Through artistic and curatorial case studies, this research and exhibition project investigates the »Nachwende« (open-endedness) – the 1990s, a time period initially assumed to be a transitional phase. The project explores how artists adapted their working methods in this new situation after 1990, which methods and motifs became flagships in the era of the clash of art concepts and systems, and how these being taken on again by younger generations. The exhibition is devoted to East German artistic search for a new and distinctive vocabulary, a search that continues in a »Nachwende« period understood in the broader sense to extend to this day.

Indications of this continuing »Nach- wende« can be found in the ways East German artists categorize themselves: exemplified by their self-identification as first, second, third generation artists or in their ironic self-designations as Oosi, ex-Oosi, or Wossi, as well as by distinctions such as exile, or, and the East Germans (Yana Milev). These self-categorizations have recently broadened to include comparisons of East German and migrant experiences (Naika Foroutan) and have been rendered more complex by the description of East Germans as inherently heterogeneous (Peggy Piesche, among others).

In this process of self-determination, also artistic and mediated by artists, recurring methods can be identified over the last three decades: the use of biographical references, reference to private archives and work (memory of the artistic »me« families and the use of documents from state surveillance as now publicly accessible – if not always unproblematic) – sources. Such assertions of the artistic »me« are often preceded by various experiences of overwriting: through the deliberate destruction and non-recording of works, through their devaluation into mere historical artefacts, through the dislocation of archives and the disappearance of works into storage. Artists have also appropriated this kind of overwriting as a technique – the resurrection of archives, or in cases of individual source or by transferring these methods into their own artistic practices.


As an additional case study spanning several weeks, the exhibition focuses on the institutional history of the nGbK itself – in its (not entirely conflict-free) pioneering role as a mediator between West German and East German art: the survey of all exhibitions related to the GDR since the nGbK’s founding in 1980 highlights this shifting arena of encounter. Developed by Anna Voswinckel in collaboration with Beatrice E. Stammer, a documentation of »nGbK: Exhibition Außerhalb von Mittendrin« (Outside of Control, 1990), the nGbK exhibition history, art, literature, music, and theatre project that offered a feminist perspective on the Nachwende, circulates through the exhibition.

Without claiming to map or depict the set of the Nachwende in its entirety, the case studies point to an ongoing search for a new and distinct language, as well as for new images and methods. Constellations of thematically linked works can be seen as prompts for a conversation about artistic practices of the last decades.

Challenges of the 1990s: A microhistory of »Nachwenden« developed by Susa Weber (1999, Leipzig), is not an emblematic methodological landscape that explicitly pigeonholes certain recurring discourses and metaphors from the art scene from 1990 onwards. In fact, for example, to the 1990s art-theoretical debates of the late-modern versus the global box as a fundamental heuristic dichotomy between the presentation of Eastern and Western European art, to green-screen technology as a commonly used tool for the exchange of images and back- grounds, or to the frequent utilization of GDR history in cultural spaces and institutions.

Susa Weber’s opening up of her own work archive, prepared expressly for the exhibition, to be pasted over, renders the »Nachwenden« a space of a deliberately chosen practice of overwriting. Intended as a counter- methodology, this microhistory activates a series of movements by means of which the exhibition transforms itself over the seven weeks. The works are initially stuck in a storage depot, from which they are taken and placed in the exhibition space either as temporary hangs or as permanent past-overs as part of the week-long case studies. The active use of individual »Klappen« (»flaps«) as working spaces for two new productions refers to the »Außerhalb von Mittendrin« exhibition Case studies and contributions by:

Bakri Bakhit Tina Bara Nadja Buttendorf Can Candan Yvon Chabrowski Harun Farocki Jörg Herold Bernd Hiepe Margret Hoppe Wilhelm Kloetzke & Peter Woelck Silke Koch Eric Meier Minh Duc Pham

**Partners of nGbK project group**: Bakri Bakhit, Elske Rosenfeld, Wolfgang H Scholz, Anna Voswinckel, Susa Weber

**Please refer to our website www.ngbk.de for the latest information on programme and accessibility of our exhibition space.**
Sabine Reinfeld (*1976, Leipzig) is producing the performance "Miss DDR" and on the lines of development of artistic practice up to the present day (date and place tba via newsletter and blog). Polzin’s works include research into the architectural and design history of the GDR. In his sculpture "Außerhalb von Mittendrin", Harun Farocki in a photographic and in the form of her Coca-Cola dress. The work, shown here as an overwriting, also refers to the upcoming exhibition "Kammerspiel [Chamber play]", Gloria (detail), 2005/2021 (rough cut), 1991, video, 22:16 min, courtesy Galerie EIGEN + ART Leipzig/Berlin VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn 2021

Programme

Wednesday, 15 September 2021, 15:00, nGbK exhibition space »MEET THE ARTIST [e], with Sue Webster as part of Berlin Art Week

Wednesday, 29 September 2021, 19:00, nGbK exhibition space »Miss DDR«

Thursday, 8 October 2021, 15:00, nGbK exhibition space »Miss DDR«

Wednesday, 1 November 2021, 16:00–20:30, nGbK exhibition space »Resonanz«

Wednesday, 29 September 2021, 19:00, nGbK exhibition space »Miss DDR«

Wednesday, 15 September 2021, 15:00, nGbK exhibition space »MEET THE ARTIST [e], with Sue Webster as part of Berlin Art Week

Wednesday, 29 September 2021, 19:00, nGbK exhibition space »Miss DDR«