



Edvard Munch, Porträt Walther Rathenau, Berlin, 1907  
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## **Embracing Modernism**

### **Big names from the Stadtmuseum Berlin**

**From 7.10.22**

Press conference: 6.10.22, 11 am

Please send your accreditation for the  
press conference by 4.10.22 to:  
[presse@berlinischegalerie.de](mailto:presse@berlinischegalerie.de)

Lovis Corinth, Edvard Munch, Max Beckmann, Ernst Ludwig Kirchner and many others – the Stadtmuseum Berlin boasts outstanding works by eminent modernist painters. Twelve highlights from its premium collection will be guests at the Berlinische Galerie from October 2022. They bring new tones to the permanent in-house exhibition, sparking a conversation with resident works.

Sharing collections and jointly making them accessible to the public must become standard museum practice in the future. In this instance, the partnership was prompted by extensive conversion work at the Märkisches Museum, which is scheduled to close for four years in 2023, leaving the foundation Stadtmuseum Berlin without its principal home. To ensure that significant paintings from its collection can remain on display, the idea was born in the two houses of integrating selected works into the permanent exhibition “Art in Berlin 1880-1980”. Early modern art is a particular strength of the Stadtmuseum Berlin holdings.

The paintings to be hosted at the Berlinische Galerie are by Max Beckmann, Theo von Brockhusen, Lovis Corinth, Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, Walter Leistikow, Max Liebermann, Edvard Munch and Lesser Ury. All of them were important figures who enriched the city’s art scene in the early 20th century.

#### **Modern art in Berlin**

The highlight of the display is a striking portrait of the politician, manufacturer and art collector Walther Rathenau, painted in Berlin in 1907 by the Norwegian Edvard Munch. Munch’s arrival in the German capital in 1892 marked the birth of modernism in Berlin. His show with the Association of Berlin Artists was shut down within days when conservative members protested vehemently against his innovative style. That was the year when progressive artists, among them Max Liebermann and Walter Leistikow, formed the “Association of the XI” to bring the latest trends in German art to an audience in Berlin. Exhibitions by this initial alliance of modern artists were similarly seen as an affront to the conservative tastes that prevailed under Kaiser Wilhelm II. The “Association of the XI” was the nucleus that spawned the “Berlin Secession” in 1898/99. Munch was among those who regularly took part in its exhibitions.

#### **“Secessions”**

The “Berlin Secession” had ambitious aims. Like the “Secessions” in Munich and Vienna, it catalysed the modernist breakthrough in Berlin.

Thoughtfully chosen, carefully hung exhibitions provided a coherent overview of contemporary trends. The latest works by German artists took centre stage but there were also gems from the recent past and major paintings by European colleagues. Shows at the “Berlin Secession” encompassed a wide spectrum of styles including Naturalism, Symbolism, Art Nouveau, Impressionism and Pointillism.

A new generation encouraged a shift in paradigm around 1910. The “Berlin Secession” split over disputes between established artists and proponents of nascent Expressionism. The “New Secession” was founded in 1910, the “Free Secession” in 1914. These, too, were powerful countermovements that resisted the academic influence at exhibitions.

### **(Self-)Portraits – Edvard Munch, Lovis Corinth, Max Beckmann**

In addition to Munch’s portrait of Walther Rathenau, there are several portraits here by Lovis Corinth. Leading public figures sat for him, like the influential journalist Alfred Kerr (1907), and so did his student and future wife Charlotte Berend (1902). She and her husband were both members of the “Berlin Secession”, frequently contributing to its shows. The works from the Stadtmuseum Berlin also include some outstanding self-portraits. By 1900 at the latest, when he moved from Munich to Berlin to pursue his career, Corinth was painting one every year on his birthday.

A self-portrait by Max Beckmann (1910/11) depicts him at the age of 27. He was probably reacting to a negative exhibition review in the Berliner Tageblatt in 1910, which hurt the artist badly. The clue is the newspaper he is holding with a derisive, self-assured smile.

### **“Plein air” painting – Walter Leistikow, Max Liebermann, Theo von Brockhusen**

Around 1900 Walter Leistikow was one of the most sought-after painters in Berlin. He had a flair for networking and was a driving force in the city’s avant-garde community. His landscapes, in particular, demonstrate a new, modern approach to art. “Evening over Schlachtensee” (c. 1895) is an example. Like the Impressionists, Leistikow often painted straight from the motif, usually in the countryside near Berlin with its many lakes.

Max Liebermann’s “Boys Bathing” was shown just after completion at the second exhibition of the Berlin Secession in 1900, where the rendering was praised for its vitality. Liebermann’s “plein air” painting inspired Theo von Brockhusen, whose motifs

focused from 1908/09 on the picturesque Havel scenery around Baumgartenbrück by Lake Schwielow. One specimen is “Wind on the Havel” (c. 1914), which reflects his affinity with Vincent van Gogh.

### **Nollendorfplatz – Max Beckmann, Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, Lesser Ury**

Several artists featured Berlin’s Nollendorfplatz in their townscapes. From 1910 to 1914 the artist Max Beckmann and his wife Minna Beckmann-Tube spent the winter months living at no. 6. His studio window looked out across the north-west corner of the square. Ernst Ludwig Kirchner’s view of Nollendorfplatz was painted in 1912. In 1911 the Expressionist and co-founder of Brücke had moved from Dresden to Berlin, where he painted numerous street scenes reflecting his experience of the big city. Lesser Ury’s “Nollendorfplatz Station at Night” of 1925, by contrast, remains true to the artist’s Impressionist origins. Ury’s reputation for atmospheric paintings of nocturnal urban scenes dated back to before 1900.

### **Artists**

- Max Beckmann (1884 Leipzig – 1950 New York)
- Theo von Brockhusen (1882 Marggrabowa, now Olecko/Poland – 1919 Berlin)
- Lovis Corinth (1858 Tapiau/East Prussia, now Gvardeysk/Russia – 1925 Zandvoort)
- Ernst Ludwig Kirchner (1880 Aschaffenburg – 1938 Davos)
- Walter Leistikow (1865 Bromberg, now Bydgoszcz/Poland – 1908 Berlin)
- Max Liebermann (1847 Berlin – 1935 Berlin)
- Edvard Munch (1863 Løten – 1944 Oslo)
- Lesser Ury (1861 Birnbaum, now Międzychód/Poland – 1931 Berlin)

### **Press images**

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**Press**  
**Berlinische Galerie**

Ulrike Andres  
Head of Communication and Education  
Tel +49 (0)30 78 902 829  
andres@berlinischegalerie.de

Contact:  
Julia Lennemann  
Communication  
Tel +49 (0)30 78 902 831  
lennemann@berlinischegalerie.de

Berlinische Galerie  
Berlin's Museum of Modern Art,  
Photography and Architecture  
Alte Jakobstraße 124–128  
10969 Berlin  
Tel +49 (0)30 78 902 600  
berlinischegalerie.de

Admission 10€, concessions 6€  
(Prices may vary during  
temporary exhibitions)

Wed–Mon 10 am–6 pm  
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**Press**  
**Stadtmuseum Berlin**

presse@stadtmuseum.de  
Tel +49 (0)175 4310818

Stadtmuseum Berlin  
Landesmuseum für Kultur und Geschichte Berlins  
Presse- und Öffentlichkeitsarbeit  
Poststr. 13-14  
10178 Berlin  
Tel +49 (0)30 24002 162  
stadtmuseum.de