952,” Records of the High Commissioner for Germany (HICOG), RG 466, NACP.
and western fashion tropes. Although this is hardly surprising, it solidified an early attack on the United States as harbingers of *Unkultur* (unculture, absence of culture), lasciviousness, and a volatile unpredictability. Between 1954 and 1958, both East and West German press commentators, as well as their respective government officials, explicitly argued that these destructive tendencies were the result of Hollywood film.

As the divided city, Berlin provided a unique access point to the western world for East sector residents. Until 1961, these permeable borders provided the US government the opportunity to further spread a constructed image of the “American way of life”. As the American military government reestablished the German film industry, a flood of American blockbuster films hit theaters accessible to all Berlin residents.

The air in the cinema can be cut with a knife, a breath that takes your breath away, but it’s no drawback for the box office; the three to four screenings – “special projects for Eastern visitors” – are listed on the board from 9 to 3:30PM. The narrow doors are only open for about twenty minutes, allowing for the audience to change, but not air to be renewed. Candy wrappers, chocolate wrappers, and discarded programs are strewn across the floor. The custodial women cannot clean up the ‘exchange market of flat illusion’ every two hours. But the visitors do not mind…The speakers blast with music that is as “hot” as the atmosphere and the syncopated Dixieland rhythms play a bit louder here than in any other cinemas. This is unavoidable; otherwise you would not hear the melody over the rhythmic footsteps of the visitors.

Werner Berger, a writer for teen magazine *Blickpunkt*, expresses here the exciting novelty of the *Grenzkino*, a type of cinema established by the US government directly along West Berlin’s Eastern Sector border (fig. 139). This cultural initiative granted the US government

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195 “So sieht die fascistische Brut der Adenauer, Ollenhauer, Kaiser und Reuter aus!” *Neues Deutschland*, 21 June 1953.
197 Ibid.
unprecedented access to everyday Berliners, especially of the working class. However, what began as a political initiative actually transformed into a site for agency, critique, and rebellion.

This chapter argues that Hollywood film, as ideologically employed by the US government, plays an integral role in the Nachgeborenen generation’s (those born after the event, in this case WWII) reimagining of German national identity, most critically in divided Berlin. The Grenzkino acts as a mid-century locus for youth rebellion, identity formation and expression against the bourgeois “decency, culture, [and] taste” of the older generation.198 Often described as “tawdry” sites of American excess and low-brow culture, the border theaters attracted working-class German adolescents to consume Hollywood film. In conjunction with the growing popularity of American rock ‘n’ roll, a German youth subculture called the Halbstarke emerges—clearly influenced by American fashion and ‘the rebel’ archetype—and reprocesses these styles and attitudes to address identity construction in the wake of Nazism (fig. 140). The appropriation and alteration of dress is instrumental to the subcultural identity formation; such trends were first seen in and spread by films including The Wild One (Der Wilde, 1954, fig. 141), Rebel without a Cause (…denn sie wissen nicht, was sie tun, 1955, fig. 142), Blackboard Jungle (Die Saat der Gewalt, 1955, fig. 143), and Rock Around the Clock (Außer Rand und Band, 1956, fig. 144).199


199 The literal translations of the German titles are also a compelling entry point for understanding West Germany’s perspective of these American films. This is especially true for the more complex titles: …denn sie wissen nicht, was sie tun (They Know Not What They Do), Der Saat der Gewalt (The Seeds of Violence), and Außer Rand und Band (Out of Control). The first title is a direct biblical quotation from the book of Lucas (23:24) during which the crucified Jesus Christ asks God to forgive those who put him to death, or more broadly, humanity.
Vital to these patterns of dress and behavior is the public display of self-representation. Soon after the West German debuts of these films, both East and West German press outlets began to refer to rowdy groups of male adolescents, between sixteen and twenty-three, as *Halbstarken* (“hooligans” or “rowdies;” literally “semistrong”); a term borrowed from the early twentieth-century to describe delinquent, working-class male adolescents. The divided German presses drew explicit connections from the *Halbstarken* to American culture and style, reiterating denim and *Texashemden* as defining visual identifiers. They argued that the youth group modeled themselves on and emulated the rebellious behavior of the biker/greaser archetypes first seen in the aforementioned Hollywood films. Between 1956 and 1958, conflicts and riots amongst Berlin teenagers rose, leading the press to categorize the incidents as the larger *Halbstarkenproblem*. Given the centrality of the filmic image to *Halbstarken* identity-construction, the *Grenzkino* becomes the most consistent site of blame. Described as “Marlon Brandos,” the adolescents involved in these conflicts were often reported as wearing *Amibüxen* or cowboy pants (American pants; denim), leather jackets, Texas shirts (t-shirts), and ducktail plumes (figs. 145-146). In 1956, West German director Georg Tressler released *Die Halbstarken* (Teenage Wolfpack, 1956, fig. 147); one year later, East German director, Gerhard Klein

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201 Curt Bondy, *Jugendliche stören die Ordnung: Bericht und Stellungnahme zu den Halbstarkenkrawallen* (Munich: Juventa-Verlag, 1957). Bondy and his team of fellow social psychologists studied the effects of rock ‘n’ roll on young German men across class separation. Women were not included in the research. Bondy and the West German press referred to the activity of the *Halbstarken* as the *Halbstarkenproblem*. They concluded that listening to rock ‘n’ roll did not necessarily have a mal effect on youth; their attraction to it was part of a “normal,” rebellious stage of their lives and ultimately, those expressions were non-political.
released *Berlin – Ecke Schönhauser* (Berlin – Schönhauser Corner, 1957, fig. 148).\(^2\) Both films approach identical issues of cultural and generational clash through the lens of rebellious youth. Regardless of Eastern or Western origin, both films pull narrative and stylistic cues from their Hollywood predecessors.

Above all, the *Halbstarken* represent an opposition—however disorganized—to the educated elite, represented by their parent culture. Unlike German traditions of high culture, the subculture embraced commercial popular culture, consumption, and held an overarchingly informal perspective with regards to dress, behavior, and entertainment. By appropriating aesthetics associated with American film and popular culture, the *Halbstarken* provoke and destabilize traditional forms of self-representation and consumption. After reports of their alleged delinquency circulate, the primarily West German *Halbstarken* are relegated as the folk-devil of 1950s FRG, even bleeding into East Germany. By understanding the formation and impact of the *Halbstarken*, the effects and mediation of American cultural propaganda and popular culture imagery on foreign audiences becomes increasingly discernible and measurable.

\(^2\) Gerhard Klein began working as a filmmaker and cartoonist before WWII. After fighting in the war and surviving a British POW camp, Klein began making films again, focusing on children’s and documentary films. After joining the DEFA film studio, he started his series, the Berlin Films, which includes *Eine Berliner Romanze* (*A Berliner Romance*, 1956), *Berlin – Ecke Schönhauser*, (*Berlin Through Our Eyes*, 1965), and *Berlin um die Ecke* (*Berlin Around the Corner*, 1966). *Berlin um die Ecke* was banned from the GDR, only to be released again in 1987. Klein often clashed with the government, pushing the boundaries of theme and avoiding dogmatic filmic language. Of the many critiques by the government, one included his clear affinity for Italian neo-realism.
2.1 Atrocity Films and the Ideological Space of the Cinema

The Allies’ first major cultural goal was to decentralize and dismantle Germany’s largest film and television production company, *UFA GmbH (Universum Film AG)*, which had been nationalized during the Third Reich.203 Given the Nazi Party’s successful monopolization and employment of the filmic medium as both a vehicle of entertainment and ideological indoctrination, its future remained ambiguous in the immediate postwar period. Despite prewar acclaim for being Hollywood’s most compelling competitor, the German film industry had severely ruptured. Ally-led “denazification” initiatives and the democratic reeducation of Germans often featured visual components presented through popular media including pamphlets, billboards, and posters; however, with a film industry in need of complete restructuring, the Allies recognized a unique opportunity. Although the Soviet Union had reestablished cinemas as early as June 1945, the United States and Great Britain eventually conceded to the idea of non-fiction film as a powerful information tool. According to a July 12th American intelligence report,

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203 Founded in 1917, UFA was first based in Berlin and later moved just outside the city to Babelsberg, Brandenburg, Potsdam. The production company was originally established to counteract foreign propaganda but became better known for its entertainment films. By 1942, the organization had been co-opted by the Nazi party as part of *Gleichschaltung*, or the forced consolidation and coordination of UFA and its fellow German competitors Tobias, Terra, Bavaria Film, and Wien-Film to form UFA-Film GmbH (Ufi). In March 1933, the Ministerium für Volkserziehung und Propaganda (Ministry for Popular education and Propaganda) was established by the Nazi regime. Joseph Goebbels served as the organization’s director. As is well known, film was instrumental to Goebbels’ propaganda campaign. At the end of the war, the Soviet army had established physical occupation of the studio complex, only departing in 1949 with the establishment of two German states. With aid from the American Military Government in Germany, UFA was eventually restructured and reestablished in West Germany. This allowed for a new generation of filmmakers to emerge and the reemergence of German film on the international stage.
USSR officials believed that entertainment activities were necessary, at all costs. The people of Berlin needed to forget their hungry stomachs, their former homes...the whole gory picture of a defeated city.  

About two months after National Socialist abdication, the United States military government began to advocate for the cinema’s unique spatial characteristics and pedagogic capacity. Pragmatically, cinemas could be secured with reliable heating and could provide a safe-haven for struggling war survivors and refugees; opportunistically, the cinema had already been a popular activity for prewar and Third Reich audiences.

The quiet, darkened space garnered an unspoken, yet mostly observed social contract between audience members: to pay attention, to remain silent, to remain seated until the end of the showing. Although at one time, the German cinema had been criticized for simply embodying a mass medium without high cultural value, film became an instrumental cultural tool of institutional, commercial, and subcultural ideation. The cinema space possesses appealing “transclass, transgender, [and] transnational” characteristics, epitomizes a “center for commercial enterprise” in which there exists a “play on the public’s erotic and consumer fantasies,” and encourages identification and unification amongst actor, audience, and narrative. By the end of 1945, the American Zone and Sector were home to about 350 movie theaters and expecting for 500 more to be opened by ICD in 1946. The growing prospect of ICD and OMGUS’s untapped cultural and political opportunities stimulated some of the first postwar films.

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After the war, US occupation officials closed all surviving German cinemas, confiscated all surviving Nazi film material, and prohibited German films from being screened. Rather than prioritize entertainment, occupation officials focused on the documentary film as a means for information dissemination. As quickly as June or July 1945, the ICD tested atrocity films produced by the US Office of War Information (OWI), in cooperation with the British counterpart on German audiences. Among the test films was KZ (Death Camp, 1945, figs. 149-150), a jointly produced American-British newsreel film under the umbrella of Welt im Film (World in Film). This film shows extremely graphic footage from at least twelve concentration camp liberations, including thousands of victims of extreme starvation and charred remains. The barrage of dead bodies, including tight shots of faces, is inescapable throughout the film’s twenty minutes. The organizations soon developed a confrontation policy which included the compulsory viewing of atrocity films in exchange for certification of their food ration cards. The US OWI made their primary goal clear: “to make them [the German population] realize that they are guilty.” A test group in Erlangen was led to believe that they were attending a feature-length Western; however, the nearly 400 viewers were subjected to explicit images of the dead and dying, the representation of National Socialist officers as criminals, and narration about a Bergen-Belsen commander’s wife who constructed lampshades out of human skin. Following these precedents, OMGUS’s first documentary film, Todesmühlen (Mills of Death, 1946, fig.

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207 https://www.filmothek.bundesarchiv.de/video/583680?topic=doc6jz7xnsazz5ub5443fp&start=00%3A00%3A00.00&end=00%3A01%3A04.17
208 Ibid., 58n20. OWI exercised diverse media approaches to their confrontation campaign, including posters with atrocity photographs with such titles as “German Culture” and “These Atrocities: Your Guilt,” but for the most part, newsreel film footage was the most persistent forms of presentation.
151), screened in Berlin in May 1946; although the film was tailor-made to induce collective
guilt within its German audience and create distance from Nazi rhetoric, Todesmühlen did not
address European Jewry or their targeted extermination in any capacity. Disturbing images of
piles of gold teeth, human hair, and shoes were juxtaposed with footage from the liberations,
crematoria, gas chambers, and those survivors on the edge of complete starvation. The result was
oppositional to their goals. Todesmühlen was only shown for a week across German cinemas
and—quite obviously—failed to attract audiences. In Berlin, the turnout was less than half of the
theater’s capacity. As was common practice with much, if not all OMGUS cultural initiatives, a
survey agency collected voluntary audience reactions. Around seventy percent of the 1,040
Berliners who had seen the film argued that they didn’t believe the German people were
responsible for the atrocities. As Cora Sol Goldstein rightly argues, “the film violated the main
tenet of advertising—the propagandist must not antagonize the target audience.” Furthermore,
eighty-two percent of audience members claimed this was their first encounter with the existence
of such camps at all. Todesmühlen had not only failed to attract audiences, but also to produce
collective guilt; most critically, the film’s moralistic may have even provoked some viewers to

210 Mills of Death, released by OMGUS in January 1946, featured graphic footage from the
liberations and focused on producing guilt within German viewers. One clip shows a scene from
Leni Riefenstahl’s popular Triumph of the Will (Triumph des Willens, 1935) with narration,
“Germans bear heavy crosses now...the crosses of the millions crucified in Nazi death mills!”
There is additional discussion of tons of human bone and hair used as fertilizer and in
manufacturing. Unsurprisingly, the documentary did not achieve successful acclaim. Clearly part
of the US government’s push towards denazification and reeducation, officials realized that the
strategy was not working and required change.
212 Cora Sol Goldstein, Capturing the German Eye: American Visual Propaganda in Occupied
Germany (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 56.
213 Ibid.
feel defensive about their commitment to National Socialism and eugenics, regressing their convictions completely.

This exercise in driving collective guilt developed from forced visits to liberated concentration and extermination camps organized by such American Generals as Dwight D. Eisenhower, George Patton, and Omar Bradley. Documented in such publications as *Life*, *Time*, and *Vogue*, US military officials gathered German civilians in the towns nearest to the camps and forced them—men, women, and even children—to confront piles of emaciated, decaying bodies. War correspondents including Lee Miller, Margaret Bourke-White, and David E. Scherman photographed these viewings (figs. 152-154); such filmmakers as Alain Resnais and Alfred Hitchcock captured the camp’s horrors in moving images (figs. 155-156). Beyond atrocity imagery used as evidence in the Nuremburg Trials, *Welt im Film* also featured the creation of memorials and the dissolution of hard-edged militarism. Although reports confirm a “respectful, but hardly enthusiastic” reaction, it comes as no surprise that their accusatory tone did not stimulate the intended mental and emotional reflection. By late-February 1946, OMGUS statistics found that seventy-eight percent of moviegoers had seen *Welt im Film* and sixty-one percent of them found its content favorable because the newsreel shared information from the “outside.”

By the end of the year, Chief of Intelligence Michael Josselson determined that objectively propagandistic films must be avoided.

The German public has been fully saturated with propaganda films during the last 12 years and therefore is very skeptical of any kind of propaganda today…The conclusion may therefore be drawn that showing a series of straight propaganda films in Germany at this time will not achieve the desired effects.

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214 Goldstein, *Capturing the German Eye*, 57.
215 Michael Josselson, Chief of Intelligence, “Request for Special Report on German Reactions to American Films, 4 September 1946,” Records of OMGUS, RG 260, NACP.
Despite the slight improvement of general opinion on documentary-style film, ICD began strategizing the German film industry’s renewal. A turn towards entertainment, with focus on reigniting the German production, might facilitate a smoother reorientation and openness toward foreign occupation, ideology, and culture.

The Soviet Military Administration in Germany (SMAD), however, had already been strategizing the production and synchronization of films for German release as early as June 1945. By that November, officials, filmmakers, writers, and other cultural officers met at the Hotel Adlon to begin organizing, and six months later, Deutsche Film-Aktiengesellschaft (DEFA) was formed as a method of inaugurating German film production. One of the first DEFA films, also considered the first Trümmerfilm (rubble film), was Die Mörder sind unter uns (Murderers Among Us, 1946, fig. 157). Produced in Potsdam-Babelsberg’s Althoff Studios, the film explored post-traumatic stress disorder, denazification, and vigilantism, with a strict moral attitude. Although the film hints at a Holocaust narrative, it does not explicitly address the event itself. Without actually placing the blame on Germans, the film does not place the blame on East Germans. In a sense, the film’s circumvention of historical specificity prefigures the 1950s Heimatfilm (homeland film). This type of nostalgic German pastoral narrative would soon become the most desired genre amongst Germany’s older generation (Tätergeneration, perpetrator generation). A Heimatfilm, like Schwarzwaldmädel (Black Forest Girl, fig. 158), offered a depoliticized story that romanticized prewar German life through idealistic views of the

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During the period of occupation, there was a commonly held view that Soviet and GDR oversight and reconstruction was much more punitive than the Western Allies. With the 1946 establishment of DEFA, Soviet policy toward film grew increasingly narrow, including a strong push against Nazi-era and prewar era filmmaking. Desirable themes included supporting state socialist ideology and politics, antifascism, and genre films. The DEFA Film Library is housed at the University of Massachusetts in Amherst.

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countryside, as well as the “displacement of fantasies of nation into…regional registers”.\textsuperscript{217} Although historians including Jacqui Miller argue that there is some acknowledgement of postwar anxieties, the films do not explicitly address them. Some of these examples include the entrance of an outsider into a tight-knit community; the birth of a biracial child (Afro-German) into a white, bourgeois family; and generational conflict.\textsuperscript{218} The thematic treatment of generational conflict reappears again and again, especially toward the mid- to late-1950s as German film production is consistently growing and reaching higher quality. However, in order to discuss this development, especially in the context of the occupation, Germany’s prewar film history and relationship to Hollywood must be addressed.

2.2 Occupational Rewiring: The US Government, Hollywood, and the German Film Industry

In order to fully grasp the \textit{Halbstarken}’s emergence and their eventual designation as cultural folk devil, it is crucial to perform an exegesis of the postwar German film industry. Without understanding the United States’ role in rebuilding this German industry, it will be difficult to recognize why the \textit{Halbstarken} represented such a moral and cultural threat. The

\textsuperscript{218} Jacqui Miller, “‘What’s Wrong with a Cowboy in Hamburg?’: New German Cinema and the German-American Cultural Frontier,” in \textit{Frontiers of Screen History: Imagining European Borders in Cinema, 1945-2010}, edited by Raita Merivirta, Kimmo Ahonen, Heta Mulari, and Rami Mähkä (Bristol; Chicago: intellect, 2013), 47-48. This common trope had its roots in the real-life entanglements between American G.I.’s and German women during reconstruction. Germans called all such ‘fraternizing’ (prostitution) women “Veronika”, in contrast to the highly respected female ‘role’ as \textit{Trümmerfrau}. In addition, derogatory monikers including “Amiliebchen” (Ami-lover) and “Amizonen”, which capitalized on the Weimar use of ‘Amazon’ to describe powerful, American women. Beyond these nationalist and gendered terms, some German critics called white German women in relationships with African American G.I.’s, “\textit{Negroliebchen}”. See Poiger, \textit{Jazz, Rock, and Rebels}, 33-37.
US—as the Ally with the most comprehensive involvement—undertook a series of political actions to exercise power, including the legislative decartelization of the German film industry and the re-insertion of Hollywood films into the nation. National film industries often begin by parsing their relationship to Hollywood, “not because the cinema industry based in the United States has produced the best films (by some criteria) but because it has forced all other national cinemas to begin by dealing with the power of Hollywood as an industry.”219 For West Berlin, this industry occupation is even more crucial. Despite financial support for German-owned and operated film and cinema development, funding and film distribution were overwhelmingly sourced by American institutions. This resulted in the predominance of American films, which followed a historical precedent set in the early twentieth-century.

After 1914, German markets closed to American imports, only to reopen in parallel with the rise of Hollywood films between 1921 and 1923, most famously with Charlie Chaplin’s The Kid (1921). From the late-1920s through 1933, the German film industry produced mostly operettas, Heimatfilme, historical biographies, and war films.220 With the rise of National Socialism, film production shifted to aesthetics that appeared more commercial and legible: ideological messaging was the first priority. Despite the Third Reich-operated Filmcreditbank’s financial blockade of Hollywood, “cross-fertilization” or emulation of Hollywood in National

220 Fehrenbach, “Persistent Myths,” 85.
Socialist film persisted quietly; Heide Fehrenbach even argues that *Glückskinder* (Lucky Kids, 1936) was almost a complete remake of *It Happened One Night* (1934).²²¹

Instrumental to this transnational exchange, was German-born film producer and executive Erich Pommer. Only two years after his appointment to head production operations of Berlin-based film and television production company *Universum Film AG* (UFA), Pommer relocated to Hollywood to work for Paramount Pictures and Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer (MGM).²²² After a brief return to his role at UFA, Pommer’s contract was rescinded in early 1933 due to his Jewish ancestry in a tumultuous political landscape. While pursuing distribution negotiations in New York, WWII broke out and prevented Pommer from re-entering Britain with his German passport. Following his wartime exile, Pommer was recruited as the highest-ranking film control officer of OMGUS in occupied-Germany.²²³ With most of his production and distribution management experience deriving from his time in Hollywood, Pommer’s tendency to market American film imports favorably was all but ensured. However, Pommer faced major conflict between OMGUS and eight major Hollywood production companies. Considering the decrepit state of the German economy, OMGUS’s democratization program could not be expected to turn a stable profit for Hollywood studios. This lack of incentive resulted in Hollywood production

²²¹ Fehrenbach, “Persistent Myths,” 87.
²²² Pommer signed with Fox Film Corporation to oversee their European branch, *Film Europa* from Paris, but moved to the UK in 1936 to work for Alexander Korda’s London Films. A year later, Pommer opened his first production company, Mayflower Picture Corporation, with actor Charles Laughton and produced films such as *St. Martin’s Lane* (1938) and Alfred Hitchcock’s *Jamaica Inn* (1939).
²²³ The US government established OMGUS on 1 January 1946 and appointed General Lucius D. Clay as lead commander. The government organization was composed of five different offices in Wurttemberg-Baden, Greater Hesse, Bavaria, Bremen, and Berlin. OMGUS, controlled the reestablishment of mass media, and produced and distributed US propaganda materials to combat lingering Nazism in Germany. OMGUS was eliminated on 5 December 1949, when the US High Commissioner for Germany (HICOG) assumed control of its operations.
companies sending older films or those of lesser quality than was being produced contemporaneously in the United States. Box office hits were often withheld due to the inconvertible nature of the Deutsche Mark into hard, valuable currency.\textsuperscript{224} Now, in addition to the unwanted documentary films, the so-called “poor quality” of these select Hollywood films became a central critique amongst German audiences.

By 1948, Pommer contributed to the reorganization and redevelopment of the film industry by distributing film licenses, overseeing studio reconstruction, and supervising the Western zone production of twenty-eight films. Two years prior, Pommer worked with the Motion Picture Export Association of America (MPEA)\textsuperscript{225}, the ICD’s film branch responsible for the marketing and export of all US motion pictures to Europe and Asia.\textsuperscript{226} The MPEA, in concert with US intelligence reports from 1946 to 1948, determined that German audiences took little interest in poor quality American films. Examples included \textit{Here Comes Mr. Jordan} (fig. 159) and \textit{Tom, Dick, and Harry} (fig. 160), which had not only failed in the box office, but also incidentally prevented a steady return of cinemagoers for at least three weeks.\textsuperscript{227} Statistics indicated that Germans preferred native motion pictures given their treatment of familiar themes and subject matter, as well as the presence of recognizable actors and language. Accordingly, the

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\textsuperscript{224} Heide Fehrenbach, “Persistent Myths,” 87.
\textsuperscript{225} Founded in 1946, the MPEA, was established to promote American films abroad and bypass production company monopolies in those foreign countries. MPEA was in constant conflict with OMGUS with regards to film distribution, given their different socio-political and economic goals. See “Movies Begin to Fight Foreign Monopolies,” \textit{New York Times}, 5 April 1946.
\textsuperscript{226} As a branch of OMGUS, ICD was primarily responsible for providing Germany with information “which [would] influence them to understand and accept the United States programme of occupation, and to establish for themselves a stable, peaceful, and acceptable government.” Robert R. Shandley, \textit{Rubble Films: German Cinema in the Shadow of the Third Reich} (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 2010), 11.
\textsuperscript{227} Fehrenbach, “Persistent Myths,” 87.
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superficial escapist fantasies and foreign humor that so often dominated Hollywood films fell flat on German audiences.

When compared to the long historical trajectories of high-brow culture in Western Europe, the US held a reputation of being culturally void. This concept became central to the *Halbstarkenproblem*, given the American occupation and Germany’s impressive film history. The American government desired to combat their reputation as culturally empty and the West German government wanted to rebuild their own sources of cultural production. Frequently considered a nation that is overly concerned with material wealth and the production of low-brow culture, the US also possessed a reputation for exporting films lacking real artistic value. Examples included violent “Wild West” westerns and gangster films, A measure arguably even more closely associated with American-style democracy—“consumer choice” and the right to select—came to take the place of blanket fascination with American culture that was present in former decades. However, after coming under heavy criticism for establishing the Wiesbaden-based *Freiwillige Selbstkontrolle der Filmwirtschaft* (FSK), MPEA tried to retract Pommer’s appointment as Film Production officer. Like the US’s Hays Code, FSK sought to introduce a voluntary self-rating system for the film industry, ultimately threatening government regulation procedures and military censorship. With the establishment of the two German states in 1949, Pommer resigned and returned to the United States.

\[\text{Ibid.}\]

\[\text{Pommer established FSK with film directors, Curt Oertel and Horst von Hartlieb who was the Director of film distribution in Wiesbaden. FSK’s rating system functioned through a numbered rating system: 0 (released without age restriction), 6 (released to age 6+), 12 (released to age 12+ or age 6-11 with parental guidance), 16 (released to age 16+), and 18 (released to age 18+).}\]
Given these governmental changes, the military occupation operation that created OMGUS was no longer necessary; instead, HICOG resumed organizational duties. Earlier that year, an Occupation Statute was negotiated to officially demarcate the extent of Western occupying forces’ legal powers given to the new West German state. The Statute specified that the Western Allies must terminate control over all “specified areas,” and provide West German officials with rightful leadership. The French Military Government, however, argued for the Western allies to continue exercising power over “nonspecified [sic] or residual areas”. Due to the ambiguity of language, including the absence of ‘reorientation’ in discussions of responsibility and power, the Western occupiers preserved a much higher level of control than had been in place since 1946 or even intended by the Statute from its conception.\(^{230}\)

As suggested by the State Department’s Public Affairs Division, a new cultural program would be introduced with even greater emphasis on reorientation efforts of the immediate postwar period. The State Department specified that HICOG possessed the power to initiate a more targeted and enforced cultural program, better aligned with the Second World War’s Psychological Warfare Division. Historian David Monod argues that despite stricter objectives, HICOG was far too understaffed and disorganized to accomplish them; however, their efforts proved more successful than that of OMGUS.\(^{231}\)

With the establishment of student exchange programs and regrouping at RIAS (Rundfunk im amerikanischen Sektor, American Sector Broadcasting) and Neue Zeitung, HICOG expanded and improved its cultural reach.

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\(^{231}\) Ibid.
2.3 “Easy Entertainment”\textsuperscript{232}: The Grenzkino Initiative

With diplomatic tensions rising, the Soviet Union suddenly imposed a blockade on West Berlin in June 1948. Without reliable and accessible sources for food, raw materials, and other supplies, the sequestered and largely Allied-dependent West Berlin population began to suffer at a rapid rate. With the reality of total capitulation to the Soviets encroaching, the US military government organized one of the largest humanitarian rescues in the history of the country. Given Soviet obstruction of railways, roads, and canals, US military planes dispersed food and other aid packages over Tempelhof Airport. The “Berlin Airlift,” or “Operation Vittles” as it was known within the military, effectively saved two-and-a-half million Berliners and led to the Soviet Union’s lifting of the blockade in May 1948. In the years following the Blockade, Soviet General Vassily I began accusing the Western powers for converting West Berlin into a “breeding ground” of espionage.\textsuperscript{233} Without a doubt, Berlin proved to be the closest Western city to intercept vital radio signals behind the Iron Curtain, thus launching a number of “listening posts” operated by the US, the most renowned being Teufelsberg.\textsuperscript{234} With such rumors of a

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\textsuperscript{232} Mr. Ball to A. Felguth, Film and Exhibits Program, “Border Theater Film Program for Eastern Residents, 28 November 28, 1952,” Records of HICOG, RG 466, NACP. \\
\textsuperscript{233} John B. Crane, “Berlin Blockade Is In Sight Again as We Plan New Lift,” \textit{Green Bay Press-Gazette}, 10 July 1952. \\
\textsuperscript{234} Named “Teufelsberg” (‘Devil’s Mountain’), the peak of this mountainous man-made hill in the Grünewald Forest became the site for the renowned Field Station Berlin, a US-operated listening station. Large geodesic forms were used to disguise such surveillance devices, undoubtedly directed toward the Eastern Zone and Soviet Union. After the US abandoned the premises in 1991, the buildings fell into disrepair and were reclaimed amidst the nascence of rave and techno culture. After years of parties, the buildings were yet again reclaimed by a group of artists in search of inexpensive studio space. Teufelsberg has become a peculiar Berlin icon, appearing in video works by Hito Steyerl and Julian Rosefeldt, film and television. See http://teufelsberg-berlin.de.
\end{flushright}
second Berlin Blockade, the Western allies focused on strengthening reeducation and democratization efforts, especially attuned to border crossing.

Before the construction of the Wall in 1961, crossing the border (Grenzübergangsstelle, border crossing site) between East and West Berlin only required identification papers.235 With less surveillance and enforcement of division than in later years, East sector residents crossed relatively unhindered into the West to buy goods, see movies, and visit friends and relatives. Although this exhibited a degree of autonomy, Soviet sector border guards and customs agents were at liberty to monitor traffic, inspect those individuals crossing (Grenzgänger), and confiscate Western goods. Shoes and jeans were central to the Eastern consumer drive; some women were known to enter the popular Western sector department store KaDeWe (Kaufhaus des Westens), purchase slips, blouses, and skirts and conceal them under their own dress in order to “dupe” the Soviet sector border officials and customs officers. Visitors were even known to purchase shoes at the beginning of the day, break them in by walking all over the Western sectors, and then try to pass them off as preowned shoes to the GDR guards.

Crossing the border into the Western sectors was encouraged by both the US and the West German governments; US officials even fostered trusting relationships with GDR youth in order to attract higher numbers. As incentive, GDR adolescents had the opportunity to request travel reimbursements, a per diem, and even spend time with an American family in order to become better acquainted with the American way and a kindness or generosity that was seemingly unattainable in the East. Co-organized RCA, televisions were set up just beyond the

235 Until 1961, border crossing was essentially unrestricted. West German citizens could freely enter the East with an application for a visa at an East German embassy a few weeks in advance. One-day visit visas were issued right at the border, with no previous application necessary. East Germans were likely to exchange East German Marks for Deutsche Marks (DM),
border in West Berlin in order to attract GDR viewers to watch western television (figs. 161-162). In 1955 alone, the United States funded twenty-one thousand trips across the border for East German teens, even including the 1958 delivery of Christmas gifts by West German youth organizations.\(^{236}\) With the US taking precedence in the Western consumer markets in conjunction with the slow reinvigoration of the German film industry, the appearance of the Halbstarken is much less alarming than suggested by the German press.

Given the failure of immediate postwar newsreels, documentaries, and Hollywood B-films, US officials in HICOG’s Film Section explored new and more creative methods of reaching diverse German audiences and improving relatedness of such materials. Their central goals included opening up the German film market to free competition, diminishing American military censorship policies, and maintaining focus on democracy and individualism.\(^{237}\) A large part of facing this dilemma was to renegotiate Hollywood film export contracts for dispersion in West Germany. Fully grasping the political consequences of the city’s division and an opportunity to reach a desirable audience, HICOG Film Section official Oscar Martay initiated the “border theater” in early 1950. Four years later, ___ honored Martay for this initiative, which attracted over 278 million Eastern residents between 1950 and 1961 (figs. 163-164).\(^{238}\) Once approved by the Büro für Gesamtberliner Fragen and the Landesfinanzamt, eleven would open by the end of the year.\(^{239}\) The first screening, featuring Ninotschka (1939, fig. 165), took place in

\(^{236}\) American Embassy Bonn, “Despatch 664, 22 October 1956,” Department of State Central Files, RG 59, 511.62b/10-2256, NACP.
\(^{237}\) Heide Fehrenbach, “Persistent Myths,” 88-90.
\(^{238}\) Mr. J.C. Kolarek via Mr. Pagan and Mr. Keefe to R.M. Bailey, “Office Memorandum: Border Theaters, 9 December 1952,” Records of HICOG, RG 466, NACP.
\(^{239}\) From 1950-961, thirty-two border cinemas operated. Beyond film screenings, the Grenzkino offered East Berliners a reliable and safe meeting site before the Wall was established.
May 1950. Starring Greta Garbo and Melvyn Douglas, the film follows a callous Russian woman’s business trip to Paris and her romantic encounters with a man whose ideological convictions should bring her to loath him. This film was employed with an unapologetic propagandistic intent; Ninotschka (Garbo) is portrayed as stern and rigid, whereas Count Leon (Melvyn) fulfills the promise of Western democracy.

As early as August 1950, Der Tagesspiegel reported that the Marshall Plan administration had initiated contracts with nine American film companies in order to begin showing American films in the FRG. This agreement allotted about ninety films to be shown each year; however, the contract specified that the selection of films be determined by the Economic Cooperation Association (ECA). Less than a month after Der Tagesspiegel’s original report, the newspaper featured the article, “Escape from the Kolchos Milieu: Soviet Films for Empty Theaters – Border Cinemas draw Crowds,” in which the ‘Grenz-Kino’ (Grenzkino, or border cinema) is mentioned for the first time (fig. 166). The article specified that eleven border cinemas had been opened in West Berlin along the border to the east sector, including

areas like Spandau, Oranienstraße, and Potsdamer Platz, among others (fig. 167). Weekday showings—most often 2PM and 4PM—were reserved for east sector audience members, for whom ticket prices were only 25 West German Pfennig (Pf) or 1.50 Eastern Deutsche Mark (DM Ost, fig. 168). ²⁴² East visitors were expected to present their Kennkarte (identification); the film program for East visitors was organized by HICOG and purposefully different than regular showings at the theater. Given the essentially unrestricted access to the democratic zone, visitors were most often youth, trade school students, women, and the unemployed (fig. 169). In order to participate in this program, as a theater owner, one had to obtain a letter of recommendation from the Landesfinanzamt Berlin for exemption from the amusement tax, which was then forwarded to the Berlin Distributors’ Association (BDA, Filmverleiherverband) and included information about joining the border theater program. Martay’s Film Section, in conjunction with the BDA, organized the free use of films during the first twelve months of the program. By September 1951, theater owners were required to pay twenty-two percent of their income per ticket as a loan fee to the distributors. A large majority of films negotiated by Martay and HICOG were American films; however, as the program progressed German owners were able to select their own films (fig. 170). ²⁴³

Within a year, twenty-one West Berlin cinemas (totaling 9,489 seats, fig. 171) along the Eastern sector border were salvaged from bankruptcy, most of which achieved “phenomenal” success. ²⁴⁴ Given their location, East Berlin visitors were easily and rapidly able to reach these

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²⁴² These showings were also accessible to West Sector audiences for the regular admission fee.
²⁴³ “Border Theaters, 4 December 1952,” Records of the High Commissioner for Germany (HICOG), RG 466, NACP.
²⁴⁴ Mr. J.C. Kolarek via Mr. Pagan and Mr. Keefe to R.M. Bailey, “Office Memorandum: Border Theaters, 9 December 1952,” Records of HICOG, RG 466, NACP.
theaters *en masse*, effectively emptying out Soviet theaters and causing them to rely more on older German films or even, Western films (figs. 172-173).\(^{245}\) However, HICOG began to question the program’s major thrust, especially the use of so-called cheap tricks—“posters of scantily-clad women and exaggerated pictures of violence”\(^{246}\)—in order to attract East visitors, even pictured in *On the Happiness of Man* (fig. 174). A November 1952 exchange between officials of the Film and Exhibits section of HICOG’s Berlin Public Affairs Division specifies that “there is no doubt that Mr. Martay initiated the ‘border theater program’ for East area residents for cultural and political reasons” (fig. 175).\(^{247}\) Other participating parties included the *Landesfinanzamt*, Downtown Exhibitor, Distributor, Border Exhibitor, Eastern Sector Resident, Communistic Propaganda, and even HICOG, divided between Martay, Bachmann, and Felguth.\(^{248}\)

In the same letter, the original task of the border theaters was to ensure that, …these people [East Zone and East Sector residents] should ‘enjoy first-class movie fare produced in the West’ giving a picture of the Western living standard, the pleasure of free entertainment and the various characteristics of different peoples in the democratic countries without any particular tendency.\(^{249}\)

The letter continues to describe the types of films “allowed” at border theaters: they include “low quality gangster- and rowdy pictures, [and] westerns…often advertised through posters of very bad taste offering welcome material to the Eastern propaganda against the Western Powers, particularly the United States.”\(^{250}\) The issue of poor quality or inappropriate films forced the

\(^{245}\) Ibid.
\(^{246}\) Ibid.
\(^{247}\) “Border Theaters, 4 December 1952,” Records of HICOG, RG 466, NACP.
\(^{248}\) “Office Memorandum: Border Theaters, 9 December 1952,” Records of HICOG, RG 466, NACP.
\(^{249}\) Mr. Ball to A. Felguth, Film and Exhibits Program, “Border Theater Film Program for Eastern Residents, 28 November 28, 1952,” Records of HICOG, RG 466, NACP.
\(^{250}\) Ibid.
United States government into a difficult position. Self-censorship—as in, removal of American or Hollywood films deemed unworthy—could have destroyed the unabashedly positivist message of American culture embedded so deeply in the United States’ postwar renewal project. Furthermore, the author urges other officials to recognize, first, the failure of the border theater ideological mission, and second, the disjunction between HICOG, the theater owners, film distributors, and desires of the audience members.

The exhibitors put the blame either on the audience claiming they wanted to see such gangster type pictures or on the distributors who allegedly let them have good pictures for such non-profit performances on very rare occasions only. When checking on the distributors’ attitude the letter argument appeared only partly justified although there is no doubt that the financial interest of many distributors was stronger than their cultural or political idealism…It is felt at this time that an independent and satisfactory solution to this confused situation cannot be reached by the movie theater owners alone nor by the distributors…It is much more imperative to create an entirely new basis for this service of West Berlin and the Western world in aid of the suffering East Germans.251

Despite the economic gains made by theater owners and their relatively autonomous film selections, officials at the Public Affairs Division (PAD) were intent on convincing colleagues to “…consider this situation with common-sense, not with idealism, and try to understand that their films are being shown in the only ‘show-window’ of the free world that can be seen by the intelligent Eastern population, the functionaries of the SED and members of the Soviet occupation forces.”252 By restructuring the film program, PAD suggests that the United States could,

…take a lot of wind out of the Eastern propaganda sails stopping their continuous cries: “Look at the border theaters where you have an image of the obsolete, decayed and rotten Western world any day you go and see the movies! What kind of meaning do these pictures have in regard to the social tasks of our time? They are nothing but opium for the

251 Ibid.
252 “Border Theaters, 4 December 1952,” Records of HICOG, RG 466, NACP.
people! They are big business for your capitalist exploiters! Another means to besot you!”

However, the reality of the border theater project was that it was a highly successful venture; more than 220,000 visitors averaged each month, about 26,000 each day crossing over from the Eastern sector.\textsuperscript{254} If anything was deemed a failure, it was HICOG-produced films; their mission to disseminate explicitly reeducation-oriented documentaries either conjured little interest or triggered emotional distress for German attendees, rather than so-called ‘dangers provoked by such “sensational films with lack of taste.”’\textsuperscript{255}

Under occupation, the US exercised censorial power over film selection, most of which was produced in Hollywood, although the two institutions did not always share the same economic or political perspectives. As the West German economy strengthened from the mid- to late-1950s, American distributors felt more confident importing Hollywood films on which they could better ensure reliable profitability. By 1955, West Germany had finally achieved sovereignty and joined NATO through the Nine Power Conference’s approval of the Paris Treaties.\textsuperscript{256} For the film industry, this meant less financial assistance and political oversight from the Allies, especially the United States. Through the mid-1950s, superior Hollywood and

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{253} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{254} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{255} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{256} This diplomatic achievement is attributed to Western Allied desire to partner with West Germany, which had been discussing rearmament as early as 1950. In the same year, the Western Allies entered war with Korea, quickly realizing their defense system needed further support. After a failed attempt to join the European Defense Community (EDC) due to France’s Gaullist and communist refusals, the Brussels Treaty was revised to include West Germany in the Western European Union (WEU) and allow the country to rearm. As specified at the London and Paris Treaties, the WEU would maintain some control over the size of the FRG military and Germans could choose to perform civil service as an alternative to military service. Although the three Western Allies continued to occupy contested areas like Berlin, the West German government had assumed overall control of the country.
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Western films were being screened in border theaters, including *Blackboard Jungle*, *Gone with the Wind* (1939), and *Rear Window* (1954). According to internal GDR reports, the border theaters were attracting as many as seven million East Germans per year, clearly increasing as film selections improved.

2.4 The American Rebel Meets the German *Halbstarke*

Since 1955, German Grenzkino owners possessed greater autonomy over film selection, including the role they played in a surge of the more recent and popular American films previously mentioned: *The Wild One*, *Rebel without a Cause*, *Blackboard Jungle*, and *Rock Around the Clock* (figs. 176-178). All three films feature leading adolescent males in urban environments, wherein instances of cultural clash with their parents’ generation cause friction and rebellion, sometimes murder and death. The characters played by Marlon Brando and James Dean are stoic, aggressive, and independent (figs. 179-180); their hard-edged clothing—heavy leather jackets branded with their gang’s symbol or acronym, stiff denim, and sturdy boots—mirrors these emotional characteristics. Depicted as delinquents, the American youth rarely express patience or respect for authority. Their interests include rock ‘n’ roll, dancing, women, motorcycles, and drinking themselves into a stupor. Despite their brooding lone-wolf posturing, they are consistently surrounded by a group of likeminded male youths, often unemployed or school drop-outs (figs. 181-182). Generational tension and conflict highlighted in these three films were expressed through outward, public-facing demonstrations of rebellion. This often included the purchase of a car or motorcycle, the donning of a leather jacket, the expressive throes of adolescent sexuality, or the steely riffs of American Rock ‘n’ Roll. From these films, the *Halbstarken* modeled themselves on such anxiety-inducing American teen archetypes:
greasers, rockers, rebels. Over the course of the decade, and with assistance from these films, juvenile delinquency became synonymous with the United States and “poisonous” American culture.

The Halbstarken’s most direct connection to American culture is through their self-fashioning. Dick Hebdige would refer to this act of self-expression through clothing as one way in which the Halbstarken formulate “a coded response to [undesirable] changes affecting the entire community.” What separates this idea from the mere consumption or following of popular trends is the self-generated nature of the effort; Erving Goffman referred to the improvisational repurposing of an object as a “make-do,” or the use of “available artifacts in a manner and for an end not officially intended, thereby modifying the [programmed] conditions.” In further detail, this meant that there is either “a physical reworking of the artifact” or “an illegitimate context of use.” Goffman argued that “make-do’s” can alter the conditions of life. Halbstarke males often wore their undershirts backwards in order to achieve the higher neckline consistent with t-shirts, a garment not readily available in divided-Germany. Adolescents adopted tight-fitting pants, with a clear preference for Levi’s denim. However, because denim was not sold in the GDR and was extremely expensive in the FRG, East German Halbstarken added rivets to blue or black pants to give the appearance of the working-class pant

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257 In GDR newspapers and popular press, the word “giftig” (“poisonous”) was often employed to describe the malignant effects of American popular culture on youth culture.


260 Ibid.
they desired (fig. 145). Teenage men also began to style their hair greased back into a “ducktail plume”, similar to the style worn by James Dean and Elvis Presley (fig. 146). The incredibly casual appearance of blue jeans, t-shirts, and styled hair drew a through-line not only to American dress, but also undisciplined behavior. According to Hebdige and Stuart Hall, “the media not only provides groups with substantive images of other groups, they also relay back to working-class people a ‘picture’ of their own lives which is ‘contained’ or ‘framed’ by the ideological discourses which surround and situate it.” Hebdige argues that in most cases, “deviant behavior or the identification of a distinctive uniform (or more typically a combination of the two) can provide the catalyst for a moral panic.” That being said, subcultures choose to outwardly display their own codes; in the case of the Halbstarken, this is exemplified by their altered undershirts and workpants. Rejecting regimented or formal attire, this new self-fashionsing inspired by American film alarmed the Tätergeneration and government officials across divided Berlin. They feared that disciplined teenagers might soon be a distant reality, as demonstrated in pop culture of the United States where teenage delinquency was conceptualized as an epidemic.

Both The Wild One and Blackboard Jungle open with intertitle ‘warnings’ regarding systemic juvenile delinquency, the dangers of leaving the problem unresolved, and the importance of education (figs. 183-184). Bill Haley’s “Rock Around the Clock” plays as the credits for Blackboard Jungle roll on a classroom chalkboard. This film deals with disruptive,

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262 Hebdige, Subculture, 85.
263 Ibid., 93.
distracted, and ill-mannered students, through the lens of Mr. Dadier, a new English teacher and former Naval officer. In an effort to establish a functional classroom to excel their stunted educations, Mr. Dadier tries to cultivate Gregory Miller’s (Sidney Poitier) natural leadership, only to meet resistance. After a series of violent encounters between the boys and various teachers and students, Gregory comes to the assistance of Mr. Dadier and his fellow unruly peers follow suit. The film concludes with Dadier and Gregory making a mutual pact to stay in school. *Blackboard Jungle* uses fearmongering in order to illustrate the necrotic youth generation, which can only be saved with the persistent and tireless dedication of regimented adults. *Blackboard Jungle* ended up being the thirteenth most-watched film of 1956.²⁶⁴

Whereas *Blackboard Jungle* took place within the confines of an inner-city high school, *The Wild One* features a biker gang terrorizing a small town selected by them for no particular reason. The randomness of their target aids in their portrayal as crazed teenagers; that any town makes for a fun afternoon of teasing and spooking townspeople unacquainted with motorcycle gangs. Far different from Poitier’s character, Johnny Strabler (Marlon Brando) expresses apathy for any organized or mainstream institution or activity, other than his gang. The arc of the story is less about the redeeming qualities of misguided youth, and more about the danger of a mounting nihilistic attitude amongst the adolescent generation. Amidst a drunken and chaotic show-down in the town square, the elder café bar back is struck with a tire iron and dies. Although Johnny had been trying to suppress the conflict, he ends up getting prematurely blamed for the death. At the police station, the Sheriff reprimands Johnny: “I don’t know if there’s any good in you. I don’t know if there’s anything in you, but I’m going to take a big fat chance and

let you go.” That Johnny could be so empty or so uncultivated—in the shadow of his elders, “the bravest generation”—is a fear embedded in postwar American culture and one that relates to Germany’s recovering familial structures.

A West German distributor of *The Wild One* encouraged cinema-owners to emphasize the rebelliousness of Brando’s image. Advertising campaigns highlighted his speed, masculinity, and dominance, especially in terms of his sexuality. One slogan read, “Marlon Brando, Racing Rebel in the Rush of his Drives.” In another poster, Johnny grabs the blouse of his co-star and love interest, Kathie (fig. 185). Despite this authoritative depiction, Murphy’s character is sometimes accused of contributing to Johnny’s antagonism. In a pivotal scene, Johnny rescues Kathie from his riled gang of fellow motorcyclists only to forcefully kiss her in a secluded area. After pushing him off, Kathie shouts, “It’s crazy, isn’t it? You’re afraid of me? I’m not afraid of you anymore, but you’re afraid of me!” In *Blackboard Jungle*, Miss Hammond is sexualized both by her male students through whistling and catcalling (figs. 186-188). Even a fellow teacher tells her with a patronizing tone, “With your good looks, you’ll need to have the National Guard escort you to class every day!” After Hammond is attacked by a student in the library, Mrs. Dadier (Anne Francis) accuses her of wearing clothes that were “too sexy” for teachers. Later, she is blamed for an unsubstantiated affair with Mr. Dadier (Glenn Ford). The seductive and

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266 Ibid.
267 Poiger, *Jazz, Rock, and Rebels*, 76.
manipulative influence of women became even more integral to such German filmic responses to rebel films as 

*Die Halbstarken* and *Berlin – Ecke Schönhauser.*

In late-1955, *Rebel without a Cause* premiered in West Germany, receiving much criticism from the government. Rather than illustrating the rebellion of a working-class adolescent as was true for *The Wild One*, *Rebel* featured a distinctly middle-class protagonist struggling to coexist under the influence of his fragile father and overbearing mother. The film’s focus on the psychology of the family as the cause for juvenile delinquency also differentiates it from previous iterations of the rebel archetype on screen; however, in later German iterations of the rebel film, the trope of the damaged or absent father is emphasized to an even greater degree. The West German film rating board eventually prohibited screenings of the film for young people under the age of sixteen.\(^{269}\) However, the action was motivated by the idea that adolescents would not take adults of the film seriously, thus increasing youth rebellion and thwarting “proper ethical formation.”\(^{270}\) Eventually, popular opinion regarding the effects of commercial film on adolescents reversed. According to a December 1956 article in West Berlin newspaper *Der Tag*, studies found that westerns and other films depicting violence, actually allowed young men to safely release pent-up childhood aggression.\(^{271}\) This assumes the psychological function of film and filmic images, as well as their capacity to perform as a corrective for social conflict.

\(^{269}\) The board specifically refers to the adult characters as “comical figures” and expresses concern about youth rebellion against authority figures because they are not represented seriously. See Arbeitsausschuß der FSK, “Jugendprotokoll: Denn sie wissen nicht, was sie tun…,” 19 January 1956, Landesbildstelle Berlin, Pressearchiv (LBS).

\(^{270}\) Ibid.

\(^{271}\) “Keine Angst vor Abenteuern?,” *Der Tag*, 9 December 1956.
These films were often used by West German reviewers as a measure for differentiating their country from the United States. In 1955, social scientist Helmut Schelsky had already coined the term “Konsumterror” or “consumption terror,” and had discussed the negative effects of American-influenced materialism and consumerism on West German youth.\textsuperscript{272} Schelsky rightly concludes that although the Halbstarken were not particularly motivated by any single party politics, they embodied skeptics of complacency with mass opinion. What Schelsky fails to recognize is that the Halbstarken’s most assertive and convincing exercise of this skepticism was through their image and the cultural posturing of their purported delinquency. Without their explicit self-fashioning of American sartorial trends and occupation of key cultural sites like the Grenzkino, the Halbstarken might not have garnered such an incisive social response. They integrated American style precisely for its divergence and its visibility; and this obvious deviation from militant aesthetics and attitude was even more compelling with the backdrop of the culturally “void” border cinemas.

2.5 Halbstarkenproblem? Or the Dangers of Rock ‘n’ Roll Dancing

After 1945, two generations emerged as oppositional: those who experienced the war and those who did not. Those who had lived through the rise of Nazism, participated or complied, and survived the dissolution of the Third Reich were characterized as Tätergeneration; the core

\textsuperscript{272} Helmut Schelsky, “Beruf und Freizeit als Erziehungsziele in der modernen Gesellschaft (1955),” quoted in Schelsky, “’Reconstruction’ and ‘Modernization,’” in Modernisierung im Wiederaufbau. Die westdeutsche Gesellschaft der 50er Jahre, eds., Axel Schildt and Arnold Sywottek (Bonn: Dietz, 1998), 426. Helmut Schelsky held a university position in German-occupied France during the Third Reich, where specialized in family sociology. He argued that men and women should perform their respective gender roles in order for the family to function properly.
characteristics of this generation were their inability to admit to or atone for the wartime crimes against humanity, often consumed by anger at the failure of this utopian project and their generally militant attitudes. In opposition, the Nachgeborenen came to age in the midst of reconstruction and Allied intervention; the arrival of American-style capitalism and the overarching push toward mass commodification defined their adolescence, also provoking critique and rejection of such systems. Forming and strengthening in the late-1960s, the German Student Movement (68-Bewegung) would respond to lasting western cultural colonialism, as well as dissatisfaction with the West German government’s hypocritical polices and poor treatment of students. However, before their development, the Halbstarken exercised rebellion with regards to recent German history and its contemporaneous cultural shifts.

Both American and German parent and youth generations navigated these conflicts, in part, because the postwar period invoked myriad cultural transformations. From the perspective

273 The German Student Movement emerged in 1966 as the West German economy entered into a brief recession. Given recent history and the Wirtschaftswunder, this was met with disbelief. Students realized the inadequacies of a capitalist system and the perceived authoritarian leanings of the FRG government. On June 22, 1966, students enrolled at the Freie Universität in Berlin organized a sit-in at the meeting hall for the school senate, demanding transparency, inclusion, and demonstrating a need for further democratization within the university structure. In the coming years, the Socialist German Student Union (Sozialistische Deutsche Studentenbund, SDS) would become the leading organization of the movement. Events escalated into violence during the June 1967 visit of the Shah of Iran, considered by the SDS to be a brutal dictator and unwelcome in a so-called democratic nation like the FRG. Incidentally, the police killed one protester, leading to nationwide response. In April 1968, an assassination attempt was made upon SDS leader, Rudi Dutschke; although he recovered, he suffered from significant brain damage. Axel Springer, publisher of tabloid magazine Bild-Zeitung, was blamed by SDS given his public political attacks on Dutschke, referring to him as “Red Rudi” and a communist. It was believed that Springer organized the attempted assassination with the aid of neo-Nazi Josef Bachman. For further information, see Martin Klimke, The Other Alliance: Student Protest in West Germany and the United States in the Global Sixties (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010); Uwe Bergmann, “The ‘Sit-In’ as a Means for Reforming the University (June 22, 1966)” German History in Documents and Images, accessed November 13, 2018, http://germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org/sub_document.cfm?document_id=891.
of clinical psychology, teenage rebellion is not so much a cultural phenomenon as it is a measure of individual and personal development, and differentiation and separation from one’s parents. However, Germany is a unique case, wherein the parent generation was responsible for the dissolution, destruction, and division of the country. They were also accountable for horrific atrocities, though these had not yet received direct, public attention. From the perspective of the Nachgeborenen, the Tätergeneration’s embrace of totalitarianism depleted them of their autonomy; an individual was part and parcel to a mass, another cog in the machine. Although occasions of dissidence under authoritarian regime were not absent during the Third Reich, the Nachgeborenen generation did not view them as being adequate enough to admonish blame.

Art historian James Meyer discusses a particularly apt postwar sentiment in relation to a methodical return to art of the 1960s: the desire to experience a historical moment for which one was not yet alive.²⁷⁴ He argues that the 1960s are a “recurring topos” and that collective interest in a “return to or return of” that period signifies a pivotal point wherein history and memory meet and cross. Essentially, this idea describes being absent for an event or period of time (i.e. recent history) that is historically significant to and inseparable from contemporaneous events. If applied to 1950s-Germany, the youth generation expresses shame for the parent generation’s actions, producing a tension between their absence from the event and their casting judgment upon it. In a sense, the youth cannot divorce themselves from the past’s latent problems and this encourages searching for new or alternative systems for guidance, including foreign culture.

With regard to music, the US government was committed to spreading jazz, which they viewed as representative of “freedom from conventions, tolerance and cosmopolitanism, coolness, civility, opposition to all that seemed conformist, rusty, uniformist.” Jazz had also, by definition, originated in the United States; thus, elevating it as a serious musical form was synonymous with elevating and intellectualizing American culture (fig. 190). However, rather than embracing more suitable figures as Perry Como and Doris Day, the Halbstarken identified with Bill Haley and Elvis Presley, “the music of vulgar American democracy.” Rock ‘n’ roll worked symbiotically with the rebel protagonists portrayed in Hollywood film; these characters listened and danced to rock, and thus, represented rock ‘n’ roll and its negation of high culture. This message was explicitly relevant to Halbstarken who were not concerned with education or high art and rebelled against bourgeois attitudes. Their appropriation and reprocessing of American cultural signifiers is their rebellion.

The spaces Halbstarken occupied were most often public areas including the street, public transportation stops, swimming pools, and border cinemas (fig. 191). With accessibility to and growing interest in the filmic medium and foreign films, the inexpensive Grenzkino became the most popular site for youth congregation. Considering their prime, purposefully powerful border-side real estate, these cinemas also increased close encounters between GDR and FRG adolescents, allowing for another layer of mediation between groups. With teens making up nearly eighty percent of Grenzkino visitors, the impact of American popular culture through the lens of Hollywood film was not only vast, but also spread at a rapid rate. Upon entrance to an

average West Berlin courtyard off of Naunystraße, a bustling crowd of young Berliners eagerly waiting to see the United States’ most recent, controversial blockbuster hit, *Blackboard Jungle*.

Berliner Bernd Feuerhelm remembers his experience of the film’s premiere at Filmbühne Naunystraße in Kreuzberg:

…Most of the young people came from the surrounding area and at this cinema…If the showing was not sold out, the rest of the visitors were let in without an entrance ticket. This was not the exception in this cinema, but rather the rule… In the press, [*Blackboard Jungle*] had already made headlines and should be understood as a daunting example of youth criminality…half of SO36 seemed to want to see the movie, because the cinema was bursting at the seams that day. There was a disturbance and the visitors crowded on the sides. No one wanted to see the *Wochenschau* or *Vorfilm*. And then the film began with a cracking overture: “One, two, three ‘o clock, four o’ clock rock, rock…” And the audience’s deafening whine began.²⁷⁷

As Feuerhelm recalls, Filmbühne Naunystraße was known for attracting teens interested in rock ‘n’ roll and dancing and American popular culture. Film screenings at this particular theater occasionally led to “riots” between audience members. This assertion was almost always misunderstood or misreported by both older generations and the FRG and GDR press. In reality, these disruptions—dancing in the aisles, not remaining seated—were the result of music, screen images, and a general air of excitement rather than actual physical conflict. Cultural decorum, as known to the educated bourgeoisie, had begun to dissolve with the influx of “low-brow” American culture. Older German generations feared cultural ineptitude, based on what they viewed as a rapidly developing American cultural hegemony.

Riots (*Krawalle*) in border cinemas and around other public spaces, including concert halls, bars, cafés began breaking out as early as April 1956. Over the next five months, thirty-six

riots took place in West Berlin alone and as a result, around three-hundred and nine male teens were arrested. These incidents increased in frequency across West Germany, totaling to about a hundred riots by the end of 1958. Although it is estimated that a mere ten percent of West German adolescents participated in such riots, it is the spread of American-influenced style and stereotypes that made the most impact. Although the *Halbstarken* did not have a large majority following, the overwhelming press and public response to the teens heightened the perceived impact of their activities. In September 1956, the West Berlin parliament discussed such conflicts, citing that in West Berlin, one specific group had modeled their behavior “word for word, picture for picture”\(^{278}\) on *The Wild One*. The leather-clad adolescents frequented a West Berlin café called Big Window, where they caused disruption and skinny-dipped in the river Havel. The group called themselves “The Wild Ones of the Big Window” and were referred to as “Marlon Brandos” in the press.\(^{279}\) This would eventually escalate to an actual riot at a Bill Haley and His Comets concert (fig. 192). On October 26, 1958, teenage rock ‘n’ roll fans packed into the West Berlin Sportpalast. At one point during the concert, fans suddenly went from dancing to throwing chairs, and charging and striking the stage amidst total chaos. The aftermath left five policemen severely beaten, six members of the audience with serious injuries, and damage to the venue around 50,000 DM. Following this and other incidents across Germany, the *Krawalle* and rage against American films reached a new threat level amongst parents and the press.

East German reviewers frequently attacked the border theaters, citing the dishonest luring of GDR adolescents, American gangster films, pornographic content, and violence amongst

audience members. A *Berliner Zeitung* journalist dramatizes the so-called violence of the crowd, “Hell, am I in Chicago? But no, I’m just sitting in a cinema, in a West Berlin border cinema.”

They argue further that even FRG political parties, like the Social Democratic Party (SPD, *Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschland*) have called this initiative “a scandal.” The article contends that these films are in fact crimes that “poison young souls for political ends and bring young people down a downward path.” Later accounts of border theaters amplify their accusations of political objectives and reveal now-confirmed truths about the controlled operation. *Neues Deutschland* reports in September 1959 that border cinemas are “human traps” in which seventeen-year-olds are recruited into foreign espionage. That month, Werner Moch, an agent of the Federal Intelligence Service of West Germany (BND, *Bundesnachrichtendienst*), was arrested for the recruitment of over thirty-five GDR adolescents since February 1956. Moch was recruited by Herbert Steinborn and Hans Schrödter, on behalf of the BND, and engaged with youths at “City,” “Lido,” “Casino,” “Aladin,” “Stella,” and “WTB” Grenzkinos. Despite years of negative press on both sides of the Iron Curtain, Grenzkinos continued to be a site for Halbstarken to meet, see films, and dance. Even more fascinating, however, is the filmic exploration and treatment of Halbstarken as a specifically German subculture, surfacing a decade after the war.

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281 Ibid.
282 Ibid.
283 Reinhard Gehlen was recruited by the US military in 1945 to establish the Gehlen Organisation (“the Org”), an espionage network conducting surveillance on the Soviet Union. The organization included former Nazi *Schutzstaffel* (SS) and *Sicherheitsdienst* (SD) members who had previously assisted Gehlen in gathering anti-communist intelligence. Later, Gehlen became the first President of the BND (1956-1968). Gehlen was also involved in the 1944 Hitler assassination plot, though his involvement went undiscovered for years.
2.6 Halbstarken On Screen

In an eerie and coincidental foreshadowing, Georg Tressler’s *Die Halbstarken* opens with a low-vantage point view of a towering wall, five years before the Berlin Wall’s construction (fig. 193). Coincidentally, Tressler had collaborated with the US government on a short agricultural film for the Marshall Plan two years earlier. Screenwriter for *Die Halbstarken*, Will Tremper, recalls seeing Tressler’s short on potato cultivation and being impressed by the level of energy and excitement brought to such a mundane subject. Initially, the West Berlin government agreed to cooperate with Tremper on the film; however, they withdrew funding after arguing that *Die Halbstarken* did not portray any viable solutions to delinquency in the western sectors. Regardless, Tremper stabilized funding from elsewhere and requested that Tressler direct the teen drama that follows a group of adolescent boys as they navigate life in the divided city (fig. 194). This film impacts postwar German cinema for multiple reasons: first, the film portrayed West Berlin in all of its inconsistencies with regards to damage and reconstruction, division and community; second, the film highlighted young, local actors that included Horst Büchholz (Freddy Borchert, fig. 195) and Karin Baal (Sissy Bohl, fig. 196), leading to their relative fame; and third, it was a huge commercial success and represented the first of many competitive FRG films. The film gave cause to label Büchholz the German version of James Dean or Marlon Brando, and its cinematic depiction of juvenile rebellion spoke to larger generational problems that extended beyond Germany’s division.

*Die Halbstarken* opens with an introduction of the three protagonists: Freddy, his brother Jan Borchert, and Freddy’s girlfriend Sissy as they steal watches, smoke inside, and catcall women at a bustling public pool (fig. 197). A series of rebellious encounters take place, including street aggression and shady business deals, and audiences learn about a large debt
owed to an unidentified party. At the Borchert home, domestic life is in peril. Mr. Borchert is aggressive and physically abusive during angry outbursts with his sons, particularly Freddy, who dropped out of school (figs. 198-199). Jan maintains a formal salutation with his father (“Sir”), in a kind of verbal acknowledgement that Mr. Borchert will never change his perspective on the world. Mr. Borchert expresses that Freddy is “better off dead,” despite his wife showing a more nurturing concern, even standing up to her husband.\textsuperscript{284} This single scene solidifies that the film is examines conflict and morality between generations, the value of education and work, and the “dangerous” expression of individuality.

Meanwhile, viewers join the \textit{Halbstarken} as they dance to lively rock ‘n’ roll records in a newly opened Italian espresso bar. The cinematography features multiple, tight close-up shots focusing on the rapidity of step-work, hip swinging, clapping and champagne consumption (figs. 200-202). Freddy and Sissy perform a full swing dance, during which Freddy’s shiny leather pants are framed front and center (fig. 203). The accompanying music is mostly fast-paced and chaotic, lending a sense of uncontrollable rowdiness to the scene. That is, until a new record plays a John Philips Sousa-style march and the mood is automatically trampled by the sounds synonymous with their parents’ generation. Mocking a march formation led by Freddy, the group of teenagers exit the bar without paying the bill (fig. 204). The film also contains instances of sexual exchange; Freddy corners Sissy salaciously and asks her if she’s been with Jan before kissing her passionately; Freddy tells Sissy she’s “the only one”\textsuperscript{285} and she seductively asks him to say it again as the camera cuts to her hand clenching the leather armchair (fig. 205). As Freddy

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\textsuperscript{284} \textit{Die Halbstarken} (Teenage Wolfpack), directed by Georg Tressler (West Berlin: Inter West Film GmbH, 1956), b/w filmstrip, 97 mins. \\
\textsuperscript{285} Ibid.
\end{flushleft}
plans a rouse to buy a gun and steal money from a bank, tensions heighten between his group members. Klaus admits that he doesn’t want to participate in the robbery, but with verbal and physical threats made by Freddy, he complies. As the leader, Freddy tries to expedite group adrenaline by talking manically about getting “it all”\(^\text{286}\) (the girl, the apartment, expensive goods) and retirement after the heist. Eventually, the film culminates in the successful distraction, bait and switch, and robbery of two delivery men; however, after reaching safety, the group learns that the bags contain letters and money orders rather than cash. In the end, Sissy attempts to seduce Jan into planning a new heist and lies to Freddy about Jan trying to kiss her. When Freddy and Sissy then decide to rob the home of Antonio, the espresso bar owner, they find instead, Antonio’s ill and bed-ridden father pleading for help. When the elderly man attempts to call emergency services, Freddy pulls his gun on him and threatens to shoot him. Unexpectedly, Sissy screams out, “Don’t just tell him, just do it,”\(^\text{287}\) grabs the gun herself, and shoots both the father and Freddy. In this shocking conclusion, Sissy replaces Freddy as the major danger to society: dishonest, sexually promiscuous, and greedy (figs. 206-207).

Sissy’s transformation over the course of the film, from tagalong to aggressor, speaks to a larger fear about women and power in the FRG. Since the end of the Second World War, the roles of women in society had drastically changed. Suddenly, they were confronted with leading the household when male/father figures had not returned from combat. During the occupation, German women who associated with American GIs were referred to as “Veronika” by German commentators, also labeling them as prostitutes. American women, similar to *The Wild One*’s Kathie Baker (Mary Murphy) and *Blackboard Jungle*’s Miss Hammond (Margaret Hayes), were

\(^{286}\) Ibid.
\(^{287}\) Ibid.
often referred to as *Amazons*. This moniker was based on a German stereotype that American women possessed an outward masculinity and had a powerful effect on men, especially sexually. German women considered to be fraternizers were also called “*Amiliebchen*” (Ami-lovers) and “*Amizonen*,” a reference to their presence in the American zone.\(^{288}\) Bearing these stereotypes and derogatory names in mind, *Die Halbstarken* argues that female seduction and promiscuity leads to male rebellion. Echoing back to *The Wild One*, wherein Kathie accuses Johnny of being afraid of her, viewers witness her character transform from a ‘damsel in distress’ to a confident, self-assured woman, expressing her desires: “I wanted to touch you. I wanted to try anyway.” She caresses his motorcycle and with a breathy voice tells Johnny, “I’ve never ridden on a motorcycle before. It’s fast. It scared me. But I forgot everything. It felt good” (fig. 208).\(^{289}\)

Faced with the unrelenting seduction of Western pop culture and attitudes toward money and consumption, the protagonists of *Berlin - Ecke Schönhauser* (Berlin – Schönhauser Corner, 1957) wrestle with division, self-identification, and unemployment. Similar to *Die Halbstarken*, these youth represent the first generation of East Germans to mature after the Second World War; they similarly struggle with defining their own masculinity whilst confronting a skeptical parent generation. Gerhard Klein’s film highlights a small group of East Berliner adolescents as they move across borders, make bets, steal, and drop out of school; this eventually leads to physical violence, escape, and pregnancy. Lead characters deal with a wider gamut of sub-narratives than in Tressler’s film: Kohle (Ernst-Georg Schwill), like Freddy, suffers regular beatings at the hand of his stepfather; Karl-Heinz Erdmann (Harry Engel), on the other hand, is the subject of mockery because he allegedly lives off of his family’s fortune without actually

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\(^{288}\) Poiger, *Jazz, Rock, and Rebels*, 35.

\(^{289}\) *The Wild One* (1954).
working; Dieter (Ekkehard Schall) faces teasing from the other crew members because his brother is on the police force; and Angela secretly deals with her mother’s romantic affair with her boss, after the wartime death of Angela’s father. West Berlin—its cinemas, music, fashion styles, and increased wealth—provides a tempting fantasy of a different life for the group. Several scenes throughout the movie feature the boys crossing into the western sector, including close-up shots of the signs (figs. 209-210).

After a series of scenes in which Karl-Heinz attempts to make money by organizing illegal identification cards in the western sector, the audience witnesses a day’s work for Dieter, an industry worker. Panning shots of heavy machinery are met with conflict when suddenly, an active WWII bomb is discovered and detonates (figs. 211-212). Fortunately, it doesn’t appear that anyone suffers injury; however, it foregrounds the perilous and real circumstances of Berlin’s reconstruction. Eventually, Karl-Heinz accidentally kills a man who his accomplice was scamming for money. This leads to a conflict during which Kohle throws an object at Karl-Heinz’s head, leading him to believe he’s just killed his friend. Dieter and Kohle decide to flee to the Western sector, where they can claim they are dissenting for political purposes. While at a transit camp, Kohle is poisoned by other youth staying there and Dieter returns to the GDR. The film concludes in the police chief’s office with Dieter; Karl-Heinz will receive ten years for manslaughter and Dieter is not prosecuted for anything. The policeman urges Dieter to take advantage of this fresh start, solemnly stating, “I’m to blame. And you’re to blame. Where you won’t find us, you’ll find our enemies.” The police chief’s warning reiterates the containment narrative enshrouding East Germany; an attitude that keeping people in is more beneficial to a

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290 Berlin – Ecke Schönhauser (Berlin – Schönhauser Corner), directed by Gerhard Klein (East Berlin: DEFA-Studio für Spielfilme, 1957), b/w filmstrip, 81 mins.
functional, socialist society. Of course, this would soon morph into a tangible solution with the establishment of the Berlin Wall, or as GDR officials called it: the “antifascist protection dam.”

Other allusions to socialist ideology surface throughout the film. Karl-Heinz’s father criticizes him for spending so much on a new leather jacket, something he deems “frivolous;” Karl-Heinz is also wearing a bolo tie throughout the film, another allusion to western wear (fig. 213-214). This was also commonly used as an adjective for consumer goods associated with the United States and West Germany. Americans, in general, were considered frivolous, vulgar, and materialistic by the Soviet Union and GDR. At Bahnhof-Zoo, a central train station that straddled the American sector, a Telegraf newspaper seller shouts the latest headline: “Nuclear arms for West Germany! 55 billion for arms,” referencing West Germany’s 1957 request for nuclear weapons from NATO (fig. 215). Connections to the US also appear in the form of pop culture. Angela describes her ideal man as Marlon Brando, Kohle discusses crossing into the western sector to see Hollywood films at border theaters (fig. 216-217), a poster of Marilyn Monroe hangs in an East German transit camp bunk room (fig. 218). This film emerges as one of the first from DEFA to actually confront the idea that GDR adolescents were interested in American cultural imports. As was also true with Die Halbstarken, some actors in Ecke were selected directly from the streets of East Berlin, bringing the action of the film even closer to reality.

Reviews of the film in GDR publications were surprisingly positive. During a brief political thaw between 1956 and 1957, the Free German Youth (FDJ, Freie Deutsche Jugend)

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291 The SED officially referred to the Berlin Wall as the Antifaschistischer Schutzw all. GDR officials often blamed the Western sectors for harboring extant fascists. Their claim was that the wall would keep the dangers of fascism out of the GDR.
had adopted consumerism as a means to attract more members. Dieter is even recruited heavily by the FDJ throughout the film; however, he states that he lost both of his parents in the Second World War and he doesn’t want to provoke another conflict. Dieter goes further to explain that no matter what he does, it is considered wrong. He laments, “At the corner, I’m a rowdy. If I boogie, I’m a Yank (Amerikaner),” expressing his dissatisfaction with the state of the world. The film was commercially successful and became one of the country’s most-watched films in 1957. The characters’ interest in Western sector or American cultural influences was not initially viewed as a threat, but rather as a simple phase in adolescent development. An article in *Neues Deutschland* even encourages teens to see the film along the border at Schönhauser Allee where they would see actual teens “who touch up their hair, which is cut like James Dean’s, the Hollywood heartthrob” (fig. 219). However, in late-1957, governmental opinion of the film grew negative and scornful. SED officials argued that East Germany had been “penetrated” by Western culture, specifically the celebration of capitalist consumption and vulgar, or decadent culture. The biggest criticism, after the promotion of Western culture and consumption, was that the film lacked a celebration of the Party itself, as well as youth complying with (and succeeding by) SED beliefs and serving in the National People’s Army. Discussions of dangerous American cultural influences resulted in a temporary ban on student travel to the FRG or other NATO countries. In the end, seeing “actual” *Halbstarken* on the silver screen aligned too closely to the individualist narrative associated with western consumerism and democracy.

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293 Horst Knietzsch, “Wo wir nicht sind…,” *Neues Deutschland*, 3 September 1957.
The clandestine construction of the Berlin Wall forced most Grenzkinos to close their doors to the public (fig. 220). Unsurprisingly, the GDR press showed great relief with regards to concrete border closure. Neues Deutschland reports on the mass closures a week after the barrier’s assembly writing,

Empty cinemas, empty cash registers – that was the picture in all West Berlin districts on the first weekend after the GDR government took measures to protect their borders. Today, peace has returned to where once enticing titles and glittering advertisements for gangster or sex films animated the American way of life for the young people of democratic Berlin and its peripheral areas. Overnight, the over 250 border cinemas have been sucked into the vortex of failed front politics and bankruptcy. A stone’s throw from the transition to West Berlin on the Robert-Koch-Straße is the ‘Grenzkino’ “City”. Today, the iron gates are lowered, and a small sign simply states: “Closed for company holidays!” How mocking is the final movie title over the entrance “All Quiet on the Western Front.”

The sudden nature of their extinction indicates the Grenzkino’s very real dependence upon Eastern sector audience members, as well as their own reliance upon Grenzkinos to experience film from outside the Eastern Bloc. The Berlin Film Association called these “dead zones along the zonal borders,” even referring to the issue as “Kinosterbens,” or “cinema starvation.”296 What Neues Deutschland once considered “the frontier between war and peace,”297 was now completely absent from the cityscape. Film was no longer being used so effortlessly as common language between the divided and politically-divergent cultures of Germany. In a sense,

297 Original German phrase is “toten Zonen entlang der Zonengrenze”.
298 This was in reference to Friedrich Wilhelm Foss’s cinema “Camera” located in Potsdamer Platz. Foss had been involved with film for years before opening his first border theater in West Berlin. He had already reopened the “Aladin” theater in East Berlin that served Soviet soldiers and military officials exclusively. Although Foss was earning a decent living, he decided to focus his efforts on screening Western films in the FRG. After being attacked in GDR newspapers for opening “Camera, Kunstantm officials forced Foss to close “Aladin” in 1951. See “Kinomann zwischen Ost und West,” in “Flimmern auf dem Eisernen Vorhang,” 22-24.
**Grenzkinos** had fulfilled the cultural duty ascribed to them: to spread filmic images in both East and West Berlin, targeting youth specifically.

With Hollywood’s ‘Golden Era’ and the postwar explosion in American cultural exportation on behalf of the US government, Germans began to pay closer attention to other national cultures. For the *Halbstarken*, this meant a kind of retreat from the nationalistic thrust that failed during WWII, and an interest in pushing boundaries. American culture became synonymous with rebellion through the influx and popularity of Hollywood films depicting juvenile delinquency. These pop culture images—leather-clad Brando and Dean forging their own paths—inspired a type of self-fashioning that valued cultural reprocessing. The *Nachgeborenen* generation, as symbolized by the *Halbstarken*, formulate a fresh collective identity to challenge the failed, rigid formality of the *Tätergeneration*. By selecting and altering elements of American culture that served their contemporaneous socio-political needs and emotional desires, the *Halbstarken* negotiated new relationships toward militarization, capitalist consumption, and the politicization of culture. This social phenomenon gave way to more complex cultural responses (in the wake of cultural stunting), as demonstrated with the success of *Die Halbstarken* and *Berlin – Ecke Schönhauser*. This generation of consumers would soon pull back from the dream-like state, in which the American film rebel, rock ‘n’ roll, and Coca-Cola reigned supreme. More and more, FRG citizens, artists, and eventually leftist extremists alike would tire of the relentless silent salesman, the bombardment of capitalist messaging, and its social alienation. In the early-1960s, a group of Düsseldorf artists generated a series of live demonstrations that would both reveal the power and influence of advertising and consumer goods, and also expose their inability to repair a divided Germany. Like the photographs of
Ursula Arnold and Evelyn Richter, these demonstrations probe and disrupt the tacit acceptance of ideological narratives and represent a subterranean and skeptical reimagining.
Chapter Three

“THE CHILDREN OF MARX AND COCA-COLA”:
ART, CONSUMPTION, AND UPHEAVAL

On October 11, 1963, Living with Pop: A Demonstration for Capitalist Realism opened in Düsseldorf’s Berges furniture store (fig. 221). Leaving the store nearly untouched, organizers Konrad Lueg (later Fischer)298 and Gerhard Richter led visitors on a tour through typical German living rooms to the soundtrack of advertisements and music. Confronted with reminders of present-day politics, including West Germany’s recent economic boom, the Western Allies, and the politics of memory, the artists also installed paintings and objects seamlessly throughout the store, as if part of the fabricated domestic space. Months prior, the artists had already collaborated with Manfred Kuttner and Sigmar Polke on a different storefront demonstration in abandoned butcher shop, once again including the phrase Capitalist Realism in exhibition materials. Although the artists never considered it a movement or group categorization, “Capitalist Realism” should be understood as representative of the space between the two. No definition or manifesto was ever conceptualized, and the artists abandoned the term by 1966.299

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298 Konrad Fischer took his mother’s maiden name, Lueg, for a brief period of his artistic career to differentiate from the common German surname, Fischer. In later years, Fischer embraced his given surname upon opening his own gallery.

299 Eckert J. Gillen posits that Richter understood “Capitalist Realism” as an expression and a reference more than anything else, which is a fair interpretation of the contested phrase. Gillen proposes that the term also references “the German variant of American Pop Art;” however, this derivation is problematic in consideration of Richter’s early explorations with photo- and mass
Literature on Capitalist Realism often classifies it as derivative of Barbara Rose’s *Art International* article on American Pop art, seen by the artists in early 1963 (fig. 222); however, this narrative does not adequately engage with the artists as autonomous, politically-engaged citizens in West Germany’s oscillating socio-economic landscape. Given their direct reference to capitalism, sites of mass consumption as exhibition spaces, and confrontation with commodities and their reproduced images, the Capitalist Realism demonstrations require reevaluation.

Looking through the lens of the economic miracle’s elevation of Western consumer goods, most vividly mediated through popular US government-funded exhibitions. Taking into consideration Kuttner, Polke, and Richter’s new experiences of Western consumer society after years spent living under restricted artistic and political traditions in both Nazi and East Germany, the demonstrations function as a response to a markedly different sphere of consumption. This chapter argues that the demonstrations and their alienating images of commodities contend with an American model of mass consumerism that falsely promises rehabilitation through consumption.

Until the mid-1960s, the prestigious Künstakademie Düsseldorf (Düsseldorf Academy of Fine Arts) attended mainly to experiments in abstract and *informel* painting echoing the work of Karel Appel and Wols (figs. 223-224),\(^{300}\) however, for Richter, the compulsion to reproduce media image-painting, which predate his awareness of American Pop Art. Additionally, labeling the four figures as “German Pop artists” is equally problematic. Although Lueg and Richter had introduced themselves as such to art dealer Ileana Sonnabend in 1963, their work is vastly different from that of American Pop: in form, perspective, and composition.

\(^{300}\) Coined in 1952 by French critic Michel Tapié, *Art Informel* or *art autre* (“art of another kind”), defined a radical break in postwar European painting. This style ranged from surrealist automatism, or an automatic, intuitive approach to artmaking; to Tachisme, the French stylistic equivalent of American Abstract Expressionism. Artists included Karel Appel, Jean Dubuffet, Jean Fautrier, Wols, among others. For further discussion, see Michel Tapié, *Un Art Autre* (Paris: Gabriel Giraud, 1952).
mass media images through painting begins in 1962. This impetus began before Richter’s collaboration with Kuttner, Lueg, and Polke, and before their collective introduction to American Pop art in January 1963, a point which has not been critically examined. Richter recalls that his first “Photo-Picture” (1962), was the result of a happenstance encounter with a magazine image of French film star Brigitte Bardot. He claims that painting from a photograph was “the most moronic and inartistic thing that anyone could do.” Here, he discusses a strategy for extinguishing “style” from his practice, referring to the reproduced image as “the ‘naive’ photograph.” Using words like “happenstance” and later, “mindless” acquit the artist of decision-making and consequences, functioning as a kind of creative protection. This idea of the mindless perusal undoubtedly relates to the enormous photography exhibitions previously discussed, as well as the overarching goals of reeducation programming in West Germany.

Considering examples of housing and consumer goods exhibitions, the US government’s primary

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301 Although Richter begins his own catalog raisonée with Tisch (Table, 1962), he made several paintings from illustrated magazine images that year, including Eisläuferin (Ice Skater), Sargträger (Coffin Bearers), and Hitler, the latter of which he destroyed. It has since been revealed that the recto of Hirsch (Deer, 1963) features an image of Hitler overpainted with sheer pigment. The faint image of Hitler, barely visible through the cracking beige paint, appears in the same pose and expression as the 1962 work, suggesting that Richter reused the original canvas.


303 Photographer Thomas Demand has discussed this unconscious impulse to compose with regards to Sink (1997), a photograph of a cardboard re-construction of his kitchen sink. “…The day I decided to make this piece, I soon realised that, without meaning to, I was ending up making a real composition in my sink. I fell into my own trap. When I understood that I would never make a sink that was innocent enough, I called a friend and said ‘Can you go to your kitchen and photograph your sink for me?’ I wanted this piece to be sufficiently devoid of signification to create a balance.” The attempted removal of self-governance from the composition process relates to Richter’s interest in the neutrality or banality of media and found photographs. See François Quintin, “There is no Innocent Room,” Thomas Demand, exh. cat. (Paris: Fondation Cartier pour l’art contemporain, 2000): 36-68.
objective was to effectively place subjects into sites of consumption to provide the paradigm of modern living, one of both affluence and ease.

Advertising images and found photographs provided the four artists with a kind of neutrality, liberating them from some choices regarding composition, perspective, and style. The pattern that emerges is one of seemingly banal subject matter. In *Faltbarer Trockner* (Folding Dryer, 1962, fig. 225), for example, Richter depicts a woman demonstrating the use of a laundry rack, a reproduction of an advertisement clipped from a magazine (fig. 226). Situated below the painted half-tone Richter includes fragment of the ad’s text: “5, 60 m nutzbare Trockenlängen!” accompanied by the price in Deutschemarks. In a 1990 interview with Sabine Schütz, Richter reflects upon such banal subjects as a folding dryer and toilet paper roll (*Klorolle* [Toilet Paper], 1965, fig. 227); he calls it “poor person’s art.” Richter divulges that the folding dryer advertisement caught his eye because of its representation of socioeconomic status. Richter explains,

I didn’t find the clothes-drier [sic] ironic; there was something tragic about it, because it represented life in low-cost housing with nowhere to hang the washing. It was my own clothes-drier, which I rediscovered in a newspaper—objectivized, as it were.305

Here, Richter clearly identifies the ways in which his personal life, everyday life, and the mass media image merge. When Schütz asks if such banal motifs—the folding dryer, toilet paper, chair, lamp—have anything to do with “middle-class stuffiness,” Richter confirms. In a sense, the folding dryer is representative of Richter’s transition from East to West. It is a symbol of the American-style capitalism so central to the US government’s consumer goods exhibitions in the

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304 Gerhard Richter, “Interview with Sabine Schütz, 1990,” in Daily Practice of Painting, 211.

305 Ibid.
discussion ahead. This low-cost, mass-manufactured style speaks to its relatively conventional and ubiquitous existence; merely one free market consumer product amidst a multitude of others.

That three of the four artists associated with Capitalist Realism had recently emigrated from East Germany is often overlooked in the literature. Artists who had spent their adolescence tethered to the ideological objectives of fascist or state socialist governments often possessed little to no understanding of the avant-garde’s legacy in Germany, or elsewhere. This is not to suggest that such artists arrived as ‘blank slates’, but rather that they experienced the process of discovery through a unique historical lens. In a 1986 interview with Richter, Benjamin H.D. Buchloh probes the artist to decode this process of exposure. Born less than a year before Hitler was named Chancellor of Germany, Richter admits that he had no awareness of such pivotal figures as Duchamp, Picabia, Man Ray, Malevich and knew nothing of modernist movements including, Dadaism, Constructivism, and Surrealism. In a striking segment, Richter explains that his literacy in the German avant-garde was discovered through postwar American art.

Buchloh: Do you now see that as an issue? Does it now surprise you that Schwitters was never or hardly ever mentioned at that time? There were German artists, after all, great German artists who belonged to the avant-garde.

Richter: I came to know them by way of Rauschenberg, Schwitters included.

Buchloh: …the way the West German artistic landscape was reconstructed after it had been reduced to provincial status by war and Fascism – all this was a highly artificial reconstruction...The most important artists fell outside its scope altogether: Schwitters, Hannah Höch and John Heartfield were forgotten, as was the whole of German Dadaism. Reconstruction went by way of Paris painting and American painting. That is what the whole of the German Informel is based on, dismal as it is – and that’s how the foundations of Modernism in Germany were relaid. That was the situation you found when you arrived.

Richter: Which is my basis.

Buchloh: First you see the American Rauschenberg, then you discover the German Schwitters through the American. That’s an interesting paradox.306

The poignancy of such a paradox is not insignificant: for one’s exposure to the artistic legacy of his home country to be mediated through that of a foreign country—war victor and occupier, no less—is a compelling amalgamation and blurring of national and cultural identities. The artist admits that this was, in part, due to a rejection of German cultural history after the war, echoing Theodor Adorno’s imperative for cultural overhaul. Richter’s experience is hardly unique in this period, but rather should be understood as a paradigm for artists escaping restrictive regimes and entering new cultural, political, and social realities. It places a more compelling emphasis on cultural experiences promulgated by occupational governments, including exhibitions seeking to introduce and familiarize German citizens with new perspectives toward capitalism and consumption.

3.1 Fabricating the “American Way of Life” in West Berlin

As early as 1947, classified US intelligence reports indicate that counter-initiatives were proposed in order to undermine the increase of propaganda dissemination by the Soviet Union. Attacking the “American Way of Life” as vulgar and frivolous was the major thrust of the Soviet Union’s propaganda campaign. Shortly thereafter, OMGUS initiated a series of exhibitions focused on postwar housing trends in the United States. The central aim of these early

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Adorno’s memorable and oft-cited reflection—“…nach Auschwitz ein Gedicht zu schreiben ist barbarisch”—communicates what the sociologist viewed as an urgent stunting of postwar cultural production by the very society who generated the Holocaust. This short passage translates to “It is barbaric to write poetry after Auschwitz,” or “There can be no poetry after Auschwitz.” Adorno first wrote this in 1949, but often returned to it in later writings. His later texts discussing the influx of American culture and so-called “Americanization” in Germany will feature later in this chapter. See Theodor Adorno, “An Essay on Cultural Criticism and Society,” in *Prisms*, trans., Samuel and Shierry Weber (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1967), 34.
exhibitions was to tout the benefits of an American lifestyle. What began as exhibitions featuring photographs and small maquettes of suburban American homes, later transformed into more immersive installations with built-to-scale homes and real consumer products. In 1949, Peter Harnden, a Yale-trained architect and the Director of Exhibitions Programs at OMGUS, organized the exhibition So wohnt Amerika (How America Lives) at US Information Centers across Germany. Although designed by the Bauhaus’ former master instructor of graphics, Joost Schmidt, So wohnt Amerika failed to attract large audiences and press coverage (fig. 228). Mounted during a time when German audiences were still struggling to provide basic shelter and food for their families, American-style living was perhaps too distant a reality. The head of Frankfurt’s US Information Center, Donald W. Munz, reflected in a Special Report that “the general attendance figures would have been astronomic…if real, honest-to-god electric stoves, refrigerators and deep-freeze units had been on hand.” In the coming years this would radically alter attendance at domestic interior and consumer goods exhibitions, defining a more tangible and culturally distinctive image of life in the United States for German audiences.

To bolster the effort of other Marshall Plan “reeducation” programs, the US State Department funded the construction of George Marshall-Haus, a trade pavilion in West Berlin’s exposition park (fig. 229). The exhibition space’s opening show, Amerika zu Hause (America

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308 US Army Intelligence, “Russian Propaganda Regarding the American Way of Life (Project 3869), 10 October 1947,” Records of the Army Staff, RG 319, NACP.
309 Donald W. Muntz to Patricia van Delden, “Special Report re America House Publicity Efforts on Behalf of the “So wohnt Amerika” Exhibition, 24 August 1949,” Records of OMGUS, RG 260, NACP.
310 Desiring to feature local talent and encourage German connection to the space and its programming, the State Department awarded the building’s commission to Bruno Grimmek (1902-1969), a Berlin-based municipal architect. In 1957, Grimmek would also design the USIA’s West Berlin Amerika Haus building after Walter Gropius (1883-1969) unexpectedly rescinded his contract. Walter Gropius was originally given the commission for Amerika Haus
at Home), coincided with the annual West German Industrial Exhibition in October 1950. This was also the first time that an exhibition featured a full-scale model tract home designed by Minneapolis firm Page and Hill and constructed by German carpenters adjacent to the exhibition hall (fig. 230). Although the State Department was aware of the major material deficits still lingering in divided Germany due to reconstruction, they persisted in promoting “American economic strength,” to show “how the average American worker and his family live under a system of democracy and free enterprise.” Furthermore, the exhibition would counter Communist propaganda aimed at critiquing ‘‘Wall Street hegemony,’ [and] ‘the enslavement of the American worker.’” The two-week run proved wildly successful, attracting 43,000 Germans, 15,000 of whom crossed the border from the East (fig. 231). US Marshall Plan officials often organized exhibition openings to coincide with East German socialist holidays; *Amerika zu Hause* opened on the same day as East German Parliamentary elections and offered

West Berlin in 1951; however, according to Hans Georg Hiller von Gaertringen, the US State Department refused to honor Gropius’ request to receive compensation in US dollars. The next year, the State Department commissioned Gordon Bunshaft (1909-1990), the head designer of Chicago renowned architectural firm Skidmore, Owings & Merrill. With the inauguration of President Dwight D. Eisenhower, Bunshaft’s designs were not perceived as “dignified” enough, resulting in a desire to hire a local German firm. The Ministry for Foreign Affairs narrowed in on Grimmek for his successful and widespread municipal work in West Berlin, including the *Verkehrskanzel* (traffic control stand), new subway stations, and of course, George C. Marshall-Haus. Grimmek’s architectural approach aligned with the American endorsement of International Style modernism, often featuring architectural details that included expansive floor-to-ceiling windows to communicate a metaphorical transparency and openness. For further information, see Hans Georg Hiller von Gaertringen, *Pop, Politics, and Propaganda: Amerika Haus Berlin through the Ages* (Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz, 2015).


subsidized ticket prices for GDR citizens, like many US government-sponsored exhibitions. Curated by US Homes and Housing Finance Agency’s Bernard Wagner, the exhibition also featured tours and explanations of appliances by “attractive” female students majoring in American Studies at the Freie Universität, which had been established in West Berlin just two years prior. “Pop-eyed Germans” waited to “storm” through the home, peeking in through the windows and crowding one another inside the space (fig. 232). The attraction of the six-room home drew so many visitors that the State Department hired special security guards to patrol both front and rear entrances to the home, also implementing a ten-person visitor policy given the building’s limited structural fortitude (fig. 233). Historian Greg Castillo suggests that the frenzy over Amerika zu Hause is related to the fact that “15 percent of the West German population was crowded into housing with three or more inhabitants per room, and the average working-class family of four spent nearly half its disposable income on food.” Households of early-1950s divided Germany were still trying to recover economically and the possibility of purchasing a refrigerator or washing machine was simply not there; however, exhibitions like Amerika zu Hause fabricated a hopeful image of prosperous years to come (fig. 234). In a

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313 The most striking example of Eastern ‘outreach’, was the release of 100,000 balloons, attached to which were cards with American “propaganda material” ideally attaining “thorough distribution among Soviet satellites.” Page to Secretary of State, “Department Pass ECA, Commerce and Home Housing Federal Agency, 18 October 1950,” Central Decimal Files: Germany: Expositions, Exhibitions, and Fairs, RG 59, 862A. 191 BE/10-1850, NACP.
316 Ibid.
317 Castillo, “Domesticating the Cold War,” 269-70.
telegram to the Secretary of State, John J. McCloy, US High Commissioner to Occupied Germany, suggests plans to award the home to a raffle winner in a live RIAS broadcast arguing: “This chance to put living monument to American life in Berlin outpost should be capitalized,” especially in the midst of Soviet-controlled elections. An internal memorandum between State Department officials describes the exhibition as, “a gratifying demonstration of what can be accomplished in selling the American democratic way of life from the Berlin ‘showcase’ behind the iron curtain in an incredibly short space of time.” This statement confirms the conceptualization of ‘the American democratic way of life’ as a marketable and consumable model, the alluring and pragmatic potential of Berlin as a synecdoche for broader-reaching Cold War interests.

The explosive response to Amerika zu Hause, especially as a somewhat mundane Marshall Plan initiative, indicated that exhibitions constructing experiential models of American life and mass-consumerism could be successful in West Germany. If given the chance, the FRG would have sought market relations beyond its borders to the east; however, given the United States’ geopolitical interests, West Germany “came under pressure to curb their cartels, introduce American techniques of mass production, and be more receptive to the mass-marketing methods indispensable to establishing themselves in new sales territories.” With this strategic thrust,

West German industrial workers began to be conceptualized as “full-fledged consumers” (fig. 235). Given how critical it was to initiate and maintain consumer interest, US officials introduced a new interactive element to their exhibition programming by incorporating real Marshall Plan consumer objects into the prefabricated model home.

3.2 The “Ideal Dwelling” as *tableau vivant*

Opening in 1952 at Marshall-Haus, *Wir bauen ein besseres Leben* (We’re Building a Better Life) boasted the “ideal dwelling” as its pivotal concept (fig. 236). Installed in the interior of the exhibition hall, the two-story model home featured five significant advancements: a roofless top, viewing catwalk, live narrator, model “family”, and copious consumer goods. Designed by officials of the Mutual Security Agency (MSA), an organization developed after the dissolution of the Marshall Plan’s Economic Cooperation Administration (ECA), the exhibition marketed specifically toward East German visitors. Ultimately, the exhibition attracted 395,000 visitors, with just under fifty-percent coming in from the GDR. Despite a pledge to organize this exhibition to feel less “overtly American” by incorporating goods from the “Atlantic Community” (i.e. Marshall Plan) and stressing Pan-European industrial development, the goods were still unavailable in Germany (fig. 237). The State Department suggested that *Better Life* should “show West Berliners, and more especially East Zone and [Soviet] Sector visitors, the progress made in the West in developing consumer goods designed to raise the standard of living

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322 Ibid.
323 Rebec to US Secretary of State, “Untitled Telegram, 31 May 1952,” Central Decimal Files, Germany: Expositions, Exhibitions, and Fairs, RG 59, 862A. 191 BE/5-3152, NACP.
of the average family.” The official slogan of the exhibition solidified this perspective: “Es liegt an dir,” or, “within your grasp.” The accompanying exhibition catalog emphasizes the necessity for the Atlantic Community to welcome collaboration, but also realize that “the combination of beauty and functional quality characterizes…products of industrial mass production” (fig. 238). Information booths distributed Sears, Roebuck catalogs to visitors, featuring many of the products on display; in Berlin, officials noted that continuous restocking was necessary because so many catalogs had been stolen by spectators.

To secure an ample offering of MP consumer objects for the exhibition, the State Department recruited an unidentified MoMA curator, most likely Edgar Kaufmann Jr., whose expertise and affiliation would align with the government’s International Style goals. As Curator of Industrial Design, Kaufmann was lauded for his dazzling displays of modern household furniture and design objects for such exhibitions as the museum’s annual “Good Design” shows (fig. 239-240) and New Home Furnishings (1951). The ECA hired Kaufmann as a consultant in previous years, renowned for his blending of both high-brow design and more

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325 HICOG Berlin to US Department of State, “Berlin Industrial Fair 1952, 5 November 1952,” Central Decimal Files: Internal Affairs of State Relating to Exhibitions and Fairs in Germany, RG 59, 826A.191, NACP.
326 HICOG Bonn to US Secretary of State, “Telegram: Berlin Industrial Exhibition, 30 June 1952,” Central Decimal Files: Internal Affairs of State Relating to Exhibitions and Fairs in Germany, RG 59, 862A.191-BE/6-3052, NACP.
328 Castillo is the first to note that multiple MSA memoranda note a contract with MoMA; however, they never name a specific curator. Castillo, “Domesticating the Cold War,” 273. See also Records of the International Information Administration, Subject Files, European Field Program, 1949-1952, RG 59/150/71/35/04, Entry 5323, Box 8, NACP.
quotidian objects. With MoMA’s curatorial influence, the assistance of US Public Affairs Officer to Bonn, Herwin Schaeffer, and other external consultants sourced objects from West Germany, France, and Italy. The focus on Marshall Plan countries speaks both to the “Pan-European” ideological thrust and also to a less overt demonstration of the “freedom” of choice and expression in the democratic and consumer-focused United States. The broad-stroke inclusivity of the Atlantic Community served the United States’ underlying anti-communist mission and again fulfilled a desire to embody the heroic archetype for Western Europe: “another Berlin airlift.”

The large model home, which stood at twice the size of a typical West German dwelling, greeted visitors upon entrance to the exhibition pavilion. In fact, despite the German architectural design origins, the house closely resembled that of the postwar suburban housing developments envisioned by William Levitt in New York (fig. 241). The undulating seascapes of ‘tiny boxes’ across the east coast known as “Levittowns” were products of Fordist assembly line mass production and the American postwar economic boom. In the chaos of reconstruction and postwar refugee crisis overcrowding, no such open swaths of land existed in West Berlin.

According to correspondence between HICOG Office of Public Affairs officials, Kaufmann Jr. was selected for various exhibition consultation because he was highly respected in the design field. Specifically, Kaufmann consulted on the 1951 exhibition, *Industrie und Handwerk schaffen neues Hausgerät in USA* (Industry and Craft Create New Home Furnishings in the USA) which debuted in Stuttgart. See Elmer Lower to Richard Brecker, Central Decimal Files: Internal Affairs of State Relating to Exhibitions and Fairs in Germany, RG 59, 862A.191 Box 5227, NACP.

Castillo compares the exhibition’s sudden influx of goods and furnishings at Tempelhof Airport to the 1949 Berlin Airlift. Castillo, “Domesticating the Cold War,” 274.

Donald Monson to Joseph Heath, 31 October 1952,” Consumption, Housing, Propaganda Strategies, Special Representative in Europe, Office of Economic Affairs, Labor Division, Country Files Related to Housing, Records of the US Foreign Assistance Agencies 1948-61, RG 469, NACP.
Consultant to the MSA, Donald Monson wrote, “It’s all very well to put up shows like this, but in view of the extreme housing shortage in Germany…it can be questioned whether propaganda to break down this rule of fair sharing is a wise one.” According to supervisor Michael Harris, the “…main point was the attractive and realistic display of the least expensive, aesthetically acceptable mass-produced objects commonly used in everyday living by ordinary people” (figs. 242-243). However, Harris’ conception of “ordinary people” was misaligned with reality. Even if, perhaps, one’s wealth was stable, much of the myriad of furniture, appliances, and mass-produced objects awaiting discovery inside were not even available for purchase in Germany. In related government-funded endeavors, extravagant commodity displays marketing to the robust citizen-consumer, often served as a litmus test for covert intelligence gathering and receptivity in foreign espionage vetting procedures. Staff members at the Working Group for East-West Assistance (Arbeitsgemeinschaft Ost-West-Hilfe) organized exhibitions of consumer goods alongside didactics educating East German visitors—who made up the majority—on “Free Economy” and “Free Enterprise”. Receptive visitors were encouraged to visit the Cultural Help (Kulturelle Hilfe) Headquarters, a front financially supported and run by US intelligence operatives seeking to vet individuals and build an East German spy network.

332 Ibid.
333 Michael Harris to Joseph Heath, “Telegram: 31 October 1952,” Consumption, Housing, Propaganda Strategies; Records of the US Foreign Assistance Agencies 1948-61, Special Representative in Europe, Office of Economic Affairs, Labor Division, Country Files Related to Housing, RG 469, NACP.
334 See de Grazia, Irresistible Empire, 336-375.
Above all, the stagecraft for *Better Life* re-envisioned the constructed image of a better standard of living with more detail and more complex subtexts. An entire “family” of actors was hired to perform typical domestic tasks of a modern household by “…actually going through [the] physical actions of living in [the] dwelling, making proper use of objects in it” (fig. 244). The demonstration attracted media attention when it was wrongly reported to include “a consumers’ strip-tease” by “a luscious young German girl,” acting as the housewife (fig. 245). The newspaper reported that she would “model such wares as nylons, panties and brassiers [sic]…get dressed and undressed, get in and out of bed, and take a shower.” Given that the home lacked a roof, the bird’s eye view would provide viewers with an even more intimate encounter with the action (fig. 246). Despite the controversy, officials maintained that there was nothing “vulgar or cheap” about the demonstration. Thus, the successful demonstration of ‘modern living’ would continue to the American national exhibition at Sokolniki Park in Moscow where the famous ‘kitchen debate’ took place on 24 July 1959 (fig. 247). Published for the first time in 2009, the well-known image depicting American Vice President Richard M. Nixon and Soviet Premier Nikita S. Khrushchev in the showroom was revealed to show another figure: Lois Epstein. Hired as “a typical American housewife,” Epstein was asked to demonstrate

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336 HICOG Bonn to US Department of State Bureau of German Affairs, “Telegram: 31 May 1952,” Central Decimal Files: Internal Affairs of State Relating to Exhibitions and Fairs in Germany, RG 59, 862A.191, Box 5225, NACP.
338 Ibid.
the General Electric combination washer-dryer set for audiences (fig. 248). The seduction of the ‘live demonstration’—beginning with Better Life—adds a theatrical misdirection to the pointed political objective: the encouragement of mass-produced commodity culture.

Real glass windows and a raised catwalk facilitated an unusually voyeuristic visual engagement with the over six-thousand consumer products and furnishings, and live actors (fig. 249-250). The demonstration of ‘modern living’, in conjunction with the aerial point of view composed the live action into a tableau vivant, or “living picture” (figs. 251-252). Michael Fried argues that although “picture” is accepted as the correct translation of “tableau,” it “…lacks the connotations of constructedness, of being the product of an intellectual act.” He cites French critic Jean-François Chevrier as the first to coin “the tableau form” in the late-1980s upon observing a newfound proclivity towards photographs “designed and produced for the wall” by such photographers as John Coplans, Suzanne Lafont, and Jeff Wall, among others (fig. 253). Chevrier maintains that these photographers challenge images as “merely” mobile and manipulatable prints that are “taken” by instead constructing a confrontation between the spectator and the photograph. In other words, this confrontation “must cause them to exist, concretely, give them weight and gravity, within an actualized perceptual space, of an ‘object of thought’ [a phrase of Hannah Arendt’s]” Better Life encourages the confrontation by ascending

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341 Michael Fried, Why Photography Matters as Art as Never Before (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2008), 146.
the scaffolding, peering below into the roofless house, and listening to a white laboratory coat-clad narrator describe the demonstration below (fig. 15). The elevated and removed viewing experience arguably results in a less simulated experience (i.e. not being in the house with the actors, or able to walk inside each room and become part of its reality, fig. 254); however, it enables a discrete framing of a singular image: the ‘ideal’ nuclear family co-existing in an ‘ideal’ home, surrounded by ‘ideal’ goods.

Incorporating Clement Greenberg’s concept of photographic “transparency,” Fried argues that in comparison to a painting, photography possesses the innate ability to encourage spectators to “look ‘through’, or more accurately, look ‘past’” the image’s surface. In other words, to ignore the ‘constructedness’ of its realism. In contrast, a painting’s material surface is more immediately palpable to spectators, discouraging the idea of transparency in favor of announcing the painter’s intervention. Thus, without literally walking viewers through the experience of capitalist wealth, Better Life’s topless house—“like a doll’s house”—reveals its own ‘constructedness’ in service of concealing its transparent ideological goals. One of the actresses playing the role of the housewife, Adila W., was even quoted by Der Tagesspiegel as stating “…because I think the house is so perfect I am afraid we will not want to move out…after

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344 Ibid.
345 HICOG Berlin to US Secretary of State, “Telegram: 20 September 1952,” Central Decimal Files: Internal Affairs of State Relating to Exhibitions and Fairs in Germany, RG 59, 862A.191-BE/9-2052, NACP.
two weeks. What will happen if I fall in love with the kitchen too?”

In harmony with the actress’s reflection, *Neue Zeitung* wrote, “Many a visitor will sigh enviously: there is wonder kitchen from US completely automatic, mechanized, electrically equipped somehow reminding of control board of airplane. Here household chores are pleasure…when will this dream become reality?”

The sheer excess of consumer goods glazed the exhibition with optimism; consumer goods = freedom of possibility, choice, and opportunity and the exact narrative of democracy and capitalism embraced and exported by the United States government. *Better Life’s tableau vivant* presented ‘modern living’ from a comfortable distance, an aerial view that the spectator’s imagination could snapshot, collapse, and carry with them outside the confines of the exhibition space (fig. 255).

The final gallery of *Better Life* displayed every single product found in and around the home, individually tagged to advertise the retail price, the (Marshall Plan) country of production, and the number of hours of labor necessary to *purchase* the object, rather than produce it (figs. 256-257). This number was calculated according to the average skilled worker’s earnings in West Germany at the time. Notably, this model presents an inversion of the Marxist concept which defines the value of an object based upon the labor necessary for *production*. Marx critiqued capitalist production for promulgating exploitative principals, positing that profit obtained from selling goods at retail price results in taking advantage of laborers. The capitalist politics of the exhibition extended beyond the content and display to the international tour of the

346 Ibid.


348 Castillo, “Domesticating the Cold War,” 276.
show. Marshall Plan officials even chose additional venues outside of West Germany in France and Italy where communist labor unions had preempted concern. The 1954 Paris and Milan iterations of the exhibition assumed a new title—*Home Without Borders* (*Maison Sans Frontières* and *Casa Senza Frontiere*, respectively, fig. 258)—again conflating domesticity and consumption, to establish them beyond geographical and economic borders.

The demonstration of “modern living” was also the focal point of Marshall Plan films like *Einkaufen leicht gemacht* (*Shopping Made Easy, 1952*), screened at the second annual Berlin International Film Festival, founded by OMGUS one year prior. In addition, didactic exhibitions seeking to educate German visitors on the benefits of self-service retail were quickly proliferating. The Caravan for Modern Food Service, organized by *How America Lives* curator Peter Harnden, featured expandable cargo trailers simulating an American grocery store (figs. 259-261). Implemented as a pedagogical tool for European consumers previously unfamiliar with self-service shopping, the Caravan presented cases packed with meat, fish, and dairy, as well as shelves lined with fresh produce and pre-packaged food items (fig. 262). Trucked city to city, each Caravan displayed a placard with translations of “supermarket theory and practice” in seven different languages (fig. 263). In addition to the realistic composition of the supermarket—shopping carts, a check-out counter, refrigerated cases, and mock aisles—the Caravan also contained a screening room for technical films and a library with reference materials (fig. 264). No longer required to make several stops for habitual daily shopping

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349 *Shopping Made Easy* (1952) was directed by Danish-French director George Freedland for the Marshall Plan.

350 Premiering in Paris with successful outcome, the Caravan also traveled to Belgium, Holland, Denmark, Germany, and Italy. Until the end of the 1950s, American-style supermarkets were commonplace features of national exhibitions.
(butcher, fish monger, cheese monger, etc.), the new model—based on American grocery stores—
not only increased ease of access to necessities and lowered prices, but also completely reimagined consumer experience with products, choice, and advertising.

Closely aligned with Better Life’s model, “Supermarket USA”, sponsored by the National Association of Food Chains and the US Department of Commerce, opened in former-Yugoslavian Zagreb for the 1957 International Trade Fair (fig. 265-266). The fabricated retail space was housed inside a glass and steel pavilion conceptualized by well-known American industrial design firm, Walter Dorwin Teague. As with Better Life, “Supermarket USA” featured a second-story catwalk for aerial observation of the self-service model. Even more unusual, young female students performing the demonstration periodically asked audience members to integrate their infants into the shopping cart to observe and perform the perusal of aisles with children. At the check-out counter, a lottery ticket was distributed to patrons; every one-hundredth participant was awarded the opportunity to fill a bag with gratis food products imported from Philadelphia. Both the Caravan and “Supermarket USA” aided West German grocery store openings throughout the 1950s: in 1951, the nation had only thirty-nine supermarkets and by 1961 that number grew to 17,132 self-service retailers. West Germany—

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351 The first self-service grocery store opened in the US as early as 1917, after which more developed in the 1920s. By the 1930s and 1940s, the large supermarket style had become the norm. There was apparently no interest in this model in West Germany until 1951, when the National Association of Food Chains arranged for West German grocers to travel to the United States to learn more about the technique. By 1953, self-service grocery stores began to grow. See Brendan M. Jones, “Hausfrau takes to supermarket: West Germany Self-Service Food Chains Are Replicas of US Counterpart,” New York Times, 22 August 1955, 29.


even Yugoslavia—was “getting into the supermarket business at a fast pace,”\textsuperscript{354} compelling daily consumer encounters with sparkling logos, bright displays, and the ability to roam, compare and choose: the “illusion of boundless abundance.”\textsuperscript{355}

Thus, with newfound economic stability and the marriage of serialized display with an American consumer mentality, a kind of hybrid European consumer-citizen emerged. Production could not progress without demand; consumption, therefore, became a primary duty for West German citizens. Discussion of “our consumer society” (\textit{Konsumgesellschaft}) would not emerge until the late-1950s, where conflicting viewpoints regarding the economic miracle were already taking shape.\textsuperscript{356} The characterization expressed both pride in swift economic stabilization, as well as West Germany’s embrace of and differentiation from American models of modern living and consumption. However, a quiet anxiety anchored by memories of Germany’s most recent period of affluence—the 1930s—surfaced. For the generation of West Germans coming of age in the 1950s and 1960s, like Kuttner, Lueg, Polke, and Richter, acceptance of Erhard’s social market economy began to coincide with fascism and American imperialism. Beset with the responsibility to both consume for economic stabilization and maintain critical perspectives toward persuasive ideologies, a hybrid generation of European \textit{consumer-citizens} emerged,

\textsuperscript{354} Richard W. Boogaart, “General Summary of Supermarket Possibilities in Western Europe, July 1956,” [July 1956], unpaginated [1], box 37, IBEC Supermarkets-Boogaart, R.W., 1956-1968, IBEC.


epitomized through the words of Jean-Luc Godard: “the children of Marx and Coca-Cola.”

This generation, represented here by artists associated with Capitalist Realism, accepted the FRG’s embrace of American-style consumer culture that espoused freedom of choice and individuality, but also castigated the materialism and imperialist exploitation beneath its attractive logos and alluring displays.

3.3 Artistic Renewals and the Latent Commodity Image

Late-1950s Düsseldorf witnessed the rapid development of artist group Zero, which included artists Heinz Mack, Otto Piene, and Günther Uecker (figs. 267-268). The group materialized from a dada-like mythology, in which Mack flipped through a random book, landed on the word “zero” on the index’s final page, and decided to accept it as the group’s moniker. Zero artists created works implementing a new artistic vocabulary through such materials as nails, foil, cardboard, and light, as well as pursuing philosophical notions of transcendence. Through performances and ephemeral exhibitions, they focused on issues of crude materials and space, rather than the artist’s own hand. Given the recent Nazi past, Zero believed collaboration and participation should be central components to an artistic reinvention; the larger, transnational ZERO group included Yves Klein and Lucio Fontana and developed from Mack, Piene, and Uecker’s collaborations. Wolf Vostell (1932-1998) and Konrad Klapheck (b. 1935) were also

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357 This phrase makes an appearance in the film as an intertitle in between segments. Jean-Luc Godard, dir., **Masculin-feminin** (Anoushka/Argos films, 1966).

358 It should be noted that according to Valerie Hilling, Curator at the Guggenheim Museum, Otto Piene specified that “Zero” should coincide with the German group and “ZERO” should be linked to the larger international network of artists working in this tradition, including Lucio Fontana, Piero Manzoni, Yves Klein, Yayoi Kusama, among many others. See Valerie Hillings, ed., **ZERO: Countdown to Tomorrow, 1950s-60s**, exh. cat. (New York: Guggenheim Museum Publications, 2014).
active in this period in Düsseldorf. After two years at the École Nationale Superieur des Beaux-Arts in Paris, Vostell had absorbed tenets of both Dada and Surrealism and created his first Dé-coll/age in 1954. These works, including those previously discussed in the introduction (figs. 3-4), operated as juxtapositions of decontextualized objects “marked by life” reprocessed to resemble assemblage. Vostell attended the Düsseldorf Art Academy briefly before co-founding Fluxus, a group of artists who enacted Happenings across West Germany and France in late-1950s and early-1960s.\textsuperscript{359} In June 1962, “Neo-Dada in Music” was held at the Kammerspiele Düsseldorf and featured performances by Wolf Vostell, Nam June Paik, Benjamin Patterson and others; Richter, Lueg, and Polke were all in attendance and recall the novelty of discovering such a fresh perspective on artmaking. Richter remembers connecting to Fluxus’ surprising cynicism, feeling it gave him permission to exercise that through his own work.\textsuperscript{360} Fluxus offered Richter and the others a new sense of skepticism with regards to artistic and economic institutions, eventually developing into Living with Pop. Given its state, divided Berlin was unable to foster a

\textsuperscript{359} From 1958-1959, Vostell had been working on an “environment” entitled Das schwarze Zimmer (The Black Room), featuring three sculptural assemblages (Auschwitz-Floodlight 568, Treblinka, and German View) dealing with Germany’s postwar amnesia. The same year as Adolf Eichmann’s Argentine capture and his globally-televised war crimes trial in Jerusalem, Vostell served as the layout chief for popular illustrated magazine Neue Illustrierte, where his daily responsibilities included exposure to and sorting through hundreds of photographic press images dealing with current events. This was the first contact he had with images of mass murder, torture, starvation at Nazi concentration camps, which were not yet being published in Germany. From a conversation with the artist in 1997, Eckhard Gillen notes from a conversation with the artist that “this experience changed his art lastingly – and his philosophy of life.” Das schwarze Zimmer included a cover image from Der Spiegel, featuring a Roman Catholic clergyman, and unidentified newspaper clippings discussing the Soviet Army and the East German police’s military branch. Das schwarze Zimmer also marks the first time Vostell included a functional television into his work, allowing the black and white snow of an idle set and its subsequent white noise to enter the space of the viewer. The three-part work was shown for the first time at architect Rolf Jährling’s Galerie Parnass in Wuppertal in 1963 and included a bus tour led by Vostell to view 9 DÉCOLLAGES implanted throughout the city’s urban fabric.

\textsuperscript{360} Robert Storr, Forty Years of Painting, 47.
vibrant international art community; its problematic role was frequently acknowledged in art publications contemporary to the 1960s. Heinz Ohff, a well-regarded, Berlin-based art critic, publicly grappled with the city’s provincial status as early as 1964. In his 1968 book, *Pop und die Folgen: oder, Die Kunst, Kunst auf der Strasse zu finden* (*Pop and its Success: Or, Art of the Street*), Ohff wrote, “Why does everything happen in and around Düsseldorf?”361 This is a powerful charge for reassessment over twenty years after the war.

With Berlin nearly eighty-five percent razed by April 1945, the struggle to clear rubble, rebuild infrastructure, and secure reliable sources of food and shelter took precedence (fig. 269). Most citizens subsisted on a ration of 860 calories per day, only increasing to 1,800 by the end of 1946.362 Over five million homes—making up about forty percent of all German housing—had been either badly damaged or completely destroyed and public infrastructure laid in ruins. To add to the austerity, the winter months of 1946 proved particularly brutal, leaving many without heat; cinemas in the American zone became reliable havens for warmth. Simultaneously, Germany also experienced an influx of over twelve million war refugees, nearly three million of them homeless.363 Five million German men had died and many others had been taken as prisoners of war; those service men who returned were a minority, making up only one out of

361 Heinz Ohff, *Pop und die Folgen: Oder die Kunst auf der Strasse zu finden*, designed and illustrated by Wolf Vostell (Düsseldorf: Droste Verlag, 1968), 146. Original German text reads “Warum spielt sich alles in Düsseldorf und um Düsseldorf herum ab?”.
three born in 1918. A large number of women, commonly referred to as *Trümmerfrauen* (rubble women), assumed the responsibility of clearing Berlin and other cities of their immense debris (fig. 270). As demonstrated in the previous chapter, the bourgeois nuclear family had been greatly jeopardized by missing husbands and fathers, and everyday life existed in a state of paralysis.

At the turn of the century, Berlin was instrumental in the history of the film industry, both in production and practice: the 1912 establishment of Studio Babelsberg, home to lauded German filmmakers Fritz Lang, Ernst Lubitsch, and F.W. Murnau, and as discussed prior, it became Hollywood’s earliest and most threatening competitor. During the Weimar era, the city witnessed the perpetuation of German Expressionism and Berlin Dada, the birth of *Neue Sachlichkeit* (New Objectivity) as a critique of Expressionism, and the establishment of the Bauhaus School in nearby Dessau. Berlin was an attractive early twentieth-century cultural center, albeit one fraught with the reputation of unbound decadence. With severe inflation, the interwar period’s economic slump propagated mass unemployment, a deeply embedded sex-work network, the reputation for illegal substance abuse, and rampant organized crime. Hitler’s rise to power and his aggressive political reorganization lead to significant economic growth at the expense of slave labor and exploitation. This forced many of its leading cultural figures to flee before the magnification of the National Socialist Party’s extreme and violent policies.

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364 Tony Judt, *Postwar: A History of Europe since 1945* (New York: Penguin, 2005), chapters 1 and 3; especially 19, 21, and 82.

365 Nearly 75,000,000 m³ of rubble and debris was dispersed in Grünewald Forest, located deep in West Berlin. In later years, the rubble became completely overtaken by forest and is still unidentifiable to the naked eye.

366 Central to their political and ideological coup, the Nazi party purged Germany of communist and left-leaning artists and intellectuals, both symbolically with book burnings and the destruction of artwork, but also physically in labor, concentration, and extermination camps.
With the occupation of the city in 1945 and resulting surveillance by allied forces, infrastructure and reconstruction were first priority; the only market functioning was the black market, circulating imported goods including Chesterfield cigarettes and Coca-Cola from Allied military members (fig. 271).

The late-1940s and 1950s brought the economic miracle, during which West Germany experienced a period of soaring economic growth, employment, and positive external trade balance, with unprecedented speed. Amongst many advantageous outcomes, Germany effectively abolished the postwar black market and embraced a new, booming commercial marketplace. The idea of the economic miracle began to take on an almost mythic role: it provided a compact slogan and an imaginary currency to satisfy a postwar desire to regain autonomy. This rapid growth highlighted the leadership of future Chancellor Konrad Adenauer and his Minister of Economics (1949-1963) Ludwig Erhard. Erhard’s “social market economy” (Soziale Marktwirtschaft) model synthesized, first, an American model of capitalism and consumer society (Konsumgesellschaft) and second, social democracy. By 1960, the FRG accounted for seventeen percent of the GNP, a number that was considered quite high even during the prewar era. Although the United States was not so much concerned with the reversal

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367 In 1955, inflation began to increase, sending Germany into high-alert given their recent history of hyperinflation during the interwar period. Tightening and then scaling back on credit allowed the country to recover from a mild recession in 1958. By 1960, unemployment was below one percent. See Pete Mavrokorathos, Stan Stascinsky, Andrew Michael, “Germany: Twenty Years After The Union,” International Business & Economics Research Journal 9, no. 4 (April 2010): 113-124.


369 See Ludwig Erhard, Prosperity for All [Wohlstand für alle], trans., Thomas Dunlap (Düsseldorf: Econ-Verlag, 1957).
of the Republikflucht (‘fleeing the Republic’ [GDR])—the estimation that between 1945 and 1961, three and a half million Soviet Zone/GDR citizens (out of eighteen million) fled to the west—their central mission was to keep the FRG dedicated to its capitalist development.

Historian Paul Betts argues that many West Germans only conceived of the war’s end with the “revival of consumerism,” rather than the Nazi party’s surrender or Germany’s occupation and division.\(^{370}\) The cultural memory of West Germany’s transformation from Stunde null (‘Zero Hour’) to stability demonstrates the powerful impact of material goods and consumer desire, both of which were fueled by images.

For artists like Kuttner, Lueg, Polke, and Richter, a stable economy meant such quotidian changes as wider access to new materials, revitalized collectors, and eventually the West German art market’s restitution. The Rhineland—especially Cologne and Düsseldorf—was fecund with raw materials and became a center for industrial activity and economic stability.\(^{371}\) Given their proximity to resources and opportunities, as well as the bolstering of their prewar reputations for academic artistic excellence, Cologne and Düsseldorf were more quickly elevated as artistic centers. For Cologne, the 1967 foundation of Kölner Kunstmarkt (Art Cologne) by gallerists Hein Stünke and Rudolph Zwirner marked a pivotal moment of reinvigoration of the struggling West German contemporary art market. For Düsseldorf, regeneration was also the result of the

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\(^{371}\) Although Nordrhein-Westfalen and its surrounding area was originally within the boundaries of the British-military government sector, the city became part of the “Bizone” in 1947, giving both American and British military-governments equal jurisdiction. As the years progressed, American presence began to overshadow that of Great Britain, and as the conflict of the Cold War evolved, West Germany, in general, became a more critical American ally.
Kunstakademie’s long history of international prominence dating back to the mid-nineteenth century.\textsuperscript{372}

The Düsseldorf Art Academy was effectively the catalyst for early collaborations between Kuttner, Lueg, Polke, and Richter. Although beginning their studies under the tutelage of different professors, all four artists found themselves in Karl-Otto Götz’s course by February 1962. Despite garnering attention for his Informel paintings and monotypes (fig. 272), Götz’s pedagogical approach strayed from this tradition (and the Academy’s) given his interest in “information aesthetics.” Stimulated by the cognitive psychology of Donald Broadbent and mathematical/communication theory of Claude Shannon, Götz conducted information processing (Informationsverarbeitung) experiments in his courses from 1962-65.\textsuperscript{373} Hoping to understand how one processes visual information, Götz tasked around 300 of his students to reproduce images through drawing. Götz tested their “storage rates” (Speicherrate) and “channel capacity” (Kanalkapazität), collected to measure their speed and accuracy. Götz’s pedagogical method centered on training the artist to receive and filter information. Certainly, these exercises must have affected the artists’ practices; this is the same time that Richter begins collecting and analyzing the function of images, and then reproducing them through painting.

\textsuperscript{372} The Kunstakademie gained prominence under the direction of Wilhelm von Schadow. This period elevated the school to international recognition with such “plein-air” landscape painters as Karl Friedrich Lessing, Johann Wilhelm Schirmer, and Andreas Achenbach, whom were all considered as contributors to the Düsseldorf School of Painting. In the postwar era, Düsseldorf Art Academy boasted Professors Karl-Otto Götz (1959-1979), Joseph Beuys (1961-1973), Bernd Becher (1976-1996), and Nam June Paik (1979-1996), all of whom played a central role in the FRG’s artistic reification..

\textsuperscript{373} Michael Sanchez, “A Logistical Inversion: From Konrad Lueg to Konrad Fischer,” Grey Room 63 (Spring 2016): 9-10.
For the first time in August 1962, Kuttner and Richter collaborated on an exhibition, “m. kuttner g. richter düsseldorf” in Fulda. Richter’s contributions included pieces of clothing hardened with glue and affixed to the wall. Although Joseph Beuys had begun his appointment in Monumental Sculpture at the Düsseldorf Academy the year prior, Richter was not enrolled in coursework with him. On his glue objects, Richter writes, “Among other things (i.e. paintings), I also installed some prepared pieces of clothing (a dress, a shirt, a blouse) on the gallery walls. That of course went too far. When in fact such a striped lacquered shirt is really a perfect work of art, one cannot paint it any better than that.” For Richter, the lacquered shirt epitomizes a perfect work by the very fact that it is not reproduced and no longer functions as representation. It is the actual object: a shirt. The supplementary act of painting it with glue or lacquer—restricting its tactile qualities and relegating it to the wall—situates the shirt aesthetically and physically closer to a painting. Richter views this proximity as problematic to representational painting because despite all efforts, a painting of a shirt will never be as “perfect” as or truthful as the shirt itself. To exhibit the object as a painting is to override the challenges of representation; this solution was not compelling to Richter. He is driven by the act of reproducing the garment or folding dryer, especially the act of reproducing the *reproduced image* (photograph, advertisement) of the object. The manifestation of perfection is not Richter’s goal,

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374 It seems Beuys and Richter met in 1962 according to a chronology provided in Obrist’s compilation of Richter’s early writings; however, he makes no specific mention of Beuys in his letters or journals until 1972. Beuys can be seen in photographs of the Kaiserstr. 31A *Sonderausstellung* (Special Exhibition)and later contributed one work to *Living with Pop*. See Gerhard Richter, “Exhibition Report,” reproduced in *Pop-Art: Eine kritische Information*, ed., Rolf-Gunter Dienst (Wiesbaden: Limes Verlag, 1965).

375 Storr, *Forty Years of Painting*, 53.
but Fulda exhibition marks a pivot in the artist’s consideration of objects and their reproduced images.

In 1963, Kuttner shared his January issue of *Art International* with the others, introducing American Pop art through the lens of Barbara Rose’s article, “Dada Then and Now.” Although the artists’ varied levels of English fluency is unclear, Rose’s article addresses “New Dada,” or the wave of art-making in the United States associated with such artists as Robert Rauschenberg, Claes Oldenburg, Jim Dine, Allan Kaprow, among others. No longer fearing the “tyranny of the masterpiece” or the threat of the machine, these artists dedicated themselves to the image, what Rose defines as “the recognizable object as we encounter it in everyday experience;” it embodies a recreation of the object or simply the use of the everyday materials: furniture, utensils, rubbish, food, chicken wire, plaster. Furthermore, Rose argues that for these works, “the contemporary” is achieved through the use of newspaper clippings, postmarks, advertisements.

Rose maintains that Neo- or New American Dada artists recreate superior versions of these objects to avoid alienation or shock from their audience, as was common with the old vanguard of European Dada. Rose provides a provocative explanation with regards to the movement’s cultural impetus:

> What they see in America, its glitter, its vulgarity, its carnival-like excitement and constantly changing face. By transforming the commonplace and the ordinary into the poetic or the arresting, they force us to look freshly, to correct our corrupted vision...By investing the trivial with importance, it mirrors our dislocated sense of values.\(^{378}\)

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\(^{377}\) Ibid., 25.

\(^{378}\) Ibid., 28.
In other words, through the isolation and elevation of the banal and the trivial, these artists are able to attain a certain level of cultural dissociation. The dislocation Rose proposes is directly related to what she views as the artists’ antagonism towards the bourgeoisie, even symbolizing the art market itself. As such, it is this antipathy that unites old and new Dada; it is the reification of banal consumer products that constitutes it as a cultural analgesic, or in Rose’s words embody, “the altarpieces of our religion.”

Of the many terms featured in Rose’s article, including: Socialist Realism, Neo Dada, Junk Culture, Antikunst, Nouveau-Realisme, and Imperialist Realism, Capitalist Realism is notably absent. When Kuttner, Lueg, Polke and Richter coined the term, they were fully aware of its clear references to the Socialist Realist tradition. Leading up to 1962, Richter especially, had been working between two painterly traditions: Socialist Realism and the Informel-style abstraction of such artists as Jean Dubuffet and Alberto Burri (fig. 273). At the prestigious Dresden Höchschule für Bildende Künste (Dresden Art Academy), Richter had first been trained as a mural painter; the only remaining photographic documentation of his Socialist Realist work is of the “Public Health” and Lebensfreude (Joy of Life) murals painted at the Deutsches Hygiene-Museum in 1956, which have since been painted over (figs. 274-275). As the dominant artistic style in the Eastern Bloc, Socialist Realism—as examined previously with regards to photography—glorified the ideals of collectivity and the emancipation of the proletariat. The

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Ibid., 27.


Walter Ulbricht was a loyal follower of Joseph Stalin and therefore implemented Socialist Realism in the GDR immediately. Stalin had dismantled independent artistic groups in the early-1930s and in 1934 classified Socialist Realism as the official Soviet painting style.
style was intended to both detract from the impenetrable and elitist abstraction of figures like Kazimir Malevich, and also communicate with ease and simplicity to the USSR’s illiterate civilians. Isaak I. Brodsky’s portrait *Lenin on a Rostrum* (1927, fig. 276) is a paradigm of this artistic style; the viewer’s vantage point is from below, elevating Lenin’s notoriety and omnipotence as he confidently addresses an unseen crowd. A photograph of the same scene by Pyotr Otsup is reproduced in *On the Happiness of Man* in 1967 (fig. 277), reiterating the image’s cultural weight decades into the future. The low vantage point is also reproduced in the extended scene of industrial production in *Berlin – Ecke Schönhauser*. The buildings loom over the laborers, communicating a sense of significance and superiority. Kuttner, Polke, and Richter—having all immigrated from the East—were profoundly unsatisfied with Socialist Realism given its bold ideological claims. For them, it depicted scenes of everyday life that were either limited or inconsistent with their own realities. After burning the *Informel* paintings he created in Dusseldorf, Richter sought a “Third Way” between socialism and capitalism.\(^{382}\) By implementing Capitalist Realism, the artists could mutually critique the opposing ideological positions, both emphasizing their new West German political landscape and poking fun at the art world’s obsession with artistic categorization.

\(^{382}\) Jan Thorn-Prikker, “Gerhard Richter im Gespräch mit Jan Thorn-Prikker,” in *Gerhard Richter: im Albertinum Dresden / Galerie Neue Meister* (Cologne: Walther König, 2004), 79. Not to be discounted, Richter begins his own catalog raisonée in 1962 with *Tisch* (Table), a painting of a white table, the subject of which was culled directly from a photograph in Italian architecture magazine, *Domus*. Often misidentified as paint, Richter used solvent to “erase” the surface pigment already in place. Richter had simultaneously been rehearsing this technique directly onto the surface of *Domus*’s pages. John J. Curley argues that *Tisch* exemplifies Richter’s desired “Third Way,” even linking *Tisch* to the German suffix, “-istisch.” This begins to collapse distinctions between descriptors “sozialistisch,” “kapitalistisch,” “realistisch,” and “formalistisch”. He characterizes it as “all and none of those labels.” For a more detailed discussion on this conservation finding, see Curley, “Gerhard Richter’s Cold War Vision,” 34fn24; for more a more detailed reading of *Tisch*, see ibid., 19.
Rose’s article also includes photographic reproductions from Sidney Janis Gallery’s November 1962 *New Realists* exhibition, including George Segal’s *The Dinner Table* installation (1962, fig. 278), Roy Lichtenstein’s *Woman Cleaning* (known later as *The Refrigerator*, 1962, fig. 279), Tom Wesselmann’s *Great American Nude, No. 39* (1962, fig. 280), and James Rosenquist’s *The lines were etched deeply in her face* (1962, fig. 281). According to both the artists and the historiography, these are the first images of American Pop encountered by them. Furthermore, their first experience with American Pop was not only mediated through photographic reproduction, but also through the additional mediation of the illustrated magazine, as was true with Richter’s early experiences with Abstract Expressionism. Although Richter had already been experimenting with painterly devices now associated with Pop, the reproduced Janis photographs remain the origin story for so-called German Pop art. The discontinuity of the commonly-accepted order of events requires a reconsideration of Capitalist Realism through the lens of West Germany’s economic, social, and political histories.

Prior to arriving in Düsseldorf, Richter had crossed the border into West Germany a handful of times to see movies and exhibitions. On one such trip, Richter visited *documenta II* (1959) for four days, narrating his experience in multiple letters to his artist-friends Helmut and

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383 Even throughout the emotionally-tricky weeklong bureaucratic hold at the Giessen transit camp, Richter revels in the possibilities that come with a new beginning. He writes the Heinzes about escaping to the cinema to alleviate his “despair,” where he viewed *Trial Marriage* (1929) [there is a possibility that this was actually Michelangelo Antonioni’s *L’avventura* (1960) or Philippe de Broca’s *Les Jeux de l’amour* (1960)], admitting that he was impressed to the point of desiring a second screening. Frequently, the focal point of Richter’s letters is his frequent visits to the cinema and regular television habit. This consistent exposure to and interest in lens-based media images, eventually begins to seep into his painting and collaborative practices. Gerhard Richter, “Letter to Helmut and Erika Heinze, 15 April 1961,” in *Gerhard Richter: Images of an Era*, eds., Ortrud Westheider, Michael Philipp, and Uwe M. Schneede (Munich: Hirmer Publishers, 2011), 40; Buchloh, *Images of an Era*, 40fn12.
Erika Heinze, and Wieland Förster. Curiously, Richter’s letter to Helmut does not begin with an enthusiastic retelling of influential or shocking art on view—a powerful experience which, according to Richter, might have contributed to a desire to leave the GDR in the first place—but rather, with a facetious, highly detailed account of the interiors of the on-site restaurant and Museum Fridericianum, visitors’ clothing, and fictionalized characters. Richter illustrates a particularly grotesque scene: “the older ladies with gigantic asses explain[ing] everything on display by the fact that the war was lost…wolffing down the whipped cream cakes, tears come to their eyes…” and even comments upon the effect of police presence in the galleries:

…even the youth stands still in front of the still paintings—they would even stand to attention if one were to declare publically the degree to which these works of art relate to German Nazi Fascism and American capitalism. Emotional empathy is dictated, those who dictate it have money and amass more money. Grohmann is a grand-style arms dealer. Until now he shot using a silencer—that of course had to be changed.

Disturbed by the both antithetical and simultaneous excess and emptiness he perceives, Richter’s initial reading of West Germany, through the lens of documenta, is one of disgust. The artist conflates fascism and capitalism and by way of metaphor, condemns the injustice of the art world system. Through facetious analogy, Richter implies that Will Grohmann—prewar Modernist critic, historian, and founding committee member for documenta—provides the


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384 Richter first met Erika in the early-1950s because she lived in the Dresden home of Richter’s future parents-in-law. While Richter attended the Dresden Academy of Fine Arts, he developed a friendship with Helmut, who was enrolled in the sculpture program from 1950 to 1957. Wieland Förster was also a student in the sculpture program from 1953 to 1958, but eventually moved to East Berlin. For further information and English translations of these letters (1959-1964), see Uwe M. Schneede, Gerhard Richter: Images of an Era exh. cat., (London: Heni Publishing; New York; Paris: Marian Goodman Gallery, 2011).

385 “The sheer brazenness of it! That really fascinated me and impressed me. I might almost say that those paintings were the real reason why I left the GDR.” Gerhard Richter, “Interview with Benjamin H.D. Buchloh, 1986,” in The Daily Practice of Painting, 163.

ammunition to maintain the system’s inequalities, within which wealth serves as an edict for success. Following this visit, Richter stayed in Dresden for nearly two years, finally deciding to flee to the FRG just four months before the Berlin Wall was constructed and sealed the countries’ borders for forty years. Upon meeting Kuttner, Lueg, and Polke, new confrontations with life in the West and the superficiality of mass consumerism began to surface. This influenced a series of demonstrations prodding the limits of capitalism and representation.

3.4 Illusions of Abundance? Demonstrating the Economic Miracle

On March 30, 1963, after driving the city streets in Lueg’s black Peugeot, Lueg and Richter selected a space for their first joint exhibition: a butcher shop awaiting demolition on Kaiserstraße. At this time, neither Lueg nor Richter were aware of Andy Warhol’s April 1961 exhibition Bonwit Teller (fig. 282) or Claes Oldenburg’s The Store (1961, fig. 283), both of which took place in store display windows. By May, the artists circulated square invitations

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387 Richter did not return to Dresden for twenty-five years.
388 The artists drafted a letter to city administration to facilitate the rental of the abandoned storefront, noting the participation of “four painters and graphic artists from Group 63 for 8 days,” which would exhibit the new figurative art movement happening in Düsseldorf. The city subsequently approved the rental from 4-18 May 1963 for a fee of 40DM. Consistent with his developing aversion to stylistic and ideological categorization, Richter insisted on eliminating the “Group 63” moniker before submission. See Günter Herzog, “...ganz am Anfang / How it all began,” sediment: Mitteilungen Zur Geschichte Des Kunsthandel 7 (2004): 36; see also Thomas Kellein, “Life with Pop,” in Ich nenne mich als Maler Konrad Lueg / When I paint my name is Konrad Lueg (Bielefeld: Kunsthalle Bielefeld; Düsseldorf: Sammlung Fischer, 1999), 16.
389 Ibid., 21. It should also be noted that Düsseldorf gallerist Alfred Schmela made his first trip to New York City in September 1963 for three weeks (hence why he was unable to attend the Demonstration that October), during which he met Leo Castelli and purchased the first work of American Pop to enter West Germany: Roy Lichtenstein’s Two Faces. Schmela subsequently organized the first exhibition of George Segal’s work in West Germany, after which David Zwirner and Rolf Ricke began collecting American Pop art. See Catherine Dossin, “Pop begeistert: American Pop Art and the German People,” American Art, Vol. 25, No. 3 (Fall 2011), 173.
adorned with single illustrated magazine clippings, to announce a *Sonderausstellung* (Special Exhibition, fig. 284). Circling around the image in dizzying display are terms that include “Imperialistischer Realismus,” “Antikunst,” and “New Vulgarismus” posed as questions for the recipient. Although “Capitalist Realism” is not found in the selection, Lueg and Richter would cleverly adopt it for the title of their next exhibition.\(^\text{390}\)

In a letter to *Fox-Tönende-Wochenschau* (Fox Movietone News), Richter, on behalf of the group, clarifies,

> Pop Art is not an American invention, and we do not regard it as an import—though the concepts and terms were mostly coined in America and caught on more rapidly there than here in Germany…This art is pursuing its own organic and autonomous growth in this country; the analogy with American Pop Art stems from these well-defined psychological, cultural, and economic factors that are the same here as they are in America…\(^\text{391}\)

This proclamation reveals two critical points: the first being Richter’s insistence that Pop does not necessitate cultural boundaries or difference, and the second being their lack of recognition—arguably awareness—of the Independent Group. British art critic Lawrence Alloway had coined “pop art” in 1954, a term that would later reference the photography-specific source materials—and their oft mass-produced referents—directly quoted what is now understood as Pop art. Although such Independent Group artists as Richard Hamilton and Eduardo Paolozzi would not associate this term with their work until the 1960s, it seems plausible that Richter would have discovered Pop chronologically: first, through new developments in Great Britain and second,

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390 The moniker was never meant as a group identifier and the artists now associated with Capitalist Realism did not use this term to describe their work themselves. Art dealer and gallerist René Block famously imbricated the name for his 1964 exhibition in West Berlin, which included Berlin-based artists K.P. Brehmer and K.H. Hödicke.

391 Herzog, “…ganz am Anfang / How it all began,” 36.
through its American counterpart. No mention of the Independent Group through travels, exhibitions, discussions of coursework or personal reading appear in Richter’s personal writing or the larger body of literature on the artist. Shortly before *Sonderausstellung*, Lueg and Richter traveled to Paris where they met with Ileana Sonnabend at her newly established gallery and first saw paintings by Lichtenstein in person. Although the artists considered mounting *Sonderausstellung* as an exhibition of Lichtenstein reproductions painted by them, the exhibition took a different course.\footnote{Michael Sanchez, “A Logistical Inversion: From Konrad Lueg to Konrad Fischer,” *Grey Room* 63 (Spring 2016): 9.}

Each of the four artists contributed one work in the shop window: Kuttner’s *Heiligen Stuhl* (Holy Seat, 1963, fig. 285), Lueg’s *OWO-Paket* (OWO Packet, 1963), Polke’s *Massenmedia* (Mass Media, 1963), and Richter’s *Objekt zweier Puppen im Raumen* (Object of Two Puppets in Space, 1963, none of which were for sale (collectively pictured, fig. 286). Lueg displayed, *OWO-Paket*, a box of Omo laundry soap powder atop Kuttner’s levitating neon red chair, titled and inscribed with “Heiliger Stuhl” (Holy Seat). With this detail, Lueg elevates the status of the commodity from the banal to the divine, inscribing it with a kind of power within a hierarchical relationship.\footnote{Sanchez argues that Lueg’s alteration from ‘M’ to ‘W’ symbolizes the transition from Mann (man) to Weib (woman), an apparent reference to the artist’s name change: Fischer (paternal) to Lueg (maternal).} Omo reappears in Lueg’s painting, *Der OMO-Vertreter* (The OMO Rep, 1963, fig. 287), depicting a suited salesman, whose face is concealed by a large, logo-less detergent box, identifiable as Omo by its swirled background design (fig. 288). Subjugated by the faceless detergent box, the salesman is rendered obsolete; the commodity literally supersedes his identity and his role, again displaying an imbalanced power dynamic between consumption
and identity. Perhaps appearing as merely a mundane household object, laundry detergent had attracted the attention of cultural critics like Roland Barthes, as early as 1957. He argued that detergents, naming Omo and Persil specifically, epitomize the powerful latch of consumer trends and society’s oft inability to identify their catalysts. Condemning advertising and its surreptitious implication of the consumer, Barthes discusses ‘Persil Whiteness’: the idea that detergent represents a social concern for appearances, but also cleanliness, purity, and even innocence. \(^{394}\)

Under American occupation, *Persilschein*,\(^{395}\) or “Persil clean,” doubled as a colloquial expression referencing de-Nazification certificates given to Germans by the US military to confirm the ‘cleanliness’ of their political past (fig. 289); it also serves as an obvious reference to the purification of racial bloodlines so vital to Nazism’s racial ideology, dissonantly resonating in Persil’s slogan, “Persil: Nothing cleans better—nothing washes whiter!” (fig. 290).

Polke’s contribution, *Massenmedia*, consisted of a bound stack of glossy illustrated magazines hung from a hook. Sharing a likeness to a butchered animal carcass suspended inside a meat locker invokes mass-production (consumer products, the ubiquitous image as it relates to mass-produced media), Polke violently strips the periodicals full of advertisements of its identity and individuality. The remainder of the exhibition included four photo paintings by Richter: *Party* (1962, fig. 291), *Tote* (Dead, 1963, fig. 292), *Erschießung* (Shooting/Execution, 1962, fig. 293), and *Eisläuferin* (Skater, 1962, fig. 294), the latter two he would later destroy. Each

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\(^{395}\) The term *Persilschein* originates within the German military and referred to their conscription cards. Upon arriving to training and receiving their uniforms, recruits would often use an empty box of Persil to send their civilian clothing back home.
painting contends with images pulled directly from illustrated magazines, both advertisements and editorials. *Party* depicts a group of five formally dressed party-goers, imbibing and laughing as they pose for a photograph. Rendered primarily in black and white paint, Richter marks the media image with a proliferation of garish stitches, blood-like pigment, and actual incisions into the canvas. The central male subject’s mouth, agape with a grin, gushes bright, crimson blood into his punch glass. The intended cheerful aesthetic of the advertisement thus mutates into a much more nefarious and sinister display; Richter’s physical mutilation of this constructed pleasure, exposes the subtext of consumer seduction as a rot objective. In fact, the remaining three paintings exhibited by Richter depict gore, confront death, and even reference such historical specificities as Nazi-mandated executions by firing squad. Unidentified works by Polke featuring illustrated magazine ads smeared with pigment were also integrated into the show (fig. 295). Each of the objects displayed at the former butcher shop approach the commodity image and mass-production differently: Kuttner and Lueg facetiously elevate, whereas Polke and Richter cynically violate. In a final gesture, the artists designated a recess in the floor—whether it was preexisting or not is uncertain—for exhibition visitors to use as an ashtray, literally rendering the storefront a meaningless receptacle for waste.³⁹⁶

Attracting press coverage on both regional and national platforms, *Sonderrausstellung* not only drew attention to the exhibited artists, but also proved to be indicative of a larger national need for artistic activity.³⁹⁷ A review in the *Neue Ruhr Zeitung* titled “These Are

³⁹⁷ Günter Herzog argues that this was likely due to the “artists’ good public relations work” for the exhibition. According to the guest book and *vernissage* photographs, those in attendance included artists Joseph Beuys, Gotthard Graubner, Heinz Mack, Chris Reinecke, and Günther Uecker. Richter, Polke, Lueg, and Kuttner had drawn an engaged art crowd for what is often
Artworks Too,” stated: “For some time now a shop window on Kaiser Street has literally blown its frame.”398 If one considers the shop window as representative of the product inside, the review argues that the commodity has blown its frame, or its constraints. The “frame” itself references the framed, saleable work of art; this is reiterated in the review’s title “These Are Artworks Too.” Thus, narrowing the gap between commodity and work of art only to have that comparison blown apart is for the exhibition to challenge the constraints of the commercial marketplace. As it turns out, Kaiserstr. 31A was situated across the street from Alfred Schmela’s popular Düsseldorf gallery, Galerie 22. Two weeks prior to the opening, Richter wrote the Neue Deutsche Wochenschau stating, “…no gallery, museum or public exhibiting body would have been a suitable venue”399 for Sonderausstellung. The entangling of commodity, artwork, and the space of the consumer returns with Lueg and Richter’s demonstration, Living with Pop: A Demonstration for Capitalist Realism.

That September, Lueg and Richter mailed invitations featuring the exhibition title, vernissage information, and a deflated green balloon with the text “Leben mit Pop bei Berges” (“Living with Pop at Berges,” fig. 296). Text below instructs recipients to “1. Blow it up! Regard the inscription! 2. Let it burst! Regard the sound!” suggesting an immediate, corporeal experience. On October 11, 1963, Living with Pop: A Demonstration for Capitalist Realism opened inside a Düsseldorf’s furniture store, Möbelhaus Berges. The demonstration featured a

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variety of works and actions by the artists; Lueg and Richter specify that “a number of exhibition concepts were rejected, and it was resolved to hold a demonstration” underscoring the denial of the traditional exhibition structure. Furthermore, the entire furniture store would be integrated with the demonstration, “exhibited without modification.” Visitors were instructed to sign a ledger and remember their assigned number. Passing manifold illustrated magazines strewn across the stairwell, visitors were left in a third floor waiting room and asked to demonstrate disciplined behavior. Fourteen Pomeranian roebuck antlers decorated the walls, visually anchored by thirty-nine chairs, each one topped with a copy of October 11th’s Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung (fig. 297). Life-size papier-mâché “guests of honor” Alfred Schmela, the renowned Düsseldorf art dealer and gallerist, and then-US President John F. Kennedy oversaw the demonstration (fig. 298).

In numerical order, visitors were summoned to “Room No. 1”, where Lueg and Richter, dressed in suits, relaxed on living furniture displayed atop white plinths, “like sculptures” (fig. 16). Complacent looks glazed over their faces as they sat motionless or read a detective novel; neither artist made any notable gestures or interacted with the approximately 122 visitors. A television broadcast the day’s news stories, followed by “The Adenauer Era,” a special commemoration of Chancellor Konrad Adenauer’s tenure and scheduled resignation. In the center of the room, an elevated table displayed coffee and cake (“Kaffee und Kuchen”),

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400 The report specifies that 81 living rooms, 72 bedrooms, kitchens, and nurseries would be utilized, all featuring paintings by the artists. In The Daily Practice of Painting, 20.
401 Lueg and Richter specify in the report that the roebuck deer were shot in Pomerania, between 1938 and 1942. Scholars have determined that they were shot by Richter’s father, who was originally from the historical Prussian region, which ceased to exist beginning in 1945. Ibid., 19.
402 Ibid., 20.
403 This would also become the title of a 1966 work by Lueg, in which visitors congregated at a long table to share coffee and cakes in celebration of gallerist Alfred Schmela. The German
utensils, beer, a bottle of schnapps, glasses, and other “odds and ends” (fig. 299). A tea trolley placed on the other side of the room (not documented), displayed a vase of flowers, the recently published memoirs of Winston Churchill, a cupboard, and homemaking magazine, Schöner Wohnen. At the request of the artists, Joseph Beuys’ “official costume,” including a hat, yellow shirt, blue trousers, socks and shoes hung on a wall. Attached to the clothing were nine slips of white paper each adorned with a single brown cross and sitting below, a cardboard box housed a container of Palmin (solidified coconut fat) and a pair of shoes. Filled with butter, the shoes are rendered unusable and reference a fattening of sorts, perhaps even the gluttony of consumer desire. Recorded advertisements and dance music vibrated over the loudspeaker and the fragrance of pine air-freshener wafted throughout the space. Eventually, the artists descended from the plinths to begin the “grand tour,” leading visitors through the space. Unfortunately, few images of the demonstration exist, leaving Reiner Ruthenbeck’s contact sheet as its most in-depth documentation (fig. 300). Although Lueg and Richter originally intended for spectators to cycle back around to the waiting room and begin the process anew, many visitors failed to abide by the proposed itinerary.

Berges’ remaining showrooms displayed the store’s extensive contemporary furniture inventory and amidst the “tightly packed alcoves, cubicles, rooms, stairs and passages,” Lueg and Richter had installed paintings in the bedroom and living room sections. Lueg exhibited Vier Finger (Four Fingers), Betende Hände (Praying Hands), Bockwürste auf Pappteller (Bockwursts

tradition of “Kaffee und Kuchen,” or Kaffeeklatsch consists of an afternoon coffee, a piece of cake, and stimulating conversation. Although the ritual’s origins are unknown, coffee arrived in Germany around 1675 and was considered a luxury beverage for nobility, due to its high cost. Today, there is no socio-economic status built into the tradition and it is enjoyed by family, friends, and coworkers alike.
on Paper Plate), and (Coathangers, fig. 17), all of which had been completed in 1963 (figs. 301-303). Richter’s contributions included *Mund* (Mouth, 1962, fig. 304), *Papst* (Pope, 1963, fig. 305), *Hirsch* (Deer, 1963, fig. 306), and *Schloss Neuschwanstein* (Neuschwanstein Castle, 1963, fig. 307). Despite some similarities with regard to subject matter, these paintings are neither translations nor imitations of American Pop; rather, they treat the commodity image as foreign, even alien. Lueg’s paintings illustrate the serialization of both animate and inanimate objects: hands, fingers, or sausages, perhaps referencing Wayne Thiebaud’s *Salad, Sandwiches & Desserts* (fig. 308), reproduced in Rose’s article.

Superficially, the paintings share food as subject matter, repetition, and an imagined endless extension of the objects beyond the picture plane; however, Lueg’s popular Bavarian sausages appear flat and inedible, as abstracted, two-dimensional forms. Furthermore, *Four Fingers* displays little realistic anthropomorphic reference, given the vibrant and ostentatious primary colors interwoven into the abstracted pattern. Similarly, Richter’s *Mouth*—modeled on a magazine image of film star Brigitte Bardot—is dismal and barely legible: a muddled and dizzying void. When placed in conversation with Roy Lichtenstein’s *The Refrigerator*—the mythologized impetus for Pop aesthetics in Germany—the two paintings share almost nothing in common. Lichtenstein’s rendering of an enthusiastic, but oddly vacuous housewife cleaning a refrigerator is flat, graphic, and mechanical. Whereas Richter’s visible, even manic circuitous brushstrokes and close compositional cropping is a reminder of the artist’s intervention. *Living with Pop* acknowledges underlying parallels in cultural and political stimuli that were contemporaneously shaping responses to mass media and the commodity image.

From 1961 to 1963, West Germany experienced intensely turbulent politics, engendering a great deal of change alongside mounting activist voices. Clandestinely assembled under the
cover of night on August 13, 1961, the Berlin Wall served as an unyielding physical and spatial reminder of division and conflict; the sixteen-hour military stand-off between American and Soviet tanks at Checkpoint Charlie pushed world powers to the brink of another World War; and intensifying riots across the FRG which led to hundreds of injuries and arrests. According to the artists’ report prepared on September 12th, Lueg and Richter had chosen October 11th for the demonstration weeks prior to the event. Art historian Stephan Stsembski posits such inclusions as the papier-mâché figurines were merely a result of the artists’ recent experience constructing carnival floats in Düsseldorf; however, the heavy-handed collection of time-sensitive material (newspapers, a television broadcast, references to allied leaders Churchill and JFK) speaks to a desire for historically and politically-charged specificity. A year earlier, controversy surrounded Adenauer after he supported Minister of Defense, Franz Josef Strauss, in the accusation of Der Spiegel editors for espionage and high treason. Editor-in-chief Rudolf Augstein and four other journalists were arrested, leading to mass protests in West Germany and ultimately Adenauer’s political demise. President Kennedy had just visited West Berlin on 26 June 1963 (figs. 97 and 128), during which he delivered a memorable speech regarding Germany’s division, the immorality of communism, and the United States’ unfailing solidarity with the FRG, especially the divided city: “Ich bin ein Berliner.” With the geopolitical (and physical) backdrop of the Berlin Wall, the speech drew hundreds-of-thousands of supporters under a scorching summer

404 In October 1962 Der Spiegel published an article detailing possible weaknesses of the FRG’s defense forces in the face of military aggression. The Defense Ministry considered the published information state secrets and accused the magazine of espionage and high treason leading to the arrest of Editor-in-chief Rudolf Augstein and four other journalists. Mass protests broke throughout the West Germany, resulting in Adenauer’s loss of party support and his replacement by Ludwig Erhard, Adenauer’s former economic Minister.
sun and reached many more through Radio in the American Sector (RIAS, \textit{Rundfunk im amerikanischen Sektor}) and television broadcast.\footnote{Although RIAS ("a free voice of the free world") was founded to provide West Germany with news, commentary, and cultural programming, its transmitters allowed for accessibility in East Germany. RIAS built a large audience in the GDR, discreetly geared programming toward such listeners, and added a new transmitter in Bavaria (FRG) to improve reception in southern areas of East Germany. Later, RIAS television would detract listeners away from radio, but it maintained a powerful reach within the GDR. RIAS followed in the tradition of Voice of America and Radio Free Europe. For a more detailed histories of RIAS see Nicholas J. Schlosser, "Creating an ‘Atmosphere of Objectivity’: Radio in the American Sector, Objectivity and the United States Propaganda Campaign against the German Democratic Republic, 1945-1961,” \textit{German History} 29, no. 4 (2011): 610-627 and Axel Schildt, “Hegemon der hauslichen freizeit: Rundfunk in den 50er Jahren,” in \textit{Modernisierung und Wiederaufbau: Die westdeutsche Gesellschaft der 50er Jahre}, ed. Axel Schildt and Arnold Sywottek (Bonn: Dietz, 1998).}

For Kuttner, Lueg, Polke, and Richter, the retail space served as a social sphere to exercise political rhetoric on the Adenauer period and its economic transformation, as well as to look critically at consumption as a method of historical dissociation. Dieter Kunzelmann’s German branch of the Situationist International, \textit{Subversive Aktion}, agendized storming department stores and distributing goods as \textit{détournement} to combat growing alienation of capitalism and mass consumerism. In the late-1960s, German Student Movement leader Rudi Dutschke organized Berlin “go-ins” concentrating on department stores as sites for guerilla protesting and political agitation. Already in 1956, Adorno addressed audiences at Hanau’s Historical Society of the US Army’s Third Armored Division, Cologne’s Amerika Haus, and various universities on German and American culture and their vast differences. East Germany had already categorized American culture as \textit{Unkultur}, stripping it of any power or value. With American military escalation in Korea and Southeast Asia, the United States’ role in molding capitalist West Germany and encouraging mass consumerism was under heavy scrutiny.
Social critics linked to the Frankfurt School, including Adorno and Marcuse believed the temptation to consume was fueled by the dangerous and relentless “soft force” of desire. Termed “consumption/consumer terrorism” (*Konsumterror*), they theorized that the inescapable ubiquity of commodities transformed into modes of satisfaction. Marcuse’s *One-Dimensional Man* (1964) criticizes consumerism as a form of social control, focusing on the detrimental effects of consumption. Members of the German Student Movement identified closely with Marcuse’s theory that the removal of autonomy results in an authoritarian “unfreedom,” causing citizens to believe individual happiness and social connection could be purchased. Marcuse argues that through “sublation” (*Aufbehung*), classical bourgeois art fails to recognize the realities of labor and economic competition by using beauty as a distraction. During “American Week,” a May 1967 Brussels department store campaign highlighting products made in the USA (similar to this one at Koma in West Berlin, fig. 309), a devastating fire broke out leaving 300 dead. Two days later, Berlin activist group Kommune I distributed fliers on the Free University’s campus calling the fire a “mass happening,” denouncing Americans for intensifying bomb campaigns in Southeast Asia, asking provocatively, “When will the department stores in Berlin be on

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406 Helmut Schelsky, *Schule und Erziehung in der Industriellen Gesellschaft* (Würzburg: Werkbund Verlag, 1957), 72. The origins of the word *Konsumterror* are unclear; however, it was quickly adopted by RAF and other leftist groups in the late-1960s and throughout the 1970s. See also Robert G. Moeller, *West Germany under Construction: Politics, Society, and Culture in the Adenauer Era* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1997).


408 The fire broke out at A l’Innovation department store. On April 3, 1968, RAF alerted the German Press Agency that a political act involving fire would break out at Frankfurt’s Kaufhof. That evening a fire broke out at Kaufhof, damaging several hundred-thousand DMs worth of merchandise and displays, but causing no casualties or injuries. Gudrun Ensslin, Andreas Baader, and two others were sentenced to three years in prison, beginning October 31, 1968.
Marcuse’s theory was later adopted by leftist extremist and Red Army Faction (*Rote Armee Fraction*) leader, Andreas Baader. Under his leadership, the concept of *Konsumterror* swelled into a series of RAF terrorist acts and attempted assassinations across Germany, including a fire at a Frankfurt department store (fig. 311).

At *Living with Pop*, the artists intended for visitors to become trapped in an endless loop of the same tour, becoming painfully aware of their role as consumers. This highly controlled, authoritative structure of the demonstration aligns with the *tableau vivant* in *Better Life*, where visitors were meant to identify with the underlying American narrative of consumption as reconciliation. Displayed in repetition on the Möbelhaus Berges’ façade marquee, the tagline, “Schoener wohnen durch Berges” (“Better living with Berges,” fig. 221), promises higher quality of life through material satisfaction. Richter quickly tired of the consumer-driven landscape of the West, writing in 1962, “I did not come here to get away from ‘materialism’: here its dominance is far more total and more mindless.”

The idea that materialism, or material desire, is both dominant and mindless for Richter’s conception of the West speaks to his experience with the proliferation of advertising and ubiquity of images. Reproduced images in illustrated magazines and newspapers offered Richter and the others associated with Capitalist Realism a “mindless” methodology for processing their environment. This is the same type of therapeutic dissociation reminiscent of *Family of Man*, solidified by its overwhelming

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409 Martin Klimke, “‘We Are Not Going to Defend Ourselves Before Such a Justice System!,’” *German Law Journal* 10, No. 3 (2009), 265. See also Alexander Sedlmaier, *Consumption and Violence: Radical Protest in Cold-War West Germany* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2014).

photograph count and generalization of culture. The abundance of images and objects is only reiterated in Better Life, where visitors gaze upon the six thousand-object, American consumer dream home. Despite internal MSA documents warning officials of the common American stereotypes held by Europeans—“materialistic”, “gadget-conscious”, and preachy—Better Life still boasted an unrealistic vision for West German audiences. Richter’s opinion of the West’s overwhelming sensory overload and his—more or less--automatic processing of images parallels the psychological anchoring of advertising: to entice a consumer, deliver digestible information, and convince them of its necessity.

In West Germany, the “average living room” signified a larger reconciliation with the fragmented postwar-family, antidotal consumerist desires, and the politics of memory. Berges’ promise of “better living” indicates that the private, domestic space of the living room is a primary site for such change. In a conversation with Robert Storr about his early practice, Richter references Hannah Arendt’s well-known examination of Adolf Eichmann’s 1961 internationally televised trial, stating that: “there was nothing but crime and misery in those living rooms” (fig. 312) A literal reading of Richter’s claim—that the trial’s distressing

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412 Richter quoted in ibid., 110. See “Interview with Gerhard Richter” in Gerhard Richter: Forty Years of Painting, ed., Robert Storr (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 2002), 293-94. After hiding in Argentina since the end of the war, Nazi SS lieutenant colonel and chief operational officer of the Final Solution Adolf Eichmann, was captured by the Israeli Mossad and extradited to Jerusalem for trial. In Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil (1963), Arendt argues that Israeli Prime Minister David Ben-Guiron explicitly planned and orchestrated the trial to serve as a public spectacle: one which emphasized the victimization of the Jewish people over his specific crimes. Eichmann’s trial was the first postwar war crimes trial to be filmed and broadcast in its entirety; its emphasis and reliance upon extensive, emotionally strenuous witness and victim testimonies was nearly absent from the 1946 Nuremberg Trials. The trial’s enduring media image features Eichmann—whose normal, bureaucratic appearance clashed with the
witness testimonies were broadcast directly into so many homes—is not nearly as compelling as a more nuanced reading of the living room as a synecdoche for the broader, postwar West German climate. Arendt describes Eichmann’s baseness as concealed beneath his visible, bureaucratic skin, ultimately delineating the impossibility of moral certitude through surface readings. Berges’ banal fabrications of private domesticity extended consumers the possibility of withdrawal from the “crime and misery” shadowing the period. Echoing Arendt’s theory, Richter argues that what reads banal, can also be “horrible”; disjunctions between appearance and reality are not only possible, but also common. Thus, when placed in conversation with the antlers, schnapps, and pine-scent air freshener, Living with Pop harkened the Heimat, that reassuring nostalgic return to pastoral German landscapes and an untethered national heritage. In this sense, the living room operated as a site in which the stains of National Socialism were domesticated within the distraction and fantasy of prewar Germany. In Living with Pop, the living room is both fabricated and available for purchase by visitors, rendering it both an idealized Heimat and a distracting consumer display.

3.5 Capitalist Realism’s Shelf Life

As with the consumer goods fairs and self-service grocery store demonstrations, visually striking advertisements and images of consumer products lined the pages of Stern, Quick, Neue Illustrierte. Such consumer products as Omo detergent, Nesquik, and Kodak also appear in work at Kaiserstr. 31A and Berges, and later, references are made to chocolate, socks, Berliner

depravity of his crimes—contained within a bulletproof glass box, currently on display and in the Museum of Jewish Heritage’s collection.

413 Weiner, “Memory under Reconstruction,” 111.
(Bäckerblume), among many other advertising images (figs. 313-314). In April 1957, *magnum* dedicated the issue “The Society in which we Live” to society and consumerism, featuring essays by Jürgen Habermas and Karl Bednarik (fig. 315). Industrial designer Wilhelm Wagenfeld observes that consumer goods could now better infiltrate the society, serving as a “cultural mirror” (*Kulturspiegel*). Across two double-page spreads, the magazine asks “Welchen Preis sind wir bereit,…für die Freiheit zu zahlen?” (What price are we willing to pay for freedom?). The feature juxtaposes four unidentified photographs taken in the FRG with two taken in the GDR by Henri Cartier-Bresson and an unidentified photographer (figs. 316-317). On the first page readers see the chaos of a bustling department store spotted with special offer signs; then, German passersby unable to avert their gaze from the alluring displays of the latest fashions; and finally, a shopper’s head barely floating amidst shelves and shelves of canned foods. On the opposite page, viewers see a rather different narrative of the East: solemn crowds wandering directionless, blending into the bronze faces of a monumental socialist realist memorial; and distraught figures appearing isolated even amongst company. This issue, like many other issues, could have easily fallen into the hands of Richter, who cites covertly perusing issues of *magnum* in Dresden that were sent from his Aunt based in the FRG. Illustrated publications were instrumental to all four artists’ practices in the early-1960s, even clipped and collected by Richter for his *Atlas* (fig. 226).

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414 Jelly- or custard-filled donuts sold in Berlin; this word also forms the joke regarding JFK’s famous “Ich bin ein Berliner” speech; although, his grammar was correct.


Understanding the power of the advertisement, in conjunction with their own self-awareness and skill with public relations, the artists created and submitted a *Living with Pop* advertisement for the October 5th, 1963 issue of *Der Mittag* (figs. 318-319). The advertisement features only one image: a reproduction of an installation photograph taken at the Sidney Janis exhibition that had been appeared in Rose’s article. Foregrounded in the image are works including Claes Oldenburg’s *The Stove (Assorted Food on a Stove)* (1962, fig. 320), Wayne Thiebaud’s *Salads, Sandwiches & Desserts* (1962, fig. 308), and Enrico Baj’s *Style Furniture* (1961, fig. 321). Beneath the reproduced reproduction, a caption reads “This is roughly what the exhibition, ‘Living with Pop’ will be like.” Although *New Realists* provides a model for *Living with Pop*, Lueg and Richter contrast their strategy by announcing that none of the works on display will be for sale, unlike those exhibited by Sidney Janis. They explain that allowing their works to become commodities testifies to the idealistic nature of capitalist reality, wherein it is difficult to separate money from profit, once again grappling with the idea of a capitalist realism.

Bold text announces: “Herbstliche Visionen!” (“Autumnal Visions!”) advertising “fewer paintings than objects…disguised as manifestations of our time [and] stripped of their function,” assigning to them historical and cultural value. Readers learn that upon arrival, they will be directed to the office wing, where a decision is imminent: whether or not they want to “live with Pop.” The ability to make this decision signifies their recognition capitalism’s free choice; however, the ad continues, “…it should be pointed out that—whether you want to live with pop or not—you have to live with furniture anyway.” In other words, one has no choice but to contend with the commodity; its presence is permanent. Likewise, the title’s use of “leben” can

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417 Lueg and Richter, “Herbstliche Visionen!” *Der Mittag.*

189
be translated as both “living” and “life”, depending upon the syntactical structure. Lauren Elizabeth Hanson has suggested that the title could also intimate a more “instructional slant,” as in “How to Live with Pop.” The ad further suggests that the Berges visitor will have the opportunity to experience the interplay of all the store’s furniture items (lamps, rugs, décor, ceramics), ensuring the result will be beneficial to one’s “well-being” (Wohlbefinden). The direct correlation between commodity and health further solidifies the impression that the commodity acts in the same manner as an antidote: it heals, repairs, recovers.

Gallerist and art dealer René Block posits that the actions associated with Capitalist Realism were not meant to delineate an overtly critical perspective; however, this did not stop him from promoting his West Berlin gallery as a “moral institution” in direct association with the term. When the art dealer relocated to Berlin in 1963, he still viewed the city’s artistic community as relatively provincial (figs 322-323); even art critic Heinz Ohff recalls, “it was not surprising that people in Berlin found the ‘capitalist realists’ more interesting than the hollow imitators of Rauschenberg or Schwitters.” Block’s politics were not necessarily covert, as exemplified by his decision to establish his gallery in the decentered divided city. He was also forthcoming with his desire to provoke confrontations between German visitors and historical

419 The artists conclude their announcement by providing readers with “something favorable about capitalist reality” and homing in on exactly what makes an ad enticing: a special offer. For only 266 DM (around 159 USD) one could get a bed, nightstand, and an armoire with laundry attachment.
420 Heinz Ohff, “Poetry in contemporary German art,” Studio International (December 1964), 262.
truths within the gallery walls. Although the art dealer sometimes concedes that Capitalist Realism was merely a “brand,” there is no doubt that he understood the ideological stakes of the term and continued to codify “Capitalist Realism” for future exhibitions of the four artists’ work.

In 1964, Block first mounted a solo show for Richter entitled *Gerd Richter: Pictures of Capitalist Realism*, premiering on the heels of the artist’s budding international career; that spring, Kasper König organized an introduction with Munich gallerist and art dealer Heiner Friedrich, resulting in Richter’s first contract and largescale solo exhibition. What followed was a series of shows loosely associated with the term, essentially transforming Capitalist Realism into a platform for political galvanization. According to Block, Capitalist Realism was the “new antiacademic art,” spurring the art dealer’s pioneering of multiples, prints, and expanded market networks as a means of democratization. In 1968, Block published a portfolio edition called *Grafik des Kapitalistischen Realismus*, featuring work by Kuttner, Lueg, Polke, and Richter, as well as Berlin-based artist K.P. Brehmer and K.H. Hödicke (fig. 324). The book juxtaposed examples of Capitalist Realism and Socialist Realism (GDR and USSR) side-by-side, acknowledging the clear ideological division so present in the city. The visual reminder of the Cold War’s ideological binary was inescapable. Following a series of successful exhibitions and in the face of the growing and more pressing protest of the Vietnam War, Block abandoned Capitalist Realism in 1968. Only later did Block admit that his appropriation of the term was, in

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421 The dealer cites Wolf Vostell’s July 1964 performance *Nie wieder/never/jamais* at the Festival of New Art in Aachen as the impetus for his Berlin space and larger effort towards the “democratization of the market.” “‘A New Berlin is on the Line’: Lea Schleiffenbaum in Conversation with René Block” in *German Pop* (Frankfurt: Walther König, 2015), 238 and René Block, “Speculative Realism: An Interview with René Block,” *Artforum* (April 2014), 230.
422 Block points out that the four artists were not making use of the print, as a medium, for democratized distribution. Until 1968, Richter had made less than eight prints, Polke had made two, and Lueg had produced four. Block, “Speculative Realism,” 231.
part, due to its confrontations with division, which he recognized as explicitly pertinent to divided Berlin.  

Berlin’s division may have, ironically, provided Block a marketing scheme; however, the Wall’s purpose—implemented as an instrument of containment—was to obscure the visualization of Western democracy and capitalism from GDR citizens. Beyond operating as device of control, the wall also clarified ideological boundaries in the most straightforward way: a binary. The construction of images as diversions from social and political realities extended beyond the topless home in *We’re Building a Better Life* and the plinths on which Lueg and Richter idly sat. The discernible constructedness and solicitous realism of such *tableau vivants* almost seal the fissures of a postwar cultural reconstruction in Germany. What is at first diplomatic and (relatively) discreet support of economic stimulation, later cultivates an autonomous and sardonic response. At Berges, Lueg and Richter present spectators with “the official version” of the economic miracle (choice, luxury, desire), but also their subterranean reality (the commodity as both healing and autocratic, an artist’s entanglement with these capitalist systems).

On the occasion of JFK’s famous 1963 visit, multiple press images depict the President atop a raised viewing platform, peering over the Wall into East Berlin (fig. 32). The photographs show less of what actually is within the President’s purview and instead leave observers with their own imaginative faculties, to construct one’s own image of the other side. Regardless of ideological positioning, the photograph offers viewers no greater perspective and no clearer truth. The relatively veiled solicitation of American models through the Marshall

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Plan’s constructed images and demonstrations is, in a way, reprocessed and reclaimed through the concept of Capitalist Realism. Within the very symbols of the economic miracle—a butcher shop and furniture store—Kuttner, Lueg, Polke, and Richter demonstrate a sardonic resentment of the mass media’s manipulative advertising and address banality’s implicit ideological structures, as a powerful, institutional misdirection.
CONCLUSION

Shortly after the Allied takeover of Berlin in 1945, US Military officials scoured the city for visual symbols of National Socialism, seeking to destroy them in acts of iconoclasm. One of the most compelling examples of Nazi symbology in Berlin was W. Lemke’s fourteen-foot iron cast Reichsadler (Imperial Eagle) clutching a swastika in its talons, governing high above Tempelhof Airport’s main terminal. Now under American jurisdiction, US military officials began altering its appearance by placing a shield painted with the American stars and stripes over the prominent swastika (fig. 326). In addition, officials painted the head of the eagle with white pigment, resulting in a visual transformation of the Reichsadler into the American bald eagle (fig. 327). Acts of cultural reprocessing, exemplified here with the eagle, have been central to the discussion of cultural renewal and identity construction throughout this dissertation. The complexities of transcultural reception are vast; however, through a cross-media approach, a clearer image of how the US employed cultural tactics for ideological messaging and the diverse ways in which German communities evaluated, embraced, exploited, altered, and rescinded these images. What emerges is a much greater and more complex sense of German agency amidst occupation and division, competing political and economic interests, and massive reconstruction.

These cultural initiatives, defined by their presentation of “American ways of life,” were undoubtedly propagandistic in their mission to oppose communism and promote the ideals of a democratic government and capitalist society. As demonstrated by the immense stagecraft of
How to Build a Better Life and theatrical self-service supermarket installations, the United States’ political goals in the postwar milieu spread far beyond territorial conflicts. The city’s division provided the government sundry creative opportunities to gain access behind the Iron Curtain. In doing so, a larger population of East Germans were exposed to the social, economic, and political tenets of the Western world. Photographic exhibitions like The Family of Man provided the Nachgeborenen generation with a template for using social documentary to communicate their everyday experience under state socialism, without risking imprisonment. Film, especially, worked in the United States’ favor despite the government’s opposition to Hollywood’s portrayal of youth deviance as an unmanageable moral plague afflicting the country. Instead, youth on both sides of Berlin’s border absorbed those images of rebellion as a visual vocabulary for exposing the socio-political hazards of their respective nations. In an attempt to rebuild German masculinity without falling into totalitarian traps, they exercised agency by emphasizing individuality through the Halbstarke subculture. This generation developed the ability to read imagery with more skepticism than the previous generation, whom had fallen to indoctrination on several occasions. In Düsseldorf, a group of artists from both East and West Germany, design a method to confront the alienation of the commodity. In doing so, they reveal the limits of consumption as a means for cultural survival. These citizen-consumers demonstrated that embrace and criticism could coexist; selecting which parts of American consumer culture and how much social and political engagement fit their current needs.

As early as 1964, the US government’s dedication to West Germany’s survival and growth begins to wane. Having narrowly avoided nuclear annihilation during the Cuban Missile Crisis, and with the shocking assassination of President Kennedy, divided Berlin and its relative autonomy, was no longer a geopolitical priority. In 1965, 200,000 US Marines were deployed to
Vietnam, where ground war was not only brutal, but rapidly escalating in scale and intensity. West Berliners’ attitudes toward the United States were likewise souring. Across the world, students and workers organized mass public demonstrations and protests, leading to violent clashes with the police and members of the armed forces. By 1968, the GDR adopted its strictest border control measures, requiring FRG visitors and other tourists to obtain visas and participate in rigorous passport checks for travel.

The height of anti-American protest in West Berlin occurred in May 1970 when Rolf Ficker, a self-identified left-wing socialist, attempted to set fire to Amerika Haus Berlin using homemade incendiary devices. In a statement published by Ficker in *Agit 883*, a radical left magazine, he urges readers to “remember Buchenwald and Dachau” as “[West Germany] is well on its way to neo-Fascism” (figs. 328-329). In the wake of Ficker’s attempt, “stones, bottles, paint bombs,…Molotov cocktails [and] steel balls” were launched at the façade resulting in the injury of police officers and demonstrators, the death of police horses, and the destruction of windows and paving stones in front of Amerika Haus (figs. 330-331). RAF members Horst Mahler and Astrid Proll who assisted with Andreas Baader’s prison escape the same year, participated in protests at Amerika Haus. Proll cites American rock music and the Armed Forces Network (AFN) as influential, clarifying that “we were against U.S. politics, not against the Americans.” Stuart Hall argues that subcultures are forms of resistance toward hegemony and performed through the marriage of culture and politics; however, this also risks the justification of extremism and terrorism.

Throughout this dissertation, images of American life and culture have been examined in the context of West Berlin during the early Cold War period. These images not only spurred explicit responses by German viewers and art practitioners, but also reveal the stakes of
diplomatically-supported foreign media sent abroad. The discussion offers readers an opportunity to grapple with the political and historical contradictions behind these efforts and the myriad ways in which they actually affected society across class divisions. The utopian images presented—the great family of man, American hegemony, material abundance—are ultimately unsustainable. In an effort to reconstruct robust cultural life in postwar Germany, curators, artists, and civilians alike utilized these models to encode undesirable histories, subvert political oppression, express individual identity, and critique inadequate economic systems. Amidst period anxieties and artistic regeneration, divided Berlin’s many cultural facets come to light. The tensions, contradictions, and interventions of the ideological lens and the subterranean actor propose a resilient sense of agency in the face of destruction and occupation.
FIGURES

Figure 1: Amerika Haus Bookmobile at the Soviet Zone border, March 1960. Allied Museum, Berlin.
Figure 3: Wolf Vostell, *You Are Leaving the American Sector*, 1964. Spray paint on silkscreen print on photo canvas. 48.5 x 177 ¼ inches. Museum Folkwang, Essen. © 2016 VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn.

Figure 4: Wolf Vostell, *We Were A Kind of Museum Piece (Wir waren so eine Art Museumsstück)*, 1964. Spray paint on silkscreen print on photo canvas. 47 ¼ x 177 inches. Berlinische Galerie, Berlin. © VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn.

Figure 6: Robert Rauschenberg, *Skyway*, 1964. Oil and silkscreen on canvas. 215 31/32 x 192 inches. Dallas Museum of Art.
Figure 7: Film still, *Germany, Year Zero*. Directed by Robert Rosselini, 1948. Filmed on-location in war-torn Berlin.
Figure 12: Schedule for “East screenings” (Ost-Tages) and crowds in front of Camera-Lichtspiele. Nachlass Friedrich Wilhelm Foss.

Figure 13: …den sie wissen nicht was sie tun (Rebel Without a Cause) advertising poster, 1956.
Figure 14: Advertising for Die Halbstarken (Teenage Wolfpack) at a cinema in Munich, 1956. Photograph by Felicitas Timpe. Bildarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz.
Figure 15: View of “ideal house” from catwalk in *We’re Building a Better Life* (*Wir bauen ein besseres Leben*). George-Marshall-Haus, Exposition Park, West Berlin, September 1952. RG 286-MP GER 2222, NACP.
Figure 16: Installation view of Room No. 1 (Living Room) at Living with Pop: A Demonstration for Capitalist Realism (Leben mit Pop: Eine Demonstration für den kapitalistischen Realismus). Möbelhaus Berges, Düsseldorf, 11 October 1963. © 2014 ARS, New York/VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn. Photograph by Reiner Ruthenbeck.
Figure 17: Konrad Lueg, *Coathangers*, 1963.

Figure 19: Film still from The Red Balloon. Directed by Albert Lamorisse. 1956.
Figure 20: Nadar (Gaspard Félix Tournachon), Félix Nadar in Gondola of Balloon, c. 1863. The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles. ARTstor.
Figure 22: Exhibition catalog cover design, *The Family of Man (Wir alle)*, 1955. University of the Arts Archive (UdK; formerly Höchschule der bildende Künste, 1945-75), Berlin.
Figure 23: Cover design, *Coca-Cola Overseas*, December 1958. Edward Steichen Archive (ESA), V.B.i.58. MoMA Archives, NY.

Figure 24: “‘The Family of Man’ Photographic Exhibition at Johannesburg, Union of South Africa,” *Coca-Cola Overseas*, December 1958. ESA, V.B.i.58. MoMA Archives, NY.
Figure 25: Exhibition catalog cover design, World Exhibition of Photography: What is Man? (Welt Ausstellung der Photographie: Wer ist Man?), 1965.

Figure 26: Exhibition catalog cover design, On the Happiness of People (Vom Glück des Menschen), 1967.
Figure 27: Wayne Miller, Untitled (Birth of Miller’s son, David B. Miller), 1946. In The Family of Man, 1955.

Figure 28: E. Kassin, “In a Moscow Hospital,” n.d. In World Exhibition of Photography: What is Man?, 1965.

Figure 30: Ralph Morse, Untitled (American soldier kissing his English girlfriend, Hyde Park, London), 1944. In *The Family of Man*, 1955.
Figure 31: Jaroslav Guth, Czechoslovakia, n.d. In *World Exhibition of Photography: What is Man?*, 1965.

Figure 32: B. Petzold, Untitled, n.d.. In *On the Happiness of People*, 1967.

Figure 34: Edward Steichen, Aerial View of Vaux, France, 1918. ARTstor.
Figure 35: Installation view, *Road to Victory*, MoMA, 21 May – 4 October 1942. Photographic Archive, MoMA Archives, NY. IN182.7. Photograph by Albert Fenn. Installation by Herbert Bayer.

Figure 36: Installation view, *Road to Victory*, MoMA, 21 May – 4 October 1942. Photographic Archive, MoMA Archives, NY. IN182.18. Photograph by Samuel Gottscho. Installation by Herbert Bayer.

Figure 39: Edward Steichen editing The Family of Man. New York, c. 1950s. Photograph by Wayne Miller and Homer Page. ARTstor.
Figure 40: Floor plan and description of *The Family of Man*, MoMA, NY, 1955. Published in *Popular Photography*, May 1955, 148.
Figure 41: Herbert Bayer, Diagram of Extended Field of Vision, 1930. ©2007 Artist Rights Society (ARS), New York/VG Bild-Kunst Bonn.

Figure 42: Herbert Bayer, Installation view, German section of the Exposition de la société des artistes décorateurs, Paris 1930. ©2019 Artist Rights Society (ARS), New York/VG Bild-Kunst Bonn.
Figure 43: Installation view, *The Family of Man*, MoMA, 1955. Photographic Archive, MoMA Archives, NY. IN569.3. Photograph by Ezra Stoller.

Figure 44: Installation view, *The Family of Man*, MoMA, 1955. Photographic Archive, MoMA Archives, NY. IN569.84. Photograph by Ezra Stoller.


Figure 50: Henri Cartier-Bresson, *Bali, Indonesia*, n.d. Magnum Photo Agency.
Figure 51: Lynching of “Bootjack” McDaniels. Winona, Mississippi, April 1937. Photograph removed from *The Family of Man*, MoMA, 1955.
Figure 52: Detonation of test bomb *Mike*, Operation Ivy, Enewetak Atoll, 31 October 1952.

Figure 53: Test bomb detonation. In *The Family of Man (Wir alle)*, The Municipal Gallery, Munich, 19 November-18 December 1955. Records of USIA, RG 306-FM, NACP.
Figure 54: Wayne Miller, Miller’s family standing in front of a color transparency of test bomb Mike. In *The Family of Man*, MoMA, 1955.
Figure 55: Installation view, *The Family of Man (Wir alle)*, Academy for Creative Arts (Höchschule für bildende Künste, HBK), West Berlin, 22 September – 9 October 1955. Records of USIA, RG 306-FM, NACP.
Figure 56: Installation view, *The Family of Man (Wir alle)*, HBK, West Berlin, 1955. Records of USIA, RG 306-FM, NACP.

Figure 57: Installation view, *The Family of Man (Wir alle)*, HBK, West Berlin, 1955. Records of USIA, RG 306-FM, NACP.
Figure 58: Installation view, *The Family of Man (Wir alle)*, HBK, West Berlin, 1955. Records of USIA, RG 306-FM, NACP.

Figure 59: Installation view, *The Family of Man (Wir alle)*, HBK, West Berlin, 1955. Records of USIA, RG 306-FM, NACP.
Figure 60: Edward Steichen (L) posing with US Ambassador to Berlin James B. Conant (R), *The Family of Man*, HBK, West Berlin, 1955. Records of USIA, RG 306-FM, NACP.
Figure 62: Visitors at *The Family of Man*, HBK, West Berlin, 1955. Records of USIA, RG 306-FM, NACP.
Figure 63: Visitors at *The Family of Man*, HBK, West Berlin, 1955. Records of USIA, RG 306-FM, NACP.
Figure 64: Installation view, *The Family of Man*, HBK, West Berlin, 1955. Records of USIA, RG 306-FM, NACP.

Figure 65: Wolfgang Albrecht, *Leipzigerstraße during East German Uprising*, 17 June 1953. AP.
Figure 66: Ralph Crane, East Berliners attempt to enter British Sector to retrieve aid packages, Life Magazine, 31 July 1953. © Time, Inc.

Figure 67: Carl Mydans, Sign on border warning “You are now leaving British Sector,” West Berlin, May 1952. Time/Life Pictures Collection.
Figure 68: Telegraf, 17 June 1953. Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, Zeitungslesesaal.

Figure 69: Postage stamp memorializing Wolfgang Albrecht’s photograph from the 17 June 1953 Uprising.

Kriegsrecht über Ostberlin
Sowjets schießen auf Arbeiter
Generalstreik gegen den Terror


Panzer und Geschütze

Standrecht ist keine Lösung

Die sozialistischen Behörden in Ostberlin haben die Bewohner der Stadt mit Gewalt unterdrückt. Die Bewohner von Ostberlin haben sich mit Streiks und Demonstrationen gegen diese Übergriffe gewehrt.

242
Figure 70: Bertolt Brecht photographed at *The Family of Man* (*Wir alle*). Records of USIA, RG 306-FM, NACP.
Text:
“So haben wir ihn an die Wand gestellt:
Mensch unsresgleichen, einer Mutter Sohn
Ihn umzubringen. Und damit die Welt
Es wisse, machten wir ein Bild davon.”

“And so we put him up against a wall:
A mother’s son, a man like we had been
And shot him dead. And then to show you all
What came of him, we photographed the scene.”

Illustrated magazine original photo caption:
“The Germans were ‘kind’ to this Frenchman. They blindfolded him before he was shot.”
Figure 73: Anonymous, Jews forced out of Warsaw Ghetto, n.d.

Figure 74: Anonymous, Young boy surrenders in Warsaw Ghetto, n.d.
Figure 75: Roman Vishniac, *Warsaw (The Cheder, Slonim)*, 1938.

Figure 76: Margaret Bourke-White, *The Talmud Class, Czechoslovakia*, 1938. *Life* Magazine Image Archives.
Figure 77: Visitors viewing Warsaw Ghetto photographs, *The Family of Man*, Munich, 1955. Records of USIA, RG 306-FM, NACP.

Figure 78: Visitors viewing Warsaw Ghetto photographs, *The Family of Man*, Munich, 1955. Records of USIA, RG 306-FM, NACP.
Figure 79: Visitors viewing Warsaw Ghetto photographs, *The Family of Man*, Munich, 1955. Records of USIA, RG 306-FM, NACP.

Figure 80: Wynn Bullock, *Child in the Forest*, 1951. ARTstor.
Figure 81: A Mother and her child appear in a state of shock, 1945. Courtesy of Shogo Yamahata and Bonhams.

Figure 82: Ysuke Yamahata, A Mother and her child appear in a state of shock, 1945. Courtesy of Shogo Yamahata and Bonhams.
Figure 84: Installation view, *What is Man?*, Academy for Creative Arts (Akademie der bildenden Künste, AdK), West Berlin, 1965. AdK Archives.

Figure 86: Otto Steinert, *Junge Schauspielerin, Marion Ibach* (Young Actress), 1949. Estate Otto Steinert, Museum Folkwang, Essen.
Figure 87: Otto Steinert, *Luminogram II*, 1952. Estate Otto Steinert, Museum Folkwang, Essen.
Figure 88: Georg Lotter, “Newly weds (sic) in Munich”, n.d. In *What is Man?*, 1965.

Figure 89: Jürgen Vollmer, “Paris,” n.d. In *What is Man?*, 1965.
Figure 91: Richard Peter, “Returned P.O.W.,” Germany, 1946. In *What is Man?*, 1965.

Figure 92: Richard Peter, “The corpse of German air-raid warden was found in the beer-cellar of a restaurant in the old part of Dresden,” March 1946. In *What is Man?*, 1965.
Figure 93: Charles Moore, “Race riot at Birmingham, Alabama,” n.d. In *What is Man?*, 1965.

Figure 94: Charles Moore, “Race riot at Birmingham, Alabama,” n.d. In *What is Man?*, 1965.
Figure 96: Hartmut Vogler, “African Teacher in German Family,” n.d. In *What is Man?*, 1965.
Figure 97: Juxtaposition of Max Jacoby, “Platform for cameramen opposite the Schöneberger Rathaus in Berlin during President Kennedy’s address,” 1963 and Yael Joel, “Baby-food test carried out by an American food company,” n.d. In What is Man? exhibition catalog, 1965.
Figure 99: Erich Schutt, *Help for the Buddies*, ca. 1955/1960.

Figure 100: Jo Gerbeth, *Sports for the Masses*, 1959.
Figure 101: Jo Gerbeth, *A Toast to the City of Moscow*, 30 April 1957. Bild 183-46223-0001, Bundesarchiv-Bildarchiv.
Figure 102: Günter Weiß, Visitors to *On the Happiness of Man*, IAP, East Berlin, 1 November 1967. Bild 183-F11-1-0001-011, Bundesarchiv-Bildarchiv. Image redacted to comply with Bundesarchiv-Bildarchiv copyright regulations.

Figure 103: Giso Löwe, Visitors to *On the Happiness of Man*, 4 January 1968. Bild 183-G0105-0007-001. Bundesarchiv-Bildarchiv. Image redacted to comply with Bundesarchiv-Bildarchiv copyright regulations.
Figure 104: Günter Weiß, Visitors to *On the Happiness of Man*, IAP, East Berlin, 1 November 1967. Bild 183-F1101-0001-010, Bundesarchiv-Bildarchiv. Image redacted to comply with Bundesarchiv-Bildarchiv copyright regulations.

Figure 106: Exhibition catalog double-page spread featuring Yosuke Yamahata, A woman breastfeeds her baby amid the rubble, 1945 (R). In *On the Happiness of People*, 1967.

Figure 107: Thomas Billhardt, Walter Ulbricht reciting a speech, n.d. (R). In *On the Happiness of People*, 1967.
Figure 108: D. Hyronimus, Military police socializing with citizens, n.d. (L). In On the Happiness of People, 1967.

Figure 110: Karl Marx quotation: “The best for man is man himself. Consequently, one must destroy all relationships, all ties in which man is a depressed and enslaved being.” In *On the Happiness of People* exhibition catalog, 1967.

Figure 111: Walter Ulbricht quotation: “…Socialist culture is characterized by real humanism and an optimistic view of life and the world. In it all the good, the true and the beautiful, which humanity has produced, are cultivated and become the living source of the full development of all spiritual and moral powers of men.” In *On the Happiness of People* exhibition catalog, 1967.
Figure 112: View of Berlin Wall at Brandenburg Gate, c. 1961.
Figure 113: action fotografie meeting with Professor Widmann (HGB Leipzig). Clara-Zetkin-Park, Leipzig, 1956. Photograph by Roger Rössing, Museum der bildenden Künste (MdBK), Leipzig.
Figure 115: Installation view. *action fotografie* ’57, Leipzig, 1957. Photograph by Roger Rössing. SLUB Dresden/Deutsche Fotothek.

Figure 116: Installation view, *action fotografie* ’57, Leipzig, 1957. Photograph by Roger Rössing. SLUB Dresden/Deutsche Fotothek.
Figure 117: F.O. Bernstein mounting the entrance sign for *action fotografie ’56*, Leipzig, May-June 1956. Photograph by Roger Rössing. SLUB Dresden/Deutsche Fotothek.

Figure 118: Installation view, *action fotografie ’56*, Leipzig, May-June 1956.
Figure 119: Installation view, *action fotografie ’56*, Leipzig, May-June 1956.

Figure 120: Installation view, *action fotografie ’56*, Leipzig, May-June 1956.
Figure 121: Günter Rössler, *Solarisation*. In *action fotografie ‘56* exhibition catalog, 1956.

Figure 122: Man Ray, *Primat de la matière sur la pensée*, 1929.
Figure 123: Excerpt from *action fotografie* '57 exhibition catalog displaying “D” classifications. Leipzig, 1957.

Figure 124: Participants hang “Discussion Room” sign, *action fotografie* '57, Leipzig, 1957. SLUB Dresden/Deutsche Fotothek.
Figure 125: Installation view. *action fotografie '57*, Leipzig, 1957. SLUB Dresden/Deutsche Fotothek.
Figure 126: “Übergabe eines Beutels” (Handing over a bag), Observation, n.d. Der Bundesbeauftragte für die Unterlagen des Staatssicherheitsdienstes der ehemaligen Deutschen Demokratischen Republik (Federal Commissioner for the Records of the State Security Service of the former German Democratic Republic, BStU), Berlin.
Figure 127: Fotos zum Beobachtungsbericht (Photos of the observation report), 1984. BStU, Berlin.

Figure 129: Ulrich Mack, President John F. Kennedy in West Berlin, 26 June 1963. Ulrich Mack and Prestel.

Figure 132: Boris Vladimirski, *Roses for Stalin*, 1949. ARTstor.

Figure 134: Henry Ries, Landing of the Candy Bombers at Tempelhof Airport, 1948.
Figure 135: Guanajay IRBM Launch Site 1 with Probable Nuclear Warhead Storage Site, 22-56N 82-39W, 17 October 1962. NASM-NASM-9A09003, Dino Brugioni Collection, National Air and Space Museum.
Figure 136: Film still from Abraham Zapruder’s video of JFK’s assassination, Dealey Plaza, Dallas, 22 November 1963. © 1967 The Sixth Floor Museum, Dallas, TX.
Figure 138: Bernd Feuerhelm, *Halbstarke* dressed in leather jacket and cropped blue jeans with a ducktail plume. Privatarchiv Bernd Feuerhelm.
Figure 139: Camera-Lichtspiele, Potsdamer Platz, West Berlin. Nachlass Friedrich Wilhelm Foss.

Figure 140: Halbstarke at Bill Haley and his Comets concert, West Berlin, October 1958.
Figure 141: Promotional lobby card for The Wild One. Directed by Laslo Benedek. Culver City, CA: Columbia Pictures, 1953. 79 min., 35mm. Heritage Auctions.
Figure 144: Promotional poster for *Rock Around the Clock*. Directed by Fred F. Sears. Culver City, CA: Columbia Pictures, 1956. 77min., 35mm.
Figure 145: *Halbstarken* wearing leather jackets, Levi jeans, and Elvis coifs working on a motorbike. Photograph by Will McBride. Bildarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz.
Figure 146: *Halbstarken* wearing leather jackets, cuffed jeans, pomaded ducktail plumes and carrying a lunchbox decorated with James Dean’s face, c. 1959. Photograph by Martin Schmidt. Deutsches Historisches Museum.
Figure 147: Promotional poster for *Die Halbstarken* (Teenage Wolfpack). Directed by Georg Tressler. West Berlin: Union-Film GmbH, 1956. 97 min., 35mm.
Figure 148: Film still from *Berlin – Ecke Schönhauser* (Berlin – Schönhauser Corner). Directed by Gerhard Klein. East Berlin: DEFA, 1957. 81 min., 35mm. DEFA Stiftung Filmdatenbank.
Figure 149: Film stills from *KZ* (Death Camp). Produced by the United States Office of War Information (OWI). *Welt im Film* 5/1945. 20 mins., 35mm. Bundesarchiv-Filmothek.

Figure 150: Film still from *Welt im Film* (World in Film). Produced by the United States Office of War Information (OWI). Bundesarchiv-Filmothek.
Figure 151: Film still from Todesmühlen (Death Mills, USA). Directed by Billy Wilder. US Department of War, 1945. 22 min., 16mm.

Figure 152: Lee Miller, “Believe It,” Vogue, 1 June 1945.
Figure 153: Margaret Bourke-White, “German civilians made to face their nation’s crimes,” Buchenwald Concentration Camp Liberation, April 1945.

Figure 154: David E. Scherman, Dachau Nazi Prison Camp, April 1945. LIFE Picture Collection/Getty Images.
Figure 155: Film still from *Nuit et Brouillard* (Night and Fog, FR). Directed by Alain Resnais, 1956. 32 min., 16mm.

Figure 156: Film still from unfinished film, *German Concentration Camps Factual Survey* (*Memory of the Camps*, USA/UK). Directed and produced by Sidney Bernstein and Alfred Hitchcock for American and British Army Film Units, 1945. 16mm. Imperial War Museum, London. UCLA Film and Television Archive.
Figure 157: Film still from Die Mörder sind unter uns (Murderers Among Us, GDR). Directed by Wolfgang Staudte. East Berlin: DEFA, 1946. 85 min., 35mm.

Figure 158: Film still from Schwarzwaldmädel (Black Forest Girl). Directed by Hans Deppe. West Berlin: Berolina Film. 100mins., 35mm.
Figure 159: Promotional poster for *Here Comes Mr. Jordan*. Directed by Alexander Hall. Culver City, CA: Columbia Pictures, 1941. 94 min., 35mm.

Figure 160: Promotional poster for *Tom, Dick, and Harry*. Directed by Garson Kanin. Los Angeles, CA: RKO Radio Pictures. 87 min., 35mm.
Figure 161: East Germans invited across the border to watch Western television, 17 August 1951. Records of the Agency for International Development, RG 286-MP GER-1148, NACP.

Figure 162: East Germans invited across the border to watch Western television, 18 August 1951. Records of the Agency for International Development, RG 286-MP GER-1142, NACP.
Figure 163: “Brückenplastik” Award, 2 November 1954. Deutsche Kinemathek – Museum für Film und Fernsehen Archiv, Berlin.

Figure 164: Oscar Martay accepting the “Brückenplastik” Award, 2 November 1954. Deutsche Kinemathek – Museum für Film und Fernsehen Archiv, Berlin.
Flucht aus dem Kolchos-Milieu: Sowjetische Filme vor leeren Sälen—Starker Besuch der Grenz-Kinos


Die meisten Grenz-Kinos haben eine Mittagsvorstellung um 13 Uhr und eine Nachmittagsvorstellung um 15 Uhr eingerichtet. Bei starkem Andrang wird jedoch auch schon von 11 Uhr vorabend abgelegt. Die Besucherzahlen sind überall stark erhöht. Bei Spitzelfilmen sind die Vorstellungskassen ausgekauft. „Wir stellen den Spielplan so zusammen, daß unsere Gäste Filme sehen, die im Osten nicht gespielt werden. Vor allem gute Unterhaltungsfilme, unter denen „Der dritte Mann“ besonders starke Beachtung fand“, sagte uns einer der Kinos-Verleger. In der „Camera“ am Potsdamer Platz sahen die Besucher kürzlich beispielsweise „Symphonie Pastoralis“.

An der Kasse eines Grenz-Kinos in der Oranienstraße beobachteten wir das Publikum aus der Irredenta, das sich dort kasten kaufte. Man freut sich, daß man nicht anzustehen braucht. „Endlich mal ein Kinobesuch, der ein Vergnügen ist“, meinte eine ältere Frau. Das Publikum setzt sich hier am frühen Nachmittag vor allem aus Frauen und Studenten der östlichen Hochschulen zusammen.


H.S.
Figure 167: Berlin: Zones of Occupation Map, 1945. Compiled and drawn by the Office of Strategic Services. Central Intelligence Agency.

Figure 168: Camera-Lichtspiele (Grenzkino) ticket stub. Nachlass Friedrich Wilhelm Foss.
Figure 169: Couple standing in front of Vox-Lichtspiele (Grenzkino). Flimmern auf dem Eisernen Vorhang: Die Geschichte der Berliner Grenzkinos 1950 bis 1961 (exh. cat., 2011).
Figure 170: Bali-Lichtspiele (Grenzkino) program, June 1954. Deutsche Kinemathek – Museum für Film und Fernsehen Archiv, Berlin.
Figure 171: Map of West Berlin Grenzkinos. Organized by Andreas Döhler, Anna Krenz, Susanne Quehenberger, Bianca Schemel, and Jacek Slaski. Berlin: WIR e.V., 2011.
Figure 172: Camera-Lichtspiele promotional material. Nachlass Friedrich Wilhelm Foss.
Figure 173: Atlantic (Grenzkino), West Berlin. Mitte Museum/Bezirksamt Mitte von Berlin.
Figure 174: Examples of western film posters depicting sexualized women. In *On the Happiness of Man* exhibition catalog, 1967.
Büro für Gesamtberliner Fragen

- Der Leiter -

7. April 1955

71 O2 61, App. 3600

An die
Direktion der Oppelner Lichtspiele

Berlin 30 36
Oppelner Str. 15

Wie Sie durch unser Schreiben vom 24. März d.J. an den
Verband Berliner Filmtheater zur Kenntnis bekommen haben,
galt die derzeitigen Steuerbefreiungen der Sondervorstellun-
gen für Ostbewohner nur als vorläufig.

Der Grund dafür sind die bisher unbefriedigenden Verhand-
lungen zwischen den Vertretern der Filmtheater und des Film-
verleihs mit den Vertretern der zuständigen Senatsverwaltungen.

Im Interesse der Ostberliner wird sich in Kürze der Senat zu-
sammen mit dem Abgeordnetenhaus-Ausschuß für Gesamtberliner
Fragen der Angelegenheit annehmen.

Da von vielen Interessenten aus dem Sowjets Sektor Berlins neben
sonstigen Beanstandungen bei den sog. Grenzkinos besonders das
niedrige Niveau der Filmprogramme kritisiert und dabei auch
Ihr Theater erwähnt wurde, halten wir uns für verpflichtet,
Ihnen davon Kenntnis zu geben mit der Bitte, analog einiger
anderer Theater Ihrer Gruppe umgehend eine Niveauverbesserung
der Spielpläne vorzunehmen.

Bei der Errichtung der Grenzkinos war doch die Aufgabe gestel-
worten, den Ostbewohnern gute Filme zu zeigen, wozu ständige
Verführungen von Sitten-, Kriminal- und Wildwestfilmen nun wirk-
lich nicht gehören.

Wir würden es sehr begrüßen, wenn unser heutiger Appell bei
Ihnen auf günstigen Boden fällt und sichacher

mit vorsichtiger Hochachtung

[Unterschrift: ...]

Figure 175: Letter from Büro für Gesamtberliner Fragen to Oppelner Lichtspiele Grenzkino regarding programming, 7 April 1955. LAB B Rep 002, Nr. 2163, Landesarchiv, Berlin.
Figure 176: West German promotional photograph for *The Wild One*, 1954.

Figure 177-178: West German advertising for *Rock Around the Clock*, 1956. Bundesarchiv Berlin – Filmarchiv.
Figure 179: Marlon Brando on set for *The Wild One*, 1953.

Figure 180: James Dean on set for *Rebel without a Cause*, 1955.
Figure 181: Promotional photograph depicting Johnny and his gang. In *The Wild One*, 1953.

Figure 182: Film still depicting Jim and a gang of peers. In *Rebel without a Cause*, 1955.
Figure 183: Intertitle warning in opening credits for *The Wild One*, 1953.
The scenes and incidents depicted here are fictional. However, we believe that public awareness is a first step toward a remedy for any problem.

It is in this spirit and with this faith that BLACKBOARD JUNGLE was produced.

Figure 184: Intertitle warning in opening credits for Blackboard Jungle, 1955.
Figure 185: Johnny grabbing Kathie’s blouse. Film still from *The Wild One*, 1953.

Figure 186: Group of male students catcalling Mrs. Hayes. Film still from *Blackboard Jungle*, 1955.
Figure 187: Sexualized depiction of Mrs. Hayes in promotional material for *Blackboard Jungle*, 1955.

Figure 188: Sexualized depiction of Mrs. Hayes in promotional material for *Blackboard Jungle*, 1955.
Figure 189: Youth reading pulp fiction dime novels in postwar Germany, 1950. Photograph by Gerd Minigram. Bildarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz.
Figure 190: “Dr. Dietrich Manicke, Amerika Haus music program manager, illustrates use of new American Haus record listening cabins to Frau Frieke, youth librarian, and Frau Mueller, secretary.” Amerika Haus, Berlin, 5 June 1957. Allied Museum, Berlin.
Figure 191: Gathering under the S-Bahn in East Berlin. Film still from Berlin – Ecke Schönhauser, 1957. Photograph by Siegmar Holstein and Hannes Schneider.

Figure 192: Riot at Bill Haley and His Comets Concert. Sportpalast, Berlin, 26 October 1958.
Figure 193: Film still of wall in the opening credits for *Die Halbstarken* (Teenage Wolfpack), 1956.

Figure 194: Horst Büchholz and Karin Baal in promotional poster for *Die Halbstarken* (Teenage Wolfpack), 1956.
Figure 195: Horst Büchholz on set for *Die Halbstarken* (Teenage Wolfpack), 1956.

Figure 196: Opening shot of Karin Baal as Sissy. *Die Halbstarken* (Teenage Wolfpack), 1956.
Figure 197: Film still from opening scene. *Die Halbstarken* (Teenage Wolfpack), 1956.

Figure 198-199: Film stills of Mr. Borchert arguing with his son Jan and Jan after Mr. Borchert strikes him on the face. *Die Halbstarken* (Teenage Wolfpack), 1956.
Figure 200: Film still of rock ‘n’ roll foot work. *Die Halbstarken* (Teenage Wolfpack), 1956.

Figure 201: Film still of hip-swinging. *Die Halbstarken* (Teenage Wolfpack), 1956.

Figure 202: Film still of Freddy (L) and friend drinking champagne at the espresso bar. *Die Halbstarken* (Teenage Wolfpack), 1956.
Figure 203: Film still of Freddy in shiny leather pants. *Die Halbstarken* (Teenage Wolfpack), 1956.

Figure 204: Film still of Freddy mocking the John Philips Soussa march music by marching his group of friends out of the bar. *Die Halbstarken* (Teenage Wolfpack), 1956.
Figure 205: Film still of Sissy grabbing arm of the chair in pleasure. *Die Halbstarken* (Teenage Wolfpack), 1956.

Figure 206-207: Film stills of Sissy at the beginning of the film versus the end of the film. *Die Halbstarken* (Teenage Wolfpack), 1956.
Figure 208: Film still of Kathie seductively caressing Johnny’s motorcycle. *The Wild One*, 1953.
Figure 209-210: Film stills of Berlin’s border and crossing into the western sectors. Berlin – Ecke Schönhauser, 1957
Figure 211-212: Film still of industrial work zone and rubble where Dieter works in East Berlin. 
*Berlin – Ecke Schönhauser, 1957.*
Figure 213-214: Film stills of Karl-Heinz in his “frivolous leather jacket” and a bolo tie after getting injured. *Berlin – Ecke Schönhauser*, 1957.
Figure 215: West Berlin newspaper seller with cover story discussing NATO. *Berlin – Ecke Schönhauser*, 1957.
Figure 216-217: Kohle crossing into the western sector to go to the cinema. Berlin – Ecke Schönhauser, 1957.
Figure 218: View of Marilyn Monroe poster on bunk-bed at East German transit camp prior to legal immigration into West Germany. Berlin – Ecke Schönhauser, 1957.
Figure 220: Soviet Panzer in front of City-Lichtspiele one day after the Berlin Wall is constructed, 13 August 1961. Ullstein Bild.

Figure 222: Double-page spread of Barbara Rose’s “Dada, Then and Now,” Art International, January 1963.

Figure 224: *magnum: Die Zeitschrift für das moderne Leben*. No. 24 (June 1959) juxtaposing photograph of atomic bomb explosion and untitled oil painting by Wols from 1946.
Figure 225: Gerhard Richter, *Faltbarer Trockner* (Folding Dryer), 1962. Atelier Gerhard Richter.

Figure 227: Gerhard Richter, *Klorolle* (Toilet Paper), 1965. Atelier Gerhard Richter.
Figure 228: Visitors at *Wie wohnt Amerika* (How America Lives). Central Decimal Files: Germany: Expositions, Exhibitions, and Fairs, RG 59, 862A.191 BE/11-850, NACP.
Figure 229: Crowds of visitors at inaugural opening of George-Marshall-Haus, Exposition Park, West Berlin, October 1950.
Figure 230: Man standing outside the model home, *America zu Hause* (America at Home), October 1950. Central Decimal Files: Germany: Expositions, Exhibitions, and Fairs, RG 59, 862A.191 BE/11-850, NACP.
Figure 231: Crowds of visitors lined up outside the model home, *America zu Hause*, October 1950. Central Decimal Files: Germany: Expositions, Exhibitions, and Fairs, RG 59, 862A.191 BE/11-850, NACP.
Figure 232: Visitors peering through the windows of the model home, *America zu Hause*, October 1950. Central Decimal Files: Germany: Expositions, Exhibitions, and Fairs, RG 59, 862A.191 BE/11-850, NACP.
Figure 233: Visitors crowding into the model home, *America zu Hause*, October 1950. Central Decimal Files: Germany: Expositions, Exhibitions, and Fairs, RG 59, 862A.191 BE/11-850, NACP.
Figure 234: Kitchen inside model home, America zu Hause, October 1950. Central Decimal Files: Germany: Expositions, Exhibitions, and Fairs, RG 59, 862A.191 BE/11-850, NACP.

Figure 235: Double-page spread illustrating hours of work required for production of clothing items, America zu Hause (America at Home) exhibition catalog, October 1950.
Figure 237: Galleries of objects and furnishings for sale at Better Life, September 1952. RG 286-MP GEN-2352, NACP.
Figure 238: Entrance to Better Life explaining the importance of the Atlantic Community, September 1952. RG 286-MP GER-2224, NACP.
Figure 239: Installation view of *Good Design* exhibition at MoMA, 21 November 1950-28 January 1951. Curated by Edgar Kaufmann, Jr. Photograph by Leo Tractenberg. IN463.1A, MoMA Archives, NY.

Figure 240: Installation view of *Good Design* exhibition at MoMA, 21 November 1950-28 January 1951. Curated by Edgar Kaufmann, Jr. Photograph by Soichi Sunami. IN463.2, MoMA Archives, NY.
Figure 241: Aerial view of Levitt and Sons houses in Levittown, Pennsylvania, 1952. Special Collections Research Center, Temple University Libraries. The Encyclopedia of Greater Philadelphia.
Figure 242: Display of objects at Better Life, September 1952. RG 286-MP GEN-1976, NACP.

Figure 243: Galleries of objects and furnishings for sale at Better Life, September 1952. RG 286-MP GEN-2353, NACP.
Figure 244: Visitors peer inside the “Ideal House” at Better Life, September 1952. RG 286-MP GEN-1902, NACP.
Figure 245: “Housewife” actress demonstrating the bathtub at Better Life, September 1952. RG 286-MP GEN-1888, NACP.
Figure 246: Aerial view of “Ideal House” at Better Life, September 1952. RG 286-MP GEN-2394, NACP.
Figure 247: Soviet Premier Nikita S. Khrushchev and US Vice President Richard M. Nixon during their “Kitchen Debate” at the US exhibit at Moscow’s Sokolniki Park, 24 July 1959. AP Photo.

Figure 248: “Housewife” Lois Epstein demonstrating appliances for Nixon and Krushchev at the US exhibit at Moscow’s Sokolniki Park, 24 July 1959. Photograph by Howard Sochurek for Time/Life Pictures. Getty Images.
Figure 249: Cross-section of “Ideal House” featuring visitors and family of actors at *Better Life*, September 1952. RG 286-MP GER-2219, NACP.
Figure 250: Installation view of children playing with toys at *Better Life*, September 1952. RG 286-MP GEN-1903, NACP.
Figure 251: Visitors crowd around catwalk to look into *Better Life*, September 1952. RG 286-MP GEN-1841, NACP.
Figure 252: Visitors observe model family at Better Life, September 1952. RG 286-MP GEN-1877, NACP.
Figure 253: Jeff Wall, Dead Troops Talk (a vision after an ambush of a Red Army patro, near Moqor, Afghanistan, winter 1986), 1992. Light transparency in lightbox. © Jeff Wall.
Figure 254: Visitors look inside windows of “ideal house” through passageways at Better Life, September 1952. RG 286-MP GEN-1879, NACP.

Figure 255: Installation view of “ideal house” structure, raised platform, and “outdoor” area at Better Life, September 1952. RG 286-MP GER-2221, NACP.
Figure 256: Final gallery at Better Life with adjoining sign discussing the average German worker. Stuttgart. RG 286-MP GEN-1974, NACP.

Figure 257: Galleries of objects and furnishings for sale at Better Life, September 1952. RG 286-MP GEN-1899, NACP.
Figure 258: Exterior view of Maison sans Frontières, Paris. RG 286-MP GEN-2346, NACP.

Figure 259: Exterior view of expanded Deplirex trailer used for the Caravan of Modern Food Services. RG 286-MP GEN-1959, NACP.
Figure 260: Floorplan of exhibition at the *Caravan of Modern Food Services*, France. RG 286-MP GEN-1949, NACP.
Figure 261: Visitor testing out self-service supermarket inside the *Caravan of Modern Food Service*, France. RG 286-MP GEN-1992, NACP.
Figure 262: Interior view of supermarket display inside the Caravan of Modern Food Services, France. RG 286-MP GEN-1988, NACP.

Figure 263: Multilingual entrance didactic at Caravan for Modern Food Service. RG 286-MP GEN-1954, NACP.
Figure 264: Screening room at *Caravan for Modern Food Service*. RG 286-MP GEN-1996, NACP.

Figure 265: “Supermarket USA,” Zagreb, Yugoslavia 1957. Records of the International Trade Administration (ITA), RG 489-TF, NACP.
Figure 26: Visitors to “Supermarket USA” claiming gratis bags of groceries. Records of the ITA, RG 489-OF, NACP.
Figure 267: Günther Uecker, *Das gelbe Bild* (Yellow Painting), 1957-58. Nails and oil on canvas. 34 ¼ x 33 ½ inches. Archiv Günther Uecker.

Figure 268: Otto Piene, *Rauchbild*, 1961. Oil, fire, and soot on canvas. 26 ¼ x 38 inches. Private collection.
Figure 269: Aerial view of Berlin, 1945. Granger Historical Picture Archive.
Figure 270: “Trümmerfrauen” clearing the rubble, Berlin 1945. Bild 183-Z1218-315, Bundesarchiv-Bildarchiv.
Figure 271: Walter Sanders, “What Cigarettes will Buy,” December 1946. Time/Life Picture Collection.
Figure 274: Gerhard Richter, *Lebensfreude* mural, 1956. Deutsche Hygienemuseum, Dresden. Destroyed.

Figure 275: Gerhard Richter, Diploma Project for Prof. Lohmar (*Diplomarbeit*), 1956. Deutsche Hygienemuseum, Dresden. Destroyed.
Figure 276: Isaak I. Brodsky, Lenin on a Rostrum, 1927. Oil on canvas.

Figure 277: Pyotr Otsup, “Vladimir I. Lenin at the Podium,” 1918. In On the Happiness of People, 1967.
Figure 278: George Segal, *The Dinner Table*, 1962. ARTstor.
Figure 279: Roy Lichtenstein, *Woman Cleaning (The Refrigerator)*, 1962.
Figure 280: Tom Wesselmann, *Great American Nude, No. 29*, 1962. Mixed media and collage on board. 36 x 80 inches. Tom Wesselmann Estate.

Figure 281: James Rosenquist, *The lines were etched deeply in her face*, 1962. Oil on canvas. 66 x 78 inches. Collection of Meryl and Robert Meltzer. James Rosenquist Studio / VAGA, New York.
Figure 282: Andy Warhol, *Bonwit Teller*, 1961.

Figure 283: Claes Oldenburg, *The Store*, 1961.
Figure 284: Two invitations for Kaiserstr. 31A Sonderausstellung, 11 May 1963. Collection Tobias Kuttner, Berlin.
Figure 285: Manfred Kuttner, *Heiliger Stuhl* (Holy Chair), 1962. JOHAN KÖNIG Berlin.

Figure 286: Installation view at *Sonderausstellung*, Düsseldorf, 11 May 1963. Archiv Kuttner. Photograph by Manfred Kuttner.
Figure 287: Konrad Lueg, *Der OMO-Vertreter* (The Omo Rep), 1963.
Figure 28.8: Midcentury OMO print advertisement.
Figure 289: Example of a “Persilschein” denazification certificate. 3 December 1946.

Figure 290: Midcentury Persil detergent boxes, “Persil nichts pflegt besser—nichts wäscht weisser!” (“Persil: Nothing cleans better—nothing washes whiter!”).
Figure 292: Gerhard Richter, *Tote* (Dead), 1963. The Sidney and Harriet Janis Collection, MoMA, NY.
Figure 293: Gerhard Richter, *Erscheinung* (Shooting), 1962.
Figure 294: Gerhard Richter, *Eisläuferin* (Skater), 1963. Atelier Gerhard Richter.
Figure 295: Installation view at Sonderausstellung, Düsseldorf, 11 May 1963. Archiv Kuttner. Photograph by Manfred Kuttner.
Figure 296: Invitation for Leben mit Pop: Eine Demonstration für den kapitalistischen Realismus (Living with Pop: A Demonstration for Capitalist Realism), 11 October 1963. Estate Konrad Lueg.
Figure 299: Installation view of Room No. 1 (Living Room) at Living with Pop. Möbelhaus Berges, Düsseldorf, 11 October 1963. © 2014 ARS, New York/VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn. Photograph by Reiner Ruthenbeck.
Figure 300: Reiner Ruthenbeck’s contact sheet from *Living with Pop*. Möbelhaus Berges, Düsseldorf, 11 October 1963. 2014 ARS, New York/VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn. Photograph by Reiner Ruthenbeck.
Figure 301: Konrad Lueg, *Four Fingers*, 1963. Oil on canvas. Presumably destroyed.

Figure 302: Konrad Lueg, *Betende Hände* (Praying Hands), 1963. Oil on canvas.
Figure 303: Konrad Lueg, *Bockwürste auf Pappteller* (Bockwurst on Paper Plate), 1963. Presumably destroyed.
Figure 304: Gerhard Richter, *Mund* (Mouth), 1963. Atelier Gerhard Richter.

Figure 305: Gerhard Richter, *Papst* (Pope), 1963. Destroyed.
Figure 306: Gerhard Richter, *Hirsch* (Deer), 1963. Atelier Gerhard Richter.

Figure 307: Gerhard Richter, *Schloss Neuschwanstein* (Neuschwanstein Castle), 1963. Atelier Gerhard Richter.
Figure 308: Wayne Thiebaud, *Salad, Sandwiches, and Desserts*, 1962. Sheldon Museum of Art, University of Nebraska—Lincoln. VAGA, New York, NY.
Figure 309: “USA-Woche bei Koma,” West Berlin, date unknown. NACP.
NEU! UNKONVENTIONELL! NEU! UNKONVENTIONELL! NEU! UNKONVENTIONELL!

Warum brennst Du, Konsument?

Die Leistungsfähigkeit der amerikanischen Industrie wird bekanntlich nur noch vom Einfallsreichtum der amerikanischen Werbung übertroffen: Coca Cola und Hiroshima, das Deutsche Wirtschaftswunder und der vietnamesische Krieg, die Freie Universität Berlin und die Universität von Teheran sind die faszinierenden und erregenden Leistungen und weltweit bekannten Gütezeichen amerikanischer Werbung und amerikanischem Erfindergeist, geben dieses und jenseits von Mauer, Stacheldraht und Vorhang für Freiheit und Demokratie.

Mit einem neuen Gag in der vielseitigen Geschichte amerikanischer Werbemethoden wurde jetzt in Brüssel eine amerikanische Woche eröffnet: Ein ungewöhnliches Schaupiel bot sich am Montag den Einwohnern der belgischen Metropole.

Ein brennendes Kaufhaus mit brennend Menschen vermittelte zum erstenmal in einer europäischen Großstadt jenes künstlerische Gefühl (dabei zu sein und mitsubrennen), das in Berlin bislang noch missen müssen.

Skeptiker mögen davor warnen, 'König Kunde', den Konsumenten, den in unserer Gesellschaft zu einseitig Bevorzugten und Umworbenen, einfach zu verbrennen.

Schwarzseher mögen schon unsere so überaus komplizierte und kompliziert zu lenkende hochentwickelte Wirtschaft in Gefahr sehen.

So sehr wir den Schmerz der Unterbliebenen in Brüssel empfinden: wir, die wir dem heim aufgeschlossen sind, können, solange das rechte Maß nicht überschritten wird, dem Kühnen und dem Unkonventionellen, das, bei aller menschlicher Tragik, im Brüsseler Kaufhausbrand steckt, unsere Bewunderung nicht versagen.

Auch der Umstand, daß man dieses Feuerwerk Anti-Vietnam-Demonstranten anrichten will, vermag uns nicht irrezu führen. Wir kennen diese weitfremden jungen Leute, die immer die (Plakate) von Gestern tragen und wir wissen, daß sie trotz aller abstrakter Bücherschleier und romantischer Trümmereien noch immer an unserer dynamisch-amerikanischen Wirklichkeit vorbeigegangen sind.

KOMMUNE I (24.5.1967)
Verantwortlich: D. Enzensberger

Figure 310: “Warum brennst Du, Konsument?” Flyer Nr. 7 of Kommune 1. 24 May 1967. 1000 Schlüssel Dokumente zur Deutschen Geschichte im 20. Jahrhundert Online-Archiv.

408
Figure 311: Police inspecting fire damage caused by RAF at Kaufhof, Frankfurt. 3 April 1968. Deutsche Presse-Agentur.

Figure 312: Adolf Eichmann standing inside a bulletproof glass box during his trial, Jerusalem, 1961.
Figure 313: Sigmar Polke, *Socken* (Socks), 1963. The Estate of Sigmar Polke / VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn.

Figure 314: Sigmar Polke, *Berliner (Bäckerblume)* (Berliner Doughnuts), 1965.
Figure 315: Cover design of *magnum: Die Zeitschrift für das moderne Leben*. “The Society in which we Live,” No. 12 (April 1957).
Figure 316: Depictions of shopping in West Germany. Double-page spread in *magnum*. No. 12 (April 1957).

Figure 317: Depictions of hardships in the Eastern Bloc. Double-page spread in *magnum*. No. 12 (April 1957).
Figure 318: “Herbstliche Visionen!” (Advertisement for *Living with Pop*). 5 October 1963. *Der Mittag*.

Figure 319: Advertisement for *Living with Pop*. 5 October 1963. *Der Mittag*. 
Figure 320: Claes Oldenburg, *The Stove (Assorted Food on a Stove)*, 1962.
Figure 322: René Block inside his office. Galerie René Block, West Berlin, 1969. Photograph by K.P. Brehmer.
Figure 323: Galerie René Block. Froebenstraße 18, West Berlin, 1964.
Figure 324: Cover of Grafik des Kapitalistischen Realismus (Graphics of Capitalist Realism), 1968/71.
Figure 325: President John F. Kennedy on viewing platform over Berlin Wall looking into East Berlin, 26 June 1963.
Figure 326: US Military officials raise American flag shield over swastika on Reichsadler (Imperial Eagle), Tempelhofer Feld, West Berlin, 1948.
Figure 327: Reichsadler (Imperial Eagle) with American shield and painted head, Tempelhofer Feld, West Berlin, 1948.
Figure 328: Cover design illustrating violent demonstrations in front of Amerika Haus Berlin, *Agit 883*, issue 60, 1970.

Figure 329: Rolf Ficker’s letter published in *Agit 883*.
Figure 330: Incendiary device deposited in Amerika Haus Berlin, 12 December 1969.

Figure 331: Demonstration against the US marching into Cambodia and the unlawful deaths of four Kent State students five days earlier. Amerika Haus Berlin, 9 May 1970.
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Nachlass Friedrich Wilhelm Foss. Berlin, Germany.

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*Deutsche Nationalbibliothek. Frankfurt, Germany.*

*Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library (C.D. Jackson Papers, 1931-1967; Dwight D. Eisenhower Papers as President; Cabinet Series Box 14 Nov 6, 1959; Dulles-Herter Series Box 2; Eleanor L. Dulles Papers, 1880-1994; John Foster Dulles Papers, 1951-1959; Lauris Norstad Papers; Lilly P. Edward Papers, 1928-1992; US President’s Committee on Activities Abroad: Records, 1959-61), Abilene, KS.*

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*Library of Congress. Washington, D.C.*


*National Archives and Records Administration. College Park, MD.*

*Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin. Berlin, Germany.*

*Universität der Künste Berlin, University Archives. Berlin, Germany*
Select newspapers and periodicals:

Berliner Zeitung
Bildende Kunst
Blickpunkt
B.Z.
Das Kunstwerk
Der Abend
Der Mittag
Der Morgen
Der Spiegel
Der Tagesspiegel
Deutsche Filmkunst
Die Fotografie
Die Kamera
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471


