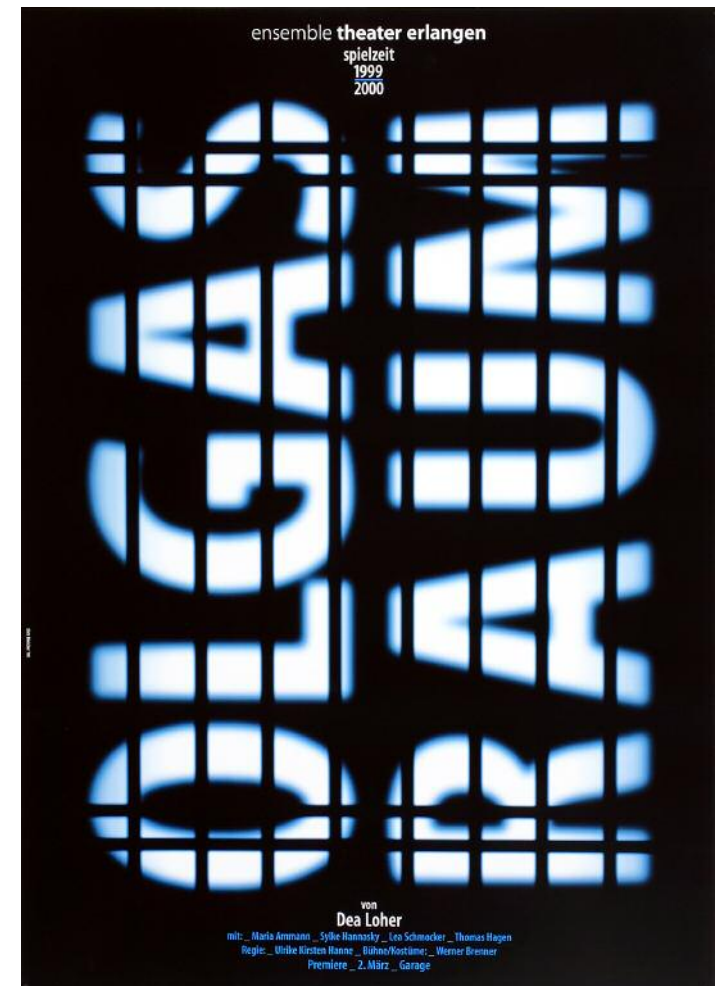
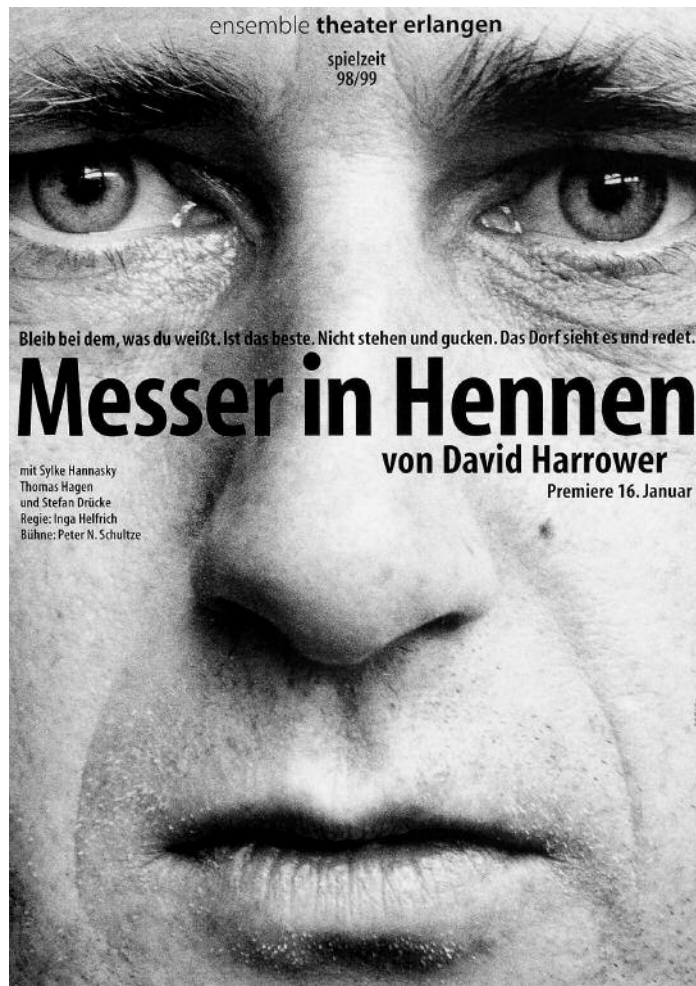
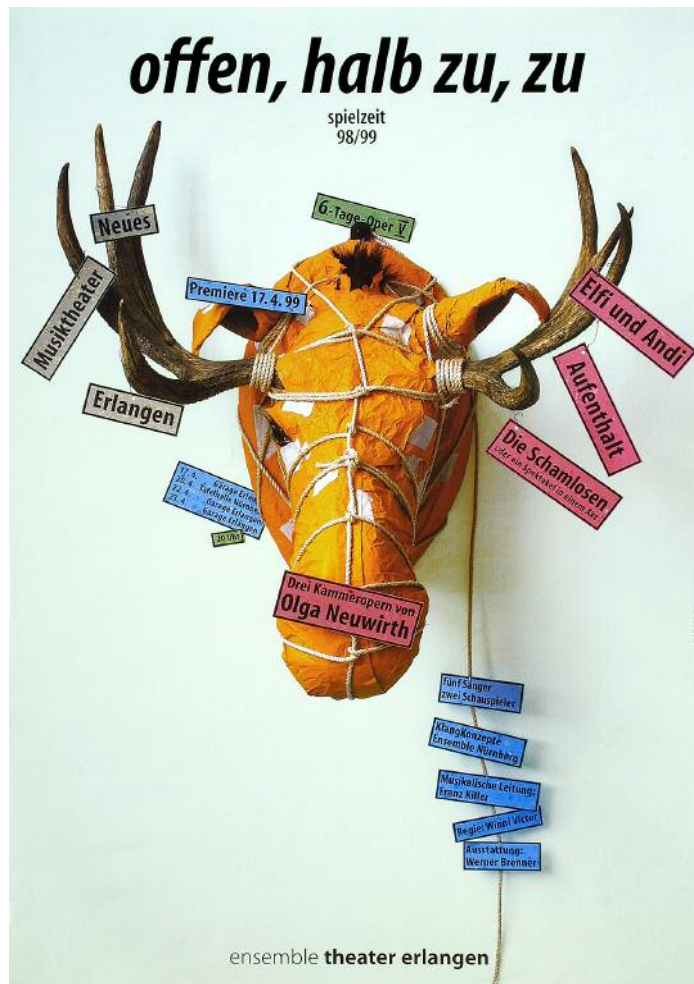
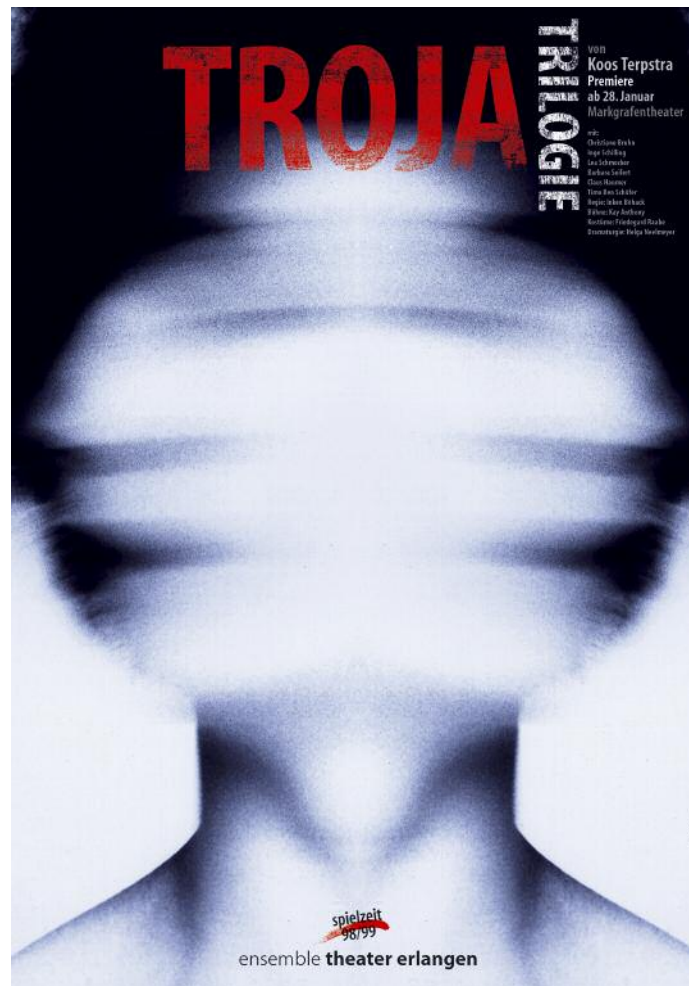
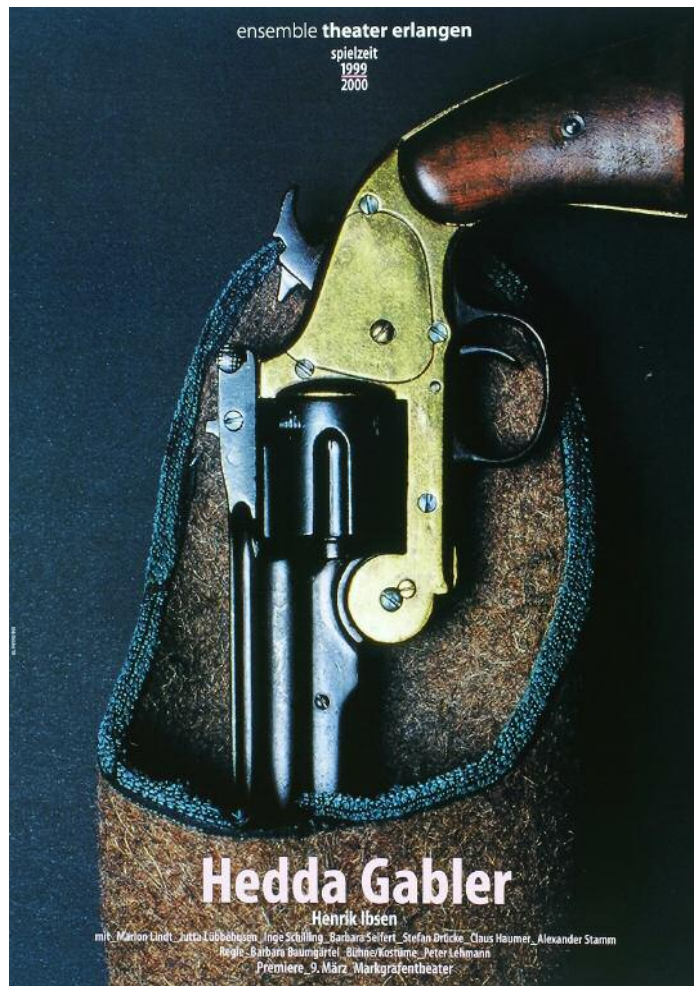


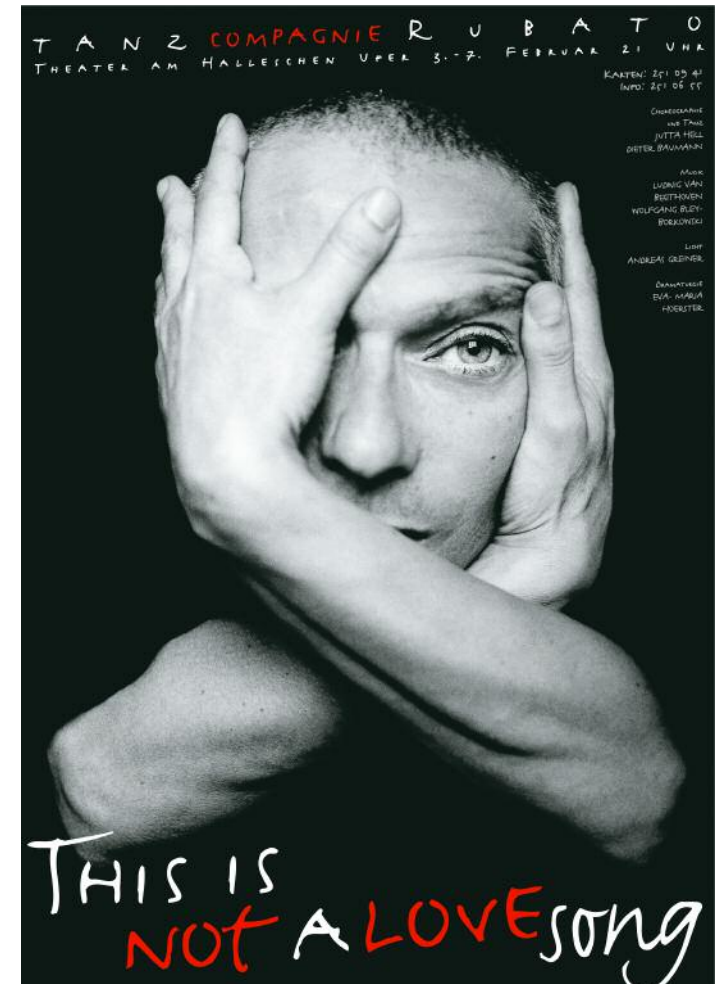
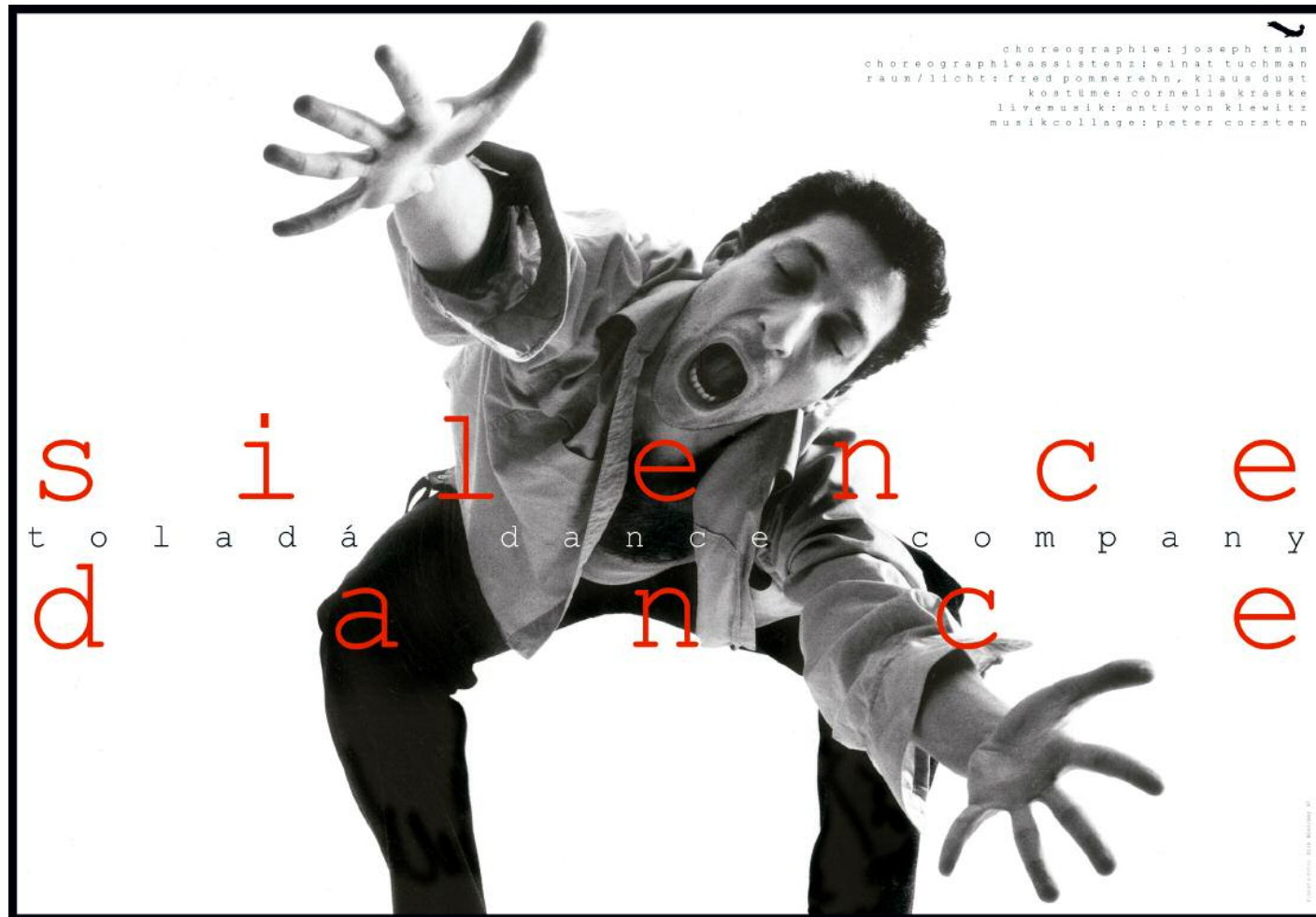
**Dirk Bleicker** | Artdirection | Fotografie | Gestaltung



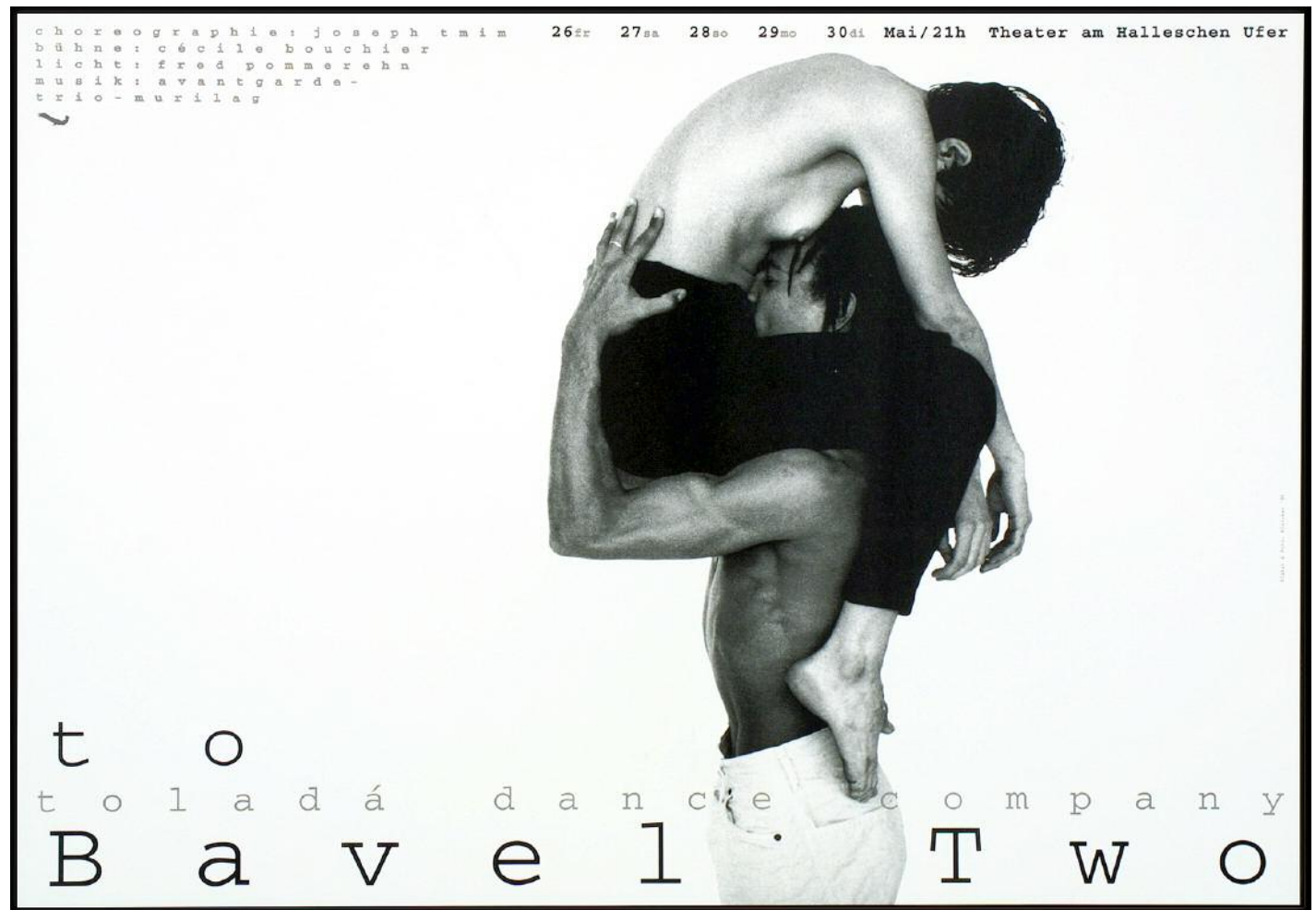


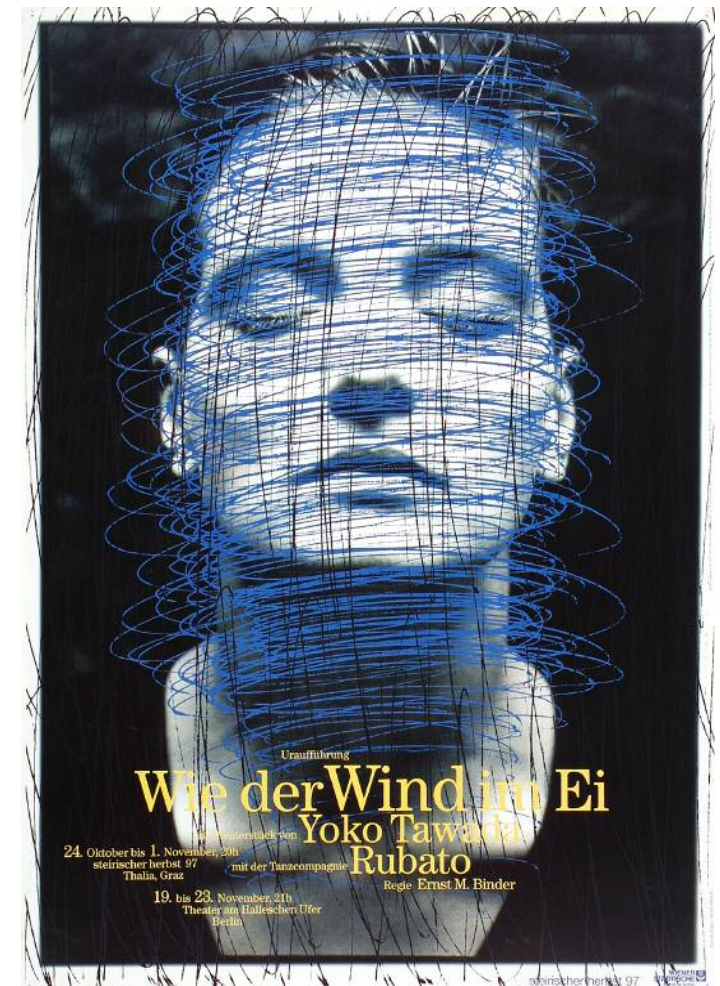
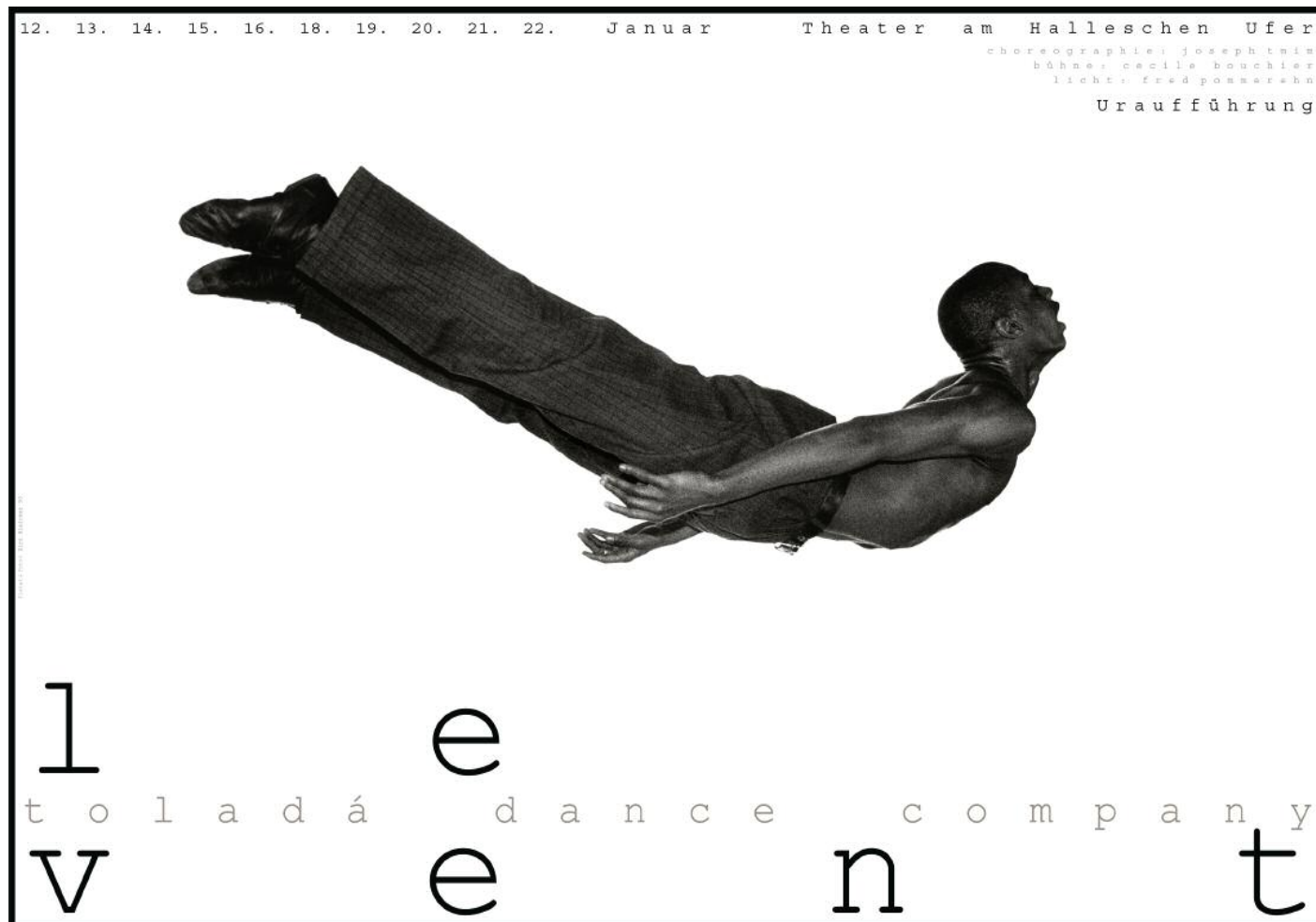




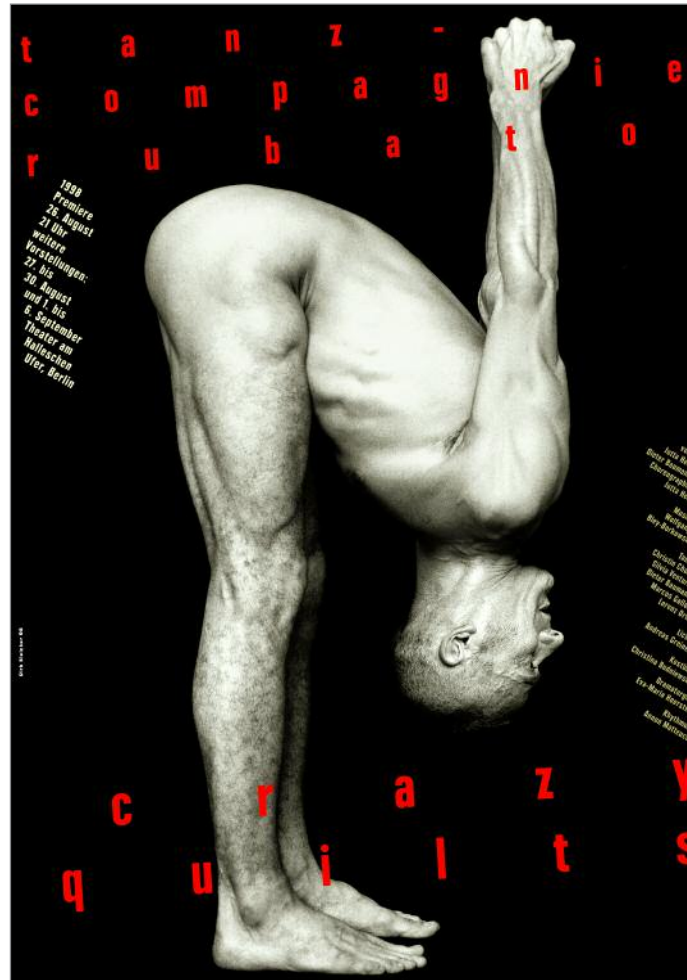








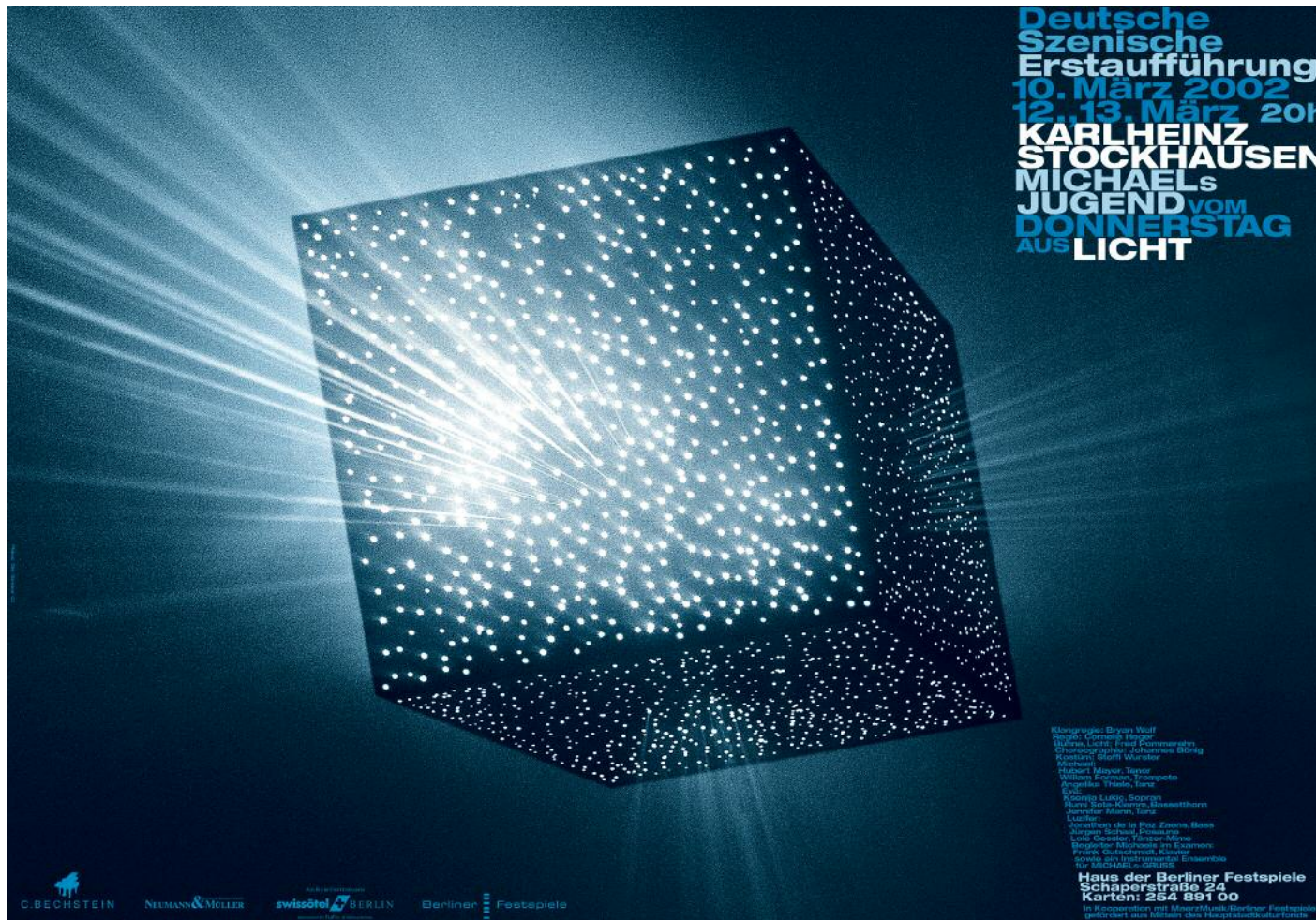




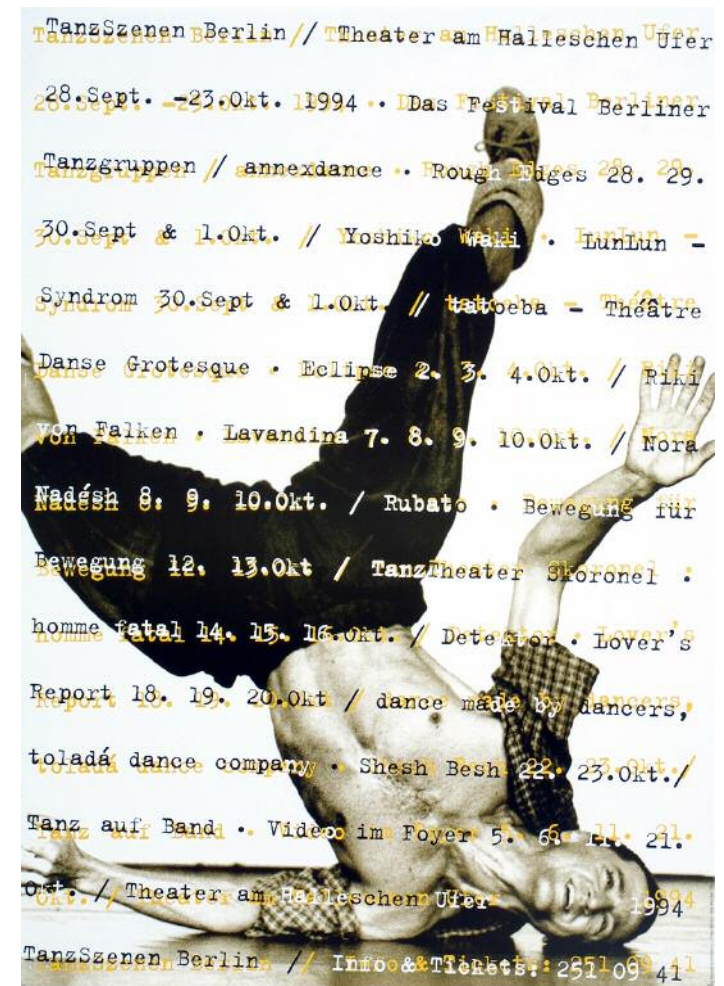
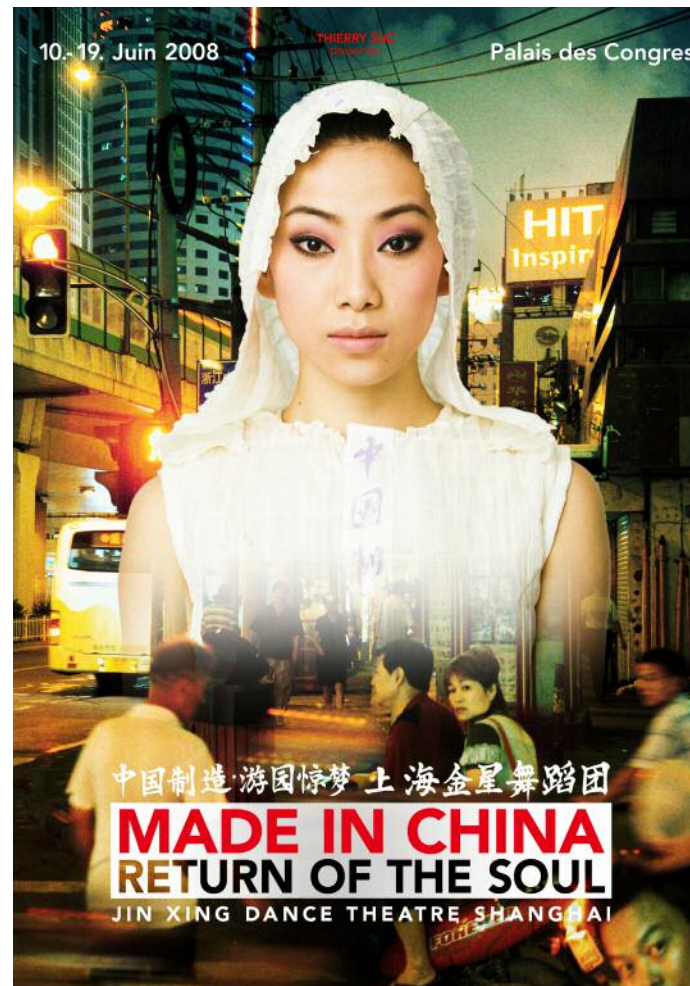


**Plakatgestaltung und Fotografie**  
Karlheinz Stockhausen, Michaels Jugend, Berliner Festspiele  
Person to Person, Tanzcompagnie Rubato

Karlheinz Stockhausen, Michaels Jugend, Berliner Festspiele  
Person to Person, Tanzcompagnie Rubato





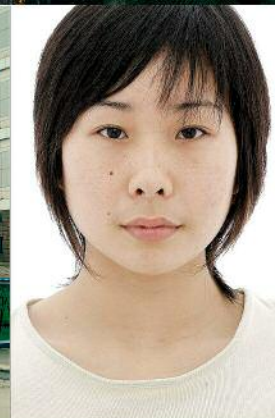
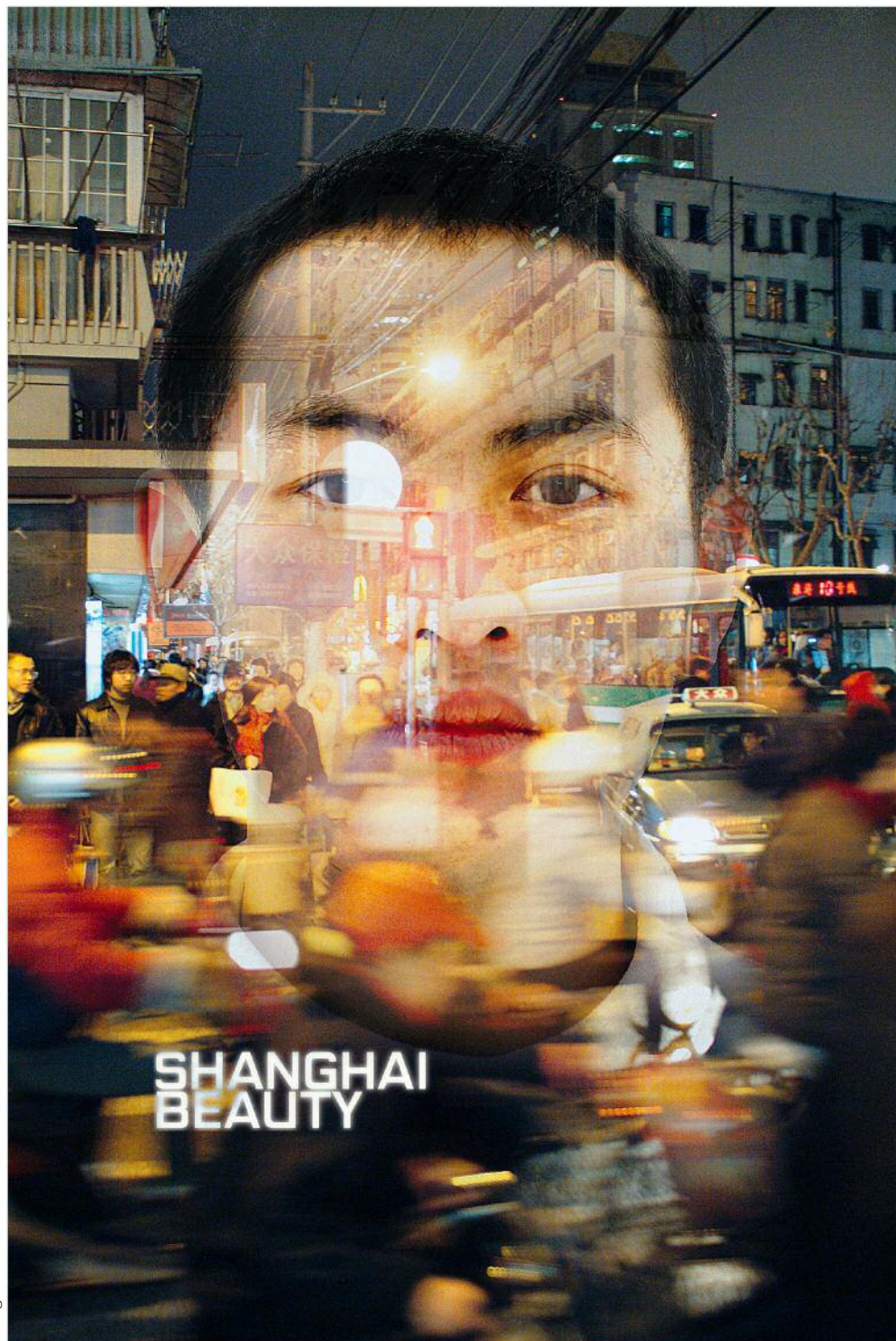




## Shanghai Beauty

Jin Xing Dance Theatre Shanghai  
& Tanzcompagnie Rubato

Werbemotiv und Pressebilder  
für das Festival „About Beauty“ im  
Haus der Kulturen der Welt



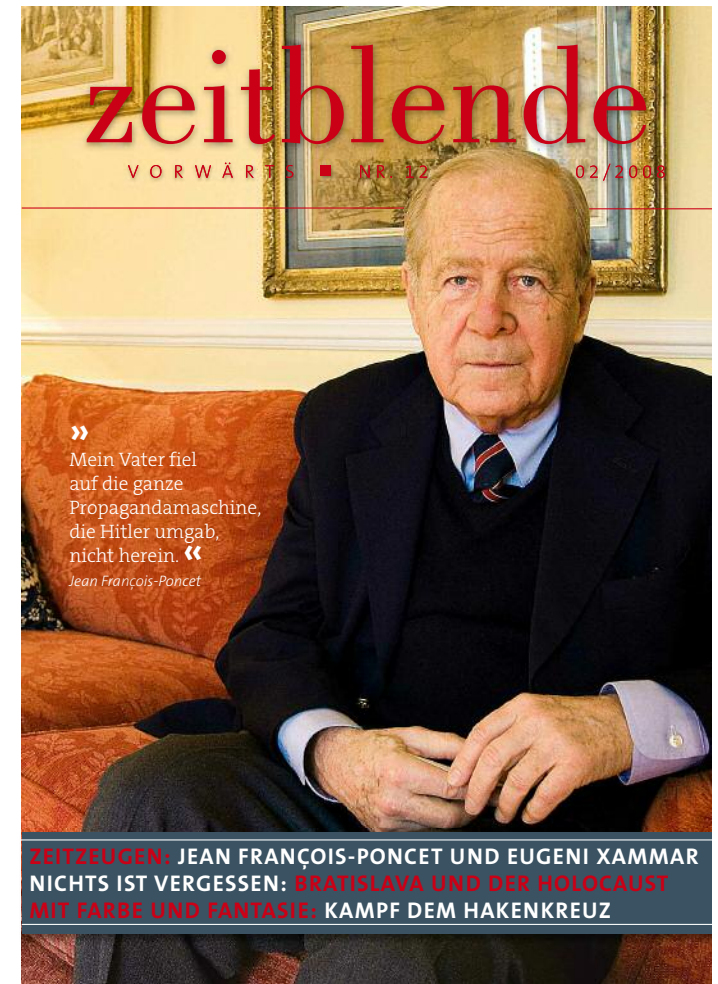
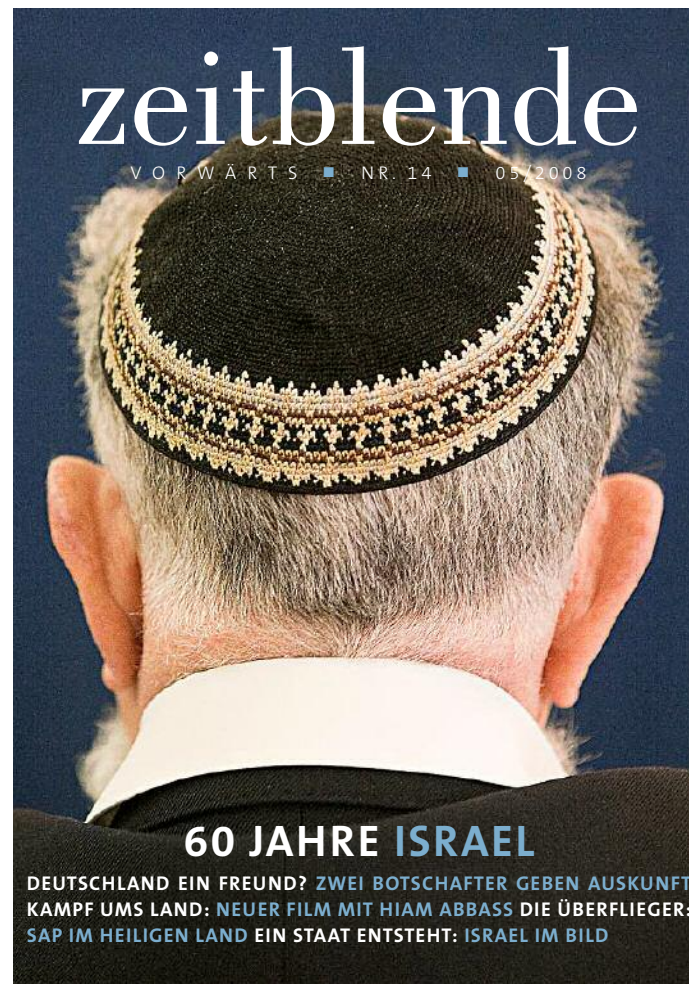


**Xiqu - Lebendige Erinnerung**  
Fotoreportage für ein Buch über die  
zeitgenössische Entwicklung im chinesischen Musiktheater

Theater der Zeit und  
Haus der Kulturen der Welt















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THE STORY  
OF STORIES**

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# JEWISH VOICE FROM GERMANY

קול יהודי מגרמניה

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No. 2 | April 2012

CHANGES

ONCE AND NOW

## New German Jewry – Made by Russians

Formerly discriminated "Ostjuden" are now the backbone of Jewish life

More than 200,000 Jews have emigrated from the former Soviet Union to Germany in recent years – they are the future of German Jewry.

Those who think statically might be surprised by the composition of today's Jewish congregations in Germany. But society is a dynamic process. The current community has little in common with the Jewry of the scholar Moses Men-

delsohn or of the writer Lion Feuchtwanger, who dominated Jewish spiritual life until the 20th century.

On the basis of a 1700 year old history, German Jewry developed a close connection to its homeland; this is visible in Yiddish, a combination of German and Hebrew elements. Pride in their country as well as experienced anti-Semitic slurs pushed many German Jews to view the "Ostjuden" with contempt.

Walter Rathenau, industrialist and author, denounced his co-Israelites and urged them to assimilate. This was a how to anti-Semites and it proved to be in vain: in 1922, Foreign Minister Rathenau was assassinated by rightwing radicals.

The Nazis didn't differentiate between German Jews and "Ostjuden". They murdered as many as they could. When in 1950 the Central Council of Jews in Germany was founded, there were less than 30,000 Jews in Germany. Most of them had been dragged from Eastern Europe or had escaped to Germany after 1945. For them, Germany wasn't 'home', but an unloved exile.

This small group gradually became the *de facto* German Jewish community. When the Soviet Union imploded after 1990, more than 200,000 Jews came from there to Germany. They soon became the majority in the Jewish congregations.

Many families with old roots felt their social position was eroding and that the post-war Jewish community was being changed too radically. Nevertheless, the new arrivals were integrated or at least encouraged to do so.

Today, the newly arrived dominate the Jewish population. The majority of Russian Jews knows little about the Jewish religion or its customs and traditions. They are, however, trying to acquire them and are giving German Jewry a new face with their intellect and their energy. This issue focuses on this phenomenon. ■



## A Young Rabbi for an Old Community

Alina Treiger grew up in the Ukraine. After emigrating to Germany ten years ago, she completed her studies and was ordained in a moving ceremony in Berlin. She is the first female rabbi trained in Germany since

Regina Jonas who was ordained in 1935. Today, the spiritual and educational work of Rabbi Treiger and her young colleagues is indispensable for the consolidation of the Jewish community. ■

## SPD-CHAIRMAN Iran's Criminal Language

In an exclusive interview given to *Jewish Voice*, the chairman of the Social Democrats Sigmar Gabriel is appalled by Teheran's openly anti-Semitic language: Any German who is just a little versed in history will be reminded of the language used by the Nazi criminals. At the same time, Gabriel criticizes the Israeli settlement policy; he compares the situation in Hebron with apartheid.

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## RELIGION Jewish Ethics of Responsibility

"Transparency" and "fair dealing" are very modern-sounding concepts. They are, in fact, a cornerstone of the Jewish religion, its history and the tradition of Israel and the diaspora. As Rabbi Walter Homolka explains, their source is to be found in the Bible – namely in the Eighth Commandment: "Thou shalt not steal!"

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## Living on!

A Jew survived due to an order given by Adolf Hitler. While doing research for an exhibition on the persecution of Jewish lawyers and judges during the Nazi period (1933-45), our editor Susanne Mauss came across a note of the Gestapo to the effect that the judge Ernst Hess was not to be persecuted or deported because of an order from the Reich Chancellery. During World War I, Hess had been an officer and superior to Corporal Hitler.

It is proper, in a Jewish newspaper, to report that Hitler personally 'saved' a Jew from being murdered? Yes. By reporting it, the system of genocide becomes apparent, a system which Hitler ordered and his 'willing executioners' carried out. Hess had the luck of being personally 'pardoned' by the mass killer Hitler, whose officials fulfilled his order with the

same efficiency they executed their master's mass murder decisions. But Hess' exemption only lasted until 1942 when at the Wannsee Conference the murder of the European Jews was codified. After this, Hess survived thanks to his 'mixed marriage' with his gentle wife. Such mercy was not for the rest of the Hess family: his sister was murdered by the Nazis, as were millions of others.

Hess' daughter is now 86 and lives in Germany. Susanne Mauss spoke with her and reports exclusively about the case. We named our story *Hitler's Jewish Commander and Victim* (pp. 8-9).

The author Ruth Klieger once wrote the book "Weiter leben" – Living On. This most Jewish principle is valid for our newspaper.

The editors and publisher



Ernst Hess, 1912 – and in the 1950's

### ECONOMY Consumer Education

When it comes to banking German clients are not efficient. An education campaign for financial services is overdue

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### ARTS and CULTURE



"My Paintings are smarter than I am". Three exhibitions in Berlin honor Gerhard Richter

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A Mentsch  
Filmmaker Georg Stefan Troller exclusively on home and exile

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# POLITICS

JEWISH VOICE FROM GERMANY | JANUARY 2012



Military parade in Tehran: President Ahmadinejad (l.) among his generals and revolutionary guards

By Clemens Wergin

German foreign policy has a strong accommodationist tendency. The German foreign policy elites do not believe in Berlin's ability to change the course of history or shape world events. That is why when it comes to the topic of Iran, there is a lot of talk in foreign policy circles about containment. If you cannot prevent the Mullahs from developing nuclear weapons, the hope is to neutralize Iran's threat as a nuclear power the same way the West countered the Soviet threat during the Cold War – through deterrence.

The storming of the British embassy in Tehran in November 2011 is a stark reminder of why containment might just not work: because Iran is, to put it mildly, an unconventional state actor and certainly not a status quo power. Within the European debate, many voices argue that Iran wants a nuclear program just so it can protect itself against the various forms of American military presence in countries like Iraq, Afghanistan, the Gulf States and Turkey.

So while Iran's nuclear program might violate international treaties that Iran itself agreed upon, it is understandable from a strategic point of view. The underlying idea of this argument is that Iran, after fulfilling its defensive goals, will not use the bomb aggressively toward the rest of the world.

This is a view that sharply contrasts with Iranian reality. The regime is still full of revolutionary zeal and if one takes a closer look at Iranian activities, especially by the Al Quds (Jerusalem) wing of the revolutionary guards, it is clear that Iran is following a foreign policy that is full of hubris. It would befit a global power, not the emerging middle power Iran actually is.

In addition to its many destabilizing moves in the Middle East, Iran continues to pursue a path of provocation by undertaking projects such as providing African separatists with weapons as well as, according to my sources, exploring the possibility of constructing a missile base in Chavez-controlled Venezuela – as it were, the backyard of the US. Moreover, Iran maintains, with the help of Hezbollah cells, a sizable presence in Europe and Latin

## Iran: The West Should Keep Its Options Open

Tehran Develops Nukes and Threatens Israel with Annihilation

America and will soon launch a propaganda TV station in Spanish, HispanTV, to influence Latin American politics.

Iran is a country of global revolutionary ambitions. There is no indication that a bomb will change that. In fact, it will change Tehran's foreign policy for the worse. Much can be said about Iran's nuclear program and its intentions regarding Israel. Europeans tend to believe in the pedagogical qualities of the bomb: if you have one, you are forced to behave like a rational actor. This is the European experience from the Cold War. The problem is: unlike the Soviets, the Shiite Mullahs believe in an afterlife or paradise. And they also believe in apocalyptic end-of-history designs. There is a strong dose of such thinking in the Iranian president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. Even former president Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, a so-called pragmatist, once contemplated that destroying Israel with the bomb might be worth the costs of the attacking country. As quoted in 2001: "One day, the Islamic world is also equipped with weapons like those that Israel possesses now, then the imperialists' strategy will reach a standstill because the use of even one nuclear bomb inside Israel will destroy everything. However, it will only harm the Islamic world. It is not irrational to contemplate such an eventuality."

So we should not be certain that Iran would not use the bomb against Israel. And if they do not want to deploy nuclear weapons against Israel, they might just as well follow Saddam Hussein's playbook. As the "Saddam tapes" show, the former Iraqi dictator developed a nuclear program not only to deter and defeat Iran, but also the conventional wisdom of Middle East experts, but also to neutralize the Israeli nuclear threat, making it possible to fight a conventional war of attrition against Israel with a pan-Arab army.

So the strategic fallout of a nuclear program for Iran would be significant, even if the Mullahs do not use it. For decades Iran has

been a destabilizing force in the region and beyond as it tried to overthrow neighboring regimes in the Gulf and elsewhere. And it has never hesitated to use terrorist organizations as proxies. A bomb would of course embolden Teheran to intensify these policies. With a nuclear program, it would be much more difficult to reign in the Iranian appetite for destruction in the region. Iran wants to become the hegemonic power in the area and the bomb would be the shield protecting it against retaliation.

Ultimately this would lead to Saudi Arabia, Turkey and Egypt to develop nuclear programs as well. Middle eastern politics are already highly complicated. Add the nuclear dimension and you can imagine how difficult it will be for the different actors in the region to justly calculate their moves. This

development would lead to a high risk of an accidental nuclear war in the region. However, in my opinion, the biggest threat will arise when the Iranian regime is eventually overthrown. The Tehran rule is inherently unstable and constantly loses legitimacy in the eyes of the Iranian people. This has been proven by the mass uprising after the rigged presidential elections in the summer of 2009. The regime can stay in power only by using even more brutal force to suppress the opposition. The revolution has taken its course, but now the Iranian people are ready to move on and shed the shackles of clerical rule, which is increasingly beginning to look more like a military dictatorship. The regime cannot last forever. Like the dictators of the Arab world, it will eventually be overthrown and if Iran possesses the bomb, this might be the most dangerous scenario of all. This is because the nuclear program is not controlled by the Iranian military, but by the revolutionary guards.

They are highly interwoven with the Lebanese terror organization Hezbollah. Iran yields considerable influence over Hezbollah, but Hezbollah also has influence within the revolutionary guards. Once the regime falls, the guards – the bearer of the revolutionary flame – will most likely decide to pass on the bomb to their ideological brethren in Lebanon and then nobody in the Western world will be safe. Hezbollah could detonate bombs in major Western cities without leaving traces that could lead to a state actor that would have to worry about retaliation. These catastrophic scenarios should make the west join forces and put the utmost economic pressure on a regime that might one day become the most dangerous rogue state in the world. For this reason we should not prematurely exclude our option of last resort: a preventive military campaign against nuclear installations in Iran. ■

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Clemens Wergin is foreign editor of the papers "Welt" and "Welt am Sonntag"



Iran's revolutionary guards are battle seasoned and prepared to fight

# ECONOMY

JEWISH VOICE FROM GERMANY | JULY 2012

## There is No Washington in Europe

A transatlantic marketplace tale

By Roland Tichy

Are the Germans just stupid, or mean-spirited on top of their stupidity for refusing to save the euro? This is a question being asked all over the world, with politicians such as Barack Obama and British Prime Minister David Cameron only posing it in a slightly more polite form. It has framed the academic debates on the issue, which have been shaped in particular by the Nobel laureates Joseph E. Stiglitz and Paul Krugman. *The Economist* depicted the global economy as a supertanker in the process of sinking – because Angela Merkel refuses to start the engines by investing money. Have the Germans now become devotees of the end of the world since they had to give up their delusions of world domination?

A metonymic shift

However, the terms of the debate serve only to show that the organization of Europe is so complex, that even Nobel-prize-winning economists no longer fully comprehend it. Therefore, let us project the European structures onto the United States. We will call the small state that is going bankrupt because the Germans refuse to save it “Greek-California” or “Greefornia” for short.

Greefornia is bankrupt because it has about eight times as many civil servants per capita and provides state pensions to workers starting at age 45. The state has horrendous budget deficits, and its bonds are worthless because even the fools on Wall Street have finally realized, between their sixth and seventh glasses of champagne, that they lent their money to a con man.

So, in our scenario, the governor of Greefornia goes to Washington and requests – nay, demands – financial support. He gets it, even though the US Constitution, like the rules that govern the euro area, expressly prohibit it. After all, what good is a constitution when the stability of a currency is in danger? As the German proverb goes: “Necessity knows no law!”

Thus, Greefornia receives a new loan, 27 percent of which is financed by the state of Germamerica, on the condition that Greefornia at least curb the most absurd excesses of its running debts, reduce the number of civil servants, and cut wages and welfare entitlements to approximately the same level as given in Germamerica. The money flows, and as expected, the promised reforms are never enacted. Unfortunately, despite the blistering invectives hurled their way, the so-called Wall Street Boys will not decide to fork over cheap loans to Greefornia.

Unlikely tales?

In the meantime, the financial markets have realized that there are practically no businesses in Greefornia anymore except basic utilities. The tomatoes in this sun-drenched land are imported from greenhouses in the Netherlands. Its milk comes from Germamerica, which sends fewer cars and none of the machines for which it is famous to Greefornia, but instead large amounts of food products, including the national specialties feta and ouzo. A peculiar sort of race begins. Every couple of months, the Governor of Greefornia declares that his state will be bankrupt in just a few days, and Washington provides mass sums of money.

In the meantime, Greefornia bows to international pressure and begins enforcing its claims to taxes, something it had never done before, even for millionaires, because it simply had no tax and revenue authorities. To this end, authorities begin photographing the state's landscape, trying to make out swimming pools in order to collect luxury taxes from their owners. The only effect achieved? Soaring sales of military camouflage nets used to hide the pools. Attempts to sell state-owned enterprises to investors fail because there are no land-registry offices. Approximately 1.5 billion dollars provided by Washington in recent years as aid for the establishment of land-registry offices was used instead by Greeforian oligarchs to buy townhouses in London.

Despite all this, some reforms have slowly taken shape. For example, taxes due are now linked to electricity bills. Unlikely tale?

Back to reality: Greece's liquidity situation is worsening despite a massive injection of 120 billion euros in aid. Luckily, the country is part of a joint currency zone – the euro area. Euros, however, are in short supply. But again, Greece is lucky: in this entirely unregulated currency system, it has the right to obtain euros in unlimited amounts from other countries and sell its bonds to the joint central bank.

In our scenario: Massive sums are flowing into Greefornia and from there directly to foreign banks. In the meantime, the country is receiving important aid. The presidents of the United States, France, and other countries criticize German-style austerity policies, which they claim are an impediment to growth. Germamerica is being called upon to assume the sovereign debt of all its neighboring countries in unlimited amounts because it got rich exporting ouzo and feta to Greece. Fancy that the President of France in particular has become a ray of hope for growth in Europe. He is lowering the retirement age in France, which was recently raised from 65 to 67 in Germamerica despite vehement protest, from 62 to 60. This move is based on the assumption that the increased sovereign debt this entails would be financed by joint bonds issued by all the countries, which in turn would be guaranteed by Germamerica.

Germamerica's politicians, who have until now submitted to every demand, although they called for an America-wide fiscal pact so as to limit the growth of sovereign debt, are now coming under pressure from the Nobel laureates. They view the loan guaran-

tees and subsidies provided to Greefornia as much too small given the threat of a global recession. As an alternative, they suggest extending the deposit insurance funds, which protect the savings of Germamerica's citizens from bank failures, to Greefornia through a banking union. In fact, the crisis in Greefornia has reached another stage entirely. Since taxes were linked to electricity bills, people have simply stopped paying their electricity bills as well, which is exacerbating the crisis faced by public electric utilities.

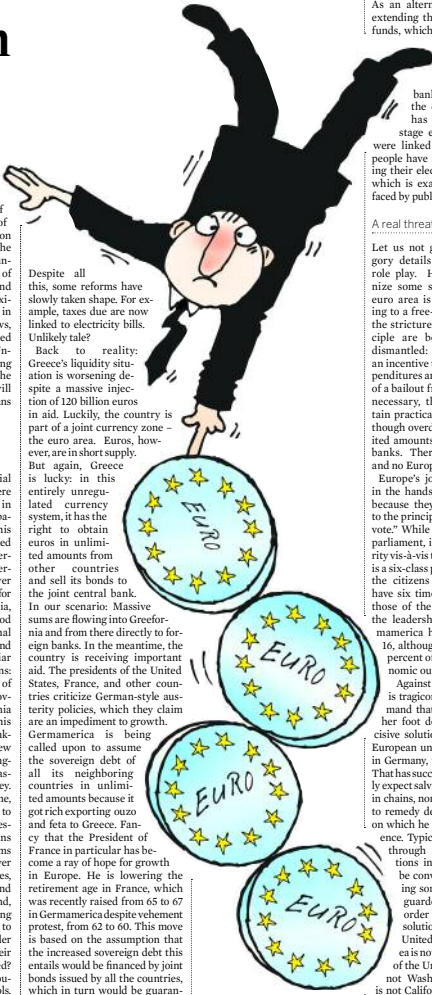
A real threat

Let us not go further into the gory details of this horrifying role play. However, we recognize some salient lessons: The euro area is structured according to a free-rider principle, and the strictures limiting this principle are being incrementally dismantled. Each country has an incentive to inflate its own expenditures and debts in the hopes of a bailout from its neighbors. If necessary, the country can obtain practically unlimited credit through overdraft loans in unlimited amounts from other central banks. There is no Washington and no European President.

Europe's joint institutions are in the hands of small countries, because they operate according to the principle “one country, one vote.” While Europe does have a parliament, it has no real authority vis-à-vis the member states. It is a six-class parliament, in which the citizens of small countries have six times as many votes as those of the largest country. In the leadership committee, Germamerica has one vote out of 16, although it accounts for 27 percent of the euro area's economic output.

Against this background, it is tragicomic when critics demand that Angela Merkel put her foot down or enact a decisive solution. The objective of European unification was to rein in Germany, the dangerous giant. That has succeeded. One can hardly expect salvation from a colossus in chains, nor can one expect him to remedy deficits in institutions on which he has barely any influence. Typically, this is achieved through protracted negotiations in which states must be convinced of relinquishing some of their jealously guarded sovereignty in order to craft centralized solutions. Europe is not the United States. The euro area is not the currency system of the United States. Berlin is not Washington, and Greece is not California. The threat of a European bankruptcy, however, is becoming a reality. ■

Roland Tichy was a member of the planning staff of the Federal Chancellery. He is Editor in Chief of Germany's leading economic paper “Wirtschaftswache” and one of the most respected economic journalists in the country.



JULY 2012 | JEWISH VOICE FROM GERMANY



Taking account of non-rational factors ...

By Joachim Goldberg

Over the past four years, we have learned that the crisis has many faces. It all began in the United States, where real estate prices suffered a massive collapse in 2008. Today, we are focused on a crisis of the common European currency. When Nobel Laureates and economists met in August 2008 in Lindau on Lake Constance to evaluate the unfolding economic threat, it already seemed apparent that much of traditional economic theory would have to be reconsidered. For example, the Nobel laureate Joseph Stiglitz predicted that a number of economic theories would not survive the crisis. Berkeley professor Daniel McFadden even went so far as to declare that the assumption that the financial markets functioned efficiently was no longer valid. Even as early as 2008, analysts and investors will have wondered how things could have gotten to where they then turned out to be. Why was the majority of economists and market participants so surprised by the enormity of the crisis?

Behavioral economics

Since then, our globalized society has endured multiple phases of economic anxiety. These were punctuated long after it has been proven that this theoretical model of a purely rational, unemotional actor does not match the reality of the financial markets. Economists in the USA have come a bit further. Over the past

## The Systematics of the Irrational

Non-monetary criteria for economic performance

Foreign Minister Walter Steinmeier demanded, in the bluntest of terms, that greed and recklessness be reined in in the future. A pious wish indeed – after all, the

“Success and failure are always measured relatively – depending on a particular frame of reference.”

theory assumes they should. Rather, they seek comfort and enjoyment while they make money, like anyone else. Profit is a fine thing, but making a profit should be fun. That is why in practice they tend to rake in profits too quickly while failing to contain losses quickly enough. Being right is also a fine thing, and being right often is an even finer thing. Thus, it's no surprise that people will do anything to avoid accepting losses. We are all trying to make decisions that we will not have to regret later on.

20 years, a branch of economics called “Behavioral Finance” or “Behavioral Economics” has established itself there. This discipline is working towards forming a meaningful and productive union of economic and psychological methods. Even hardened stock market professionals are hardly so cold-blooded and in control that they succeed in constantly maximizing their profits, as traditional economic theory assumes they should. Rather, they seek comfort and enjoyment while they make money, like anyone else. Profit is a fine thing, but making a profit should be fun. That is why in practice they tend to rake in profits too quickly while failing to contain losses quickly enough. Being right is also a fine thing, and being right often is an even finer thing. Thus, it's no surprise that people will do anything to avoid accepting losses. We are all trying to make decisions that we will not have to regret later on.

Scientific studies have shown just how low the impact of economic data actually is on financial markets. In truth, this is how the process goes: Investors prefer to perceive and pass on information that reinforces their own actions. In that respect, they are probably acting more rationally than many think. All people – not just those who participate in the financial markets – try to optimize the use of their inherently limited mental capacity in order to come to grips with the constant flood of information. With respect to our well-being, that means we primarily focus on information that retroactively justifies decisions we have already made. On the other hand, we try to ignore or downplay the significance of information that might cause us to reconsider our position.

Frame of references

We can see this strategy everywhere we look – in business and in people's personal lives. As we observe it, yet another assumption of standard economic theory emerges as false. People do not evaluate situations and decisions in absolute terms. That is,

they do not think solely of their final balance. Rather, they constantly compare themselves with others. What matters to them is not how much they earned themselves, but whether they earned more or less than others. In other words: Success and failure are always measured relatively – depending on a particular frame of reference. That frame of reference could be the purchase price of a stock or one's own account balance, but it could also be a neighbor's car, house, or racing boat. This relative evaluation can extend so far that a loss is perceived as a profit because it did not turn out as large as expected – or because an acquaintance or a colleague did even worse. And conversely, profits can even make us unhappy when they do not live up to expectations.

Reliable predictions

Fear, hope, and desperation, those concepts we always hear in discussions of the psychology of the market, are by no means the main topics of “Behavioral Finance.” Rather, this discipline is focused on recognizing and describing the systems at work behind the disproportionate and irrational behavior of market participants. An understanding of these systems is needed to make reliable predictions about the future decisions of market actors. Whoever succeeds at that will have a considerable advantage over his competitors – in the market as in life. ■

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## ART & CULTURE

JEWISH VOICE FROM GERMANY | APRIL 2012



4096 Colors, 1974



Betty, 1977

Museum Ludwig, Cologne / Private Collection

### Gerhard Richter Festival

The 80-year old master artist captures German life, love, death and history

By Régine Deguelle

Berlin is celebrating a great German painter. Works of Gerhard Richter, who recently turned 80, are being shown simultaneously at three different Berlin venues, and long lines of people are waiting to get a look. What's so special about him?

The *Wall Street Journal* wrote: He is one of the most prolific contemporary painters; he makes paintings and objects which give the art market that which the art market wants. In the last 30 years the prices of his work have increased 2000-fold (!).

Going through the exhibition,

one begins to get an idea: Richter's perception of the world radiates a strength which mirrors life, death, German history, everyday life and love.

Take, for example, the candle. In the show a picture of one is hanging next to one of a skull – side by side; they seem to form a religious diptych.

In the center of the hall, which is filled to overflowing, the two works appear to be an island. Richter himself supervised the hanging.

The painting of the candle shines and appears to flicker toward the painting of the skull. That has the force of touching one's soul, and the colors are quite subdued.

Since 1962, Richter has been collecting newspaper clippings, photos, sketches, color studies and pictures in his "Atlas" to use for his paintings. This is also true for the candle and for one of his best known works, the picture cycle on the suicide of German terrorists of the so-called Red Army Faction, "18. October 1977", which can be seen in Berlin's Old

National Gallery. For Richter, the death of the terrorists was horrific.

Richter has worked parallel in many styles. Sometimes he has worked over his originals many times, so that several cycles have emerged. Sometimes they are both abstract as well as representative, black/white, grey, many colors. The cycle of candle paintings alone encompasses 31 paintings.

The *Wall Street Journal* reports that the candle paintings went, in the early 80s, for about \$1000 per work. In the fall of 2011, a collector paid \$16.5 million for one of these paintings. Gerhard Richter, this friendly and modest philosopher among the painters, cannot understand this. Some of the visitors to the exhibition might be sorry that in 1980 they didn't notice... ■

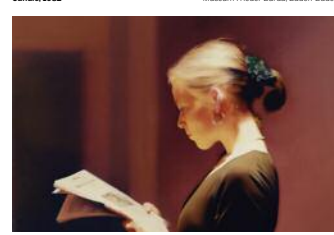
www.gerhardrichterberlin.org

Régine Deguelle is a TV journalist, producer and author.



Candle, 1982

Museum Frieder Burda, Baden-Baden



Reader, 1994

San Francisco Museum of Modern Art

#### ANTHOLOGY OF 250 YEARS

##### Heavy Poetry

By Susanne Mauss

84-year old Herbert Schmidt does not take "No" for an answer. "No. Kafka never wrote poems" – that's what the archivist said. Schmidt knew better: "Anybody who writes such love letters had to have written poems." And his research proved him

right: He unearthed twelve poems by Kafka. They are part of a remarkable anthology of German lyric poetry. 1284 pages, containing 1,200 poems by 305 poets (235 men, 70 women) with Jewish roots. The title: "Ist es Freude, ist es Schmerz?" (Is It Joy, Is It Sorrow?).

What lies before us now is a memorial book documenting the poetic heritage of a German-Jewish culture in its various dimensions beyond the Holocaust into the 21st century. The 3-kilo (6.5 lbs) tome will

become a standard work for any library. Not only does it encompass the most important examples of German-Jewish lyrical poetry of the last 250 years, from Moses Mendelssohn and Heinrich Heine to Paul Celan and contemporary poets, it also contains biographies of all the poets, an exhaustive bibliography and a historical survey of the cultural and social life of Jews in the German speaking area.

Added to this are some 'gifts' by friends to Schmidt's comprehensive volume:

the cover shows a work by famous German painter Gerhard Richter, there is a greeting by Stéphane Hessel. This is a excursion through the world of poetry, an insight into the rich tapestry of German-Jewish cultural history, a journey which can summon pleasure as well as pain or sorrow... ■

"Ist es Freude, ist es Schmerz?"  
by Herbert Schmidt (ed.)  
ISBN 978-3-934268-97-5

## RELIGION

JEWISH VOICE FROM GERMANY | JULY 2012



Mourners at the Western Wall in Jerusalem. It is customary to sit on low stools or on the floor on Tisha B'Av to lament the destruction of the Temple

The story goes that Napoleon Bonaparte traveled through the Jewish section of a city in Russia on Tisha B'Av. He rode by a synagogue, where he heard people wailing and crying. Napoleon turned to the bereft community and asked what tragedy had befallen them. He was told that they were mourning the destruction of their Temple some 1700 years before. When he heard this, Napoleon was astonished. He declared that a people so attached to their history will one day return to their land.

"By common consensus," writes Rabbi Martin S. Cohen in his recent book *The Observant Life*, "Tisha B'Av is the saddest day of the Jewish year. Aside from Yom Kippur, the only other full-day fast on the annual calendar is the fast of the Ninth of Av, popularly called by its Hebrew name, Tisha B'Av." During the week of the 9th of Av, the Sefer Torah is not adorned. This day of mourning, which falls on the 29th of July in our civil calendar this year, reminds us of the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple. Both Temples were destroyed on the 9th of Av. The Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar destroyed the first temple 586 years before our time, and the Roman emperor Titus destroyed the second Temple on the same date in the year 70 CE. This day, on which we fast from sundown to sundown, is the conclusion and the sorrowful climax of the three weeks of mourning for Jerusalem that begins on the 17th day of Tammuz.

#### Night of tears

The Mishnah also tells us of three additional catastrophes that are connected with this date, including the Roman defeat of Betar in the year 133, after which the conquerors razed Jerusalem to the ground (Mishnah Ta'anit 4:6).

The first disaster, however, took place when the Israelites were still wandering in the wilderness. Numbers 14 describes how scouts that Moses had sent into the land of Canaan returned with a discouraging report. The people wept all night – the night of the 9th of Av – and declared they would rather return to Egypt than to attempt to conquer and settle in the land of Israel. God decided that the entire generation would wander for 40 years in the wilderness until the last of them had died, and only then would their children enter the Promised Land under the leadership of Joshua.

In his *Historia de ritibus hebraeorum* ("The history of the rites, cus-

oms, and way of life, of contemporary Jewry throughout the world") the Venetian Rabbi Leon Modena (1571-1648) describes the customs of his Jewish contemporaries on Tisha B'Av as follows:

On the 9th day of the month of Av, which falls in August, they observe an especially solemn fast, because on this day the temple was destroyed twice and stood in flames and Jerusalem was conquered. Observance begins on the day before, one hour before sundown or a bit later. They do not eat or drink anything until the evening of the following day when the stars come out. They walk unshod, or at least without leather shoes. They are not allowed to wash themselves. In the evening, they visit the Synagogue, where they sit on the floor and read with great sorrow the lamentations of the Prophet Jeremiah. After morning prayers they plead with God. On this day, it is forbidden to study the Torah or other related writings for one's edification

other than the books of Job and Jeremiah and other melancholy material. After the evening meal, they do as described above. The Sabbath that follows this fast is called Nechama, which means "consolation", for the Haftarah reading from the book of Isaiah, chapter 40, "Comfort, oh comfort my people, says your God" offers them consolation and new hope for the rebuilding of the Temple and the city of Jerusalem.

The seven weeks of consolation that follow the day of mourning culminate in the celebration of the New Year – Rosh Hashanah.

#### Accursed day

We also remember other catastrophes on this day. King Edward I ordered the expulsion of all Jews from England in 1290. It was on Tisha B'Av Sephardic Jews remember the 9th day of Av as the date in 1492 when they were forced to choose between conversion to Christianity or expulsion from Spain. In Ashkenazi

communities, the liturgy includes medieval songs of lamentation that describe hardship and murder during the crusades in cities like Speyer, Worms, and Mainz. Others tell of the suffering of the Jews of Liviv and Cracow during the crusade against the Turks in 1463. In 1670, the last Jews were expelled from Vienna. It was on Tisha B'Av.

The Talmud states: "Whoever eats or drinks on the ninth day of Av makes himself as guilty as one who eats on Yom Kippur." Even though many of us in our secular world have dispensed with the old customs, we sense that it is akin to breaking a taboo if we simply go about business as usual on such days of remembrance. The American-Jewish writer Lev Raphael (born 1954) knew very well that it was a provocation to name one of his stories "Dancing on Tisha B'Av".

70 years ago, in 1942, the mass deportation of Jews from Warsaw ghetto was announced, and expulsions began on Leil Tisha

#### God's strong hand

The trauma of this loss still affects us today. Rabbi Martin S. Cohen states: "The essence of the modern State of Israel presents a different challenge to the traditional observance of Tisha B'Av." The chairman of the editorial board of Conservative Judaism mentions that "some have suggested ending our fast after reciting the Afternoon Service as an acknowledgment of the miracle of the modern State of Israel". We know, however, how endangered the existence of Israel is. Today, we once again hear open talk of Israel's destruction. Our nerves are laid bare, and we do not merely pin our hopes on silent diplomacy and the strong hand of God.

Rather, we expect understanding and solidarity from society and from Israel's political leadership. This includes the solidarity of the churches. For centuries, the church propagated a historical-theological theory that justified the discrimination of the Jews based on the destruction of the Temple. Beginning in the 16th century, the Protestant Churches observed the 10th Sunday after Trinity as a day of remembrance for the destruction of Jerusalem. In the 19th century, collections were taken up on this day for missionary work to convert Jews. In Germany after the Shoah, Israel Sunday was declared as a day of critical self-reflection and contemplation of the common roots of Jews and Christians. ■

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