

Exhibition “Designing for Berlin. Design from the Academy of Art Berlin- Weißensee”

Press previews: April 13, 2026, 3 – 5 pm

Opening: April 15, 2026, 7 pm

Duration: April 16, 2026 – February 22, 2027

The new exhibition “Designing for Berlin” by the Werkbundarchiv – Museum der Dinge focuses on a central aspect of design: the education of designers.

To this end, the Werkbundarchiv – Museum der Dinge is collaborating with the weißensee kunsthochschule berlin, which celebrates its 80th anniversary in 2026. Founded in 1946 in north-east Berlin within the Soviet occupation zone, the academy reflects the city’s post-war history – with all its ruptures, upheavals, and transformations.

As a school for applied arts, Weißensee viewed itself at the time as a counterpart to a traditional art academy. The “applied arts” started with everyday life, which is where the need in the war-torn city was greatest. All artistic disciplines – painting, sculpture, graphic design, stage design, fashion and textiles, ceramics, and industrial design – were directly related to architecture and the living environment.

The institution’s profile has been shaped by modernist designers such as Herbert Hirche, Mart Stam, and Selman Selmanagić. Their pedagogical approaches, including a shared foundation course, a close connection to professional practice and interdisciplinary work, remain relevant to this day.

“Designing for Berlin” sheds light on artistic foundations, design processes, and professional practice, bringing together historical and contemporary works from the fields of product design and graphic design. In addition, the exhibition examines current perspectives: What does it mean to study design today?

From the Berlinale poster to the lettering for Kino International, from the U-Bahn to the bicycle, from the World Clock to climate-protective façades, firewalls or theatre posters: generations of students, teachers and graduates from Weißensee have had a profound influence on Berlin’s urban spaces, culture and mobility, in short: the everyday life in the city.

The exhibition serves as a sketch and makes no claim to completeness. It neither encompasses the work of all individuals and disciplines over eight decades nor traces activities beyond Berlin.

Against the backdrop of pressing social and ecological challenges, as well as extensive budget cuts in the fields of science and culture, “Designing for Berlin” highlights the innovative and formative power of design, culture and teaching, and their importance for a sustainable and liveable city.

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BIC BEVODEBB

Opening on April 15, 2026, 7 pm (Free admission)

Welcome Address: Cerstin Richter-Kotowski, State Secretary for Culture,
Senate Department for Culture and Social Cohesion Berlin

Welcome Address: Dr. Angelika Richter, President of the weißensee academy of art berlin

Curatorial Introduction: Silke Ihden-Rothkirch, Florentine Nadolni, Curators

On the Scenography: Elizaveta Parfenova, Jonas Leue, students of the
weißensee academy of art berlin

Music: DJ Royal Radiator

The exhibition will be accompanied by an extensive program of events and educational activities. These events are held in German, unless otherwise indicated:

Talks, Lectures & Readings

Thu May 21, 2026, 6 pm

Arbeiten für Berlin

Panel discussion with aufsiemitgebrüll, Claudia Schramke, Various&Gould

Thu June 18, 2026, 6 pm

Umbrüche: von der DDR in die BRD

Panel discussion with Matthias Gubig, Joachim Hamster Damm, Nanne Meyer,
Henning Wagenbreth

Thu July 2, 2026, 6 pm

Hirdina Lecture I

„Nicht, dass das am Ende zu kopflastig wird!“

Reading and talk with Dominik Harborth and Thomas Schmiedgen

Thu September 17, 2026, 6 pm

Von Vagabunden, Rechthabern und Marxisten

Lecture by Jörg Petruschat

Book Launch: „Zukünfte bilden“ (Shaping Futures) – Conference proceedings of
the Gesellschaft für Designgeschichte

Thu October 15, 2026, 6 pm

greenlab: Neue Materialgerechtigkeit

Panel discussion with Mareen Baumeister, Sofia Fernández, Joana Schmitz

Mo November 2, 2026, 6 pm

Berliner Bildgeschichten

Panel discussion with Mawil, Ulli Lust, Bea Davies, Lias Sinram

Thu January 21, 2027, 6 pm

Hirdina Lecture II

Utopische Konstruktionen. Avantgardeprojekt

Reading and talk with Silke Ihden-Rothkirch

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Thu February 18, 2027 6 pm

Die Zukunft der visuellen Arbeit

Panel discussion with Wim Westerveld, Quang Nguyen, Jan-Henning Raff

Guided Tours

(In German, unless otherwise indicated)

Curator-Led Tours

30 Apr | 4 June | 13 Aug | 16 Nov | 22 Feb, 6 pm

Berlin gestalten – Guided Tours for All

3 May | 7 June | 5 July | 2 Aug | 6 Sept | 4 Oct | 1 Nov | 6 Dec | 3 Jan | 7 Feb, 2 pm

Designing for Berlin – Guided Tours in English

3 May | 17 May | 13 Sept | 18 Oct | 22 Nov | 21 Feb, 3 pm

Auf Spurensuche: Design in Berlin – Interactive Family* Tours

10 May | 14 June | 12 July | 9 Aug | 13 Sept | 11 Oct | 8 Nov | 13 Dec | 10 Jan | 14 Feb,
2 pm

Von Berlinale-Bär bis Weltzeituhr – Tours in Easy Language

2 June, 4:30 pm | 14 July, 4 pm | 24 Oct, 1 pm

Workshops

(In German)

Bären für alle! Gestaltungsexperimente auf Papier für Familien*

26 Apr | 17 May | 11 July | 23 Aug | 31 Oct | 31 Jan, 2 – 5 pm

BAU_M_ICH: Modulare Möbel aus Holz bauen with Melinda Barth

3 May | 7 June | 5 July, 2 – 6 pm

in cooperation with greenlab – Laboratory for sustainable design strategies

Porzellan mit Glasurtechniken upcyceln with Jonathan Bläsi

6 Sept | 4 Oct, 3 – 5 pm

in cooperation with greenlab – Laboratory for sustainable design strategies

Cornprints: 3D-Druck mit Mais mit Luis Enrique Mendivil Castañeda

1 Nov | 3 Jan, 3 – 6 pm

in cooperation with greenlab – Laboratory for sustainable design strategies

Bären gestalten: Grafische Experimente with Claudia Schramke

6 Dec, 3 – 6 pm

Formen und Gestalten mit Folien aus Apfeltrester with Verena Brom

7 Feb, 3 – 6 pm

in cooperation with greenlab – Laboratory for sustainable design strategies

Power-Poster für Berlin – Ferienworkshops für Kinder von 8 bis 12 Jahren

17 Aug – 20 Aug | 26 Oct – 29 Oct, 10 am – 3 pm

in cooperation with Jugend im Museum

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Curation

Silke Ihden-Rothkirch, Florentine Nadolni

Scenography & Graphic Design

studio mut und anmut of the weißensee academy of art berlin: Mara Avendaño, Carla Baumeister, Finn Drews, Daniel Fleer, Kélian Gerva, Konstantin Hildebrandt, Matthias Hübner, Jil Krevet, Jonas Leue, Linus Link, Elizaveta Parfenova, Lotte Riedel, Steffen Schuhmann; supported by Thilo Albers, Robert Huber and Klára Prešnajderová

Funding & Cooperation

The exhibition is sponsored by the Capital Cultural Fund and is a collaboration with the weißensee academy of art berlin.

The programme of events and educational activities is made possible with the support of bauhaus Dessau e.V.

The Werkbundarchiv – Museum der Dinge is an institution funded by the Berlin Senate Department for Culture and Social Cohesion.

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FONDS

weißensee
kunsthochschule
berlin

Senatsverwaltung
für Kultur und
Gesellschaftlichen Zusammenhalt

BERLIN



For any questions please contact:

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