

Come November and winter is undoubtedly fast approaching here in Berlin. With the last of the leaves fallen, gone are the hordes of pavement café frequenters, aside from the brave few wrapped in blankets, sipping and shivering in the Siberian winds. Berlin takes on a more dour aspect at this time of year, but it is not without its charms. The late night bars come into their own as smoky, gemütlich (cosy) havens of Berlinerkindl inspired sociability, the Wintermarkts offer a great selection of hot imbiss (snacks), gluhwein, etc. (not to mention a variety of weird wooden folk-art) and the cultural life of the city continues to race along like the Tour de France in purple spandex and fur.

It's also a great time to huddle in libraries, archives and cinemas and work up a sweat in the studio. Berlin has a great many libraries that cater to the most obscure interests. It's quite possible to visit most as a guest (you need a permanent address to become a member). This means that although you can't borrow books, it's possible to search for, order and photocopy any material you're looking for – librarians are generally fairly helpful, although you shouldn't expect them to speak English. [The University of Arts](#) which is linked to the [Technical University library](#), on Fasanen Strasse, covers most subjects, being divided into areas floor by floor. You'll need a padlock for the lockers, which you may purchase from the shop. Photocopy cards are available from the copy centre on the first floor. Art, theatre and design are located on the top floor (lofty disciplines), and you may access the online catalogue either on-site or remotely. [The State library](#) at Potsdammer Platz opposite Mies van der Rohe's Neue National Galerie also has an extensive art collection.

There are a plethora of bookshops in Berlin. [Motto](#), near Kotbusser Tor boasts the most extensive selection of artists publications I've seen to-date. Located in an off-street courtyard opposite [Chert gallery](#), it's quite possible to spend a whole day leafing through the bewildering selection of books, zines, self-published materials, etc. They also host regular events, readings and, in conjunction with [Chert](#), exhibitions. [Dussmanns](#) on Friedrich Strasse is one of the largest bookshops in town, has a range of English language books, cds, stationary etc. [Walther Koenig](#), specialises in art and has several

branches in Berlin, including one at the Hamburger Bahnhof Gallery (host to the Flick collection). Lastly, [Pro-gm](#), near Rosa Luxemburg Platz, is a great spot for browsing architecture and design publications.

For those with an interest in moving image the library of the [Deutsche Kinematek](#) Museum für Film und Fernsehen in the ‘post-modern’ (disturbingly crass) cyber-tent that is the Sony centre at Potsdamerplatz is a great resource. The catalogue covers all film-related areas and offers an extensive range of mainstream and experimental film that may be viewed on dvd or, for a fee, projected. They also house a photoarchive, an archive of film-related props, costumes, etc. and the [Marlene Dietrich Collection Berlin](#). Beneath this is [Arsenal Experimental](#) – the institute for film and video art, which has a really exciting ongoing film programme. If you’re really keen, it’s possible to become a member of Arsenal for a small fee, which gives you a reduced ticket price for all screenings.



Archive Image of Kino International, Karl Marx Strasse

Other cinemas of note (there are more cinemas than Kartoffelpuffer vendors it would seem) are [Kino International](#) and [Kino Babylon](#). Kino International, on Karl Marx Strasse,

was built between 1961 and 1963, designed by architects Josef Kaiser and Herbert Aust. A striking example of DDR chic, Kino International's glass-fronted, expansive entrance lobby, lounge and auditorium provide a stylish cinema setting and becomes, on Monday nights, a gay club. Kino Babylon, at Rosa Luxemburg Platz, was designed by Hans Poelzig, an architect associated with early Bauhaus and creator of the fantastical, expressionist Grand Theatre, Berlin, which sadly was destroyed during WWII. Kino Babylon shows a range of art house and international films in an art-deco setting.

When you've read as many books and seen as many films as is humanly possible without losing the ability to interact with other homo sapiens, you might wish to break free from the confines (those few that there are) of Berlin and make a break for the country. For a days jaunt, Deutsche Bahn (local rail) offers group tickets for up to six people, which makes it quite inexpensive. Its well worth a trip to Dessau, Leipzig or Potsdam and providing it's not duck-friendly weather it's a good idea to bring your bike along.



Walter Gropius's Bauhaus College, Dessau

The main attraction of Dessau is the Bauhaus school and [Meister Häuser](#) designed by Walter Gropius. Unnervingly quiet, and surrounded by typical suburban houses, the Bauhaus building is still in use as a college and gives the impression of a light-filled, earth-bound ocean liner. The Meister Häuser (where the tutors lived) were, at different times, home to Kandinsky, Kurt Weil and Paul Klee, to name but a few. Gropius intended that the spartan homes he designed were to be furnished with Bauhaus-made objects and fittings. Much to his chagrin a number of his colleagues refused – preferring more traditional furnishings.



Interior of the Bauhaus College

If you have neither the time nor inclination to jump on a train, but are still interested in Bauhaus, in Berlin there is the [Bauhaus Archive and Museum of Design](#), near Nollendorfplatz U-Bahn, which has on display a great collection of objects, models and correspondence.

An Artists Phrasebook – Part II

What ho! My name is László Moholy-Nagy. No, not the same one...

Servus! Mein Name ist..... Nein, nicht der selbe.

Could you tell me the way to the gallery bar?

Wo ist denn hier die Galerie Bar?

I think you'll find that's a sculpture. In English we call these 'found objects'.

Meinst du nicht, dass das eine Skulptur ist? Im Englischen nennen wir das 'Gefundenes Objekt'.

Is this really Dieter Roth's typewriter?

Ist das wirklich die Schreibmaschine von Dieter Roth?

The more I look at it the more it grows on me.

Je länger ich es anschau, desto mehr gefällt es mir.

There's something wrong with the perspective.

Irgendetwas stimmt nicht mit der Perspektive.

How many square meters is it?

Wieviel Quadratmeter sind es?

I wasn't sleeping – merely contemplating the film's embodiment of stillness.

Ich habe nicht geschlafen – sondern habe lediglich die Verkörperung der Stille im Film kontempliert.

But is it art?

Aber ist das Kunst?