

German Studies Association

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Source: *German Studies Review*, Vol. 38, No. 3 (October 2015), pp. 597-616

Published by: The Johns Hopkins University Press on behalf of the German Studies Association

Stable URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/24808963>

Accessed: 30-08-2023 12:38 +00:00

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East German Art and the Permeability of the Berlin Wall

April A. Eisman

ABSTRACT

This article challenges the commonly held belief that East German artists, and especially painters, were completely cut off from the West. Documenting the prevalence of postwar Western ideas and art in East Germany, the numerous trips East German artists took to the West, and the large number of exhibitions of East German art in West Germany after 1977, this article shows that the Wall was far more permeable for the visual arts than is currently recognized. Far from provincial, East German art offers vital insight into the dynamics of cultural exchange across the Iron Curtain.

Nearly twenty-five years after it was dismantled, the Berlin Wall still stands for many as an iconic image of the repressive nature of the East German government, which literally walled in its own people in 1961 to stop them from moving to the West. This “antifascist protection wall” significantly slowed the flow of ideas and people across the intra-German border, but it did not stop them altogether. As the British historian Patrick Major wrote in 2010, “the Wall was never a truly hermetic barrier.”¹ Indeed, recent scholarship has revealed that there was a significant exchange of ideas across the Wall in both directions. Greg Castillo, for example, looked at the competition and crossover between blocs that took place in the field of design in his book, *Cold War on the Home Front* (2010). This competition and exchange also happened in the visual fine arts, as this paper will show, and did so across the entire forty years of the Cold War period. By the 1980s, East German artists regularly exhibited work in the West, including at the prestigious Venice Biennale,² a fact that disrupts the commonly held belief, promoted by prominent art historians like Benjamin H.D. Buchloh, that successful East German artists were little more than “provincial hacks” unworthy of scholarly attention.³

German Studies Review 38.3 (2015): 597–616 © 2015 by The German Studies Association.

Buchloh's dismissal is part of a vitriolic assessment of East German art that, when read in full, may seem particularly extreme, but the idea that East German art and artists were cut off from the West is widespread in English-language scholarship, appearing even in texts that would seem to argue against it.⁴ In *Modern Art at the Berlin Wall* (2008), for example, Claudia Mesch states that she will argue that "flows of influence existed between East and West German artists." Yet, in the introduction, she writes that the Cold War was "a cultural embargo. Information about developments in institutionally sanctioned and in autonomous West and East German art was simply withheld from the public. This was as true for the West regarding artistic developments in the East, as it was for the East concerning developments in art from the West."⁵ The trope of artistic isolation can also be found in well-informed articles like Andreas Huyssen's for the 2009 catalog, *Art of Two Germanys / Cold War Cultures*, which was later reprinted in *New German Critique* as "German Painting in the Cold War."⁶ In it, Huyssen reveals the complexity of artistic development on both sides of the Wall and notes that "the borders between East and West became porous during the 1970s as a result of treaties between the GDR and the FRG." His focus in this regard, however, is on those artists who left the East for the West and made an impact there, such as Georg Baselitz and Gerhard Richter; he does not acknowledge the extent to which ideas and influences went in both directions. Indeed, in the final paragraph of an otherwise excellent article, he states that "West German art was like a black box in the East. The West German art scene, for its part, simply ignored developments in the East, and museums, galleries, collectors, and the media, with few exceptions, shunned East German art." While it is true that West German artists showed little interest in exhibiting in the East or in the art that was created there, East German artists tended to be well informed about Western artistic developments, and the "few exceptions" of exhibitions of East German art in the West were far greater in number than these sentences suggest.

In Germany, by contrast, artistic exchange across the Wall has been the focus of a number of books and exhibitions since unification, including *Deutschlandbilder. Kunst aus einem geteilten Land* (1997) and *Klopfszeichen. Kunst und Kultur der 80er Jahre in Deutschland* (2002).⁷ And yet even in Germany, the idea that artists working in the German Democratic Republic (GDR, or East Germany) were artistically isolated is regularly employed. In the 2012 catalog for the blockbuster exhibition, *Abschied von Ikarus. Bildwelten in der DDR–neu gesehen*, for example, Paul Kaiser wrote that the goal of creating a "populist, antimodern style" based on nineteenth-century models "was decidedly strengthened by the rigorous disengagement from international artistic development through the building of the Wall in 1961. From this time on, the 'iron curtain' successfully sealed off the East German art scene from the innovation compulsion of the western art establishment."⁸ Later in the same article, he referred to the "hermeticism of the East German art scene."⁹ The stereotype of artistic isolation also

appears in recent texts about individual artists from East Germany such as Hermann Glöckner¹⁰ as well as in exhibition titles, such as the 2012 exhibition at the Berlinische Galerie, *Geschlossene Gesellschaft. Künstlerische Fotografie in der DDR, 1949–1989*.¹¹

An examination of current scholarship thus reveals that although there have been studies in Germany of the artistic exchanges that occurred between East and West Germany during the Cold War, they have not penetrated the larger discourse, in either German or English. One result is the striking absence of East German art, and especially painting, from GDR studies. Out of at least six edited volumes on East German culture that emerged in response to the twentieth anniversaries of the fall of the Berlin Wall and unification, for example, only one included the visual fine arts.¹² Whereas literature, film, and material culture, including design, are frequently the focus of scholarship, painting remains largely absent despite the vital role it played in East Germany, where it was considered an important tool in the formation of the socialist personality. A study of East German art—and its reception—therefore, offers the possibility for a fascinating comparison with literature, film, and material culture that would contribute to a deeper understanding of East Germany.

This article shows that East German visual artists, and especially painters, were not completely cut off from the West. It begins by looking at the prevalence of Western ideas and art in East Germany, showing that West German art and that of the capitalist West was not a “black box” in the East, although it was certainly never fully embraced. It then looks at the fairly extensive amount of travel to the West conducted by East German artists across the forty-year history of the GDR, a privilege extended to them as members of the intellectual elite, one that was not shared by the general populace. That many East German artists traveled regularly also challenges the suggestion that they had no contact with the West or that the West lacked contact with them. Finally, the article turns to examine the emergence of contemporary East German art in the West at the international art exhibition “documenta 6” in 1977, and at the many exhibitions of contemporary East German art that took place in West Germany and elsewhere in the final decade of the Cold War. Such exhibitions show that Western audiences recognized, if only grudgingly at times, the merits of some of the art created in the GDR. By focusing on a number of prominent examples of the crossover between East Germany and the West, this article will show that the Wall was far more permeable for the visual arts than currently recognized, and that East German art is a topic that can reveal a great deal about the dynamics of cultural exchange across the Iron Curtain.

Western Art in East Germany

Recent scholarship has demonstrated that East German citizens were never as fully cut off from the West as is often assumed, a fact confirmed by the prominent East German author Christa Wolf, who stated in a letter to Jürgen Habermas in 1991 that

“we in the East knew more about the West and about living conditions there than our western colleagues knew and know about us and the conditions of our lives”¹³ With the exception of Dresden, which is located in a valley that prevented the reception of West German television signals, most East Germans could watch West German programs at home during the final decades of the Cold War, for example, even if it was frowned upon by the government. Through this, they were exposed to both the politics and popular culture of the West. They also read West German newspapers, journals, and books that were smuggled across the Wall.

Artists, as part of the intellectual elite in East Germany, had access to this information as well as to resources and opportunities well beyond those available to the general public, especially with regard to Western art. Art schools had books about Western art and subscriptions to Western art journals; the Leipzig Academy (Hochschule für Grafik und Buchkunst), for example, had *Art*, *das Kunstmagazin*; *Du, das Kulturmagazin*; and *Kunstchronik*.¹⁴ Similarly, trusted artists and cultural officials, as will be shown, were allowed to travel to the West to go to art exhibitions and conferences. Many of them smuggled back additional materials, from books and exhibition catalogs to tubes of paint in colors not available in the East. East Germans’ awareness of the West thus came from both approved and illicit sources.

Evidence that East German artists were aware of their Western counterparts—both before and after the Wall was built—can be found in their own words. At the Fourth Congress of the Association of Visual Artists (Verband Bildender Künstler) in 1959, for example, Bernhard Heisig (1925–2011), who would later become one of East Germany’s most successful painters—together with Wolfgang Mattheuer (1927–2004), Werner Tübke (1929–2004), and Willi Sitte (1921–2013)—made reference to recent work by Jackson Pollock, Robert Rauschenberg, and Ellsworth Kelly in a speech in which he criticized some of his East German colleagues’ preoccupation with formalist elements in their own art: “we can see the practice of such and similar lines of thought in the most important representatives of western art, where color is hurled, dripped, shot at, and sprayed on canvas, where montages of old bags are presented as art, and large surfaces in one color should shock alone through their scope.”¹⁵

A few decades later, the young Neo Rauch—who has become an internationally famous painter in the new millennium—focused on postwar Western art for his undergraduate thesis at the Leipzig Academy. In the introduction to “Art Informel in the Federal Republic of Germany” (1985), he stated his interest in the topic in terms of investigating the polar opposite of the current resurgence of figuration in West German painting, i.e., neo-expressionism.¹⁶ The text shows his familiarity with Western art as well as references to an East German book about West German art.¹⁷

An examination of *Bildende Kunst*, East Germany’s official art journal, shows that access to information about art in the West was also publicly available throughout the entire Cold War period, and ranged from announcements of exhibitions taking place

in the West to articles and discussions about Western art. In 1953, at the height of cultural conservatism in East German art, for example, exhibition announcements in the back of the monthly journal included short reviews of the “yearly exhibition” at the Royal Academy in London, a Picasso exhibition in Rome, and an exhibition of the French artist Edouard Pignon in France.¹⁸ In 1955, as the journal began to refine its format, a section devoted to art exhibitions in West Germany became a regular feature along with one for East German exhibitions. By the end of the 1980s, the list of exhibitions moved to the front of the journal and expanded. Each month contained a detailed listing of art exhibitions in East Germany that was supplemented by other materials. In the March 1989 issue, for example, these materials included a page-long listing of exhibitions taking place in the capitalist West through the end of the year, including in Austria, Belgium, France, Italy, the Netherlands, and West Germany. These exhibitions included solo shows of American postwar artists like Edward and Nancy Kienholz and Cindy Sherman as well as prewar modernists like Paul Klee, Franz Marc, Frans Masereel, and Max Pechstein.

Discussions of postwar art in the West also appeared in *Bildende Kunst* in issues dating back at least as early as 1972, a year after Erich Honecker replaced Walter Ulbricht as head of the East German state and announced that “when one starts from the firm position of Socialism, there can be . . . no taboos in the realm of art and literature. That concerns the question of content as well as style.”¹⁹ In February 1972, the art historian Hans Jürgen Pappies published a two-page article in *Bildende Kunst* titled, “Rauschenberg, Pop Art, Societal Critique.”²⁰ In it, he responded to comments made by Lothar Lang in a recent article in *Die Weltbühne* about the American neo-dadaist Robert Rauschenberg’s lithographic series, *Dante’s Inferno* (1959–1960), four prints from which had been on view at the International Book Arts Exhibition in Leipzig. Whereas Lang had viewed these works as critical of American society and suggested that there might be more to pop art than they—in the GDR—had previously thought, Pappies believed the works were nothing more than a reflection of the American media itself. Although his critique was negative, Pappies’s article reveals that Rauschenberg’s work had not only been exhibited in East Germany, it had also been publicly discussed.

A few months later, Ullrich Kuhirt published a six-page article about the most recent documenta exhibition, “Questioning Reality? The documenta 5 Exhibition 1972 in Kassel (FRG).”²¹ Twelve black-and-white illustrations of art created in the capitalist West accompanied the article, including American artists Duane Hanson’s *Sitting Artist* (1972), Edward Kienholz’s *Five Car Study (Castration of a Negro)* (1969/72), and Chuck Close’s *John* (1971/72), as well as work by Arnulf Rainer and Georg Baselitz. In the article, Kuhirt, who would later write a two-volume history of East German art, began by stating that the exhibition was the fifth “monster show” of what the Western press called the “biggest art exhibition in the world.” He then

described the development of documenta, which he explained first began as a “counter demonstration” against socialist art. This is why, he stated, it was placed in a city on the border of East Germany rather than in Paris, London, or even the United States. It was, he believed, an attempt to show a “worldwide unity behind capitalist art” and was thus heavily funded: Deutsche Bank, Daimler Benz, Neckermann, and the Frankfurt Allianz Insurance, among others, invested around 3.3 million Deutschmarks in the exhibition. He then went on to explain that documenta was different from other exhibitions because it was put together by a small group of experts rather than juried, and thus always had a specific conceptual character and offered a deeper look into a selected tendency of modern art. Of the original organizers, only Harald Szeemann was left for the current documenta, and he had attempted to capture the recent change in Western art toward reality with pop art and its successors, thus the theme of documenta 5: “Questioning Reality—Image Worlds Today.” But which reality, asks Kuhirt, a question he focuses on for most of the article, ultimately arguing that it was not societal reality, but rather the “reality” of appearances.

Jumping ahead ten years, we can see an increase in the number of articles about art created in the capitalist West. In the January 1982 issue of *Bildende Kunst*, Hermann Peters published, “Now what? Yet another Crisis of Individualism?”²² In a substantial, four-page article, he engages with a couple of articles by Eduard Beaucamp and Laszlo Glozer that had been published recently in West Germany. Both of these articles were critical of the state of the avant-garde in the West, where, as they saw it, pop art had devolved into a market phenomenon that had effectively erased the opportunity for authentic artistic production. The article contains four illustrations, including Robert Rauschenberg’s *Gift for Apollo* (1960) and Andy Warhol’s *Airplane Crash* (1963). This article was followed by one from a West German writer, Norbert Stratmann, titled, “How Fresh is Modern Art? A Follow-up on the ‘West Art’ Exhibition in Cologne.” It is critical of the exhibition, which focuses on avant-garde art from the United States and western Europe to the exclusion of the rest of the world. The article contains seven illustrations, including Antoni Tapies’s *Drawing of White Ovals* (1966), Richard Hamilton’s *Just What is it that Makes Today’s Homes so different, so appealing?* (1956), and Sigmar Polke’s *Modern Art* (1968).²³ Several months later, in November, the East German art critic Karl Max Kober published a four-page article titled, “Marginalia about ‘documenta 7’–Kassel (FRG).”²⁴ It contains six illustrations, including Robert Longo’s *Corporate Wars: Walls of Influence* (1982) and Salomé’s *Acrobats* (1979).

Although many of the articles about Western art were critical of it, they nonetheless engaged with these artists and their work. For some authors, the criticisms of Western art reflected their beliefs about it; for others, it was merely a rhetorical flourish that allowed them to take a closer look at the art. Similarly, the inclusion of images enabled artists to ignore the political messages in the text, if they were so

inclined, and focus on the work itself. To what extent these articles supported the official rhetoric of East German cultural policy, however, is less important here than the fact that they were able to engage with Western art and make it available to a larger East German audience.

In addition to the many articles in *Bildende Kunst*, there were also official exhibitions of postwar Western art in East German institutions, albeit often with a delay of about ten to fifteen years. In 1984, the gallery at the Leipzig Academy had East Germany's first exhibition of American pop art. It included forty works by Andy Warhol, Roy Lichtenstein, Jasper Johns, James Rosenquist, and Robert Rauschenberg, among others, and was accompanied by several articles in the press.²⁵ In a page-long article in the *Sächsische Tageblatt* illustrated by Roy Lichtenstein's *Girl in a Boat* (1963) and James Rosenquist's *Roll Down* (1965/66), art critic Peter Guth praised the works on display for their technical competence and roots in dada and surrealism.²⁶ He also pointed out that there was a significant difference between pop art and East German art: pop art aestheticized the beautiful *appearance* of reality, whereas East German art attempted to create convincing pictures of reality itself. After discussing a number of artists in the exhibition, he concluded the article by stating that this art was important to see in the original, even if it was twenty years after most of them had been created, in order to have a broader understanding of art.

In 1988, the same gallery was one of six stops—together with museums in Bonn, Berlin, Brussels, Hamburg, and Frankfurt am Main—for an exhibition of Joseph Beuys's early work.²⁷ It focused on drawings, watercolors, oil studies, and collages from the Van der Grinten collection and was accompanied by a major catalog. In one of the catalog's introductions, the prime minister of Nordrhein-Westfalen, Johannes Rau pointed out that this was the first exhibition of Beuys's work in the GDR and suggested there would be more. The following year, Reclam in Leipzig published Heiner Stachelhaus's biography on Beuys. Whereas the exhibition was limited to traditional media, the biography included his performance and installation works, some of which were also illustrated.

An art history survey book published in East Berlin in 1989 similarly reveals an informed view of art created in the capitalist West.²⁸ Like Western survey books, its coverage of twentieth century art as a whole included the "greatest hits" of modernism from fauvism to pop art: illustrations for German expressionism, cubism, futurism, suprematism, constructivism, de stijl, and surrealism appear for the prewar years, while images for abstract expressionism, including color field painting, and both British and American pop art represent the postwar years. These were published in a section titled "Art in Imperialist Countries." Performance art and postmodernism in the West, while not illustrated, also appear in the book in the form of a discussion in the text, where they were explained in terms of the loss of meaning for art within a capitalist system: happenings, fluxus, and conceptual art are presented as

“unconscious attempts to uncover the ineffectiveness of late bourgeois art through self-abandonment.”²⁹

Although installations and performance art were not condoned by the East German government, which viewed them as manifestations of capitalist alienation and thus not appropriate for the GDR until the late 1980s, there were artists in East Germany who created such works. Hartwig Ebersbach (b. 1940), a former student of Heisig's, was one of the first. In the late 1970s, Ebersbach combined visual arts with music and performance art in a number of works, including *Missa Nigra* in Leipzig and *Tangente I* in Dresden, both in 1979. It was also in that year that he began teaching an experimental art course at the Leipzig Academy. For five years, he and his students created works that transgressed traditional boundaries and did so with the rector's approval.³⁰

By the late 1980s, an alternative art scene existed in Dresden around a younger generation of artists. Key figures were the “Autoperforationsartisten”: Micha Brendel, Else Gabriel, Rainer Görß, and Via Lewandowsky. Their performances were a combination of fluxus and neodada with body art and installations in a multimedia spectacle. Although works such as theirs were never exhibited at the national Art Exhibitions of the GDR in Dresden, an exhibition that took place every four to five years and marked the high point of contemporary art in East Germany, installation and performance art did begin to receive coverage in *Bildende Kunst* in the final years of the Cold War. In the January 1989 issue, for example, there are three illustrated articles about performance art. Two discuss performances that had taken place in Berlin and Dresden; the third looks at work by the West German artist Wolf Vostell. Although performance art had not made it into the tenth and final Art Exhibition of the GDR in 1987/88, it seems likely that it would have been included in the eleventh, had there been one.³¹

East German Artists in the West

Movement across the border was not limited to just media and ideas. Before the Wall was built, people moved back and forth between the two Germanys—especially in Berlin—fairly fluidly, even as restrictions intensified in the mid-1950s. According to the British historian Patrick Major, 13.5 million official trips were made by East Germans to West Germany between 1950 and 1961, with another 9 million trips made by West Germans to the GDR, numbers that do not include the many unofficial trips made through the sector boundary in Berlin, which was “comparatively easy to cross on the subway or through a thin police cordon.”³² Archival files at the Leipzig Academy reveal that its faculty were among those making official trips to the West in these years.³³ In 1954, Albert Kapr went to West Germany for three days to visit an exhibition of book art and graphics in Düsseldorf.³⁴ Mattheuer visited the FRG in 1955, where he saw a Picasso exhibition in Hamburg and the Beckmann memorial

exhibition in West Berlin.³⁵ Heisig visited the West for “personal reasons” twice in 1955 and again in 1956.³⁶ In 1959, three teachers and the director of the Leipzig Academy went to Stuttgart and Munich for nearly a week to meet with West German colleagues, and in 1960, Gerd Thielmann visited Würzburg to work on illustrations for a book.³⁷ There is also a document from 1960 from the Ministry of Culture informing the school that trips to capitalist lands were still available for that year, suggesting that artists at the Leipzig Academy should take advantage of the opportunity.³⁸ Going to exhibitions and encouraging collegial exchange were the main reasons for most of these visits.

Even after the Wall was built in August 1961, faculty continued to visit West Germany. Heisig, for example, went to the Federal Republic several times throughout the 1960s, including in 1963, 1964, 1965, and 1967.³⁹ Significantly, this was before he had become a nationally prominent artist. In fact, Heisig was at the center of controversy in 1964 for a speech he had given in April at the Fifth Congress of the Association of Visual Artists in which he criticized East German cultural policy as being too restrictive; many scholars today believe this event led to his loss of position as rector of the Leipzig Academy shortly thereafter, and yet he was able to travel to West Germany in both 1964 and 1965.⁴⁰ Similarly, Sitte visited the Federal Republic in 1964, 1965, and 1969, the latter two times for exhibitions that included his work.⁴¹ He, too, had conflicts with the government in these years, offering an official self-criticism to the SED in 1963.⁴² Travel to West Germany in the 1960s, which were some of the most restrictive years in the GDR’s forty-year existence, was thus not limited to just those artists most praised by the government. It was, however, largely limited to the intellectual elite of East Germany, which included artists.⁴³ The general public, for the most part, was not able to travel to the capitalist West until they reached retirement age.

In the cultural relaxation that occurred in the wake of Erich Honecker’s assumption of power in 1971, and especially after the signing of the Basic Treaty with West Germany in 1973, East German artists began traveling regularly to western Europe. Tübke—who went to Kassel for the documenta 6 exhibition in 1977—travelled to Italy in 1971 for a solo exhibition of his work at the Galleria del Lavanta in Milan; he also visited Brescia, Rome, Modena, and Florence.⁴⁴ He returned the following year, winning a gold medal at the International Graphics Biennale in Florence, and visited Milan, Venice, Rome, Naples, and Sicily.⁴⁵ Over the course of the final thirteen years of the GDR, Tübke traveled to West Germany at least eight times; to Italy, Sweden, and Austria at least four times each; to France and Switzerland at least twice each; and to Greece, Spain, and the United States at least once.⁴⁶ He was also elected member of the Royal Swedish Academy of Arts in 1982, and taught a drawing class at the International Summer Academy in Salzburg, Austria, in 1984.

Tübke was not the only artist to travel so frequently to the capitalist West. Sitte—who had gone to Italy in 1955 to take part in a conference of the Italian Association

of Communist Youth—went to West Germany and France at least six times in the 1970s and 1980s, Italy at least three times, and he visited Austria, Belgium, Finland, and Switzerland at least once each.⁴⁷ Similarly, Heisig went to Denmark, France, Italy, and Sweden in the 1970s, including a trip to Kassel in 1977 for the documenta 6 exhibition and to Paris in 1979 with Sitte and Horst Kolodziej to attend the Congress of the French Artists Association.⁴⁸ In 1984, he went to England. And, for at least one year in the 1980s, he had a visa that enabled him to travel back and forth to West Berlin for stays of up to three days without requiring prior approval.⁴⁹

Travel was not limited to just the older generation; younger artists also traveled to the West. Gudrun Brüne (b. 1941), who later married Heisig, traveled to Italy and West Germany in the 1970s, and to Belgium, England, France, and Spain in the 1980s.⁵⁰ Other artists of her generation who had studied at the Leipzig Academy include Wolfgang Peuker (1945–2001) and Arno Rink (b. 1940), both of whom later became teachers there. In the 1970s and 1980s, Peuker traveled to Belgium, West Germany, Spain, and Italy; Rink, to Italy and, on several occasions, West Germany.⁵¹

Even art students were allowed to travel to the West. Trak Wendisch (b. 1956) visited Paris while a graduate student at the Dresden Academy when one of his works was included in an exhibition there.⁵² Similarly, Neo Rauch (b. 1960) went to West Berlin to see an exhibition of Joseph Beuys's work while he was a graduate student at the Leipzig Academy.⁵³ Such trips to the West were not unusual in the 1980s, nor were they limited to the GDR's best-known artists.⁵⁴ They did, however, require applying for a visa, which would then be either approved or denied.

What becomes clear with even this cursory glance is that although the Berlin Wall did make it more difficult to travel to the West, it did not stop all East Germans from doing so, nor did it prevent East German art from being shown there. Even shortly after the Wall was built, East German artists traveled regularly to West Germany. By the 1980s, these trips became frequent. Far from being isolated in a bubble, many artists in East Germany had considerable knowledge of and access to art in the capitalist West, and through their trips and exhibitions, increasingly became known and recognized in the West, especially in the final decade of the Cold War.

East German Art in the West

Contemporary East German art first emerged onto the Western art scene at the sixth documenta exhibition in Kassel, West Germany, in 1977, and thereafter became a regular feature on the West German art scene.⁵⁵ The organizer of this exhibition, Manfred Schneckenburger, invited four of East Germany's most important contemporary painters to contribute work: Bernhard Heisig, Wolfgang Mattheuer, Willi Sitte, and Werner Tübke. These artists, who were part of the "Leipzig School" of modern painters, had helped change art in East Germany in the mid-1960s from a Socialist

Realist style based on Soviet models to one based on German modernism.⁵⁶ In the 1960s, their work had been controversial in East Germany, but by the mid-1970s, these artists were receiving major prizes from the State for their art.

In his invitation letter to Tübke, Schneckenburger explained the concept behind the exhibition and its inclusion of East German art:

documenta 6 is interested in exploring the theme of image media, including changes in art due to the pressures of mass media and of ever more powerful visual stereotypes Within this conceptual framework, a strong emphasis will be placed on the different developments of Realism: Socialist Realist works hold a special place in such a typology, wherein the creative development of an advanced iconography, for example, or the new formulation of history painting play a role. Our goal is not ideological confrontation but rather verification of an independent painterly development as visible in the Socialist Realism of the GDR.⁵⁷

Schneckenburger's interest in exploring "the different developments of Realism" reflected the beginnings of a broader turn in the West—also evident in the "New Image Painting" exhibition at the Whitney Museum in New York the following year—toward figuration and away from the abstraction that had dominated the Western art market in the years since World War II. Over the course of the late 1940s and 1950s, abstract art had come to represent the "freedom" of Western democracy in the face of totalitarian societies' preference for realism, a fact encouraged by the CIA, which, as Giles Scott-Smith and Frances Stonor Saunders have documented, supported global exhibitions of abstract expressionism.⁵⁸ Although never as all-pervasive as is often presented, abstraction's dominance in the West began to waver in the 1960s with the return of figuration in pop art; it had largely disappeared by the early 1980s with the market dominance of neoexpressionism.

Less than two months after Schneckenburger wrote these invitation letters, the East German government sanctioned the requests.⁵⁹ Lothar Lang, an art historian from East Berlin, was assigned to help choose the works and write the catalog entries, which were later approved by a "working group" appointed to the task.⁶⁰ Then, in April 1977, two months before the exhibition opened, Lang traveled with Heisig and the secretary of the Association of Visual Artists of the GDR, Horst Kolodziej, to Kassel for three days to meet with Schneckenburger and look at the exhibition space.⁶¹ They returned to Kassel in mid-June to hang the paintings and attend the press conference and opening, together with the other invited artists. According to a report Lang later filed with the SED, they were treated well by the organizers and most of the other artists, including Western "stars" like Beuys and Vostell.⁶² Within the exhibition they had been given their own room, where they showed twenty-three paintings; these

were joined by one sculpture each from the East German artists Fritz Cremer and Jo Jastram, whom the East German government required be included to show the diversity of art created in the GDR.⁶³

The response in the West German press to the inclusion of East German art in the exhibition ranged from complete dismissal—“none of western quality”—to praise for how “vast” Socialist Realism was.⁶⁴ There were also a number of articles about a protest that took place in response to the inclusion of East German art in the exhibition. On June 22, the conservative daily newspaper *Die Welt*, which was generally critical of East Germany, published an article about how Georg Baselitz had pulled his work from the show in protest against what he saw as an “excessive number of ‘GDR paintings.’” Apparently, he felt that the inclusion of these works indicated that the painting department of the exhibition was not fulfilling its duty to show “the most important painters of the present.”⁶⁵ In the same article, *Die Welt* also mentioned that a group of artists who had emigrated from the GDR had set up an information stand in front of the exhibition building to protest the inclusion of East German art.

Just over a week later, on June 30, *Die Welt* published another negative article about the exhibition, this one by an unnamed author who claimed to be an artist from East Germany.⁶⁶ The author criticized the inclusion of official East German artists in documenta 6 because it gave the impression that cultural policy in the GDR was flexible. The author then pointed to “those artists not recognized by the East German government” as well as those who had been persecuted by it—namely, Roger Loewig and Sighard Pohl—and thus to the “disobedient” artists who were not represented in the exhibition.

In contrast to these negative reports in *Die Welt*, the widely read and respected weekly West German newspaper *DIE ZEIT* published an article on July 1 dismissing Baselitz’s withdrawal, stating that the absence of his work was no loss to the exhibition since his late expressionist attitude was so similar to the Socialist Realism of Heisig and Sitte.⁶⁷ Similarly, an article in the daily business newspaper *Handelsblatt* from the previous week praised Baselitz’s withdrawal as a “smart move” on the artist’s part since a comparison with East German painting would have exposed the “technical and compositional weaknesses” of his work.⁶⁸

In the East German press, documenta 6 was characterized as “the largest international forum of contemporary art from western Europe and the Americas” and the inclusion of East German artists as well-deserved recognition for Socialist Realism.⁶⁹ In the *Berliner Zeitung*, their inclusion was presented further as proof of the West’s search for a “socially meaningful art” in the face of the “absurd,” such as Walter de Maria’s *Vertical Earthkilometer* (1977); this controversial work—which submerged a five-centimeter-thick kilometer-long brass rod vertically in the earth until only the top edge remained visible, looking much like a coin—had been created by the American artist in a nearby park for the exhibition. East German articles also recounted attempts

made to undermine their artists at the exhibition—both the distribution of protest fliers and Baselitz's withdrawal—pointing out that these attempts had failed ultimately because of the high quality of the East German works on display.

Although the exhibition organizers stated that they did not want ideological confrontation, the inclusion of East German art was nonetheless viewed as such by those who protested the exhibition and by the East German government. The largely positive response to its inclusion revealed to the SED the important role that art could play in their public relations efforts with the West. Documenta 6 thus became the first of many exhibitions of East German art in the West in the final years of the Cold War, in both West Germany and beyond.

In West Germany there were at least eight major exhibitions of East German art in the 1980s. One of the first of these, *Zeitvergleich. Malerei und Grafik aus der DDR*, opened at the Hamburg Kunstverein in November 1982 and traveled to art museums in Stuttgart, Düsseldorf, Munich, Nuremberg, and Hanover over the course of the next fourteen months. Organized by three West Germans—Axel Hecht, editor of *Art, das Kunstmagazin*; Uwe M. Schneede, head of the Kunstverein Hamburg; and Dieter Brusberg, a gallerist who specialized in Western modernism and East German art—it contained seventy paintings and 160 works on paper by thirteen artists, including all of the painters who exhibited at documenta 6. The organizers had chosen the works over the course of several trips to East Germany made in the previous eighteen months, where they talked to artists and looked at thousands of works in cities around the country.

The exhibition was accompanied by a 270-page catalog that includes short biographies of each of the artists and illustrations of some of their work—in addition to articles about East German art more generally, including its development since the 1940s and the education and living conditions for artists.⁷⁰ In the catalog as a whole, there is a shared sense of wonder among the West German authors at the diversity and quality of the works being produced in East Germany—a place that Günter Grass, in his text, likened to the moon in terms of how much West Germans knew about it—and a shared desire to learn more.⁷¹

Although the *Zeitvergleich* exhibition was the largest in West Germany in that year, a review of it in *Die Welt* notes that “it is no longer unusual to exhibit artists from the ‘GDR’” and points out the variety of exhibitions of East German art that were taking place in West Germany at the time.⁷² These included two small exhibitions of East German graphic art in Hamburg as well as solo exhibitions of individual East German artists in galleries in Hanover, Bonn, and Ravensburg, and another group exhibition, titled *Zehn Künstler aus der DDR*, at the Städtisches Museum in Göttingen. According to the article, there had been “two or three dozen such exhibitions” in recent years.

In 1984, another significant exhibition of East German art opened in West Germany, first at the Worpswede Kunsthalle and then at the Villa Ichen in Bremen. Titled

DDR Heute. Malerei, Graphik, Plastik, it contained work by more than fifty of East Germany's best-known artists and was an attempt to provide an overview of important currents in contemporary East German art. In comparison to the *Zeitvergleich* exhibition, however, which was a Western look at East German art, this one was organized by curators and artists from the East and drew upon works shown at the Ninth Art Exhibition of the GDR held in Dresden the previous year. The well-illustrated catalog contains short biographies about each of the artists and one longer text. Written by Willi Sitte, president of the Association of Visual Artists of East Germany at the time, this text praises East German art and explains its connections to realism and the people before expressing hope that the exhibition will contribute to the global fight for peace, socialism, and democracy.

It was also in 1984 that the Ludwig Institute for Art of the GDR, which was founded the previous summer in Oberhausen, West Germany, by the business tycoon Peter Ludwig and his wife Irene for their growing collection of East German art, organized an exhibition of forty-one artists from their collection. *Durchblick* opened at the Städtische Galerie in Oberhausen in June and later went to the Staatliche Kunsthalle in Berlin. The 260-page catalog includes an interview with Ludwig about East German art, a conversation with several artists in Leipzig about their work, press clippings praising the Ninth Art Exhibition of the GDR in Dresden, and a chronology of important dates and documents in East German art history in addition to numerous full-page color illustrations and texts about the individual artists.

Durchblick was followed two years later by a second exhibition of the same title. Its 254-page catalog contained new articles and numerous full-color illustrations and was intended to show the continuing growth of the Ludwigs' collection and the vitality of contemporary East German art. At this point in time, they had sixty-nine artists from the GDR in their collection. The catalog also includes a five-page interview with Sitte about the role of the visual arts in East Germany in the 1980s and a two-page interview with Heisig about his new painting, *Christ Denies the Obedient* (1984–1986).

In 1986, there were several important exhibitions of East German art, including *Menschenbilder, Kunst aus der DDR* in Bonn. In an introductory text in the catalog, Johannes Rau, the prime minister of the province of Nordrhein-Westfalen in West Germany (who wrote the introduction for the Joseph Beuys catalog mentioned above), suggested that the year was significant because a Cultural Agreement had just been signed by the two Germanys in May, and that exhibitions like *Menschenbilder* were important for forging a better understanding between the two countries as well as for developing a shared *Kulturnation* (cultural nation).

In the catalog for an exhibition held two years later, *Zeitvergleich '88, ein Rückblick*, Wolfgang Becker, a West German from Hanover, hinted at the difficulties existent in the attempt at "better understanding between the two countries."⁷³ In particular, he pointed out how difficult it was to write about art from "over there"

because it was so overladen with stereotypes and prejudice in the West. He ultimately argued that painters in East Germany were like painters everywhere: “they paint.”⁷⁴

In the final decade of the Cold War, West Germany had hosted at least eight major exhibitions of East German art and dozens of smaller exhibitions as well as published catalogs totaling over 1000 pages of text and images about the art, artists, and cultural context of East Germany.⁷⁵ West German galleries, collectors, and major museums had also begun to add East German art to their collections; these included the Hamburger Kunsthalle, Sprengel Museum Hannover, and the Städelches Kunstinstitut Frankfurt am Main. There were even a few books on the topic, including Karin Thomas’s *Die Malerei in der DDR, 1949–1979*, and Hubertus Gäßner and Eckhart Gillen’s edited volume, *Kultur und Kunst in der DDR seit 1970*.⁷⁶ Upon closer examination, it becomes clear that the West German art scene—its museums, galleries, and collectors—had not “with few exceptions, shunned East German art” in the final years of the Cold War as Huyssen stated, but rather had begun to examine seriously the art created on the other side of the Iron Curtain, a process that was abruptly curtailed by the unexpected events of November 1989, after which point totalitarian approaches to the GDR reemerged as the dominant framework for more than a decade.⁷⁷

Conclusion: Neither Isolated nor Provincial

The building of the Berlin Wall in 1961 did not stop artists or the flow of artistic ideas between the West and East so much as it slowed them down. As this paper has shown, East German artists visited West Germany both before and after the Wall was built. And just as they traveled to the West, so too did their art, especially in the final decade of the Cold War. Nor did they need to travel to the West to be familiar with its art, having had much greater access to the West from within East Germany than is often recognized today, through both illicit and official sources.

Once one recognizes the extent to which East German artists were aware of Western artistic trends and the extent to which the West German art establishment was aware of East German art before the Wall fell, statements about East Germany’s artistic isolation become both untenable and surprising. Such statements are the result, in part, of unexamined Cold War-era stereotypes and a continuing lack of engagement with the realities of the East and its perspective on the world, especially in English-language scholarship. In Germany, by contrast, it is more the result of a process of forgetting in the wake of the collapse of European Communism and the subsequent return to more conservative views about the East. The Wall has come to be a symbol of the repressive nature of Communist East Germany, a country that needed to lock in its own people to prevent them from moving to the West. But it has also become an ideological tool that forestalls engagement with the complex realities of life—or, in this case, art—on the other side of the divide. Invoking the Wall, or the idea of the Wall, harnesses stereotypes that seem to justify a continuing prejudice

against the people who attempted to make their lives there—and especially against those who chose to live there out of a commitment to seeking an alternative to what they saw as the imperialist agenda of Western capitalism. The belief that the Wall created a “cultural embargo”⁷⁸ that prevented exchange between East and West Germany is just one of many Cold War stereotypes that need to be reexamined. Only by being attentive to the way in which life in East Germany both limited and enabled artists can we come to terms with the art that was made there, as both distinct from the modern art of the West as well as a vital part of the history of postwar German art and culture.

Notes

I would like to thank Kevin Amidon, Grant Arndt, Stephen Brockmann, Sebastian Heiduschke, Thomas Maulucci, Barbara McCloskey, Michelle Moyd, Cullen Padgett-Walsh, and the two anonymous reviewers at *German Studies Review* for their comments on earlier drafts of this article.

1. Patrick Major, *Behind the Berlin Wall: East Germany and the Frontiers of Power* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 188.
2. Anonymous, “Pop Art in Leipzig,” *Sächsische Tagesblatt*, June 1, 1984; *Joseph Beuys. Frühe Arbeiten aus der Sammlung van der Grinten—Zeichnungen, Aquarelle, Ölstudien, Collagen* (Cologne: Dumont, 1987). East German artists exhibited work at the Venice Biennale in 1982, 1984, and 1988.
3. Benjamin Buchloh, “How German was it? Benjamin H.D. Buchloh on *Art of Two Germanys*,” *Artforum International* 47, no. 10 (2009): 294–299.
4. In this article, Buchloh also speaks of what he sees as “the vile banality of East German socialist realist painting” (296) and states that “For Sitte, as for many other artists in this exhibition, the recesses of provincial ignorance became the wellspring for artistic abominations” (296).
5. Claudia Mesch, *Modern Art at the Berlin Wall* (London: Taurus Academic Studies, 2008), 5, 9. Mesch also suggests that because she did not see East German art on display in her many visits to museums in West Berlin in the 1980s, that it was not exhibited in West Germany (ix); rather, she sees engagement with East German art in the Federal Republic as beginning largely after the fall of the Berlin Wall, an assertion that I challenge in this paper.
6. Andreas Huyssen, “German Painting in the Cold War,” *New German Critique* 37, no. 2 110 (Summer 2010): 209–219. This article was originally published as “Figures of Memory in the Course of Time,” in *Art of Two Germanys: Cold War Cultures*, eds. Sabine Eckmann and Stephanie Barron (New York: Abrams, 2009), 224–239.
7. Books include Karin Thomas’s *Kunst in Deutschland seit 1945* (Cologne: Dumont, 2004) as well as Martin Damus’s outstanding two-book series, *Malerei der DDR* (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1991) and *Kunst in der BRD, 1945–1990* (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1995).
8. Paul Kaiser, “Bekenntniszwang und Melancholiegebot. Kunst in der DDR zwischen Historismus und Moderne,” in *Abschied von Ikarus*, eds. Karl-Siegbert Rehbert, Wolfgang Holler, and Paul Kaiser (Cologne: Walther König, 2012), 60–73, here: 63. He states the same in “Symbolic Revolts in the ‘Workers’ and Peasants’ State’: Countercultural Art Programs in the GDR and the Return of Modern Art,” in Eckmann and Barron, *Art of Two Germanys*, 170–185. All translations from the German are my own unless otherwise noted.
9. Kaiser, “Bekenntniszwang,” 65.
10. Wolfgang Holler and Paul Kaiser, “Ernste Spiele. Hermann Glöckner als abstrakter Künstler in der DDR und seine Werkgruppe der ‘Modelli,’” in *Abschied von Ikarus*, 154–163, and Claudia Petzold and Paul Kaiser, “Der Weg ins Offene. Von Atelierprojekten zu Aktionsorten im öffentli-

- chen Raum," in *Schaffents(t)räume. Atelierbilder und Künstlermythen* (Gera: Kunstsammlung Gera, 2012), 88–101.
11. For a discussion of East German artistic isolation in this exhibition, see Philipp Freytag's excellent review, "Geschlossene Gesellschaft," *Rundbrief Fotografie* 20, no. 1 (2013): 29–34.
 12. Amy Wlodarski and Elaine Kelly, eds., *Art Outside the Lines: New Perspectives on GDR Art Culture* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2011) contains several articles about painting. The five anthologies that do not include the visual arts: Anne Fuchs, Kathleen James-Chakraborty, and Linda Schorrt, eds., *Debating German Cultural Identity Since 1989* (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2011); Renate Rechten and Dennis Tate, eds., *Twenty Years On: Competing Memories of the GDR in Postunification German Culture* (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2011); Nick Hodgins and Caroline Pearce, eds., *The GDR Remembered* (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2011); David Clarke and Ute Wölfe, eds., *Remembering the German Democratic Republic* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011); and Anna Saunders and Debbie Pinfold, eds., *Remembering and Rethinking the GDR* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013). Music is also strikingly absent from GDR Studies.
 13. Christa Wolf, *Parting from Phantoms* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), 122.
 14. Dr. Beiler, *Einschätzung der politisch-ideologischen Situation unter den Studenten*, Hochschule für Grafik und Buchkunst, undated (circa 1964). HGB Archive.
 15. "Bernhard Heisig: Maler und Grafiker, Leipzig," in *Vierter Kongress des Verbandes bildender Künstler Deutschlands*, ed. Verband Bildender Künstler Deutschlands (hereafter: VBK) (Berlin: VBK, 1959), 96.
 16. Neo Rauch, "Die Informelle Malerei in der BRD," Diplomarbeit, Hochschule für Grafik und Buchkunst Leipzig, June 14, 1985, 2.
 17. Hermann Raum, *Die Kunst der BRD und Westberlins* (Leipzig: Seemann, 1977).
 18. All three of these exhibitions appear in the March 1953 issue of *Bildende Kunst*, 62–63.
 19. Erich Honecker at the Fourth Conference of the ZK der SED as reported in *Neues Deutschland* on December 18, 1971 and cited in Günther Feist and Eckhart Gillen, eds., *Kunstkombinat DDR. Daten und Zitate zur Kunst und Kulturpolitik der DDR, 1945–1990* (Berlin: Museumspädagogischer Dienst, 1990), 77.
 20. Hans Jürgen Pappies, "Rauschenberg, Pop Art, Gesellschaftskritik," *Bildende Kunst*, no. 2 (1972): 98–99.
 21. Ullrich Kuhirt, "Befragung der Realität? Zur 5. documenta-Ausstellung 1972 in Kassel (BRD)," *Bildende Kunst*, no. 11 (1972): 539–543.
 22. Hermann Peters, "Was nun? Wieder einmal Krise des Individualismus?" *Bildende Kunst*, no. 1 (1982): 2–5.
 23. Norbert Stratmann, "Wie unverbraucht ist die Moderne? Eine Nachbetrachtung zur Kölner Ausstellung 'Westkunst,'" *Bildende Kunst*, no. 1 (1982): 6–8.
 24. Karl Max Kober, "Marginalien zur 'documenta 7'—Kassel (BRD)," *Bildende Kunst*, no. 11 (1982): 558–561.
 25. Anonymous, "Pop Art in Leipzig," *Sächsische Tagesblatt*, June 1, 1984.
 26. Peter Guth, "Pop Art," *Sächsische Tagesblatt*, June 13, 1984.
 27. Joseph Beuys, *Frühe Arbeiten aus der Sammlung van der Grinten. Zeichnungen, Aquarelle, Ölstudien, Collagen* (Cologne: Dumont Buchverlag, 1987).
 28. Erika Thiel and Mechthild Frick, *Kunst Fibel* (Berlin: Henschelverlag, 1989). This survey book begins with Prehistoric Art.
 29. Thiel and Frick, *Kunst Fibel*, 235.
 30. The experimental class ran from 1979–1984, at which point the Ministry of Culture closed it down. Uta Grundmann et al., eds. *Revolution im geschlossenen Raum. Die andere Kultur in Leipzig 1970–1990* (Leipzig: Faber & Faber, 2002), 42–48. Dates from Lothar Lang, *Malerei und Grafik in Ostdeutschland* (Leipzig: Faber & Faber, 2002), 275.

31. Installation and performance art were included in official exhibitions at the local level, including *Blaues Wunder: Arbeitsausstellung Junger Dresdner Künstler* in 1988 and the *Berliner Kunstausstellung* in May/June 1989; both were coorganized by the VBK-DDR.
32. Patrick Major, "Going West: The Open Border and the Problem with *Republikflucht*," in *The Workers' and Peasants' State: Communism and Society in East Germany under Ulbricht, 1945–1971*, eds. Patrick Major and Jonathan Osmond (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002), 190–208.
33. Meeting minutes dated June 15, 1954 and April 6, 1955, and a letter from the Leipzig Academy to the Ministry of Culture on February 17, 1959. HGB Archiv.
34. Untitled document from Albert Kapr dated May 15, 1954. Sächsisches Landesarchiv: SAfgKBL 341.
35. Wolfgang Mattheuer, *Retrospektive* (Leipzig: E.A. Seemann, 2002), 254.
36. Stasi Leipzig XIII 1149-74 (000195).
37. Letter from Koenig to the Ministry of Culture, dated January 22, 1959. Protesterklärung, April 4, 1960. HGB Archiv.
38. Letter from the Ministry of Culture to the Leipzig Academy dated February 15, 1960. HGB Archiv.
39. HGB Archiv & Stasi Leipzig XIII 1149-74 (000195).
40. Archival documents show that Heisig actually resigned from the position before the congress took place. See April Eisman, "Denying Difference in the Post-Socialist Other: Bernhard Heisig and the Changing Reception of an East German Artist," *Contemporaneity: Historical Presences in Visual Culture* 2 (2012): 45–73.
41. Willi Sitte, *Epochenbilder* (Berlin: Henschelverlag, 1986), 175–179.
42. Sitte's self-criticism was published in *Freiheit* on February 2, 1963. Wolfgang Hütt, *Gefördert. Überwacht. Reformdruck bildender Künstler der DDR—das Beispiel Halle* (Döbel: Janos Stekovics, 2004), 107.
43. Unlike in the West, not everyone could become an artist—one had to be a member of the Association of Visual Artists (VBK), which generally required having graduated from one of the four main art academies. Only those who evidenced artistic skill and had a clear political pedigree would be accepted.
44. Annika Michalski and Frank Zöllner, *Tübke*, *Leipziger Beiträge zur Kunstgeschichte* (Leipzig: Plöttner, 2008), 97.
45. Hans-Werner Schmidt, ed., *Werner Tübke, Die Retrospektive zum 80. Geburtstag* (Leipzig: Seemann, 2009), 206.
46. Eduard Beaucamp, *Werner Tübke. Meisterblätter* (Munich: Prestel, 2004), 182, and Schmidt, *Tübke*, 207.
47. Willi Sitte, *Epochenbilder*, 175–179.
48. Stasi 1011-88. Stasi XIII 1149-74. The Congress of the French Artists' Association in Paris from March 30–April 4, 1979. "Bericht über die Reise einer Leitungsdelegation des VBK-DDR zum Kongreß des französischen Künstlerverbandes (UAP) nach Paris," Berlin 8.4.1979, Akademie der Künste Archiv: VBKD 75.
49. BStU-Leipzig, ZMA Abt. XX 3098.
50. Gudrun Brüne, *Puppen Masken Lebenspielen* (Potsdam: Brandenburgische Universitätsdruckerei, 2000), 130–131.
51. See Wolfgang Peuker, *Malerei und Zeichnungen* (Leipzig: Museum der Bildende Kunst, 1986), and Arno Rink, *Max-Pechstein-Ehrenpreis der Stadt Zwickau* (Zwickau: 2005).
52. *Junge Kunst aus der DDR, eine Atelierreise*, exhibition catalog, text by Lothar Romain (Hannover, 1989), 73.
53. Thomas E. Schmidt, "Plötzlich in Nebenwelten geraten. Ein Gespräch mit dem Leipziger Maler Neo Rauch—über Heimat, die Tradition und das Überleben im Kunstbetrieb," *DIE ZEIT*, December 6, 2001.

54. VBK-Dresden 91/1-3, AdK Archiv. This is not to suggest that all artists could travel, or that they could travel whenever they wanted. My point here is that travel was much more frequent and possible than most scholars in the West realize. It should also be emphasized that artists' ability to travel was much greater than the rest of the populace.
55. Lothar Lang, "Erste Kurzinformation über die Beteiligung von DDR-Künstlern an der documenta 6 in Kassel," Bundesarchiv DR1/8171 (page 24). Although individual artists from East Germany had exhibited work in the West since at least the 1950s, the documenta 6 exhibition marked the emergence of "East German art" as a category.
56. For an in-depth look at how East German art developed away from Soviet Realism, see Ulrike Goeschen, *Vom Sozialistische Realismus zum Kunst im Sozialismus. Die Rezeption der Moderne in Kunst und Kunstwissenschaft der DDR* (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 2001).
57. Letter from Schneckenburger to Tübke, November 2, 1967. Bundesarchiv DR1/8171 (page 80).
58. Giles Scott-Smith, *The Politics of Apolitical Culture: The Congress for Cultural Freedom, the CIA, and Post-War American Hegemony* (London: Routledge, 2002). Frances Stonor Saunders, *Who Paid the Pied Piper? The CIA and the Cultural Cold War* (London: Granta, 1999). For a refutation of the widely held belief that the CIA was involved with exhibitions of American art abroad see David Caute, *The Dancer Defects: The Struggle for Cultural Supremacy during the Cold War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).
59. Letter from Fritz Donner to Hans-Joachim Hoffmann at the Ministry of Culture, December 6, 1976.
60. Ministry of Culture, "Konzeption für die politisch-ideologische und organisatorische Vorbereitung des DDR-Beitrages an der 'documenta' 6 in Kassel (BRD)," May 1977. Bundesarchiv: DR 1/8171 (pages 124–137).
61. Horst Kolodziej, "Information über die Reise nach Kassel in der Zeit vom 24.4. bis 27.4.1977," Berlin, May 23, 1977. Akademie der Künste Archiv: VBKD 75.
62. Lothar Lang, "Erste Kurzinformation über die Beteiligung von DDR-Künstlern," 23.
63. Ministry of Culture, "Konzeption für die politisch-ideologische und organisatorische Vorbereitung," 124–137. Lothar Lang, "Erste Kurzinformation über die Beteiligung von DDR-Künstlern," 23.
64. Ewald Jacobs, "Vom 'Chaos' befreit: Kassels 'documenta 5' vierzehn Tage danach. Die Ausstellung der Malerei ist besser als ihr 'schlechter Ruf,'" in *Westfälische Rundschau Dortmund*, July 9, 1977. Peter Nöldechen, "DDR-Maler auf der 'documenta 6.' Bilder können eine Wissenslücke füllen," in *Westfälische Rundschau*, June 22, 1977.
65. "Protest gegen offizielle 'DDR'-Maler in Kassel," *Die Welt* (June 22, 1977). Peter Nöldechen, "DDR-Maler." For a more comprehensive look at the inclusion of East German artists in documenta 6, see Gisela Schirmer, *DDR und documenta. Kunst im deutsch-deutschen Widerspruch* (Berlin: Reimer, 2005).
66. "Was auf der documenta 6 in Kassel nicht gezeigt wird. Die verfemte Kunst der ungehorsamen Maler aus der 'DDR.' Hinter jeder Säule lauschen Riesenohren," *Die Welt*, June 30, 1977, 23.
67. Petra Kipphoff, "Malerei, Plastik, Zeichnung, Video, Photo: auf der sechsten documenta ist die Kunst sich selber zum Thema geworden. Ein ruhiges Chaos, der erste Blick durch das Kasseler Museum für hundert Tage," *DIE ZEIT*, July 1, 1977, 35. She includes Markus Lüpertz, who also withdrew his work, in this criticism.
68. Christian Herchenröder, "Der Sieg des Unvollendeten. Zur Eröffnung der documenta 6: Ein chaotisches Medienprovisorium," *Handelsblatt*, June 24/25, 1977.
69. Lothar Lang, "Interesse für die Kunst der DDR, Auf der documenta in Kassel," *Neues Deutschland*, July 26, 1977. Gerhard Müller, "Grosses Interesse für DDR-Kunst. Lichtblicke auf der BRD-Ausstellung 'documenta 6,'" *Berliner Zeitung*, July 2, 1977, 4.
70. Axel Hecht and Hanne Reinecke, eds., *Zeitvergleich. Malerei und Grafik aus der DDR* (Hamburg: ART das Kunstmagazin, 1982).
71. Günter Grass, "Sich ein Bild Machen," in *Zeitvergleich* (1982): 10–13.

72. Peter Dittmar, "Werbung mit Albtraum," *Die Welt*, November 22, 1982.
73. Wolfgang Becker, "... sie malen ja nur," in *Zeitvergleich '88*, ed. Dieter Brusberg (Berlin: 1988), 8–15, here: 8.
74. Becker, "... sie malen ja nur," 15.
75. In addition to those discussed were *Künstlerinnen in der DDR* (1985) and *Kunst der DDR in den 80er Jahren. Malerei Grafik Plastik* (1986).
76. Published in 1980 and 1977, respectively.
77. Whereas the 1980s had seen increasing interest in East German art, exhibitions of East German art in the 1990s frequently met with controversy in what has become known as the German-German *Bilderstreit*, or image battle. Joes Segal, "Disturbing Things: The Interpretation of East German Artwork in Reunified Germany," *East German Material Culture and the Power of Memory*, Bulletin of the German Historical Institute, Supplement 7 (2011), 101–112.
78. Mesch, 9.