

Press Release

HKW

Haus der Kulturen der Welt



Gemäldegalerie

Staatliche Museen zu Berlin

Haus der Kulturen der Welt

Aby Warburg: Bilderatlas Mnemosyne – The Original

Curated by Roberto Ohrt and Axel Heil, in collaboration with the Warburg Institute

Exhibition

NEW: Sep 4 – Nov 30, 2020

Press Conference: Thursday, Sep 3, 2020, 5 pm – Accreditation mandatory until Sep 2, 2020 [here](#)

Kulturforum, Gemäldegalerie

Between Cosmos and Pathos. Berlin Works from Aby Warburg's Mnemosyne Atlas

Curated by Neville Rowley and Jörg Völlnagel

Exhibition

NEW: Aug 8 – Nov 1, 2020

Errata

Exhibition at HKW

Ariella Aïsha Azoulay, New Red Order and others, organized by Anselm Franke

NEW: Sep 11 – Oct 18, 2020

Berlin, July 28, 2020

Aby Warburg: Bilderatlas Mnemosyne - the Original, curated by Roberto Ohrt and Axel Heil in collaboration with the Warburg Institute, is on view at HKW from September 4 – November 30, 2020. The accompanying exhibition at the Gemäldegalerie *Between Cosmos and Pathos. Berlin Works from Aby Warburg's Mnemosyne Atlas* runs from August 8 – November 1, 2020. In parallel, HKW shows *Errata*, with work by Ariella Aïsha Azoulay, New Red Order and others.

In the 1920s, the scholar of art and culture Aby Warburg (1866-1929) created his **Bilderatlas Mnemosyne** tracing recurring visual themes, gestures and patterns across time, from antiquity to the Renaissance and beyond to contemporary culture. At HKW all 63 panels of the **Atlas** will be reconstituted for the first time from Warburg's original, multi-colored images.

Parallel to the exhibition at HKW, the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin will show in the Gemäldegalerie, Kulturforum, works of art from prehistory and early history to modern times, related pictorial sources Warburg used as the basis for his encyclopedic picture collection. Warburg's research repeatedly reveals the instability of the lines drawn by European civilization narratives. Interventions by contemporary artists and researchers in HKW's lobby demonstrate how colonial notions of history reach into the present and what aesthetic and ritual means can be used to address them.

Press Contact: Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Anne Maier, John-Foster-Dulles-Allee 10, 10557 Berlin, Fon +49 30 397 87-153, Fax +49 30 3948679, presse@hkw.de, www.hkw.de

Press Contact: Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Elisabeth Pannrucker, Stauffenbergstraße 41, 10785 Berlin Fon: +49 30 266 42 3401; presse@smb.spk-berlin.de, www.smb.museum

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Aby Warburg studied the interplay of images from different periods and cultural contexts. He designed the *Mnemosyne Atlas* to provide a pictorial representation of the influences of the ancient world in the Renaissance and beyond. The *Atlas* consisted of large black panels on which he placed photographic reproductions of artworks from the Middle East, European antiquity and the Renaissance, alongside contemporary newspaper clippings and advertisements. In the years leading to his death in 1929, Warburg and his closest colleagues Gertrud Bing and Fritz Saxl experimented with the form and function of the *Bilderatlas*. Their goal was to present a publication designed for discussion among experts as well as the broader public. During the course of its creation, the *Atlas* developed into an instrument of cognition.

Warburg's method set new standards: it consisted in rearranging canonized images and looking at them across epochs. His project traversed the boundaries between art history, philosophy and anthropology and was fundamental for the modern disciplines of visual and media studies. Today, his use of visual memory provides inspiration and alternative routes through a reality dominated by visual media.

The exhibition at HKW restores the last documented version of the 1929 Atlas almost completely with the original images. In collaboration with the Warburg Institute, the curators Roberto Ohrt and Axel Heil have located most of the originals, some partly in color, 971 images from the 400,000 individual objects in the Institute's Photographic Collection to show all 63 panels of Warburg's unfinished magnum opus for the first time since his death. In addition, 20 unpublished large-scale photographs of panels that were previously only accessible in the Warburg Institute archives will be shown: Most of them made in autumn of 1928, they originated from the previous versions of the Atlas and are presented as large prints of the original black and white negatives.

A [folio volume](#) gathers the 63 plates of Warburg's Atlas – newly photographed from the original, multi-colored images and the 20 panels from the previous versions in black and white along with essays by Axel Heil, Roberto Ohrt, Bernd Scherer, Bill Sherman and Claudia Wedepohl. The captions have been updated and supplemented by the authors Roberto Ohrt, Axel Heil and the Mnemosyne research group since 2012 and show the state of research as of February 2020. A second volume with extensive commentaries by the curators will be published in spring 2021. Both published by Hatje Cantz.

The [companion guide](#) to the exhibition of the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin at the Gemäldegalerie has been published by Deutscher Kunstverlag.

Aby Warburg: Bilderatlas Mnemosyne - The Original, part of The New Alphabet (2019-2021) is supported by the State Minister for Culture and the Media due to a ruling of the German Bundestag.

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Fon: +49 30 266 42 3401; presse@smb.spk-berlin.de, www.smb.museum