

# Wanderings About History. The Photography of Ulrich Wüst

13.3.–14.6.2026

Curated by: Matthias Flügge

Graphic design: Lamm & Kirch, Berlin / Leipzig

GfZK Neubau

An exhibition by the ifa – Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen e. V.

Presse preview: Thursday, 12 March, 11 am

Opening: Thursday, 12 March, 7 pm

Exhibition tour with Ulrich Wüst: Thursday, 16 April, 6 pm

Exhibition tour with Matthias Flügge: Saturday, 13 June, 3 pm

The work of Ulrich Wüst first attracted attention in the 1980s, above all on account of his many *Cityscapes*, taken in several towns around the GDR. These images show scarring from the Second World War and an unchecked decay of historical built fabric. At the centre of his photographic interest, however, were those absurdities in urban situations that derive as much from a lack of attention or cluelessness as from wanton destruction or uncontrolled development. With his camera, Wüst evolved his own, very visual way of critiquing architecture. It has lost none of its poignancy today, especially as his argument is never ideological but borne along by a sense of phenomena that offers as much scope for subtle humour as for irony.

A wider international audience discovered Ulrich Wüst's photography when he was invited to exhibit at documenta 14 in Kassel in 2017. Ulrich Wüst's photographic oeuvre, which explores Eastern Germany in the broader sense, is not confined to the sunken GDR. It might be described as a pictorial archaeology of our present day. These pictures reveal the finds from his "excavations" and are at the same time tools of their conservation. Wüst has an infallible feel for the graphic quality of everyday situations, objects and materials, but also for the deeper layers of significance associated with found images.

Examples are the enlarged details from East German press products that demonstrate a manipulative use of photography. Ulrich Wüst's photographic work can be contemplated from different perspectives. While the observations captured here are essentially rooted in Germany's division and its mending, at the same time they always relate to universal phenomena of social change and its material manifestations. The seemingly terse images, extremely precise in their composition, are the fruits of lengthy visual wanderings through present sites of recent history.

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*Wanderings About History. The Photography of Ulrich Wüst* is an exhibition by the ifa – Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen e. V. It was on display in 2023 at the GoEun Museum of Photography in Busan, South Korea, and in 2024 at the RMIT Gallery, Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology in Australia. For the presentation in Leipzig, the exhibition will be extended by three series of works, including photographs taken in Plagwitz in October 1989.

You can find a selection of images online at:  
[www.gfzk.de/presse](http://www.gfzk.de/presse)

We are happy to arrange interviews and tours of the exhibition:  
[presse@gfzk.de](mailto:presse@gfzk.de)

### Ulrich Wüst

1949 born in Magdeburg  
1967–1972 studied at the University of Architecture and Construction in Weimar, graduated in urban planning  
1972 moved to East Berlin  
1972–1983 work as an urban planner and picture editor since 1984 freelance photographer in Berlin and Schönhof / Mecklenburg  
2000 Helen Abbott Prize  
2021 Art Prize of the State of Saxony-Anhalt  
[www.ulrichwuest.de](http://www.ulrichwuest.de)

### Matthias Flügge

1952 born in Demmin / Mecklenburg  
studied art history at the Humboldt University in Berlin  
1978–1986 editor of the magazine *Bildende Kunst*, afterwards freelance  
1990–1999 chief editor and co-publisher of the magazine *neue bildende kunst*, afterwards freelance journalist and exhibition organiser in Berlin  
1996 admitted to the Akademie der Künste, Berlin  
1997–2006 Vice-President of the Akademie der Künste, Berlin  
2012–2022 Rector of Dresden University of Fine Arts

### List of works

**Stadtbilder (Cityscapes), 1979–1985**  
18 b / w archival pigment prints, each 16 × 24 cm

**Roter Oktober (Red October), 2018**  
Leporello with 45 b / w and colour photographs mounted on cardboard, 14.8 × 21 × 2 cm

**Die Pracht der Macht (The Pomp of Power), 1983–1990**  
Leporello with 30 b / w photographs mounted on cardboard, 14.8 × 21 × 1.5 cm

**Notizen (Notations), 1984–1986**  
18 b / w archival pigment prints each 14 × 21 cm

**Nachlass Wiegmann. Bülowssiege (Wiegmann Legacy. Bülowssiege), 1991–1992**  
6 colour photographs, archival pigment prints, (3 ×) 70 cm × 105 cm and (3 ×) × 105 cm and 70 cm

**Mitte. Berlin, 1995–1997**  
15 b / w archival pigment prints, each 18 × 27 cm

**Morgenstraße. Magdeburg, 1998–2000**  
15 b / w archival pigment prints each 18 × 27 cm

**Flachland. Schönhof (Flatland. Schönhof), 2013**  
10 colour photographs, archival pigment prints (7 ×) 38 × 57 cm and (3 ×) 57 × 3 cm

**Randlage. Die Gemeinde Nordwestuckermark (Village Edge. The Municipality of Nordwestuckermark), 2014–2019**  
12 b / w archival pigment prints, each 26 × 39 cm

**Prenzlau, 2018**  
12 colour photographs, archival pigment prints, each 45 × 30 cm

**Jahrebuch (Book of the Years), 1978–2008**  
18 b / w archival pigment prints (15 ×) 18 × 27 cm and (3 ×) 27 × 18 cm

**Scheine (Banknotes), 2009**  
12 b / w archival pigment prints, each 30 × 45 cm

**Toter Raum. Schönhof (Dead Ground. Schönhof), 2012**  
12 archival pigment prints, each 18 × 27 cm

**Plagwitz. Leipzig Oktober (Plagwitz. Leipzig October), 1989**  
12 s/w baryte prints, each 14.5 × 20 cm

### Opening hours and art mediation

Tue–Fri: 2–7 pm  
Sat–Sun, public holidays: 12 am–6 pm

Single ticket: 7€ / 5€  
Combined ticket: 10€ / 6€  
Free admission on Wednesdays

Art mediation  
Wed, Sat, Sun: 2–6 pm

Our art mediation team guides visitors through the exhibitions, answers questions, and engages in conversation.



**Schützenstraße / Jerusalemer Straße 1996**  
From the series: **Mitte. Berlin, 1995–1997**  
s / w archival pigment print  
**18 × 27 cm**

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**Berlin 1982**  
Aus der Serie: **Stadtbilder, 1979–1985**  
s / w archival pigment print

**16 × 24 cm**

© Ulrich Wüst; ifa



**Berlin, Pappelallee September 1984**  
From the series: **Notizen, 1984–1986**  
s / w archival pigment print

**14 × 21 cm**

© Ulrich Wüst; ifa



**Kreta 1997**  
From the series: *Jahrebuch, 1978–2008*  
s / w archival pigment print  
18 × 27 cm  
© Ulrich Wüst; ifa



**Parmen 2016**  
From the series: *Randlage. Die Gemeinde Nordwestuckermark, 2014–2019*  
s / w archival pigment print  
26 × 39 cm  
© Ulrich Wüst; ifa



**Die Pracht der Macht, 1983–1990**  
Leporello with with 30 b/w photographs  
mounted on cardboard  
14.8 × 21 × 1.5 cm  
© Ulrich Wüst; ifa



**Roter Oktober, 2018**  
**Leporello with 45 b / w and colour**  
**photographs mounted on**  
**cardboard, 14,8 × 21 × 2 cm**  
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**From the series: Nachlass Wiegmann.**  
**Bülowsiege, 1991–1992**  
**Colour photograph, 105 × 70 cm**  
 © Ulrich Wüst; ifa



**From the series: Prenzlau, 2018**  
**Colour photograph, 45 × 30 cm**  
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