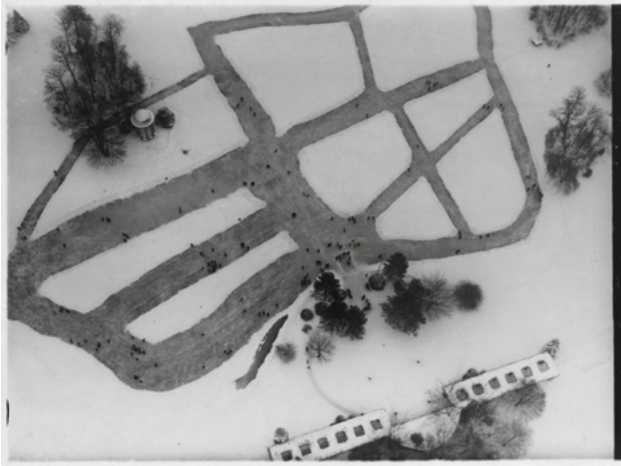


Robert Petschow, Eisbahn auf Schlosssteich, um 1930,  
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# **Robert Petschow and the New Vision**

**Thomas Friedrich Research  
Grant in Photography**

**1.10.20 – 29.3.21**

Since January 2014, the Berlinische Galerie has awarded the Thomas Friedrich Research Grant in Photography. Sponsored by its founder, the designer, publisher, collector and photohistorian Manfred Heiting (The Heiting Library Trust), it offers young researchers an opportunity to spend a year investigating a specific set of works in the Photography Collection.

In 2019, bursary holder Michael Kempf worked on Robert Petschow (1888–1945), whose often seemingly outlandish aerial views taken in the 1920s and 1930s are still held in great esteem by historians of the medium. Some thirty of his works will be shown in their own room within the permanent collection. Photographs from the holdings of the Berlinische Galerie will be complemented by loans from the Lübecker Museen – Museum Behnhaus Drägerhaus.

Petschow was a well-known balloonist in the Weimar Republic. By 1935 he had completed almost 400 ascents and won about thirty competitions. Scholars of photography value him above all for the aerial views he took during the 1920s and 1930s. These not only appeared in aviation journals and illustrated magazines, but were regularly shown during his own slide lectures and in celebrated exhibitions and publications devoted to the New Vision (Neues Sehen). In 1929 they even featured in the Werkbund show “Film und Foto” in Stuttgart and were selected by Franz Roh and Jan Tschichold for “foto-auge”, their volume of 76 contemporary photographs. With his camera he also accompanied the famous airships of the period, such as the “Graf Zeppelin” (LZ 127) on its voyage to Egypt and Palestine in 1931.

To convey what the balloon experience felt like, Petschow often cropped his images radically, sometimes cutting out the spatial context altogether and thereby alienating the motif. As a result, his aerial photography caught the attention of the avant garde from the second half of the 1920s.

Petschow’s biography after 1930 suggests, however, that the former reserve army lieutenant soon disassociated himself from avant-garde photography. As chief editor of the daily newspaper “Der Westen”, he quickly made his peace with the Nazi regime. A few weeks after the German Air Force was founded, he submitted his application to join.



## **Thomas Friedrich Research Grant: Jury and benefactor**

With some 80,000 photographs, the Berlinische Galerie boasts one of Germany's leading photography collections. It reflects the city's contribution to the development of the medium from the middle of the 19th century until the present day. Principal themes are portraits and urban views, new trends in Modernist photography and pioneering auteur photography since the 1970s. It still contains one of the most significant collections reflecting the history of photography in the GDR and also features outstanding works by contemporary photographers.

The research grant endowed with 15,000 euros a year has been made possible thanks to the support of the internationally acclaimed designer, editor and historian of photography Manfred Heiting, and it is organised in close partnership with him. The grant itself is named after the Berlin curator, publisher, writer and historian of photography Thomas Friedrich (1948–2011). His passion for the medium and his instinct for promising research are an inspiration, encouraging scholars to probe hitherto uncatalogued holdings in the Berlinische Galerie collection.

Questions and themes for this research are formulated by an expert jury consisting of: Janos Frecot (former curator of the Photography Collection at the Berlinische Galerie), Ulrich Domröse (Curator of the Photography Collection at the Berlinische Galerie), Dr Ingrid Wagner, and Manfred Heiting as an informal member.

## **Publication of research findings**

The findings of Thomas Friedrich bursary holders are published under the museum's own imprint "Forschungsberichte". "Robert Petschow and the New Vision" will come out in October 2020 (published by: Berlinische Galerie, author: Michael Kempf, 80 pages, 73 illustrations, price: 24.50 €). ISBN 978-3-940208-64-4

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8€, concessions 5€  
(Prices may vary during  
temporary exhibitions)

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