STÄDEL MUSEUM

WALL AND LABEL TEXTS

NEW WAYS OF SEEING: THE PHOTOGRAPHY OF THE 1920S AND '30S

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GERMAN PHOTOGRAPHIC EXHIBITION, FRANKFURT AM MAIN

The *German Photographic Exhibition* was the first post-World-War-I photography exhibition. Staged at the Haus der Moden in Frankfurt am Main in 1926, it covered the entire spectrum of the medium from professional, scientific, and historical photography to the photo industry and specialist literature. The show played a key role in smoothing the way for a new perception of photography, not only among contemporary experts, but virtually throughout society. The result was to anchor the medium firmly in everyday life. Numerous exhibitions and fairs in subsequent years further solidified photography's position. At the same time, photographers began publishing their works in specially compiled books. A case in point is Albert Renger-Patzsch's *The World Is Beautiful* (1928). Publications of this kind were hugely popular at the time and today possess scarcity value.

TRAINING

It was in the 1920s that photography was introduced as a teaching subject at art academies and private educational establishments. This led to the development of professional standards and a redefinition of the role of the photographer. The schools were organized in different ways. The more conservative ones took the crafts as their orientation (Teaching and Research Institute for Photography, Munich; Lette Society, Berlin), others adopted an approach that can be referred to as documentary in the broadest sense (Giebichenstein Castle, Halle), and still others pursued the experimental application of photography in advertising graphics (Folkwang School, Essen). The Bauhaus (initially Weimar, later Dessau and Berlin) employed photography in a variety of design contexts. Its teaching programme attached particular importance to technique and craftsmanship in photographic practice. The extant photos taken outside the instruction context testify to a playful approach to the medium. After the National Socialist accession to power, the academies were

subjected state and party control and ‘cleansing’—the Bauhaus in Dessau, for example, was shut down as early as 1932 because the Nazis were already in power there. The training institutions that remained in operation nevertheless continued to apply innovative ways of seeing and depicting reality.

Hans Finsler: Garne, 1927/28

The art historian Hans Finsler taught the newly introduced photography course at the School of Artisans and Arts and Crafts at Giebichenstein Castle. In his work he focussed on documenting the products of the internal school workshops. He also worked for advertising agencies and involved the students in carrying out his commercial assignments. The shots of spools of pearl thread, some upright, some lying on their sides, were taken in a textile factory. Finsler arranged the spools in such a way that some are cut off by the picture’s edges. The depth of field serves to emphasize the fineness of the threads. In a manner as subtle as it is expressive, the clear composition highlights the quality of the material.

Lucia Moholy: Postkarte Dessau: Doppelwohnhaus der Bauhausmeistersiedlung, 1926

Lucia Moholy was a trained photographer. On commission from Walter Gropius, she photographed the products of the various Bauhaus workshops, and in 1925/26 documented the newly constructed Bauhaus Residential Estate in Dessau. Her architectural views were printed in newspapers for advertising purposes and marketed as postcards. She set up a photo workshop for herself in the Master House she lived in with her husband László Moholy-Nagy in the estate. Until 1926, she edited the series of *Bauhaus Books* put out by László Moholy-Nagy and Walter Gropius. With her husband she also worked on experimental photography projects and co-authored texts on photographic theory.

Anton Stankowski: Würfel, 1928

Starting in 1927, Anton Stankowski took instruction from Max Burchartz in graphics, typography, and photography at the School of Trades and Applied Arts in Essen (from 1928 the Folkwang School of Design). A shot he took in 1928 shows three dice that have been tossed up in the air. Thanks to the fast shutter speed, they seem to be suspended there. Stankowski used the illusionistic three-dimensionality of geometric objects to test the effects of spatial structures. Burchartz’s focus on linking advertising graphics with photography would prove formative for Stankowski: in the post-war period, he made a name for himself above all as a graphic designer.

Herbert Schürmann:
Ohne Titel (Krug in Perspektive, Fotoklasse Peterhans, Bauhaus Dessau), 1932
Ohne Titel (Schneebeeren), 1932
Herbert Schürmann's aim was to make the specific materiality and various surface structures of the objects stand out in his photographs. To that end, he employed dark-light and smooth-rough contrasts which he developed to a high degree of precision. For example, he arranged smooth, white snowberries on a dark, coarsely woven fabric. In another scene he presented an earthenware jug lying on its side in such a way that its shiny-smooth glaze contrasts with the matt, unglazed surface of its base. He took both of these shots at the Bauhaus in the framework of the photography course that had only been established there in 1929 with Walter Peterhans as its teacher. Few photos have come down to us from that training context.

Gertrud Arndt: Ohne Titel (Otti Berger auf dem Balkon des Bauhaus-Atelierhauses in Dessau), 1930
Max Pfeiffer Wattenphul: Ohne Titel (Grete Willers mit Schleier), 1928
Unexpected perspectives and bold compositions heralded a new pictorial aesthetic at the Bauhaus. The portrait is a rigorous composition in which the model Otti Berger serves as a focal point in the midst of the serially arranged balconies of the Dessau Studio House façade. Max Pfeiffer Watenphul staged the costumed Grete Willers in a role play. Both photographers had already been experimenting with photography before it was introduced as a teaching subject at the Bauhaus in 1929. The school had set out to dissolve the boundary between free and applied art by adopting creative approaches to various forms of artistic expression. Under pressure from the National Socialists, it would cease operations just three years later.

Werner Rohde: Fantastischer Zirkus, 1928
Werner Rohde had originally come from Bremen. After an unsuccessful career as a painter, he registered for Hans Finsler's photo courses at Giebichenstein Castle in Halle. There he experimented with distortion techniques such as illusionistic trick photography. He created a *Fantastic Circus*, for example, with the aid of little model figures and an illuminated woven basket. It was at the international Werkbund exhibition *Film und Foto* in Stuttgart (1929) that he first presented his works to a broader public. This is one of the photos he showed on that occasion.

Carl Albiker: Ohne Titel (Close-up eines Auges), um 1930
Carl Albiker received his training at the Photographic Training Institution of the Lette Society of Berlin between 1928 and 1930. His 1930 shot of an eye testifies to the

technical precision he learned there. In 1934 he went on to head the photography department of the Art-Historical Seminar in Marburg. He continued his photographic work during his time in military service (1940/41), documenting architecture in France and Holland on behalf of the Wehrmacht.

Hannelore Ziegler: Wasserexperimente, um 1935
Little is known about Hannelore Ziegler. She gained initial experience with cameras in the studio of her father Richard Ziegler. From 1940 to 1942 she trained as a photographer at the Bavarian State School of Photography in Munich. It was in this period that she carried out her *Water Experiments*, which testify to her photographic skill.

PRESS
Thanks to improved production methods, photographic imagery found its way into the Weimar Republic press on a mass scale. The photographic illustrations served to loosen up what tended to be rather matter-of-fact reporting. Newspapers and magazines took on a whole new look as a result. Magazines such as *Die Dame* and *UHU* owed their popularity to the presentation of exceptional photographs, of which some bore no relation at all to the neighbouring text. Mirroring a sophisticated lifestyle unattainable for a large portion of society, motifs from the worlds of fashion and sports offered diversion and entertainment.

After the National Socialists came into power, the entire press was subjected to state control and forced conformity to Nazi ideals. Photographers who wanted to continue working in their profession had to provide proof of their 'Aryan descent' and join the Reich Press Chamber. Jewish colleagues who had been famous during the Weimar Republic, for example Martin Munkácsi, were forced to emigrate. Those that stayed, like Erich Salomon, suffered persecution and were murdered in concentration camps. Some established photographers such as Friedrich Seidenstücker and Max Schirner accepted and adapted to the system; others, like Paul Wolff; went a step further, expanding their previous image repertoires to include propagandistic themes and making successful careers for themselves under the new regime. The Nazis made deliberate use of photography to spread their ideology, also employing the modern formal principles developed in the 1920s to that end.

Friedrich Seidenstücker: Ohne Titel (Zoologischer Garten Berlin, zwei Zebras von hinten), 1935
A studied mechanical engineer who had taught himself the photography trade, Seidenstücker went to work as a freelance photojournalist for the Ullstein publishing

company in 1930. A portrayal of 1932 describes his photographs as timeless contemporary images that, with their ‘vibrant artlessness and their wit, always catch the viewer’s attention’. The shot of two zebras appeared in that article with the title Ornaments in the Berlin Zoo. Seidenstücker had composed it in such a way that the two animals virtually form mirror images of one another. The pattern of their markings echoes in modified form in the fences in the background. This humorous and carefully staged scene testifies to Seidenstücker’s photographic know-how.

Paul Wolff: Schattenbilder, 1930

Having initially practised as a physician, Paul Wolff went on to become one of the interwar period’s commercially most accomplished photographers. He marketed himself as a pioneer in the use of the Leica, a camera that—owing to its simple operability—lent itself to use by laypersons. In his studio in Frankfurt am Main, he moreover set up a photo agency. The images he distributed found their way into magazines, photo books, and brochures in Germany and abroad. He owed his success to the boom in the pictorial media and advertising that distinguished his time. His own works also appeared in a wide variety of contexts, in part without bearing any relation to the content of the text they accompanied. His 1929 shots of shadows taken during a tennis match are a case in point. They were published the following year in *Die Dame* to illustrate a short story in which no tennis match takes place.

Felix H. Man: Mussolini im Palazzo Venezia in Rom, 1931 (Abzug 1934)

Felix H. Man set out to reveal ‘the true face of the dictator’ Benito Mussolini, the Prime Minister of fascist Italy from 1922 to 1943. To this end, he travelled to Rome for the *Münchner Illustrierte Presse* in 1931. Having undergone a whole series of security checks, the photojournalist was finally allowed into Mussolini’s imposing office. To take this shot, he stood 25 metres from his subject—a distance that makes the Italian chief of state look tiny. Man accompanied Mussolini for an entire day: on his morning horseback ride, during his audiences, on an outing to the sea. In 1933, the dictator turned down his request for another session.

Erich Salomon: Lugano, Dezember 1928, 1928

As a reporter for Ullstein, a publishing company specializing in magazines, the doctor of law Erich Salomon made a name for himself with his photos of celebrities. He portrayed them close up, directly, unposed, and frequently without their knowledge. At the international conference of the Council of the League of Nations in Lugano, he documented the debate between the German, British, and French foreign ministers Gustav Stresemann, Austen Chamberlain, and Aristide Briand. This shot was part of a report he published, along with many others, in his 1931 photo book *Famous*

Contemporaries in Unguarded Moments. On account of his Jewish descent, Salomon was compelled to live in exile in Holland from 1933 to 1943. He was murdered in Auschwitz in 1944.

FORMS

Hardly had photography been invented than it came into use for scientific purposes. It permitted a supposedly rational view of nature and served as an aid in the documentation of research results. In the 1920s, richly illustrated popular science books enjoyed great popularity. Photographers such as Karl Blossfeldt, Carl Strüwe, and Albert Renger-Patzsch provided insights into phenomena usually invisible to the naked eye, for example the variegated structures of the micro- and macrocosm. Shots reproducing the forms of nature close up and in the finest detail blurred the boundaries between science and artistic photography. Products of organic growth became models for those of the human hand. The works by these photographers accordingly bore an influence on product design. In the Nazi period, many formal studies already popular during the Weimar Republic served as means of conveying an ideologically shaped aesthetic of nature.

Albert Renger-Patzsch: Tropische Orchis, Cattleya labiata, vor 1925

Until the mid-twentieth century, primarily drawings were used to illustrate botanical publications. Yet the photographic illustration of popular science books was also extremely popular. Albert Renger-Patzsch's *The World is Beautiful* (1928), for instance, begins with a series of twenty plant shots, among them this one of an orchid blossom. Unlike many of his colleagues, for example Karl Blossfeldt, Renger-Patzsch preferred to photograph living plants. The images usually show the blossom in its entirety along with the stem and leaves, making it possible to identify the plant with botanical precision.

Carl Strüwe: Formen des Mikrokosmos, Bau- und Bewegungsformen, Anatomie der Wirbellosen, Schuppen auf einem Schmetterlingsflügel, Admiral, 720:1, 1928 (Abzug 1955)

Over a period of thirty years, the graphic artist Carl Strüwe produced photographic images of geometric patterns and structures seen through a microscope. In analogy to the vocabulary of architecture, for example, he used the terms 'shingles' and 'flying buttresses' to refer to the shot of a butterfly wing. This photo graces the cover of his book *Forms of the Microcosm: Shape and Design of a New Imagery*, which was not published until 1955.

Alfred Ehrhardt:
Zarte Riffelung, aus der Serie: Die Kurische Nehrung, 1934
Tierähnliche Gebilde (Larven), 1933–1936
The trained organist Alfred Ehrhardt studied at the Bauhaus in Dessau in 1927/28, and it was there that he presumably first came into contact with photographic techniques. Yet it was not until 1933 that he began practising the photography profession full-time. He had been accused of 'cultural bolshevism' and lost his job as a lecturer at the Hamburg State Art School because the Nazis considered his teaching practices too leftist and progressive. In photos of natural formations, Ehrhardt continued his natural-philosophical studies of the painting and drawing of ornamental forms. He published his works in numerous photo books such as *The Mudflats* (1937), *The Courland Spit* (1938), and *Crystals* (1939), which proved immensely popular in the Nazi era and appeared in several editions.

Kurt Warnekros:
Tafel 3, Steisslage (Seitenaufnahme), in: Schwangerschaft und Geburt im Röntgenbilde
Tafel 5, Rechte Steisslage, Eröffnungsperiode, in: Schwangerschaft und Geburt im Röntgenbilde
Tafel 9, Rechte Steisslage, Austreibungsperiode, in: Schwangerschaft und Geburt im Röntgenbilde
Tafel 15, Rechte dorsosuperiore Querlage, in: Schwangerschaft und Geburt im Röntgenbilde
Tafel 26, Seitenaufnahme, in: Schwangerschaft und Geburt im Röntgenbilde
Tafel 27, Allgemein gleichmäßig verengtes Becken, in: Schwangerschaft und Geburt im Röntgenbilde
1917–1921
Working at the Berlin University women's clinic, the gynaecologist Kurt Warnekros carried out research on the diagnostic potentials of X-ray in obstetrics. His photos show foetuses and various stages of childbirth. He published many of his results in 1918 and 1921 in a two-volume work that emancipated the X-ray image from the research context and made it perceivable as art.

Karl Blossfeldt: Impatiens glanduligera Balsamine (Balsamine, Springkraut, Stängel mit Verzweigung, natürliche Größe), 1928
The shot of an impatiens stem appeared in Karl Blossfeldt's most important photo book Art *Forms in Nature* (1928). For this publication, which initially came out in the form of a portfolio, he manipulated the plants—cutting them and reassembling the parts as he saw fit and thus making them useless for the purposes of botanical

documentation. Instead, contemporaries read them as analogies of architectural forms. Owing to the strong aesthetic appeal of his reductive style, Blossfeldt was regarded from the outset as a pioneer of a new approach to photography.

PORTRAIT

Photographic depictions of faces reflect themes of importance to society in the interwar period. Portrait photography changed fundamentally in the 1920s. Elaborate stagings with props were passé; the subjects were now shown isolated before white backgrounds. Through reduction to the 'essentials,' photography was literally to mirror something of a person's intrinsic nature. The medium moreover contributed to changing the ideal of beauty, as can be seen in the abundance of celebrity portraits in illustrated magazines. Actors and dancers had themselves portrayed in certain roles as a way of demonstrating their talent. Strong lighting served to model the subject's faces. Closeups revealed every pore, every freckle. As in silent movies, the depiction of intense facial expression was to make emotions palpable for the viewer.

In addition to classical portrait photography seeking to capture the subject's personality, the interwar period was also one of type portraiture, in which individuals are depicted as representatives of a social group or a profession. In the early 1930s, the Nazis made use of stereotypical photographs to convey their ideology. Whereas photographers of the Weimar Republic had pointed their lenses at the entire social spectrum, under National Socialism portrayals of homeless persons, for instance, served solely as negative examples of the past. Departing from the objective depiction of groups of people, photographers like Erna Lendvai-Dircksen now used dramatic lighting to stage peasants and labourers as heroes as a way of underpinning racist-volkish propaganda.

Hugo Erfurth:
Käthe Kollwitz, 1925 (Abzug 1935)
Max Planck, 1938

Hugo Erfurth was one of the most important portrait photographers in Germany during the Weimar Republic. He was highly appreciated, especially in artist circles, for the sensitive portrayals in which he managed to capture the subject's psyche. Whereas in the 1920s his prominent models still came primarily from the realm of culture and theatre, in the 1930s he focussed increasingly on leading figures in business and politics. With the aid of noble printing techniques that lend his depictions striking depth, he emphasized the superiority of his photographs, which already fetched high prices during his lifetime. Erfurth's creed was to remain 'true,

clear, and faithful to life' in his artistic works—regardless of his models' political outlooks.

August Sander: Malerehepaar (Martha und Otto Dix), 1925/26
In this photograph of the painter couple Martha and Otto Dix, August Sander experimented with gazes in two different directions. Whereas Martha Dix looks at the viewer head-on, her husband's face appears in profile. Despite the two figures' physical proximity, the photo conveys nothing in the way of intimate familiarity, but—in a manner reminiscent of portrait depictions of 1920s New Objective painting—is distinguished by a chilly, aloof austerity. Sander included the photo of the Dix couple in his portfolio *People of the Twentieth Century*, in which he brought together hundreds of portraits of persons belonging to a wide range of social classes and occupations. He later published it again in his book *Face of our Time*, featuring sixty photographic likenesses. Captions such as 'widower', 'confectioner', 'secretary', et cetera defined the figures depicted as representatives of certain contemporary types. In 1936 the Gestapo destroyed the book's print sheets (not the negatives) after the Reich Literature Chamber had prohibited its publication.

Erna Lendvai-Dircksen:
Junger Fischer, Hiddensee, vor 1932
Kartoffelernte in Ries, um 1935
The photographer Erna Lendvai-Dircksen gained recognition with her long-term work on series of dramatic, close-up portraits of various groups of the population. Her photo books, among them *The Face of the German Volk* (1930) and *The Face of the Germanic Volk* (1942) were used for National Socialist race propaganda. In lectures and publications, she called for a return to the craftsmanship of photography by way of simple but all the more histrionic modes of expression and a concentration on German national themes. She continued her work in the post-war period and in 1961 published further portrait series in the book *An Image of the German* that made use of National Socialist language, if in somewhat subdued form. In view of her proximity to Nazi racial ideology, any examination of her photographic work—which has yet to undergo thorough scholarly investigation—demands a critical eye.

Helmar Lerski: Metamorphose 527, aus der Serie: Verwandlungen durch Licht, 1936
Helmar Lerski photographed the face of the construction engineer Leo Uschatz in a series of 140 closeups. Working in the blazing sun on a roof terrace in Tel Aviv, he achieved his dramaturgical lighting effects with up to sixteen mirrors and flags that helped him vary the intensity of the shadows. Having fled the National Socialists, the

photographer and cameraman thus continued the studies in portrait photography he had begun in Berlin. He had already published his photo book *Everyday Heads*, containing closeup shots of anonymous persons, in 1931. Presented as impenetrable surfaces of mask-like rigidity, their faces speak of the conflict between emotionality and ideality.

Hans Robertson: Der Tänzer Harald Kreutzberg, 1925
An impressive illustration of the cultural diversity of the Weimar Republic, Hans Robertson's extensive oeuvre has meanwhile all but fallen into oblivion. The trained engineer made a name for himself above all with dance photos. Thanks to carefully orchestrated lighting and strong contrasts, the well-known expressionist dancer Harald Kreutzberg appears as if before a stage backdrop. The slight blurriness mirrors the dynamic of the drama. Photographs of this kind could be found in books, theatre announcements, and illustrated magazines and as postcards and collector cards. In the wake of the National Socialist accession to power, Robertson—succumbing to the threat of professional restrictions he faced on account of his Jewish origins—emigrated to Copenhagen in 1935 following stays in Switzerland and Hamburg.

ADVERTISING PHOTOGRAPHY
Photos made their debut in advertising in the 1920s, replacing what had previously been purely graphic means of representation. They possessed a sensuality and immediacy that spoke directly to the public. With the help of cheap loans, the German industry invested in advertising on a broad scale, giving this branch of photography a tremendous boost. Photographers now collaborated increasingly with advertising artists. In combination with various typefaces and other typographical elements, photographs served to highlight a product's virtues. Max Burchartz, Hans Finsler, and Hein Gorny were among the best-known advertising photographers of the Weimar Republic. As the selection of works on view in this section shows, their approaches differed widely and were sometimes even experimental in character, as in the case of Umbo's shots with a 'cloud camera'. Yet they also have certain aspects in common, such as an objective pictorial language, strong contrasts, precise depth of field, and carefully balanced geometrical elements.

Hans Finsler: Tasse, Untertasse und Teller, 1931
White crockery on a black table—that is all this photo shows. Yet the clear composition is full of tension and dynamic: light versus dark, round versus angular, lines versus planes. Its focus is the coolly elegant tableware. Both the dishes and the

photograph were commissioned: Marguerite Friedländer had designed the ‘Hermes Service’ for the Halle airport restaurant; Finsler shot the photo for advertising purposes. In keeping with ideas of New Objectivity, all that matters is the object, its material, and its function.

Walter Dexel: Telefon-Uhren-Säule, Frankfurt am Main, 1927

Walter Dexel’s work *Telephone-Clock Column* served as a telephone box and an advertising medium in one. A trained art historian, Dexel had initially studied Early Renaissance illuminated manuscripts. In the 1920s, in addition to his work as a commercial artist, he also began to engage in photography. In this nocturnal scene, the telephone box makes as pure and white an impression as the damsel in the laundry detergent advertisement. The fact that nothing is to be seen of the urban surroundings lends the motif the quality of a glowing sculpture. This type of staging was as new as the technique of taking pictures by night. The image was published in 1929 in an article on the design of the neon advertising sign in the magazine *Die Form.*

Hein Gorny:
Ohne Titel (Kragen), 1928
Ohne Titel (Leibniz-Kekse), 1934–1938

The same motif, over and over again: these arrangements of collars and biscuits mirror the serial nature of consumer goods production. Focussing solely on the objects’ materiality, the abstract compositions detach them from their real-world function. In the case of the collars, the circumstances surrounding the photo commission are unknown. The name of the biscuit manufacturer, on the other hand, is clear to see: Hein Gorny’s photo depicts Leibniz biscuits made by Bahlsen. During World War II, this company made use of forced labourers. Gorny also suffered from repressive measures on account of his wife Ruth Lessing’s Jewish descent. That did not stop his works from being used for propaganda purposes. After the couple’s failed attempt to emigrate in 1938, the once-successful photographer received little in the way of commissions. Protected by his ‘Aryan’ status, his wife was spared deportation.

Yva: Reise- und Segelanzug, um 1932

An elegantly dressed young woman lounges on a white block as if on the gunwale of a boat. With her right hand she braces herself on a wooden pole suggestive of a railing. Using a minimum of everyday props, the photographer Yva created a holiday atmosphere in her studio. The model is staged from the side in such a way as to enhance the outfit to best effect. The hazy triangular forms in the background are reminiscent of pennants. This photograph was taken on commission from the Berlin

School of Textile and Fashion Design and distributed as an advertising image by the Schostal agency, which supplied numerous magazine publishers with pictorial material. Following the National Socialist accession to power in 1933, Yva was required to apply for membership in the Reich Press Chamber in order to continue her work as a commercial photographer. On account of her Jewish descent, however, her application was rejected. Her working conditions were severely limited as a result. Under the increasing threat of the destruction of her livelihood, she saw no alternative but to turn the administration of her studio over to her friend, the art historian Charlotte Weidler. In 1938, Yva was prohibited from practising her profession altogether. She gave up her studio and tried to eke out a living as a radiographer in the Jewish Hospital of Berlin. In 1942 she was arrested, deported, and murdered in the Sobibor extermination camp.

Umbo: Winterlicher Wald (Grunewald, Berlin), 1935

'The images of everyday life produced by the hemisphere camera yield peculiar perspectives', reads the review of the AEG (Allgemeine Elektricitäts-Gesellschaft) Berlin's latest technical achievement in the magazine *Volk und Welt* in 1937. The article is illustrated with photos by the former Bauhaus student Umbo, whom the company been commissioned to test the 'cloud camera'. With the aid of a fisheye lens, this apparatus took pictures with an angle of view of more than 180 degrees. Far from coming to a halt in 1933, the quest for new visual experiences in photography had continued full force—now with propagandistic intentions. The aim was to demonstrate Germany's economic and technical primacy over foreign developments, also in the area of camera technology.

Max Krajewski: Horch 8 Kühlerfigur, 1928

In this photograph, Max Krajewski portrayed the motorized vehicle as an allegory of mobility. His shot of a Horch 8 is tightly framed to focus solely on the bonnet and its mascot. The background is white; the polished chrome mirrors a landscape with trees. In the manner of an initial, this photo appeared at the head of the editorial in the July/August 1929 edition of *Das neue Frankfurt* – a special issue on 'modern transport'. The organ of the urban development programme of the same name, this magazine regularly featured discussions of themes related to building culture, art, and social policy. Under pressure from the ultra-conservative right and the National Socialists, the construction activities of 'New Frankfurt' came to an abrupt halt, and the magazine also ceased to appear in 1933. During the Nazi era and until into the 1960s, Krajewski engaged in a successful career taking pictures of architecture and industry for municipal and state authorities.

Anton Stankowski: Türen – Fenster, 1933
In countless photos of the 1920s and ’30s, Albert Renger-Patzsch focussed on the world of things. In that context he succeeded in calling attention to aspects that usually remain hidden from view. An example is this shot of a zipper, a fastening device mass-produced since 1923. The tight framing and blown-up view of the metal teeth give the materiality of brass and cloth centre stage. At the same time, relieved of their function, the interlocking rows of teeth take on an almost unsettling quality.

Albert Renger-Patzsch, Ohne Titel (Makroaufnahme eines Reißverschlusses), 1928–1933
In unzähligen Aufnahmen nahm Albert Renger-Patzsch in den 20er und 30er Jahren die Welt der Dinge in den Blick. Dabei gelang es ihm, Aspekte hervorzuheben, die dem Auge gewöhnlich verborgen bleiben – so auch bei dieser Aufnahme des seit 1923 in Serie gefertigten Reißverschlusses. Der enge Ausschnitt und die starke Nahsicht der Metallzähne lassen die Stofflichkeit von Messing und Gewebe deutlich hervortreten. Ihrer Funktion enthoben, wirken die einander gegenüberliegenden Hakenreihen befremdlich.

Elisabeth Hase: Ohne Titel (Selbstporträt am Telefon), um 1930
After studying at the Art School for Free and Applied Art in Frankfurt (present-day Städel School), Elisabeth Hase worked as an assistant to Paul Wolff. In 1932, she went into business for herself with a focus on press and advertising photography. She and her children often served as models in her photographs on different subjects. The young woman talking on the phone, for example, is Hase herself. The slight haziness conveys the fast pace of the new age, of which the young woman is self-confident protagonist. The Erich Norberg printing house in Worms purchased the photo for use in an advertisement communicating its address and—prominently—its telephone number.

INDUSTRY
Industrial photography is one of the most important testimonies of the Weimar Republic. Numerous companies used photographic images for advertising purposes and had their modern equipment and production facilities photographically staged by professionals. Usually concentrating on the beauty of technical details, the photos used in advertising tended to omit the production settings and the working conditions. Instead they zoom in on pipes, fittings, and gear levers, whose aesthetic elevation mirrors the fascination of the modern machine age. Appearing in abundance in the mid-1930s, company publications designed to demonstrate economic vitality and

prosperity testify to the state control of the economy. Photographers such as Karl Theodor Gremmler performed a balancing act between continuity and conformity. And even if the motifs of the food industry were staged with a modern formal language, in the context of the preparations for war they took on ever greater nutritional significance—and ultimately served the needs of political propaganda.

Albert Renger-Patzsch: Tauchbecken (Krausswerke, Schwarzenberg in Sachsen), 1929
Between 1929 and 1942, Albert Renger-Patzsch received regular commissions from the Krausswerke in Schwarzenberg, Saxony, Germany's largest manufacturer of metal household items. He took photographs for the company's publications, which—distinguished by their modern and diversified designs—were intended to underscore innovativeness and productivity. In his photograph *Stroll Through a Bathtub Factory* (1929), Renger portrayed the process of galvanizing a bathtub. The carefully balanced lighting created reflections on the objects' surfaces, a pictorial device that, along with the tight framing, served to aestheticize the industrial procedure. This shot was so well-wrought that the Krausswerke used it in 1930 as a poster motif.

Karl Theodor Gremmler:
Ohne Titel (Eieraufschlagen und- prüfen, Bahlsen, für Leibniz Kekse), 1937/38
Ohne Titel (Frischer Fisch), 1937/38
Ohne Titel (Dokumentation der Hochseefischerei), 1939/40
Ohne Titel (Ernte-Dokumentation für Andersen & Co.), 1939/40
Karl Theodor Gremmler belonged to the generation that embarked on their careers after the National Socialist accession to power. He specialized in photos of industrial food production. His customers included the biscuit manufacturer Bahlsen, Kaffee HAG, and above all the Hochseefischerei-Gesellschaft Hamburg, Andersen & Co. K. G. Gremmler photographed the products' entire process chain from the harvest or catch to the packaging. The photo book *Men at the Net*, published in 1939 on his own initiative, is a detailed portrayal of navigation and fishing. With the aid of harsh shadows, oblique perspectives, and views from below, his scenes of workers in heroic poses were meant to convey the progressiveness of the German food industry. The design principles served the purposes of Nazi propaganda, which generously sponsored advertising measures of this kind.

PROPAGANDA

Political movements were quick to recognize photography's potential as a means of captivating and controlling the masses. The term 'propaganda'—originally synonymous with 'advertising'—was even placed under political protection. Starting in 1933, the National Socialists adopted the modern ways of seeing developed with the camera during the Weimar Republic and instrumentalized them for their aims in the form of firmly established visual formulae. Compositions based on regular rows of objects, for example, —a visual principle familiar from product advertising—now came into use in the depiction of groups of people. Arranged along a vanishing line, the masses appear infinite and thus suggest a large public following. In compositions making use of diagonal elements viewed slightly from below, a pictorial device likewise frequently encountered in propaganda images, the motif makes all the more imposing an impression.

The use of modern modes of depiction is evident above all in areas where the aim was to convey a cosmopolitan character. In the visual communication of the 1935 Summer Olympics in Berlin, for example, the Nazis sought to maintain a 'beautiful pretence' and transport an image of Germany as a progressive and leading nation. The designs were thus geared towards the heroizing depiction of the athletes. This pictorial strategy was a Europe-wide phenomenon in the photography of the 1920s and 1930s. In Germany, however, the Nazis deliberately employed it in their propaganda as an aesthetic means of suggesting civilizational superiority.

Willy Zielke: Olympia, 1935

Under National Socialism—and with financial backing from the regime—Leni Riefenstahl advanced to become the world's most well-known woman film director. She hired Willy Zielke to assist her as a cameraman and photographer on the film *Olympia*. His photograph of a discus thrower testifies to the influence he exerted on the film's aesthetic. Strong lighting brings out the sheen of the subject's skin, lending him the quality of a Greek sculpture and serving to heighten him symbolically. This and many of the other photos Zielke took during the film shoots were published in the 1937 book *Beauty in the Olympic Games*, which credits him as their author. After he was committed to a psychiatric clinic and incapacitated in 1938 owing to a nervous breakdown, however, Riefenstahl published his works under her own name. Photos by Zielke are still falsely attributed to Leni Riefenstahl to this day.

Lothar Rübelt: Gerda Daumerlang, Kunstspringerin, Olympia, 2. Teil Fest der Schönheit, 1936

In an age when photojournalism tended to be somewhat dull, photographers like Lothar Rübelt availed themselves of a modern visual language to make it more

entertaining. Using a short telephoto lens and an exposure time of as little as 1/500 of a second, he captured the rapid sequence of a high-diver's rotation. Against the background of the white sky, Gerda Daumerlang—a sixteen-year-old athlete passionately celebrated by the press—appears to soar like a bird. Only a corner of the diving board at the bottom left provides a clear indication of a specific athletic discipline. Rübelt was a member of the Nazi party and a National Socialist by conviction. The Summer Olympics staged in Berlin in 1936 offered him an ideal framework for demonstrating his photographic know-how in the documentation of a propagandistic mass spectacle.

The games sparked enthusiasm worldwide, and many of the photographers who documented them subscribed to similar compositional principles. The cover of the French magazine *VU* published by Lucien Vogel is an example par excellence.

Heinrich Hoffmann: Adolf Hitler, 1927

Under National Socialism, the media often blurred the boundary between private and political themes. From the outset of his career, Adolf Hitler made use of photography to increase his personal renown. In 1927, for example, he had the photographer Heinrich Hoffmann of Munich take pictures of him posing as a speaker. In the late 1930s, Hitler had a ban imposed on the dissemination of these portraits. And the images do in fact reveal the emptiness of the subject's pose. Hoffmann nevertheless became the dictator's favourite portrait photographer, and with his portrayals he contributed decisively to the establishment of the Führer cult. He marketed his photographs on a mass scale in magazines and photo books and in the form of postcards and collector cards. Other photographers, for example Max Göllner of Frankfurt, likewise specialized in photography for propaganda purposes.

Walter Hege: München: Ehrentempel am Königsplatz, 1938

This photograph lends Paul Ludwig Troost's Temple of Honour on the Munich Königsplatz the quality of an antique edifice. Providing a backdrop for a consecration bowl, the sunlit columns resemble precious marble. During the Third Reich, an annual ceremony in memory of the victims of the Beer Hall Putsch of 1923 was held here with great pomp. Much like the architecture itself, the photo serves to idealize the site. Suggestive architectural views of this kind were what made the photographer, painter, and filmmaker Walter Hege so valuable for the National Socialists' pictorial propaganda.

Alexander Rodtschenko: Pionier mit Trompete, 1930

Alexander Rodchenko made use of unusual bold perspectives to depart from established visual habits. Here he photographed a trumpet player at such a steep

angle from below and such close proximity that the composition takes on a downright bizarre quality. For Rodchenko, photography always had an added illustrative value, and his photos accordingly lent themselves well to the needs of Socialist-oriented magazines such as *Novy LEF* (New Left Front of the Arts). He was well-known in Russia and abroad: his works were on view, for example, in the major international German Werkbund exhibition *Film and Foto* taking place in Stuttgart in 1929. He wanted them to contribute to the cultural establishment of the Soviet Union, as he himself avowed in public: 'The lens of the camera is the pupil of the eye of the cultured man in socialist society.' Already by 1930, however, his photos no longer conformed to the aesthetic conventions of the Soviet Union. His shot of a man blowing a trumpet was criticized for omitting the narrative element in favour of an emphasis on the motif's formal qualities. In fact, this work triggered the so-called 'Formalism dispute' that ultimately led to Rodchenko's exclusion from all official functions.

Margaret Bourke-White: Deutsche VWs als Panzerattrappen, 1932
'Dummy tanks of tin with wooden "Quaker guns" are the first evidence of Germany's overt attempts to rearm in 1934, one year after Hitler came to power.' This was the commentary in *Life* Magazine on Margaret Bourke-White's 1932 photo, which had already been published previously in *Fortune* under the title 'Marching as to war, the dummy tanks roll over the parade ground'. The American photojournalist gained renown in the 1930s with her reports on Russian, American, and German industry. After the outbreak of World War II, the demand for her photos skyrocketed. Bourke-White was the American army's first official female war correspondent.

Paul Wolff: Reichsparteitag in Nürnberg, 1934
After modern photography took hold in the late 1920s, basic compositional elements came to be firmly associated with positive meaning and advertising appeal. The Nazi state adopted and instrumentalized these design principles, for example the compositional device of rows. Paul Wolff employed it in his photo of representatives of the Reich Labour Service, which organized the half-year labour service required by law. The figures are arranged along a vanishing line such that the individual—quite in keeping with Nazi ideology—disappears in the masses. He or she was important only as a cog in a wheel.