

**MILDRED LANE KEMPER ART MUSEUM**  
WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY IN ST. LOUIS

**CONNECTIONS GUIDE**



# REALITY BITES

MAKING  
AVANT-GARDE  
ART IN  
POST-WALL  
GERMANY

February 9—April 29, 2007



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This guide is designed as a companion to the exhibition *Reality Bites: Making Avant-garde Art in Post-Wall Germany*. By including a more in-depth look at selected artworks in each section of this exhibition, this guide offers visitors an opportunity to expand their exploration of *Reality Bites* and to make connections with contemporary art.

A special section of this guide has been created in conjunction with the National Endowment for the Arts' Big Read program coordinated by Washington University. It explores issues raised in Ray Bradbury's novel *Fahrenheit 451* through selected works on display in the *Reality Bites* exhibition, focusing on the themes of technology, media culture, and memory. This section of the guide provides a great opportunity to stimulate meaningful connections between literature and contemporary art.

# REALITY BITES

## Making Avant-garde Art in Post-Wall Germany

The fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, the unification of East and West Germany in 1990, and the end of the cold war were decisive turning points in the history of Germany after World War II. *Reality Bites* gathers artworks that engage with the changed reality of German everyday life—its past, present, and possible futures. It explores how artists have adopted strategies to mediate images and symbols regarding Germany's identity as well as the role of its traumatic pasts in today's world and its relation to the age of globalization.

The artworks presented in this exhibition were executed during roughly the first fifteen years after the establishment of a unified Germany. Organized into three sections—"Re-dressing Germany," "Traumatic Histories," and "Global Spaces"—*Reality Bites* brings into focus what can be called a new avant-garde as these artworks interpenetrate the everyday and its materials in a variety of ways.

Colloquially, the term avant-garde designates art that pushes boundaries and utilizes an original approach. Works included in this exhibition are considered avant-garde because they bring the everyday into the realm of contemporary art. For example, they employ items that we see in our daily life, such as bicycle racks, television screens, advertisements, text messages, and computer icons. Several artworks also involve the participation of non-artists by including their personal stories and memories or by actually involving the viewer in the creation of the work itself. This involvement of the everyday allows the works to transcend conventional art forms—such as painting or sculpture—and also counters the notion of art as independent from other spheres of life.

While staged within the context of Germany since the 1990s, *Reality Bites* includes work by artists of various nationalities. The exhibition goes beyond the particulars of place and time to open up new avenues for understanding German art as well as artistic strategies as practiced within the frame of a global and post-national context.

# RE-DRESSING GERMANY

## In-depth Look

Bringing together videos, photographs, objects, installations, and assemblages, “Re-dressing Germany” considers artworks that create visualizations associated with the new Germany after the fall of the Berlin Wall. Work in this section of the exhibition focuses on the complexities of multiculturalism in contemporary Germany, the resurgence of xenophobic racism in the early 1990s, and the erasure of German Democratic Republic (East German) culture after unification.

Many works presented here also directly involve the new Berlin in a variety of ways. As the capital city, Berlin visually and physically embodies the unification of the two Germanies and its afterlife. Since the fall of the Berlin Wall, the city has taken on a multiplicity of identities, confronting its past during the Third Reich, its division following World War II, and its anticipated future as a globalized metropolis. The aesthetic strategies employed by artists in this section deliberately penetrate everyday life and the experiences of those living in this rapidly changing society. In this way, these artworks actively participate in the ongoing process of contributing to an identity for the new Berlin and the new Germany.

**“Ever changing, always in flux, and always transient, Berlin presents itself as a hybrid site in which national and postnational identities, local and global elements, and past and present enter into unstable connections, forming ever-new relationships to a rapidly changing reality.”**

—Sabine Eckmann, curator



Kutlug Ataman

*It's a Vicious Circle*, 2002 (screen shot)

### Kutlug Ataman

#### *It's a Vicious Circle* (2002)

Turkish artist and filmmaker Kutlug Ataman confronts issues of alienation and Germany as a multicultural site in his video installation *It's a Vicious Circle*. This work features Jamaican-born Troy Lopez—a friend of Ataman's for over fifteen years—describing his own experiences as a foreigner living in Berlin. The camera focuses exclusively on Lopez as he speaks openly about various subjects such as shopping, food, and the social differences he notices between the places he has lived. Lopez's direct and casual mode of addressing the camera involves both the filmmaker and the viewer in his conversation.

Lopez keeps returning to his frustration with how he, as a black man, is treated differently in Germany. As he continues to talk, he acknowledges that he is caught in a “vicious circle” of trying to challenge these prejudices while at the same time demanding that Germans conform to his cultural sensibilities. With the video on continuous play, Lopez's cycle of speech is never-ending—as is the social dilemma he describes.

Ataman's work frequently documents the lives of marginalized individuals through the stories they tell about themselves. The subjects in his videos speak candidly about their sexuality, obsessions, or experiences with racial stereotyping, describing reality as it is lived.

**“I look at people like buildings. Instead of walls and rooms, we have stories and experiences. As long as we can live these stories, express these stories, tell and retell these stories, then we can stand up, the way a building stands. Talking is the only meaningful activity we have. Once we are no longer willing or allowed to tell our stories, we collapse into conformity.”**

—Kutlug Ataman



**Sophie Calle**  
*Honor Guard (Neue Wache)*, 1996  
from *The Detachment* series



**Sophie Calle**  
*Lenin Memorial*, 1996  
from *The Detachment* series

## **Sophie Calle** *The Detachment Series* (1996)

Combining images and text, artist Sophie Calle’s work in this exhibition addresses the erasure of East German history from the German collective memory. After unification, the new Berlin City Parliament decided to remove monuments and symbols of former communist East Germany (GDR) from the city. In her series titled *The Detachment* (1996), Calle documents the dismantling of twelve such monuments in former East Berlin.

For this series, Calle conducted interviews with East Germans. She asked individuals about their personal memories of the monuments and how they have responded to the visible denial of their history in a newly unified Berlin. Through this process, Calle’s

work involves people living in Berlin and their everyday experiences, recognizing that the monuments were part of their childhood memories, their histories, or their life in the city. These recollections are presented in printed books, along with black-and-white photographs of the sites before the removal of the monument or marker. Above each of the books, Calle displays a photograph representing the status of the monument after unification (whether completely removed, as in the case of a colossal statue of Lenin, or obscured). Her work helps visualize the role of national symbols and monuments in the formation of both collective and individual identities.

**“I visited places from which symbols of GDR history have been effaced. I asked passers-by and residents to describe the objects that once filled these empty spaces. I photographed the absence and replaced the missing monuments with their memories.”**

—Sophie Calle



Manfred Pernice  
*Untitled*, 2002

## Manfred Pernice *Untitled* (2002)

When Manfred Pernice moved to Berlin, the city was in the midst of the process of demolition and reconstruction that followed unification. Especially in areas of Berlin that were east of the Wall, construction sites, piles of rubble, and abandoned buildings dominated, and in many areas continue to dominate, the landscape. As the visual evidence of Berlin's divided past was disappearing, Pernice salvaged a discarded metal bicycle rack from former East Berlin.

By presenting this everyday object as a work of art—with its chipped red paint and uprooted concrete base—Pernice recalls the readymades of Marcel Duchamp in the early twentieth century. Duchamp's *Fountain*, a urinal which he signed with the pseudonym "R. Mutt," shocked the art world in 1917. Duchamp's introduction of the readymade into the realm of avant-garde art questioned established notions of authenticity, creativity, and authorship.

Pernice engages this avant-garde discourse. His bicycle rack is recognizable as a functional object but can also be appreciated for its abstract artistic qualities, such as the contrasting textures of metal and concrete, the lines of the metal bars, and the minimalist quality of the industrial materials. As a product of East Germany's and Berlin's urban reconstruction, it can be seen as both a decaying artifact dug up from the ruins of the German Democratic Republic and as a symbol of the new city as it emerges from the simultaneous processes of expansion and destruction.

# TRAUMATIC HISTORIES

## In-depth Look

German unification in 1989–90 prompted a new wave of interest in—even obsession with—national memory. For a new generation of German artists, the past and its ambiguous, diverging, and unfixed relation to the present became a focus for much of their work. In the new Germany, this past consisted of the Holocaust and the violent history of the Third Reich, but also of more recent traumatic events such as the activities of the terrorist Red Army Faction (RAF) and the dictatorship in East Germany.

“Traumatic Histories” focuses on the role of contemporary art in the attempt to articulate collective trauma. Artists in this section create collaborative works, arrange site-specific pieces, and use photography to investigate national memory and its significance, exploring memory as a spatial and synchronous concept rather than a linear and evolutionary narrative. Many of these artworks unlock traumatic events from the past and acknowledge them as part of the present and the future.



Rudolf Herz  
Two photographs from *Museum Photographs, Dachau, 1976/80, 1996*

### Rudolf Herz *Museum Photographs, Dachau, 1976/80 (1996)*

Between 1976 and 1980, artist and photo-historian Rudolf Herz took hundreds of photographs of the official documentary photographs on display at the museum at the former Dachau concentration camp. Many of his photographs captured the evidence of repeated attacks to the museum displays that left scratches and abrasions on images of Hitler and anonymous Nazi guards.

Sixteen years later, for his series *Museum Photographs, Dachau*, Herz selected nine of his images that highlight these damaged photographs. He enlarged and cropped his photographs and played with the contrast, perspective, and focus to emphasize the distortion resulting from the damage. In doing this, Herz creates two layers of historical representation of trauma—the original Nazi photographs and the later violent responses to them. The artist’s manipulations also reveal his own subjective response to the imagery, adding yet another layer of representation and history.

Herz’s photographs address a number of complex issues that have preoccupied contemporary German artists, including how to represent and commemorate the Holocaust and the traumatic legacy of the Third Reich. On the surface of these photographs, Herz collapses German history, time, and memory. He leaves these traces of the German past for us to re-experience and reinterpret, preventing the kind of closure with the past that visitors to Dachau sought by violently attacking the original photographs.



André Korpys and Markus Löffler  
*Conspirative Housing Concept "Spindy,"* 1998  
 (installation view)

## André Korpys and Markus Löffler *Conspirative Housing Concept "Spindy"* (1998)

Consisting of photographs, drawings, designs, and an artist's book, André Korpys and Markus Löffler's multimedia installation deals with the West German trauma of the Red Army Faction (RAF) and its location within German history and identity. The Red Army Faction was a left-wing terrorist group that operated in West Germany from the 1960s through the 1980s. The group carried out assassinations, car bombings, kidnappings, and bank robberies targeted against German politicians, government officials, and businessmen as well as American military officers.

Rather than representing specific members of the RAF or their terrorist acts, however, Korpys and Löffler chose to explore a specific apartment space once inhabited by the RAF. The two artists researched a known terrorist hideout in Hannover, taking photographs from the outside and drawing their own maps of the apartment from police photographs. The artists hired an interior design firm to translate the apartment into a contemporary space with stylish 1990s furniture and movie posters. Korpys and Löffler then built a model of this fictional apartment and demolished it—documenting the destruction with photographs of the debris. The accompanying artists' book is composed of reproductions of the police photos, the artists' drawings, an inventory of the furniture and objects in the original RAF apartment, and police reports and newspaper clippings relating to RAF activity—some of which may be fakes inserted by the artists.



André Korpys and Markus Löffler  
*Conspirative Housing Concept "Spindy,"* 1998  
 (detail)

Through this research project, Korpys and Löffler draw our attention to the ordinary, everyday aesthetics of this terrorist apartment. Their own artistic strategies—including the subjectively created drawings, the destruction of the apartment model, and the appropriation of various materials—demonstrate attempts to recapture and rewrite this specific history of the RAF. The dissonant perspectives and media they use to explore the violent past imply both a desire to retrieve an authentic, coherent narrative of this terrorist group and the impossibility of doing so.



Renata Stih and Frieder Schnock  
*Places of Remembrance*, 1993 (site-specific installation view)

**“The memroyscape created by Stih and Schnock is complex: it shapes a cultural memory of the past even as it borrows a system of references which tie it to the present. The memorial rewards those who consent to participate in it with a new knowledge of the quarter and its involvement in the years of persecution, as well as with the mnemotechnic to store that new knowledge.”**

—Caroline Wiedmer

## Renata Stih and Frieder Schnock *Places of Remembrance* (1993)

Renata Stih and Frieder Schnock’s *Places of Remembrance* is an unconventional memorial that addresses the complexities of memorializing and commemorating German history. Among a generation of artists and intellectuals who believe in the need to revisit Germany’s Nazi past and the Holocaust in new ways, Stih and Schnock created a memorial to the murdered Jews of the Bavarian Quarter in Berlin that questions the function and effectiveness of traditional memorials in acknowledging such overwhelmingly traumatic events.

Installed since June 1993 throughout the Berlin neighborhood once occupied by an affluent Jewish community, the memorial is composed of eighty contemporary signs with texts of Nazi anti-Semitic laws, recounting the gradual isolation and exclusion of Jews from German society. Many of the signs also include excerpts from the letters or diaries of Jewish inhabitants, as well as images of objects referring to the restrictions mentioned in the text.

Stih and Schnock’s signs mimic the aesthetics of today’s advertising and public announcements. Demanding daily interaction with Berlin’s residents, the project raises public consciousness of the Bavarian Quarter’s checkered past, the erasure of this past from public memory, and the void left in German society after the city’s 160,000 Jewish residents were deported and murdered or forced into exile.

The installation in this exhibition presents the designs of selected signs from the memorial project permanently on view in Berlin’s Schöneberg district.

# GLOBAL SPACES

## In-depth Look

In an age of global mobility, telecommunication networks, and fast-paced streams of images and sound, our perceptions of both time and space have dramatically changed. The advance of globalization involves a profound shift in how objects, resources, and symbols travel across the globe, crossing boundaries without recognizing the nation as a defining limit. Rather than simply exposing the leveling effects of globalization—which supposedly “makes the world one”—artists in post-Wall Germany examine the complex interrelationship of the local and the global. The “Global Spaces” section of this exhibition considers artworks that intervene into worldwide image cultures and present new forms of perception commensurate with new technologies such as the Internet and digitization.

Works in this section investigate topics such as architecture in the age of globalization, the interpenetration of international mass culture and art, and the spatial and temporal dimensions of communication and interaction in today’s world. All of the works presented in this section encourage us to rediscover what is strange and startling—but also familiar—about our lives amid the technologies and networks of the present.

**“Majerus does not mourn the death of painting, but instead celebrates the abundance of imagery accumulated throughout the history of art, and generated today with increasing speed by the media and new information technologies.”**

—Daniel Birnbaum

### **Michel Majerus**

#### *Untitled (1996–2002)*

Composed of thirty small paintings forming a large grid, Michel Majerus’s untitled installation includes fragments of distinct visual cultures such as popular animation, video games, advertising, and elements of modern and contemporary art. His panels show ornamental patterns, colorful bubbles, computer icons, cartoon figures, Willem de Kooning brushstrokes, and—last but not least—the phrase “all you need,” causing us to recall the Beatles’ famous 1967 song.

Each panel seems to be on its own, yet it is difficult to ignore the various associations that seem to cut across the entire installation. By inviting us to follow these unpredictable chains of association, Majerus’s grid recalls our familiar experiences with Internet links and video games. His installation allows us to travel from one image to the next in a manner similar to how we move between different Web pages with the click of the mouse.



Michel Majerus  
Six paintings from *Untitled*, 1996–2002

**“Our aim was to blur the boundaries of architecture, to look for the forces that are shaping urban space. At the time we developed *Urban Diary*, text messages had been a quite new phenomenon. Naturally, we have been very much impressed by this new mode of communication. The aim of our project was to explore and use this new media in its relation towards urban space. Will people accept this media? Will they use it to communicate very private, intimate messages to the public? And how will the public space—in this case a subway station—change when all the hidden digital information is made visible?”**

—rude\_architecture



rude\_architecture  
*Urban Diary*, 2001–2 (installation views)

## **rude\_architecture** *Urban Diary* (2001–2)

From November 2001 to February 2002, a collaborative calling themselves rude\_architecture installed three digital projectors in the Alexanderplatz subway station in Berlin. These projectors displayed messages onto three advertising billboards along the subway station’s walls. The projectors were linked to a central computer server to which Berlin residents or visitors were asked to send short text messages with their cell phones. After a quick screening process, these messages were then projected onto the station’s wall, to be seen and read by passengers waiting for the next subway train.

Similar to e-mail, text messages have their own quirky poetics, often creatively short-cutting proper grammar and spelling to send fast and easy-to-type messages. By receiving messages from an anonymous public, rude\_architecture’s aim was to produce an urban diary in a language suited to the short attention spans of subway passengers. Entries to this diary ranged from the playful to the serious, including highly personal feelings and inquiries about the project’s meaning.

Rather than simply mourning the disappearance of public space in the information age, rude\_architecture relied

on mobile wireless technology to create a way for people to establish meaningful links on the fly. No one expected the subway platform to become a classroom, a community center, and a town hall meeting for Berlin citizens.

*Reality Bites* presents the *Urban Diary* project as an archive of the text messages displayed during its original installation in 2001 and 2002.

**Sabine Hornig**  
*Large Cube in Forest*  
(2004)

In her three-dimensional installation *Large Cube in Forest*, Sabine Hornig reconstructs and alters the entrance to a socialist-style school building. Entering this space, we quickly realize that the architectural elements have been reduced in scale, and the door in the work is closed and much too small. Mounted on the interior walls of this installation are transparent photographic images of a forest.

The reflective surface of the glass yields different views when seen from different positions, angles, and distances. Its most stunning effect might be realized when we locate a spot from which we can, at the same time, see the transparent image of the forest in full detail, detect reflections of the surrounding museum space, and see our own reflection in the transparent surface.

Hornig actively involves the viewer in the work of art, allowing us to create our own understanding of it from the reflections and images we experience

while walking through the space. Dependent on the viewer's movement through the work, Hornig's installation stresses the physical, bodily aspect of vision. Yet by transporting us to multiple locations at the same time, her work also draws attention to the way in which forms of perception have changed given various technologies of virtualization.

**"I reduce the form of the architectural elements, with the result that these no longer directly relate to a specific location. Instead they attach themselves to memories: the recollections of commonly encountered places and particular situations, such as standing in front of a wall or a closed door and being able to vaguely make something out though it."**

—Sabine Hornig



Sabine Hornig  
*Large Cube in Forest*, 2004

# NEA BIG READ



The Mildred Lane Kemper Art Museum is participating in the NEA Big Read program at Washington University, collaborating with the Department of English—which spearheaded this project—as well as several other campus and community organizations. The Big Read at Washington University is taking place in January and February 2007 and focuses on Ray Bradbury’s classic novel *Fahrenheit 451*.

“Of the books on the NEA’s recommended list, *Fahrenheit 451* is the one that most profoundly raises the all-important question of the utility of books,” says David A. Lawton, professor and chair of the Department of English. “Now that the Internet presents a more fundamental challenge even than Bradbury’s fire to the continued viability of books, we will have an opportunity to explore the viability of books as well as other printed and electronic mediums and their roles in developing an informed and inquiring citizenry.”

Lawton, who is spearheading The Big Read at Washington University, continued: “The University and its partners are excited to facilitate public discourse on the themes of *Fahrenheit 451*—censorship and the repression of knowledge. The ability to address these issues thoughtfully in public conversation is essential to the development of citizens who are engaged in their communities and in the pursuit of learning.”

More general information on this NEA initiative is available at <http://neabigread.org>.

For a complete listing of Big Read events in St. Louis, visit <http://bigread.wustl.edu>.

THE BIG READ is a new initiative of the National Endowment for the Arts, created in partnership with the Institute of Museum and Library Services and in cooperation with Arts Midwest. It is designed to revitalize the role of literary reading in American popular culture and aims to encourage reading by providing citizens the opportunity to read and discuss a single selected book within their communities.



## FAHRENHEIT 451: SUMMARY

Published in 1953, Bradbury’s novel focuses on the character of Guy Montag, a fireman. In Montag’s world, firemen start fires rather than putting them out. The people in this society do not read books, enjoy nature, or have meaningful conversations. Instead, they drive very fast, watch excessive amounts of television on wall-size sets, and listen to the radio on devices attached to their ears.

Montag encounters a girl named Clarisse McClellan who opens his eyes to the emptiness of his life. After a series of disturbing events, he begins to search for a solution in a stash of books that he has

stolen from his own fires and hidden in his home. Overwhelmed by the task of reading, Montag seeks out a retired English professor named Faber. Faber agrees to help Montag with his reading, and they concoct a risky scheme to overthrow the status quo.

Montag returns to the fire station and hands over one of his books to his boss, Beatty, who interrogates him. Suddenly, the alarm sounds, and they rush off to answer the call, only to find that the alarm is at Montag’s own house. Beatty forces Montag to burn the house himself. When he is done, Montag turns the flamethrower on his superior.

Montag flees to Faber’s house, where he learns that a Mechanical Hound has been put on his trail, along with several heli-

copters and a television crew. The whole city watches as the chase unfolds on TV. With Faber’s help, Montag escapes into the country and finds a group of renegade intellectuals (the “Book People”) who welcome him. They are a part of a network of book lovers who have memorized great works of literature and philosophy. They hope that they may be of some help to civilization in the aftermath of the war that has just been declared. Enemy jets appear in the sky and completely obliterate the city with bombs. Montag and his new friends move on to search for survivors and rebuild civilization.

## TECHNOLOGY AND MEDIA CULTURE

At the time Bradbury published his novel in 1953, over 25 million American homes already owned a television—a number that would almost double by the end of that decade. Concerned with what this change meant for society, Bradbury created a world in *Fahrenheit 451* that carried television technology into a futuristic extreme, with screens that take up entire walls or rooms in people’s homes. Characters in the novel such as Montag’s wife and her friends grow addicted to the empty sensory stimulation of the TV walls, and become increasingly disconnected from reality. Overall, the advancement of technologies and immersion

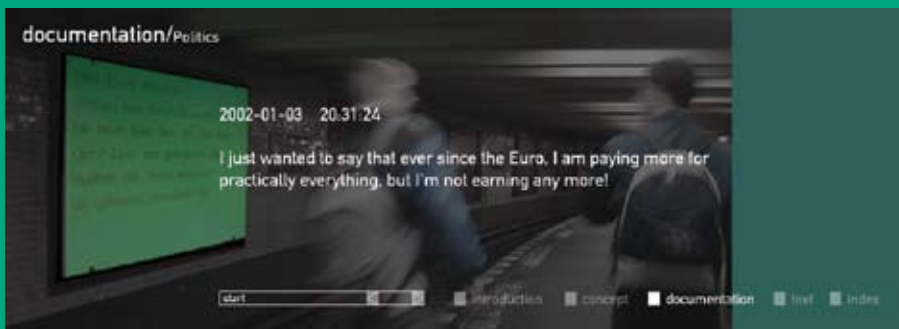
in a media society come under heavy criticism through Bradbury’s novel, which focuses much attention on the manipulative power of media and technology.

“A great thunderstorm of sound gushed from the walls. Music bombarded [Montag] at such an immense volume that his bones were almost shaken from their tendons; he felt his jaw vibrate, his eyes wobble in his head....When it was all over he felt like a man who had been thrown from a cliff, whirled in a centrifuge and spat out over a waterfall that fell and fell into emptiness and emptiness....”

—*Fahrenheit 451*

Over fifty years after Bradbury wrote his novel, we have indeed become immersed in media culture. Our lives are surrounded by digital screens, and personal communication has increasingly taken the form of e-mails, text messages, and online chats. Over 1 billion people use the Internet, and most children in the United States now spend more time on the Internet than watching television. While these technologies have connected us in exciting ways that we are still coming to understand, they have profoundly changed the way we think and experience life today. As Andreas Huysen writes, “The high-tech world we have entered is neither apocalypse nor panacea. It has elements of both.”

## GLOBAL SPACES



rude\_architecture, *Urban Diary*, 2001–2  
(from [www.urban-diary.de](http://www.urban-diary.de))

The subway installation *Urban Diary* by rude\_architecture adopted the new technology of text messaging to facilitate communication and interaction in ways never before possible. Through this experimental project, people who usually remained silent while waiting for their subway train found themselves engaging in spontaneous discussions with people they had never met. This work used advanced technology to relocate the contemporary practice of communication (through cell phones) to a public space.

In a way, rude\_architecture’s project reacts to conditions similar to those in Bradbury’s society of *Fahrenheit 451*, where meaningful communication and genuine community life cease to exist. Instead of destroying technology, however, their *Urban Diary* project creates an interface between new media communication and the urban space of the subway.

In her *Large Cube in Forest*, Sabine Hornig’s constructed environment surrounds us in a three-dimensional visual experience. While Hornig’s installation

may remind us of the TV “parlor rooms” that Bradbury describes in *Fahrenheit 451*, the work instead creates a hybrid space which not only evokes our connection to a simulated world (the forest) but simultaneously grounds us in the world around us (the architectural space of the installation, the museum space surrounding it, and even our own bodies that we see in the reflection). Hornig’s work encourages us to explore the fluid borders between the real world and its simulation, between reality and perception.

# NEA BIG READ

## MEMORY

In Ray Bradbury's novel, one of the recurring themes is that of memory—historical, collective, and personal. In the media society of *Fahrenheit 451*, television walls, mass advertising, and constant sensory stimulation have resulted in the loss of memory. For example, everyone has forgotten that firemen used to actually put out fires, not start them. Only fire chiefs retain the history of their profession, and Beatty recalls his version of the story to Montag in the first part of the novel. Moreover, Montag and his wife Mildred cannot even remember where or when they first met, forgetting even the most personal life moments.

In his struggle against the mind-numbing effects of the world around him, Montag joins an underground community. This group collectively seeks to memorize books and preserve literature, culture, and

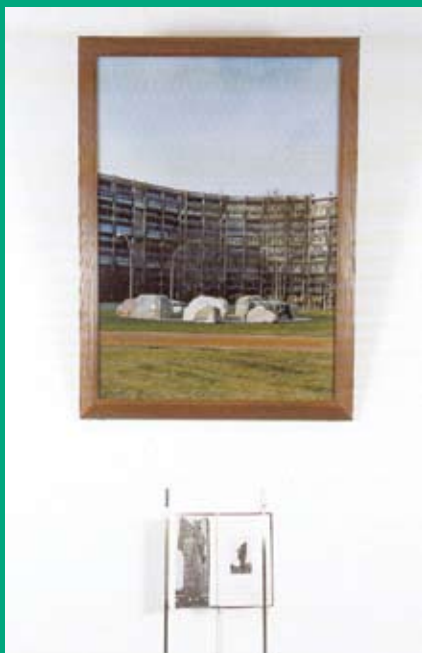
history for future generations. At the end of the novel, Montag meets up with the “Book People,” a group of hobo intellectuals. As stated by the group's leader, Granger, the key to human survival is to remember the mistakes of the past.

“Some day the load we're carrying with us may help someone. But even when we had the books on hand, a long time ago, we didn't use what we got out of them. We went right on insulting the dead. We went right on spitting in the graves of all the poor ones who died before us. We're going to meet a lot of lonely people in the next week and the next month and the next year. And when they ask us what we're doing, you can say, We're remembering. That's where we'll win out in the long run.”

—Granger

Today, our high tech-world can be seen as an active site where millions of people can participate in negotiating history and memory. Even the 2006 *Time Magazine* article announcing the Person of the Year, “you,” heralded the proliferation of Wikipedia, YouTube, and MySpace, defining a new digital democracy. Yet, as we store more and more memory on computers and data banks, the necessity of active remembrance has decreased. Furthermore, the histories constructed through the collective, collaborative sites such as Wikipedia remain as unstable and subjective as personal stories and memories.

## RE-DRESSING GERMANY



Sophie Calle  
*Lenin Memorial*, 1996  
from *The Detachment*  
series

Addressing the recent erasure of East German history from the German collective memory, Sophie Calle's work presented in *Reality Bites* evokes a dialogue that questions how history is constructed. In creating *The Detachment* series, she directly engaged with East Berliners' own process of remembering. The resulting work makes visible the suppression of differences between citizens of East and West Berlin, problematizing the type of collective identity that is presented in Bradbury's novel (in both the mass society and the collective memory of the “Book People”).

In *Fahrenheit 451*, individual identities are somewhat negated by the importance of memorizing the text of a book as part of a collective effort to “save humanity.” Calle's work asks us to reconsider the importance of individual memories in the context of a collective effort to suppress marks of conflict in urban space such as East Berlin.

## TRAUMATIC HISTORIES



Renata Stih and Frieder Schnock, *Places of Remembrance, letter "F,"* 1993

**Jüdische Verlage  
und  
Buchhandlungen  
sind bis zum  
Jahresende  
aufzulösen.**

**Dezember 1938**

Translation: "Jewish publishing houses and bookstores are to be dissolved by the end of the year. December 1938"

Renata Stih and Frieder Schnock's *Places of Remembrance* also considers the complexities of remembering. Their work makes public and exposes the forgotten histories of a formerly Jewish neighborhood in Berlin. Appearing similar to the advertisements and street signs in the community, Stih and Schnock's signs blend in to the urban environment in the same way that the anti-Semitic decrees had blended into public consciousness more than sixty years earlier. As viewers walk from sign to sign on the city streets, they also come to know the neighborhood as it exists and develops today, bringing the past into the present and the future.

## SPECIAL GUIDED TOURS: BIG READ

During the Big Read program, the Kemper Art Museum is offering special tours of the *Reality Bites* exhibition. These guided tours address the works highlighted in the preceding pages and facilitate further dialogue with issues of technology, media culture, and memory raised by Bradbury's novel.

See the calendar of events on the back cover of this guide for scheduled tours in connection with Big Read events at the Museum on February 11, 16, and 18.

To schedule a special guided tour for your group or organization, please contact Michael Murawski, coordinator of education and public programs, at [murawski@wustl.edu](mailto:murawski@wustl.edu) or 314.935.7918.

# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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## LIST OF ARTWORKS (alphabetical by artist)

**KUTLUG ATAMAN** (b. 1961, Turkey)

*It's a Vicious Circle*, 2002  
DVD, monitor, variable dimensions  
Courtesy of the artist and Lehman Maupin Gallery,  
New York

**SOPHIE CALLE** (b. 1953, France)

*Garde d'honneur (Neue Wache) (Honor Guard)*  
Color photograph, 39 x 29", and book  
*Lénine (Lenin Memorial)*  
Color photograph, 46 <sup>13</sup>/<sub>16</sub> x 35 <sup>1</sup>/<sub>8</sub>", and book  
Selections from the series *Souvenirs de Berlin-Est*  
(*The Detachment*), 1996  
Courtesy of Walter Kuna and Arndt and Partner,  
Berlin/Zurich

**RUDOLF HERZ** (b. 1954, West Germany)

*Dachau, Museumsbilder, 1976/80 (Museum*  
*Photographs, Dachau, 1976/80)*, 1996  
9 c-prints, 34x 51 <sup>3</sup>/<sub>16</sub>" each  
Courtesy of the artist

**SABINE HORNIG** (b. 1964, West Germany)

*Large Cube in Forest*, 2004  
Transparency, aluminum, glass, vinyl tile, 83 x 107 x 96"  
Courtesy of the artist and Tanya Bonakdar Gallery,  
New York

**ANDRÉ KORPYS / MARKUS LÖFFLER** (b. 1966,

West Germany / b. 1963, West Germany)  
*Konspiratives Wohnkonzept "Spindy,"* (Conspirative  
Housing Concept "Spindy") 1998  
Installation view  
Detail, ink on transparent paper, 20 <sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> x 28 <sup>3</sup>/<sub>8</sub>"  
Courtesy of the artists and Meyer Riegger, Karlsruhe

**MICHEL MAJERUS** (1967–2002, Luxembourg)

*Untitled*, 1996–2002  
30 paintings, 23 <sup>3</sup>/<sub>8</sub> x 23 <sup>3</sup>/<sub>8</sub>" each  
*Ohne Titel (Untitled) (24)*, 1996, oil on canvas  
Courtesy of the Boros Collection, Berlin  
*Ohne Titel (Untitled) (0506)*, 1999, acrylic on cotton  
*Ohne Titel (Untitled) (0657)*, 2000, acrylic on cotton  
*Ohne Titel (Untitled) (0762)*, 2001, acrylic on cotton  
*Ohne Titel (Untitled) (0764)*, 2001, acrylic and pencil on  
cotton  
*Ohne Titel (Untitled) (1020)*, 2002, acrylic on cotton  
Private collection, Berlin, courtesy of  
neugerriemschneider, Berlin

**MANFRED PERNICE** (b. 1963, West Germany)

*Untitled*, 2002  
Metal and cement, 35 <sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> x 27 <sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>"  
Courtesy of the Carlos and Rosa de la Cruz Collection

**RUDE\_ARCHITECTURE**, berlin

(Gesa Glück, Tobias Neumann, Friedrich von Borries)  
*Urban Diary*, 2001–2  
Public interactive ICT installation and website  
Courtesy of the artists

**RENATA STIH AND FRIEDER SCHNOCK** (b. West  
Germany)

*Orte des Erinnerns (Places of Remembrance)*, 1993  
Study for site-specific installation, Bavarian Quarter,  
Berlin  
76 drawings of pencil, watercolor, gouache, and  
inkjet on paper, and 76 texts, 10 x 7"  
and 7 x 10" (17.9 x 25.4") each, and 4 silkscreen  
and aluminum signs, 19 <sup>11</sup>/<sub>16</sub> x 27 <sup>5</sup>/<sub>8</sub> x 13 <sup>1</sup>/<sub>16</sub>" each  
Courtesy of Stih and Schnock, Berlin

## Sources

**Page 4:** Ana Finel Honigman, "What the Structure Defines: An Interview with Kutlug Ataman," *Art Journal* 63 (Spring 2004): 82; Malene Vest Hansen, "Public Places—Private Spaces: Conceptualism, Feminism, and Public Art, Notes on Sophie Calle's *The Detachment*," *Konsthistorisk Tidskrift* 71, no. 4 (2002): 197. **Page 8:** Caroline Wiedmer, "Remembrance in Schöneberg," *Alphabet City* 4/5 (1995): 12. **Page 9:** Daniel Birnbaum, "The Power of Now," *frieze* 34 (May 1997): 54–55. **Page 12:** "The Placelessness of Form: Sabine Hornig in Conversation with Cay Sophie Rabinowitz and Christian Rattemeyer, Berlin, September 27, 2005," in *Sabine Hornig: Der zweite Raum / The Second Room*, ed. Delfim Sardo (Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz, 2006), 40. **Page 13:** *Fahrenheit 451* summary excerpted from <http://www.sparknotes.com>. **Page 14:** Ray Bradbury, *Fahrenheit 451*. 50th Anniversary Edition (New York: Del Rey Books, Ballantine Publishing Group, 1953), 45; Andreas Huyssen, *Twilight Memories: Marking Time in a Culture of Amnesia*. (London: Routledge, 1995), 5. **Page 15:** Ray Bradbury, *Fahrenheit 451*. 50th Anniversary Edition (New York: Del Rey Books, Ballantine Publishing Group, 1953), 163–64.

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# RESOURCES FOR FURTHER LEARNING

## EDUCATION PAGE, MILDRED LANE KEMPER ART MUSEUM

<http://kemperartmuseum.wustl.edu/education.html>

Includes a downloadable PDF file of this Connections Guide, as well as links to more information about the exhibition *Reality Bites*.

## INTERNET SITES AND RESOURCES

**German Embassy Website / <http://www.germany.info>**

This site offers the latest political, economic, and cultural news from the German Embassy as well as more general information on culture, life, history, politics, and business in Germany. The German Embassy also has a podcast with access to free audio and video files.

**German Historical Institute / <http://germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org>**

German History in Documents and Images (GHDI) is a comprehensive collection of primary source materials documenting Germany's political, social, and cultural history from 1500 to the present. It comprises original German texts, all of which are accompanied by new English translations, and a wide range of visual imagery.

**Holocaust Museum and Learning Center, St. Louis / <http://www.hmlc.org>**

Through its collections, exhibits, and programs, the Holocaust Museum and Learning Center strives to educate all people about the history and consequences of the Holocaust in hope of preventing such events from happening again.

**Newseum: The Berlin Wall / <http://www.newseum.org/berlinwall>**

**Staatliche Museen zu Berlin (National Museums in Berlin)**

<http://www.smb.spk-berlin.de>

## SELECTED BOOKS AVAILABLE AT THE KEMPER ART MUSEUM

*Reality Bites: Making Avant-garde Art in Post-Wall Germany.* Edited by Sabine Eckmann (Hatje Cantz, 2007)

*Framing Attention: Windows on Modern German Culture.* By Lutz Koepnick (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006)

*The Ghosts of Berlin.* By Brian Ladd (University of Chicago Press, 1997)

*Constructing New Berlin: Contemporary Art Made in Berlin.* (Phoenix Art Museum; Prestel Publishing, 2006)

*After the Wall: Eastern Germany Since 1989.* Edited by Patricia J. Smith (Westview Press, 1999)

*The New Berlin: Memory, Politics, Place.* By Karen E. Till (University of Minnesota Press, 2005)

## GENERAL INFORMATION

MILDRED LANE KEMPER ART MUSEUM

WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY IN ST. LOUIS

Admission to the Kemper Art Museum is always free and open to the public.

Mon, Wed, & Thu: 11–6

Fri: 11–8

Sat & Sun: 11–6

Closed Tue and University holidays

Call ahead for summer hours

Mildred Lane Kemper Art Museum  
Washington University  
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**Tel:** 314.935.4523

**Email:** kemperartmuseum@wustl.edu

**Website:** www.kemperartmuseum.wustl.edu

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# REALITY BITES

## Events and Public Programs

FEBRUARY 9, 4 PM

**ARTISTS' PANEL DISCUSSION: REALITY BITES**

*Kemper Art Museum*

In conjunction with the opening of *Reality Bites*, the Museum is hosting a round-table discussion among artists and critics. The panel will include artists Rudolf Herz, Christian Jankowski, and Via Lewandowsky in conversation with critics Sabine Eckmann, Diedrich Diederichsen, and Lutz Koepnick. *Seating is limited.*

FEBRUARY 9, 7–10 PM

**OPENING RECEPTION: REALITY BITES**

*Kemper Art Museum*

FEBRUARY 11, 2 PM

**BOOK DISCUSSION AND TOUR: BIG READ**

*Kemper Art Museum*

Public book discussion of Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451*, followed by a special guided tour of *Reality Bites* addressing the themes of technology and memory.

FEBRUARY 16, 6:30 PM

**THEATRICAL READINGS AND TOUR: BIG READ**

*Kemper Art Museum*

Students from the Performing Arts Department will perform scenes from the stage version of Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451*, followed by a special guided tour of *Reality Bites* addressing the themes of technology and memory.

FEBRUARY 18, 2 PM

**BOOK DISCUSSION AND TOUR: BIG READ**

*Kemper Art Museum*

Public book discussion of Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451*, followed by a special guided tour of *Reality Bites* addressing the themes of technology and memory.

FEBRUARY 22

**LECTURE: JÖRG HEISER**

*Low-Key Attitudes, High-Class Expectations: Berlin and Art after 1989*

**LECTURE POSTPONED**

**SEE WEBSITE FOR DETAILS**

Jörg Heiser is co-editor of *frieze* magazine, writer on art and culture, and an occasional freelance curator. His lecture will examine the precarious development of an international art scene in Berlin after the fall of the Berlin Wall, discussing artists from Martin Kippenberger through Hans Haacke and Monica Bonvicini.

MARCH 8, 6:30 PM

**LECTURE: OLAF KUHLKE**

*The Past Is Always with Us:*

*German National Identities in Post-Wall Berlin*

*Brown Hall, Room 100*

Olaf Kuhlke is assistant professor of geography at the University of Minnesota, Duluth. He recently published *Representing German Identity in the New Berlin Republic*. As a cultural geographer, he examines the socio-spatial construction of contemporary nationalism and its expression in public art and performances. His lecture will examine the multiple, competing representations of nationhood in post-Wall Germany as well as the artistic creation of not one, not two, but many Germanies that currently exist in the visual landscapes of Berlin.

APRIL 11–15

## FESTIVAL OF CONTEMPORARY GERMAN FILM

The Kemper Art Museum will present a mini-festival of contemporary German film, screened in conjunction with the exhibition *Reality Bites*. Bringing the recent resurgence of international interest in German cinema to St. Louis, this series represents a selection of critically-acclaimed films from the last few years.

APRIL 11, 7 PM

**FILM: VIER MINUTEN (FOUR MINUTES), 2006**

*Directed by Chris Kraus*

*Tivoli Theatre, 6350 Delmar*

Schubert, Mozart, Chopin and a bunch of killers. That's life for 80-year-old Traude Krueger, who has been teaching piano at the women's prison since World War II. But she has never met an inmate like Jenny, who used to be a great talent, a piano prodigy even. With Traude's help, she could manage to win a prestigious piano contest. Jenny has only the four minutes of her performance to achieve redemption.

APRIL 12, 7 PM

**FILM: ALLES AUF ZUCKER! (GO FOR ZUCKER!), 2004**

*Directed by Dani Levy*

*Tivoli Theatre, 6350 Delmar*

The first Jewish comedy made in Germany since World War II, this film tells the story of two brothers who have been separated since the Berlin Wall was erected in 1961.

APRIL 13, 6:30 PM

**KEMPER CONVERSATION:**

**PANEL ON CONTEMPORARY GERMAN FILM**

*Kemper Art Museum*

In conjunction with the Kemper Art Museum's Festival of Contemporary German Film, a panel of scholars will explore recent German film in the socio-political and artistic context of post-unification Germany. Panelists will include:

**Leah Chizek** Ph.D. candidate, Department of German Languages and Literatures, Washington University; **Roger Cook** Professor of German, University of Missouri, Columbia; **Jennifer Kapczynski** Assistant professor of German, Washington University; **Bradley Prager** Associate professor of German, University of Missouri, Columbia; **Moderated by Lutz Koepnick** Professor of German, film, and media studies, Washington University

*Reception begins at 6 pm.*

APRIL 14, 2 PM

**FILM: FREMDE HAUT (UNVEILED), 2005**

*Directed by Angelina Maccaroni*

*Tivoli Theatre, 6350 Delmar*

Critically blurring the polarities of identity, this film follows Fariba who is forced to flee Iran when threatened with the death penalty for loving another woman, and even then she must assume a male identity in order to live temporarily in Germany.

APRIL 15, 2 PM

**FILM: TBA**

*Tivoli Theatre, 6350 Delmar*