



BERLINISCHE GALERIE

LANDESMUSEUM FÜR MODERNE
KUNST, FOTOGRAFIE UND ARCHITEKTUR
STIFTUNG ÖFFENTLICHEN RECHTS

ALTE JAKOBSTRASSE 124-128
10969 BERLIN
POSTFACH 610355 – 10926 BERLIN

FON +49 (0) 30 –789 02-600
FAX +49 (0) 30 –789 02-700
BG@BERLINISCHEGALERIE.DE

PRESS INFORMATION

Ulrike Andres
Head of
Marketing and Communications
Fon +49 (0)30 789 02-829
andres@berlinischegalerie.de

Contact:
Diana Brinkmeyer
Marketing and Communications
Fon +49 (0)30 789 02-775
brinkmeyer@berlinischegalerie.de

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Modern Visionaries

Paul Scheerbart, Bruno Taut, Paul Goesch
15.04.–31.10.2016



Paul Goesch, Kopf mit Farbteilung,
ca. 1920, Berlinische Galerie

“That is ultimately what we want: Utopia!” (Walter Gropius 1919)

“Modern Visionaries” is devoted to the brief but dramatic period between 1918 and 1923 – the end of World War I, the November Revolution and the formative years of the Weimar Republic. Architectural visions and drawings by three visionaries of the early twentieth century are being presented together for the first time at the Berlinische Galerie. Around 1914 the writer, poet and inventor Paul Scheerbart (1863-1915) inspired the young architect Bruno Taut (1880-1938) to take up his ideas about building with colored glass. The building material glass was thought capable of helping to bring a harmonious society into existence – a utopia as clear as glass that extended out past the planets into outer space: “Light seeks to penetrate the whole cosmos and is alive in crystal,” wrote Scheerbart for Taut’s famous Glass Pavilion built in 1914 for the Werkbund Exhibition in Cologne.

The exhibition focuses on the visionary art of Paul Goesch (1885-1940). Even while still studying architecture in Berlin before the outbreak of World War I, the young artist turned to painting. He was one of the participants of that important forum for utopian architecture, the “Crystal Chain” correspondence initiated by Taut in 1919. Goesch’s fragile mental state required numerous hospitalizations in psychiatric clinics and he was permanently institutionalized after 1921. In 1940 he fell victim to the so-called T4 Action, the Nazi program of forced euthanasia. The exhibition unites around eighty of his colored gouaches from between 1919 and 1923 with selected drawings and texts by Paul Scheerbart, whose double talent as a writer and draftsman is likewise prominently represented by important examples in the collection of the Berlinische Galerie. For Bruno Taut – the third member of this visionary triumvirate and a crucial figure for both Scheerbart and Goesch – we were able to draw on the



collegial support of the Baukunstarchiv at the Akademie der Künste in Berlin to integrate loans of works by Bruno Taut and other members of the Crystal Chain such as Hermann Finsterlin, Wenzel Hablik and Hans Scharoun. In addition, never before exhibited architectural visions by Paul Goesch were selected from the holdings of the Baukunstarchiv to supplement the motifs inspired by Christianity or Buddhism from the collection of the Berlinische Galerie. Paul Goesch can be seen in these works as a visionary Expressionist without any salvational emotionalism whose ornamental structures and colorful, exotic pictorial worlds are marked by humor and an affirmation of life, despite the dangers they visualize.

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMME

Guided tour and lecture on International Museum Day (in German)

May 22, from 11 am, museum admission, registration not required

11 am guided tour with Dr. Annelie Lütgens, head of the collection of prints and drawings, exhibition curator, 12 noon lecture "Paul Goesch im Kontext der Sammlung Prinzhorn" by PD Dr. Thomas Röske, head of the Prinzhorn Collection, University Clinic, Heidelberg

A number of drawings and a sketchbook by Paul Goesch already entered the collection of the Psychiatric University Clinic Heidelberg at the time of Hans Prinzhorn between 1919 and 1921. However, the art historian and physician did not take them under consideration in his survey textbook "Bildnerie der Geisteskranken" (1922). The lecture positions Goesch's work in Heidelberg then and now.

Curator's tours (in German)

Monday, 30.05., 13.06., 04.07., 01.08., 29.08., 2 pm
Museum admission, registration not required

Public Guided Tour in English

Monday, 03.10. 3 pm
Tour is included in Happy-Monday-admission



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EXHIBITION TEXTS

Modern Visionaries. Paul Scheerbart, Bruno Taut, Paul Goesch

Times of crises and upheavals are also the times of the visionary. Our exhibition is devoted to the brief but dramatic period between 1918 and 1923 – the end of World War I, the November Revolution and the formative years of the Weimar Republic. Diverse societal forces, including artists, were setting out to improve the world, which they wanted to turn into a place of peace, of prosperity and of beauty, and where all the arts would unite in architecture. Visionary ideas and buildings for a new society – that was the plan.

Paul Scheerbart (1863–1915), Bruno Taut (1880–1938) and Paul Goesch (1885–1940) participated in this new beginning in different ways. The exhibition focuses on Scheerbart as a visionary poet and draftsman, on Taut as a visionary architectural theorist and on Goesch as an architectural painter-poet and outsider artist. Bruno Taut assumes the role of inspirer and intermediary within this triumvirate. He disseminated Paul Scheerbart's utopias and created a forum for Paul Goesch's texts and drawings.

The exhibition unites drawings, photographs and models by Bruno Taut, Hans Scharoun, Hermann Finsterlin, Wenzel Hablik, Hans and Wassili Luckhardt from the collection of the Baukunst-Archiv at the Akademie der Künste with drawings by Paul Scheerbart and Paul Goesch from the holdings of the Berlinische Galerie.

Paul Scheerbart (1863-1915)

Paul Scheerbart's fantastic future visions influenced artists, architects and theorists. He already began propagating life in glass buildings in his novels from the late nineteenth century. In 1913/14 the author inspired the architect Bruno Taut to take up his ideas about building with colored glass. Scheerbart dedicated his 1914 theoretical treatise *Glass Architecture* to Taut, who in turn erected his Glass Pavilion that same year in the poet's sense at the Cologne Werkbund Exhibition.

Alongside his bizarre, humorous novels and caricature-like drawings, Scheerbart's vision of a "glass culture" make up the foundation of fantastic architecture and the emergent Expressionism. The building material glass was thought capable of helping to bring a harmonious society into existence—a utopia that extended far into outer space: "Light seeks to penetrate the whole cosmos and is alive in crystal," wrote Scheerbart in 1914 for Taut's Glass Pavilion. There was a dominating preference for crystalline construction elements that veered between art form and natural object.

Bruno Taut (1880-1938)

More than any other architect of his generation, Taut was someone who influenced and practiced the two decisive stylistic art movements of the nineteen tens and twenties: Expressionism and New Objectivity. In the economically difficult post-war years Taut published his visionary ideas in texts, colored drawings and architectural designs. He had already realized his preference for colored building prior to World War I at the Gartenstadt Falkenberg near Berlin and in 1925 at the Hufeisensiedlung (Horseshoe Estate) in Berlin-Britz. Taut became the spokesman of the Workers Council for Art upon its foundation in 1918 in conjunction with the German November Revolution. After founding of the *Crystal Chain* correspondence in 1919 he edited the magazine *Frühlicht* from 1920 to 1922, turning it into a forum for visionary architecture. At the same time Taut also designed stage sets and costumes for the Deutsches Theater and stood as a universal artist and pioneer of modernism at the focal point of a cultural network in the early twentieth century.



The Crystal Chain

"We are not an artist group. 'Building' takes precedence over all artistry. Only the great mirth will become victorious. Dancing and building!"

In a letter from November 1919, Bruno Taut employed these words to invite colleagues to an exchange of ideas by mail. The result was the famous *Crystal Chain* correspondence that until late 1920 would evolve into a kind of visionary think tank. The motivation behind it stems from the November Revolution of 1918. Artists and architects also founded the Workers Council for Art that same year and Bruno Taut became its spokesman. Organized by the Arbeitsrat, the *Exhibition for Unknown Architects* went on show in April 1919 with the objective of lending architecture new expression and social significance. Several of its participants would also take part in the *Crystal Chain*. At Taut's suggestion, all of the participants employed pen-names. Hermann Finsterlin thus went by the name *Prometh*; Paul Goesch *Tancred*; Wenzel Hablik *W.H.*; Hans Luckhardt *Angkor*; Wassili Luckhardt *Zacken*; Hans Scharoun *Hannes* and Bruno Taut *Glas*.

Between 1920 and 1922 Bruno Taut published the contributions to the *Crystal Chain* in the journal *Frühlicht*.

Paul Goesch (1885-1940)

The architect Paul Goesch belongs to a generation of artists who rejected the Wilhelmine regime in Germany and set off for new horizons: life reform and psychoanalysis, Expressionism and mystic Catholicism were areas he occupied himself with or which directly affected him. Goesch supported the objectives of the Workers Council for Art as well as of the November Group that was founded in 1919 and participated in their exhibitions. His fragile mental state required numerous hospitalizations in psychiatric institutions. Five of his paintings that had been acquired by the Kunsthalle Mannheim were confiscated in 1937/38 in conjunction with the National Socialist "cleansing action." Goesch's works were presented at the infamous "Degenerate Art" exhibition as those of a professional modern artist on the one hand as well as those of a "lunatic" on the other. The artist was murdered in August 1940 in Brandenburg, falling victim to the so-called T4 Action, the Nazi program of forced euthanasia. His drawings and ornamental architectural designs in a fantastic visionary Expressionist style still remain to be rediscovered.



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PRESS IMAGES



Paul Goesch,
Kopf mit Farbteilung, ca. 1920,
Berlinische Galerie, Repro: Kai-Annett Becker



Paul Goesch,
Selbstportrait, undated,
Berlinische Galerie, Repro: Kai-Annett Becker



Paul Goesch,
Festsaal, 1921,
Berlinische Galerie, Schenkung der Erbgemeinschaft
aus dem Nachlass des Künstlers, Repro: Kai-Annett Becker



Paul Scheerbart,
Ein Zukunftschild, um 1912,
Berlinische Galerie, Repro: Kai-Annett Becker



Paul Goesch,
Ohne Titel (Bajadere mit rosa Rock), ca. 1920,
Berlinische Galerie, Repro: Kai-Annett Becker



Paul Scheerbart,
Jenseitsgalerie, 1907, sheet 3 of 10,
Berlinische Galerie, Repro: Kai-Annett Becker



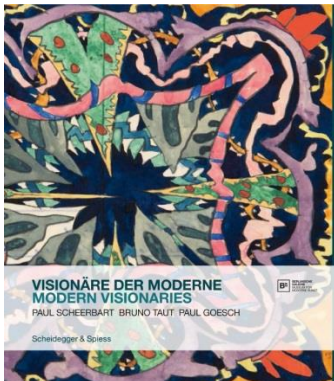
Bruno Taut,
Glashaus auf der Werkbundausststellung auf Köln 1914,
Ansicht von außen, Akademie der Künste, Berlin,
Bruno-Taut-Sammlung, photographer unknown

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CATALOGUE



On the occasion of the exhibition in the Berlinische Galerie (15.04.–31.10.2016) Scheidegger & Spiess will publish the exhibition catalogue „Modern Visionaries. Paul Scheerbart, Bruno Taut, Paul Goesch“.

Architectural utopias, drawings, and texts by three visionaries of the early twentieth century are united here for the first time. The novelist, poet and inventor Paul Scheerbart (1863-1915) inspired the young architect Bruno Taut (1880-1938) with his ideas on building with colored glass. Paul Goesch (1885-1940), a trained architect, produced hundreds of fantastic visionary drawings. He was one of the correspondents who contributed to the “Crystal Chain”, the famous forum on utopian building initiated by Taut in 1919.

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