



Berlin's Art World

An Overview of the Most Exciting Exhibitions at Berlin's Gallery Weekend

by Bettina Kraus

It all began back in the year 2005 as a co-operation between very few Berlin galleries, developed into a recipe for success, and was later adopted by numerous other cities: The Gallery Weekend – the original from Berlin – took place for the 21st time this year in May. Each spring, a maximum of 55 Berlinbased galleries present exhibitions by emerging and established artists. For this year's edition, 52 galleries throughout the global art capital were showing the works of a pleasingly equal number of female and male artists from more than 20 different countries. Internationally renowned stars of the scene could be seen alongside new discoveries in 80 exhibitions, which attracted curators, collectors, tourists, and art enthusiasts from all over the world to come to Berlin.

Despite the diversity of the positions, there were also similarities to be found, said Antonia Ruder, director of the Gallery Weekend. The exploration of queer topics, identity, power structures and gender roles were recurring themes. Compared to earlier editions dominated by a large number of shows which only included paintings, many exhibitions that were part of this year's Gallery Weekend seemingly welcomed experimentation with open arms. The opening weekend was full of events, parties, soirees, and side events such as the Sellerie Weekend, which takes place every year parallel to Gallery Weekend and emphasises the city's huge artistic diversity. Berlin welcomed its guests with beautiful spring weather, perfect for exploring the city's world of galleries. *ZOO* has selected some of the most exciting exhibitions that were on view.

Olafur Eliasson At neugerriemschneider

a surprise before it's reduced, split, and then further reduced - the title of Olafur Eliasson's new show allows a faint guess as to what awaits visitors at gallery neugerriemschneider in Prenzlauer Berg, Berlin, Slow-moving objects, some of which appear complex in their form, sometimes in all colours, sometimes grey, fill the high gallery spaces that were once used by a brewery. As playful as they are unfathomable, they attract visitors and, as the title suggests, seduce the viewer and their perception. The show builds on Eliasson's ongoing exploration of the relativity of perception and features a new body of works that engages with the physical properties of light. In the artist's words: "At my studio, I often explore the limits of my own perceptions, the extent to which I am blind to certain things, I ask myself what surprises me and what doesn't. A surprise is a function of something being revealed that was unexpected. Yet there are things that exist within this window of an unfolding surprise, in which something unexpected arrives, is revealed, becomes known, that I am interested in exploring in my exhibition at neugerriemschneider. I have recently become fascinated by polarizing filters, as they obscure and reveal simultaneously. When they are placed over the

window and shifted and combined, they provide an opportunity to experience darkness and light at the same time. You could say that it is about how I often know things I don't see, even though I don't see them. I am interested in the possibility of experiencing something that you are certain is not there. You see that it is not present in the room, and yet you experience it anyway. If I cannot imagine that it is possible, how does it happen? These new works explore this paradox spatially, approaching it as something physical that can be experienced through your real-time engagement with it. The lure is mildly unsettling and fascinating. It holds the possibility of being unforeseeable."

www.neugerriemschneider.com



Installation view of The lure of looking through a polarised window of opportunities, or seeing a surprise before it's reduced, split, and then further reduced, 2025
Photography by Jens Ziehe
Courtesy of the artist and neugerriemschneider, Berlin



Klára Hosnedlová At Hamburger Bahnhof

"The individual objects are like fragments from different cultural landscapes — the sculptures, embroideries, sometimes also paintings. Each object is a self-contained work, and regardless of their role within the overall installation, all elements and disciplines resonate with each other."

embrace is the title of the monumental installation of Berlin-based artist Klára Hosnedlová (born 1990) for the CHANEL Commission in the iconic historic hall of the Hamburger Bahnhof - Nationalgalerie der Gegenwart in Berlin. "You are supposed to feel hidden and safe here," said the artist herself during her first presentation of her major solo show. With her work - a utopian landscape - she wanted to counter the cool, industrial, and masculine architecture of the Hamburger Bahnhof — the museum was originally a train station built in 1848. Installed water points on the floor are intended to break the harshness and rigor of the architecture with soft reflections. Using delicate materials such as linen and hemp. Hosnedlová creates tapestries up to nine meters high, which, when installed in the location, are reminiscent of giant animal skins. She painstakingly transformed photos taken during earlier performances into artistic, largescale embroideries. In the exhibition, these are integrated into organic-looking reliefs reminiscent of fossils. Her filigree embroideries, which could be identified as paintings at first glance, are extraordinary not only because of their beauty and expression, but their extensive process of creation: the artist works on one piece for up to six months. Acoustic background music with songs by the female choir Lada, from her home country Czech Republic, turns the museum setting into an immersive, thought-provoking arena. "With its unparalleled scale, the CHANEL Commission at Hamburger Bahnhof is poised to become a must-see on Berlin's cultural calendar, placing the iconic hall - in a city synonymous with originality and reinvention — at the center of the global conversation on contemporary art", says Yana Peel, Global Head of Arts and Culture at CHANEL. Overall, an atmosphere between utopia and dystopia was created that evokes references to the artist's origins: The work reminds us of rural areas of today's Czech Republic, shaped by artisanal and industrial production processes as well as the shifting of national borders. Concrete slabs and iron walls recall the architecture of the communist era, grounding the utopian vision in a complex historical context. Klára Hosnedlová summarized: "Here, I see the whole installation in the historic hall as a slow shot across a landscape whose many details reflect memories, ideas, and unfinished stories."

The CHANEL Commission at Hamburger Bahnhof is an annual initiative that enables and empowers artists, like Hosnedlová, with her expansive sculptural work featuring tapestries up to nine meters high, site-specific objects, organic reliefs, and large-scale embroideries, to realize their ambitious projects within the 2,500 square meters spanning hall.

embrace is on show at Hamburger Bahnhof – Nationalgalerie der Gegenwart, in Berlin, until the end of October 2025.

www.smb.museum.com

KLÁRA HOSNEDLOVÁ,
CHANEL COMMISSION: KLÁRA HOSNEDLOVÁ
embrace, 2025,
installation view Hamburger Bahnhof —
Nationalgalerie der Gegenwart,
1.5. — 26.10.2025
© Courtesy Artist, Kraupa-Tuskany Zeidler, White Cube /
Nationalgalerie — Staatliche Museen zu Berlin,
Zdeněk Porcal — Studio Flusser

Danielle Brathwaite-Shirley At NOME

A brand new addition to Gallery Weekend and definitely worth a stop (you can't avoid Potsdamer Strasse during Gallery Weekend anyway) is NOME gallery that focuses on conceptual and gueer art. With UNCENSORED, NOME presents their first solo exhibition by Berlin-based artist and archivist Danielle Brathwaite-Shirley. She is best known for her immersive and interactive installations. performance works, and interactive video games that explore topics such as identity and misinterpretation through the creation of discomfort and confrontation. Her show The Soul Station was on view at Halle am Berghain in summer 2024. According to the artist, she is satisfied with her work when the viewer becomes active and, in particular, when they experience a sense of unease, a discomfort that prompts the viewer to reflect on their own perspective and the perspectives of possible others. Accordingly, UNCENSORED presents new works, paintings, drawings, screens, sound and video works, that confront the viewer with emotions that are often suppressed. In the face of increasing censorship, the exhibition and especially works such as They Spoke Too Freely create space for repressed conversations and encourage the audience to question their beliefs and reactions.

www.nomegallery.com



IMAGE 1
DANIELLE BRATHWAITE-SHIRLEY
They Spoke too Freely, 2024
Courtesy of the artist
NOME Gallery, Berlin
IMAGE 2 and 3
MONICA BONVICINI
Bitch, 2023
Spray paint on Fabriano paper
160.7 x 110.7 x 5 cm
Courtesy the artist and Capitain Petzel, Berlin

Monica Bonvicini and VG-Bildkunst, Bonn
Photography by Jens Ziehe





Monica Bonvicini At Capitain Petzel

sculptures, works on paper, a new site-specific video installation, and invites viewers to engage with themes of space, identity, and their construction. Her works Bitch, Vamp and Vamp focus on terms that have been used to demean women. We asked Bonvicini to describe how her art works (and the similar trend we currently see in music) bring about a reclamation of these terms. Her answer is: "The act of reclaiming words that have historically been used to marginalize or suppress women is an ongoing and complex process. These processes are rarely linear. Relationships are never one-way streets, and the use of language seems to work the same way. We must recognize that language not only describes someone; it also reveals something about the person using it. That duality is powerful. Words like 'Bitch' have been used in female rap, for example, as a reappropriation and relocation of meaning, employed to describe independent and confident women. And even though the context is different, powerful responses like that of Gisèle Pelicot have taught us that feelings of shame should change sides. The drawings in question act as a mirror, encouraging viewers to reflect on the terms themselves and their implications. It is not just about confronting language; it is also about feeling it, experiencing its weight. Art has the unique power to reframe perception. By presenting these works in clean, white-walled spaces, the context invites viewers to engage with the words anew, stripped of distraction but rich in meaning," Bonvicini's two-channel video installation lends its title to the exhibition and features three performers navigating an undefined environment. Unrelenting and restless, they repeatedly rearrange the interior. The continuous nature of their actions transcends individual gestures and can be interpreted as a broader reflection on the societal condition and an act of resistance. Bonvicini further explains: "The feeling of numbness, of powerlessness in which today's society lives is a condition that does not prevent a restless desire for change. Even if everything seems to have no immediate effect. I recently read that the plays of Samuel Beckett are once again being staged in German theaters, which feels particularly timely. There is something about the atmosphere of It Is Night Outside that resonates with the absurdity found in Beckett's work. In the video installation, the performers are constantly moving objects within the walls of an undefined space, rearranging their surroundings. It is an act of resistance, an unwillingness to accept the status quo or take their environment for granted. They challenge it, disrupt it. At the same time, the work acknowledges a hard truth: That there is no simple way out. The tension between the need for action, their unescapable repetitiveness is very much part of the piece." Spanning all three levels of the gallery. Bonvicini's exhibition is a must-see. She is one of the leading figures in contemporary art and, as she says herself, "driven by the desire to explore ideas and forms I have not seen before, things I would personally like to experience. If my work encourages people to think differently or sparks new perspectives, I consider that a success. I also hope it inspires younger artists to find their own path and trust their unique vision."

Monica Bonvicini's show It is Night Outside at Capitain Petzel includes new

www.capitainpetzel.de

Wim Wenders At Galerie Bastian

NEARBY AND FAR AWAY. PHOTOGRAPHY is the title of Wim Wenders' photo exhibition at Galerie Bastian, located in the very west of Berlin. Known as a filmmaker and for his documentary works such as Pina, Buena Vista Social Club, or The Salt of the Earth, and movie classics such as Paris, Texas and Wings of Desire, Wim Wenders' second passion is photography. His latest photographic works are on display at Galerie Bastain, taken during a stay in the Chinese countryside. Works such as China 1 show spaces with large horizons, landscapes whose pictorial space reaches out and yet appears present. Shapes, colours, and passersby of urban life dominate the images of China's big cities. The second part of the exhibition is also dedicated to the poetry of the moment: Snapshots from the forest that reflect the echo of silence. According to the gallery, "Wim Wenders sees the magical light phenomena from the deep centre of summer, the romantic forest that was once the untouchable cathedral of longing for the Germans, in which the young Goethe wrote the dreamy Wanderer's Night Song in 1780."

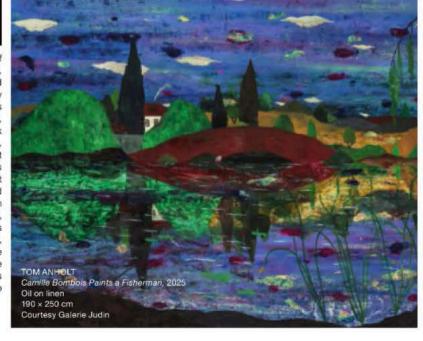
www.bastian-gallery.com



Camille Bombois by Tom Anholt At Galerie Judin

Camille Bombois, though widely recognized as a protagonist of modernity, remains something of an insider's secret. Over the years, Galerie Judin has acquired almost two dozen paintings by him and wanted to place these works in a contemporary context. The gallery asked painter Tom Anholt to invite artists like Andriu Deplazes, Anholt's mother Catherine Anholt, Emmanuel Bornstein, Esther Pearl Watson, Georgina Gratrix, Louis Fratino, and others to propose a single work each, one of which they believed that it reflected a sense of kinship, or perhaps even complicity, with Bombois and his way of thinking about the world back then. Tom Anholt's own painting's title is Camille Bombois Paints a Fisherman. Another project by Galerie Judin is a new spot to visit in Berlin: Tankstelle at Bülowstrasse 18 in Schöneberg, which opened during Gallery Weekend. The perfect idvllic place with a café and garden for a short break amidst the urban hustle and bustle. The two galleries, Judin and Pace, share the new location with the ZEIT Café. Whereas Pace Gallery has a group show Reverse Alchemy with works by Dubuffet. Basquiat, and Nava on display, iconic works by Tom of Finland can be seen at Judin. The need for the pseudonym Tom of Finland reflects the illegality at that time of the artist's explicit depictions of gay sex. It was only in later years that Touko Valio Laaksonen, aka Tom, was able to devote himself fully to his art making.

www.galeriejudin.com



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ART BERLIN GALLERY WEEKEND ART BERLIN GALLERY WEEKEND



Julian Charrière At Palais Populaire

For Ruinart's 'Conversations with Nature' programme, Berlinbased Swiss artist Julian Charrière created an exclusive series of artworks reflecting the champagne house's commitment to nature as part of the Gallery Weekend. With the series, he showcases art's ability to enlighten and transform us, in this case, promoting messages about biodiversity. "My work revolves around the concept of encounter - an intimate dialogue with places, biomes, and the environment. These moments are more than mere observations — they are a living exchange, in which landscape and present intertwine," says Julian Charrière. Based in Berlin, the Franco-Swiss artist's work, which challenges our cultural perceptions of nature and its transformation through the ages, most notably, from the Romantic era to the Anthropocene, fuses performance, video, sculpture, and photography. For Ruinart, Charrière created several Photolithographs, such as Liosina Paradoxa, depicting coral reefs as a homage to the Lutetian Sea, which covered the Champagne region 45 million years ago. The works were coloured with pigments from local limestone and crushed coral to artfully combine past and present. In another immersive installation, which is experienced in a darkened room, Charrière created a work that encourages reflection on the early geological history of Champagne and the threat to today's coral reefs.

www.julian-charriere.net / www.ruinart.com

JULIAN CHARRIÈRE

Veils - Liosina Paradoxa, 2025

Four-color photolithography printed with dead coral and chalk

Courtesy of Dittrich&Schlechtriem, Galerie Tschudi, OMR,

Perrotin, Sean Kelly, and Sies+Höke.

Copyright: the artist; VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn

ROMÉO MIVEKANNIN

After Jean Baptiste Ange Tissier, Odalisque, 2025 Acrylic and elixir bath on canyas

148 x 116 cm | 58 1/4 x 45 5/8 in

Courtesy of Galerie Barbara Thumm

Roméo Mivekannin At Galerie Barbara Thumm

Galerie Barbara Thumm is somewhat hidden away at Markgrafenstraße 68 in Berlin Kreuzberg, but it is well worth following the Gallery Weekend stickers. Although the gallery is predominantly dedicated to the representation of women, for Gallery Weekend, it is showing works by Ivory Coast-born artist Roméo Mivekannin. His exhibition Spleen alludes to European colonial and art history and the marginalisation of black protagonists. Mivekannin's second solo show at Galerie Barbara Thumm revisits the history of Orientalism with a bold intervention in the original paintings that he uses for inspiration. Presented as free-hanging canvases, his paintings do not merely reference the Orientalist tradition; they irritate it. In a subversive act, which Mivekannin refers to as "visual irritation," he reinterprets the original paintings or photographs and replaces the subjects' faces with his own black-and-white portrait, looking directly at the viewer. One impressive example is his work After Jean-Baptiste-Ange Tissier, Algérienne et son esclave. This direct gaze transforms the viewers into active participants and reclaims agency for the figures once rendered as dominated subjects, exposing the power dynamics embedded within the works. His approach, rooted in an act of critical reappropriation, turns Orientalism onto itself to reconsider its legacy in a contemporary context, as part of a collective healing process. His canvases, crafted from old bedsheets and infused with elixir baths inspired by voodoo rituals from Benin, where Mivekannin's family is from, carry profound spiritual and ancestral resonance.

www.bthumm.de





Sun Yitian At Esther Schipper

Well known in China, not so much yet in Europe, Sun Yitian's exhibition Romantic Room shows hyperrealistic paintings of childhood memories, which have many references to art history and question the role of today's women in society. Romantic Room continues Sun Yitian's multilayered approach to understanding what an image is and can be in contemporary painting. The paintings explore her personal history, intertwined with cultural and societal changes in China, through the country's image worlds, as well as how Western culture has been depicted in Chinese everyday life. For this exhibition, the artist draws on imagery from art history, massproduced consumer objects and toys, amusement Anthony Goicolea parks, but also on childhood memories and At CRONE observations from daily urban life. A particular man on nature.

www.estherschipper.com

Ralf Kokke At Kristin Hiellegierde

In his solo exhibition at the Kristin Hjellegjerde gallery, Ralf Kokke takes us into a world of dusk bathed n blue. It is a world of community and pleasure, where people come together to rest, make music, and bathe in harmony with nature. The title of the exhibition, Blue Blossom Lions, alludes to the recurring presence of lions in Kokke's dreams — guardians of his inner world and symbols of power and strength. In his paintings, predators of various kinds become companions, guiding both the artist and the viewer through the composition while retaining their mysterious, wild nature. The rough texture of the chalk paint gives works such as the painting Blue Biossom Lions a raw, almost primal quality, while the depictions of water and the impression of softness in the leaves of the trees and grass evoke a strong ensuality - a language that is both universal and deeply rooted in the body.

www.kristinhjellegjerde.com



focus of Romantic Room is on images that draw on On view at CRONE are new paintings on canvas and religious iconography and motifs from art history mylar in which Anthony Goicolea explores a theme that feature in ambitious compositions that hold that runs like a red thread through his entire body suspended multiple perspectives, cultures, and of work: The contradiction between inner and outer even temporal associations. Full of mysterious perception, the conflict between self-determination and beauty, the works count on a certain familiarity external influence, the tension between societal norms with the imagery. A cherubic child holding a and personal identity, resulting from diverse cultural pomegranate twig or a hooded figure holding an backgrounds, sexual orientations, or gender roles. iPhone looking at a Madonna-like statue, titled Anthony Goicolea, born in 1971 as the son of Cuban Virgin Mary in the Mirror may evoke Christian immigrants in Atlanta, Georgia, gained recognition associations, yet at the root of these paintings is for his digital photo collages and video works in the the artist's grappling with any inherent meaning late '90s, later focusing primarily on painting and images may have. The small child reads as angel installations. He himself was and is usually the focus but also echoes posters from the era of China's of the images he creates, just as in the exhibition Double one-child policy, incantatory images of prayer Standard on view at CRONE. Goicolea takes us on an and propaganda; the Madonna may in fact be emotional journey through the spheres of a constant a mass-produced object doubling as Buddhist search for meaning. He presents people caught in Guanyin, while the painting's complex composition bizarre, melancholic moments, seemingly trapped contains nods to Diego Velázquez' Las Meninas, between reality and a dream world. In a very tender, via Édouard Manet and Jeff Wall. Besides Sun but at the same time threatening way, his paintings Yitian's exhibition, Esther Schipper also displays capture the feeling that resonates deeply with almost three new works by Ethiopian artist Merikokeb all people who are queer or belong to another minority: Berhanu, whose work has already been shown at The consolidating brokenness, the brave yet fearful the Venice Biennale. Her works oscillate between approach to one's own identity, because you are not figurative, surrealistic, and abstract moments and like everyone around you. Goicolea's works, such as illustrate, among other things, the influence of Thinking, do not follow a traditional narrative; they rather show snapshots, short, frozen moments of the absurd but also liberating, as if someone had pressed the pause button in a shaky coming-of-age movie.

www.galeriecrone.com



SUN YITIAN Virgin Mary in the Mirror, 2024 Acrylic on canvas 208,6 x 161,6 x 9 cm (framed) Courtesy of Esther Schipper BALF KOKKE Blue Blossom Lion, 2025 Chalk paint on canvas @Ralf Kokke Courtesy of Kristin Hjellegjerde IMAGE3 ANTHONY GOICOLEA Thinking, 2025

Some exhibitions presented during the Berlin Gallery Weekend are on show until mid-June 2025

www.gallery-weekend-berlin.de

Courtesy the artist and Crone