



Lajos Tihanyi, Großes Interieur mit Selbstbildnis – Mann am Fenster, 1922
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Magyar Modern

**Hungarian Art in Berlin
1910 – 1933**

4.11.22 – 6.2.23

Berlin plays a special role in the history of Hungarian art and culture. Even before the First World War Hungarian artists came to the rapidly growing city in search of a platform to reach out to an international audience. After a failed revolution in 1919, now driven from their homeland by reactionary forces, the banks of the Spree offered a place to explore creative freedom.

The exhibition “Magyar Modern” (“Hungarian Modernists”) at the Berlinische Galerie will break new ground by honouring the versatile Hungarian contribution to modern art in the German capital. It will broaden a still Western-oriented canon to include the artistic achievements of Central Eastern Europe. The cosmopolitan Berlin of the Weimar Republic was a formative chapter in the development of these mostly young artists. As one of the largest groups of exiles in the city, they enriched Berlin’s avant-garde significantly with novel and progressive input. The advent of National Socialism cut this two-way inspiration short and erstwhile bonds sank into oblivion.

Some 200 paintings, prints, sculptures, photographs, films, stage designs and architectural drawings on display at the museum will rekindle memories of those close links between Hungarian artists and Berlin.

Major works from Hungarian art history

The nine sections of the exhibition will feature key works by unsung artists – all established names in Hungarian art history – produced or exhibited here during those Berlin years. The story begins with the group known as “The Eight”. Hungary’s modernists, schooled in brightly coloured brushwork by the French Fauves, celebrated their Berlin debut at the Secession in 1910. In the 1920s it was above all Herwarth Walden who recognised and promoted the innovative power of Hungarian painters. By offering them a platform of European renown at his gallery “Der Sturm”, he was also able to expand his profile: Béla Kádár and Hugó Scheiber blended Expressionism with Futurism, bringing to life such different motifs as the Hungarian puszta and Berlin night-life. Sándor Bortnyik, László Moholy-Nagy and Peter László Péri, by contrast, were radically abstract and gave Constructivism a decisive boost.

Impressive variety

Hungarian artists were on show at many other venues too, including the prestigious galleries run by Fritz Gurlitt and Ferdinand Möller, the annual Great Berlin

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Art Exhibition and events held by the Academy of Arts. Their works demonstrate with impressive variety how differently these exiles experienced Berlin and reflected their response in their art. József Nemes Lampérth used ink for large formats evoking dark, feverish wartime dreams, while Lajos Tihanyi's compositions with their sharp-edged shapes and striking colour contrasts absorb the urban bustle. As a foil to both, the handwoven tapestries by Noémi Ferenczy suggest a tranquil world where people live in harmony with work and nature.

Architecture for a modernist city

Hungarian architects were heavily involved in building and reconstructing Berlin during the 1920s. Architecture in the modernist style, adapting to the needs of a modern city, reflected new approaches and remain today as enduring landmarks, even if the creators have been forgotten. Fred Forbát designed working-class homes in Siemensstadt and Haselhorst, not to mention the SCC stadium. Oskar Kaufmann, a sought-after theatre architect, built half a dozen venues for Berlin, including the Hebbel-Theater, the Volksbühne, the Renaissance-Theater and the Kroll-Oper, where László Moholy-Nagy went on to produce a number of innovative stage sets.

Press photography and experimental film

Hungarians played an astonishingly diverse role in the flourishing of photography and cinema. As Berlin evolved into a global media metropolis in the late 1920s, Éva Besnyő and Martin Munkácsi – the latter as a staff photographer for the “Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung” – were key figures in the emergence of modern press photography. László Moholy-Nagy and Judit Kárász, leading proponents of the “New Vision”, explored the medium's technical potential. Their spectacular views of the Funkturm showcase this icon of broadcasting technology with steep perspectives, diagonal compositions and strong contrasts. The spectrum of Hungarian cinema ranges from experimental avant-garde film to social documentaries, exemplified in Berlin by Moholy-Nagy and Miklós Bándy in their energetic pursuit of original film-making techniques.

The last section of the exhibition centres on works that reveal growing tensions in late Weimar society. A number of Hungarian artists had joined the German Social Democratic and Communist parties and the left-wing artists' association “ASSO”. Their acerbic cartoons satirised the increasingly evident

signs of rising National Socialism – until most of them were forced into a second exile when Adolf Hitler took power.

Artists (selected)

Miklós Bándy, József Bató, Róbert Berény, Aurél Bernáth, Éva Besnyő, Vjera Biller, Mihály Biró, Dezső Bokros Birman, Sándor Bortnyik, Brassai, Béla Czóbel, Lajos d'Ébneth, Sándor Ék, Jenő Feiks, Béni Ferenczy, Károly Ferenczy, Noémi Ferenczy, Fred Forbát, Ernst Jeges, Béla Kádár, György Kákay Szabó, Ernő Kállai, Judit Kárász, Lajos Kassák, Oskar Kaufmann, György Kepes, Károly Kernstok, János Mattis Teutsch, Etel Mittag-Fodor, László Moholy-Nagy, Martin Munkácsi, József Nemes Lampérth, Gyula Pap, Peter László Péri, Bertalan Pór, József Rippl-Rónai, Hugó Scheiber, Jolán Szilágyi, Lajos Tihanyi, Béla Uitz, Andor Weininger

Catalogue

The exhibition is accompanied by a catalogue in German and English published by Hirmer Verlag. 272 pages, 220 coloured illustrations, with 14 essays by researchers in Hungary, Germany, the United States and Canada: M. Bienert, O. Botár, R. Burmeister, E. Forgács, M. Gergely, N. Philippi, T. Frank, A. Katona, M. Orosz, W. Schöddert, M. P. Szeredi, A. Wolff, M. Wucher, A. Zwickl
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Accompanying events

A broad programme of events organised together with Collegium Hungaricum Berlin will explore the life and work of Hungarian musicians and writers in Berlin during the 1920s:

berlinischegalerie.de/en/programme/calendar/

Parallel to the exhibition at the Berlinische Galerie, Collegium Hungaricum Berlin will stage the exhibitions “Magyar Neo-Avant-Garde in the 1960s/1970s” (11 November 2022 – 27 January 2023), accompanied by films about the Hungarian neo-avant-garde, and



“The Avant-Garde Legacy” (18 November 2022 – 27 January 2023), featuring young generation artists from Hungary:
hungaricum.de

Outreach

Apart from curator tours, weekend tours for all-comers and bookable tours for groups, there will be free project days and specially designed tours for school groups. Other activities will cater for children and families and there will also be a range of accessible options. Outreach activities are organised in partnership with Jugend im Museum and Museumsdienst Berlin:

berlinischegalerie.de/en/programme/education

Audio guide

A free audio guide will be available in German and English to accompany the exhibition. Visitors can download the Web version onto their own mobile phones. The audio guide contains 22 entries with in-depth information about key exhibits:

bg.berlin/audioguide-magyar-modern

Podcast

The Berlinische Galerie podcast “Kunst in Berlin” (in German) will devote an episode to the exhibition. Director Thomas Köhler and Ralf Burmeister, head of the Artists’ Archives and the exhibition curator, will discuss the Hungarian avant-garde artists and the many traces they have left in the German capital. “Ungarische Kunst in Berlin” will be available on all the usual podcast platforms and online:

berlinischegalerie.de/podcast/kunst-in-berlin

Press images

berlinischegalerie.de/en/press-release/magyar-modern

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bg.berlin/en/tickets

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Contact **Berlinische Galerie**

Ulrike Andres
Head of Communication and Education
Tel +49 (0)30 78 902 829
andres@berlinischegalerie.de

Julia Lennemann
Communication
Tel +49 (0)30 78 902 831
lennemann@berlinischegalerie.de

Berlinische Galerie
Berlin’s Museum of Modern Art,
Photography and Architecture
Alte Jakobstraße 124–128
10969 Berlin
berlinischegalerie.de

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Wed – Mon 10 am – 6 pm
Tue closed

Contact **Press**

Bureau N
Friederike Wode
Tel +49 3062736102
friederike.wode@bureau-n.de