Pictures Become Books
The most beautiful exhibition catalogues of 2017

Bilder werden Bücher
Die schönsten Ausstellungskataloge 2017

This selection of German titles is show-cased at book fairs all over the world on the German collective stands organized by the Frankfurter Buchmesse in 2018.

Photographs become Pictures.
Fotografien werden Bilder

MARTIN ENGLER
2017, 256 pages, € 45.–
Hirmer Verlag, 978-3-7774-2773-7
Städel Museum, Frankfurt, 27/4–13/8/2017

World-famous artists Bernd and Hilla Becher were the first people in Germany to teach photography as an artistic medium. Since the 1980s, their teaching has been reflected in the work of internationally significant photographers, with large-format images showing networks of relationships, and forming conceptual series. The exhibition presents about 200 photographs by Volker Döhne, Andreas Gursky, Candida Höfer, Axel Hütte, Thomas Ruff, Jörg Sasse, Thomas Struth and Petra Wunderlich.

Gurlitt: Status Report
Bestandsaufnahme Gurlitt

KUNST-UND AUSSTELLUNGSHALLE DER BUNDESREPUBLIK DEUTSCHLAND GMBH, KUNSTMUSEUM BERN
2017, 348 pages, € 2990
Hirmer Verlag, 978-3-7774-2962-5
Bundeskunsthalle, Bonn, 3/11/2017–11/3/2018,
“Nazi Art Theft and its Consequences” Kunstmuseum Bern, 2/11/2017–4/3/2018,
“Degenerate Art” – confiscated and sold

The 1,500 works of art confiscated from Cornelius Gurlitt in 2013 pose the question: are they or are they not looted art? The Bonn exhibition shows the findings of research into the origins of the works. Documents, photos and more tell the story of the art dealer Hildebrand Gurlitt, who was the main procurer of art for Hitler’s planned museum of art in Linz. The Kunstmuseum Bern, which is the inheritor of the Gurlitt collection, is showing works by Kirchner, Nolde, Klee, Heckel and Dix, related to the story of the “Degenerate Art”.

Gerhard Richter
Gerhard Richter

CHRISTOPH SCHREIER, KUNSTMUSEUM BONN
2017, 128 pages, € 2990
Hirmer Verlag, 978-3-7774-2897-0
Kunstmuseum Bonn, 15/6–1/10/2017
Stedelijk Museum voor Actuele Kunst (S.M.A.K.) Gent, 21/10/2017–18/2/2018
Museum Wiesbaden, 23/3–24/6/2018

The exhibition in Bonn shows 25 paintings with which world renowned Gerhard Richter laid the foundations of his work from 1962 and 1986. As such, they provide a key to understanding his complete works. The images of curtains, windows and doors are major pieces from New York, Budapest and Ghent, which play with the question of what painting shows us or hides from us. And what of the depiction in the medium and how this relates to the painted depiction of the world, or how both these relate to reality?
In 1937, László Moholy-Nagy founded the New Bauhaus in Chicago and in so doing exerted a strong influence on American photography. In their first year, all the students learned the basics of photography and experimented with photomontage, photograms and light painting. Famous teachers such as Harry Callahan, Aaron Siskind and Arthur Siegel left their mark on generations of photographers. The exhibition examines the period from 1937 to 2001, and with it a core aspect of the American contribution to post-war photography.

Splendour and Misery in the Weimar Republic
From Otto Dix to Jeanne Mammen
Glanz und Elend in der Weimarer Republik

Ingrid Pfeiffer für Schirn Kunsthalle Frankfurt
2017, 608 pages, € 49.90
Hirmer Verlag, 978-3-7774-2932-8
Schirn Kunsthalle, Frankfurt, 27/10/2017–25/2/2018

This exhibition focuses on the era’s hardships, which are evident in the images and across the broad stylistic spectrum. In these works, the artists seem to have sensed the inevitability of the failure of Germany’s first democratic government. The varied themes addressed in this exciting period – whose best known representatives are Otto Dix, Georg Grosz and Max Beckmann – include a farewell to the German Empire, as well as poverty, pleasure, emancipation, the first economic miracle and a fascination with sport.

The documenta 14 Reader
Der documenta 14 Reader

Quinn Latimer und Adam Szymczyk
2017, 500 pages, € 49.80
Verlag Walther König, 978-3-96098-110-7
Athens and Kassel, 11/4–17/9/2017

The documenta 14 Reader contains essays, allegories, poems and historical legal documents addressing the concerns of the project, including a reflection on sovereign national states, market economies, democracy, and the communication of art. It should be taken as a critical anthology that ponders history in order to gain a clearer view of the present and reshape the future. The picture collections illustrate the event’s broad temporal and geographical span, as delineated by the artists and other actors.
Matisse – Bonnard
Henri Matisse and Pierre Bonnard were two of the most famous representatives of French modernism. The friendship between these fellow artists lasted for over 40 years. Each took an intense approach to the same themes: interiors, still life, landscapes and above all female nudes. With 120 canvasses filled with light and colours, as well as sculptures, drawings and graphic works, the exhibition brings the two painters into a dialogue, vividly demonstrating their mutual influence.

Paul Klee
Paul Klee was one of the most influential painters of European modernism. His works have been shown in many exhibitions, but this is the first to deal comprehensively with Klee’s approach to abstraction. Four themes contribute to a common thread through Klee’s art. These are nature, architecture, painting and alphabetic characters, and their forms vary between the semi-figurative and abstract. In these, new links emerge, both to Klee’s contemporaries and to later generations.

Anita Rée
Karin Schick, Hamburger Kunsthalle
2017, 204 pages, € 3995
Prestel Verlag, 978-3-7913-5710-2
Hamburg Kunsthalle, 6/10/2017–4/2/2018
The Hamburg Kunsthalle is countering the myths surrounding Anita Rée with a retrospective encompassing 200 works. Her dark reputation stems from pictorial analyses as well as the biographical detail that she took her own life before she was 50. Hard to pin down, her style is a mixture of traditional and modern, borrowing as much from New Objectivity and Cubism as from the early Renaissance. This exhibition rehabilitates an artist who is interesting and diverse as well as curious and intellectual.
Thomas Struth – Figure Ground

THOMAS WESKI U. ULRICH WILMES FÜR HAUS DER KUNST MÜNCHEN
2017, 320 pages, € 68.–
Schirmer/Mosel, 978-3-8296-0810-7
Haus der Kunst, Munich, 5/5/2017–7/1/2018

The photographic artist captures aspects of reality that we rarely see – from primeval forests to high-tech research – in giant format photos. Hardly any other contemporary German photographer has such a broad range of subject matter. This show in Munich, with about 130 photos and two video installations, is his biggest retrospective to date. For the first time, it brings together unseen early photos with archive material that underscores the longstanding ideas behind his work and shows the process of creation.

Working on History
Arbeiten in Geschichte

LUDGER DERENTHAL, YU ZHANG FÜR DAS MUSEUM FÜR FOTOGRAFIE BERLIN
2017, 160 pages, € 38.–
Kerber Verlag, 978–3–7356–0385–2

The Cultural Revolution left its mark on half a century of Chinese art. This exhibition shows the event through the prism of historical and contemporary photographs. The former provide a picture of the Cultural Revolution and its repercussions, while at the same time illustrating photography as a medium of propaganda by revealing censorship and photomontage.

Otto Dix
KUNSTSAMMLUNG NORDRHEIN-WESTFALEN, K 20 DÜSSELDORF
2017, 240 pages, € 49,95
Prestel Verlag, 978–3–7913–5630–3
Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen, K20, Dusseldorf, 11/2–28/5/2017 (extended)
Tate Liverpool, 23/6–15/10/2017

Otto Dix, famous painter and infamous terror of the middle classes, spent three intensively creative years in Dusseldorf, from the autumn of 1922 until November 1925. As a member of the revolutionary art school „Das Junge Rheinland“ (Young Rhineland), he developed the critical style that makes him unmistakable in 20th century German art. The first monographic exhibition on this period contains around 200 paintings, water colours and graphic works taken from German and international collections.

James Rosenquist
James Rosenquist

STEPHAN DIEDERICH, YILMAZ DZIEWIOR
2017, 336 pages, € 49,95
Prestel Verlag, 978–3–7913–5723–2
Museum Ludwig, Cologne, 18/11/2017–4/3/2018
ARoS Aarhus Art Museum, Dates uncertain 14/4–19/8 2018

The museum presents the work of this important American pop artist including some material that has not previously been exhibited. The room installation F-111, an icon of the pop art era, underlines Rosenquist’s interest in the social and political events of his time. In this, he places the F-111 jet fighter, which was still being developed at the time, next to pictures of everyday American consumerism. The work envelops the viewer on all sides such that they plunge into the picture.

Art for All
Kunst für alle

TOBIAS G. NATTER, MAX HOLLEIN, KLAUS ALBRECHT SCHRÖDER
2016, 416 pages, € 50.–
Taschen Verlag, 978–3–8365–3921–0
Schirn Kunsthalle, Frankfurt, 6/7–3/10/2016

Due to the fascination with Japanese coloured woodcuts, this oldest of printing processes experienced a renaissance around 1900, especially in Vienna. The artists who took to the technique with enthusiasm and modernised it included many members of the Viennese Secession movement. Because of its replicability and easy availability, woodblock printing was ideally suited to their concept of “Art for All”. This contributed much to the development of a new imagery which already pointed towards impressionism.
The Schirn is presenting the first ever major overview of this extraordinary artist’s work. On show are works specially conceived for the exhibition, as well as many which have been held back for years and will be now seen for the first time. Ulay prefers working with Polaroids. The instant photos provide the material for his efforts at a representation of life. With his former partner Marina Abramović, he successfully expanded performance art in a way that today sets the standards for that genre.

Katharina Sieverding is one of the internationally renowned artists who rejuvenated photography at an early stage through an unconventional selection of images. As one of the few women in the German art scene, she has enjoyed success since the early 1970s. Large-format photography was a feature of her work, even before this became more widely used. Her photo series are an expression of her reflections on identity, the individual and the situation of the world in general.

The museum is showing the first major exhibition of this film and video artist. Among other works presented will be “Muster” (“Pattern”), his contribution to documenta 13, which heralded his international breakthrough in 2012. This documents the changing history of the Benedictine monastery of Breitenau, near Kassel. For the installation, as if in a journey through time, on three projection screens he melds together images of the building’s past uses as a cloister, prison, concentration camp and labour camp for girls. A timeless subject: the tense relations between men and women, and the artistic representations of this. The curators examined the way art has reflected changing gender roles, from the beginning of the first women’s movement in the 19th century to the end of the Second World War. In so doing they concentrate on the artistic schools of symbolism and surrealism. Some 150 paintings, photographs, sculptures and films address the themes of the femme fatale, seduction, emancipation, education and sexuality.

Through cooperation between the different cities these museums have created a three-part exhibition on the rise of photography. Based on the Berlin Photography Workshop, whose 40th anniversary this show marks, as well as the young scene in Essen, the exhibition provides an answer to the success story of the Dusseldorf School. It describes for the first time the history, influence and impacts of the Berlin institution and its key figures, such as Otto Steinert and Ute Eskildsen, in the 1970s and 1980s.
Schneider provokes. His fascination is for religious centres, prisons, family homes, a death chamber. He replicates them and rearranges them; he contravenes self-perception and spatial perception. His installation for the Biennale in Venice, „Totes Haus u r Venedig 2001”, earned him the Golden Lion. For this exhibition, he has designed a course leading through his most important works, from early paintings and action art from the 1980s, via „TOTES HAUS u r”, up to his newer works based on culturally or historically significant buildings.