

DAS MINSK

KUNSTHAUS IN POTSDAM

PRESS RELEASE

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Exhibition Preview

ANNEMIRL BAUER. A RUPTURE IN THE WORLD

September 5, 2026 – February 7, 2027

From September 5, 2026, DAS MINSK Kunsthaus in Potsdam will present a comprehensive retrospective dedicated to the artistic work of Annemirl Bauer (b. 1939 in Jena, d. 1989 in East Berlin). The exhibition presents Annemirl Bauer as a critical and independent voice from East Germany, and an artist who was long denied art historical recognition.

Spanning over three decades of her artistic career—from the late 1950s to her early death in 1989—approximately 150 paintings, drawings, collages, and objects from this exceptional oeuvre will be shown. Spanning four chapters, this thematically organized retrospective explores Annemirl Bauer's works, which address gender roles and gender relations within patriarchal power structures, self-empowerment, human rights, environmental destruction, and state oppression.

The titles of the exhibition chapters are inspired by words from the artist's own works and papers. Annemirl Bauer recorded both personal and political events like diary entries, incessantly documenting what she saw and what occupied her. Annemirl Bauer's works are therefore testaments to her self-understanding as a painter and uncompromising observer, who continuously campaigned for social justice and rebelled against the repressions of SED politics.

Annemirl Bauer was denied a large-scale institutional presentation during her lifetime. It is to the credit of her daughter Amrei Bauer, the estate's administrator and founder and curator of the Annemirl Bauer Haus in Brandenburg, that her body of work has been largely preserved and kept together as a cohesive collection. With this exhibition, a large number of works can be made accessible to a broader public, not least through the comprehensive research and restoration work undertaken by DAS MINSK.

The exhibition's curator Marie Gerbaulet emphasizes the incisiveness and relevance of Annemirl Bauer's work:

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"To look at life through the filter of Annemirl Bauer's image worlds is challenging, moving, and sometimes even painful—because her works are honest, complex, authentic, uncomfortable and as urgent as ever. Her courage in publicly questioning political decisions led to state repression, which is why her artistic work has scarcely received public attention for a long time.

Yet through her fearlessness and sheer painterly power, Annemirl Bauer created an independent and autonomous body of work that enabled her to live freely amidst the contradictions and divisions surrounding her and to act in an informed and resistant manner. Her perception and reflection of the era's great ruptures and challenges in everyday life and in interpersonal encounters resonates with our experience of the present day."

Interpersonal landscapes

The first chapter of the exhibition is dedicated to one of the main themes of Annemirl Bauer's artistic work: the question of what it means to be human. This is particularly reflected in her portraits and her mother-child motifs, as well as images of her relationships with others and herself. Beyond this, it addresses Bauer's identity as a woman *and* mother, motherhood, and Bauer's discovery of herself in these roles. These works express existential feelings such as loss, profound connection, dependency, vulnerability, closeness, boundary-setting, and separation from the maternal bond.

Women, if we do nothing today, tomorrow we'll live like the day before yesterday

The second chapter centers womanhood, framing the question of *herstory*. The works on view offer feminist counter-narratives to the hegemony of male-dominated historiography and art history. They focus on Bauer's experiences and those of other women with the aim of developing an alternative to the established, male-dominated historical narrative—one that moves toward a visual history free from the male gaze. These works are visual commentaries on violent fantasies that spring for the most part from the minds of men, and on structural and state violence against women, while also making visible the ongoing quest for an identity worth living within patriarchal or misogynistic power structures.

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I will not remain silent

From the 1980s onward, Annemirl Bauer's works documented the visible and invisible power structures of SED politics that increasingly inscribed themselves into her life and the lives of all GDR citizens. As a sensitive observer and victim of political repression by the Ministry for State Security (MfS or *Stasi*), Annemirl Bauer's works developed into a form of artistic resistance. In numerous works using image and text, she criticized the failure of the social utopia of existing socialism, the danger of disinformation and disenfranchisement of citizens, environmental pollution, the erection of the Berlin Wall and the sense of imprisonment it brought about, being deprived of freedom, and a palpable sense of confinement.

I want to feel the globe myself

The fourth and final chapter of the exhibition is dedicated to the theme of travel, which had fascinated Annemirl Bauer since her childhood. In 1987/88, she took one final trip before her premature death, illegally, using a travel permit from West Berlin to the Canary Islands in Spain, which resulted in numerous small-scale drawings. A number of the artist's travel collages can also be seen in the exhibition. Her travels nurtured her political acuity and allowed her to discover new pictorial themes and techniques and to immediately process what she had seen and experienced. She remained a critical observer who didn't limit herself to striking landscapes or urban spaces, but also thematized social injustices: motifs like the garbage heaps of economic prosperity, urban landscapes shaped by skyscrapers, and the precarious position of women appear as visual distillations of her critique of social and political relations in societies shaped by patriarchy. However, Annemirl Bauer's desire to travel was largely thwarted by the SED's restrictive border policies.

The Exhibition Catalog

The catalog *Annemirl Bauer: A Rupture in the World*, which traces Annemirl Bauer's multifaceted artistic cosmos, is published by DISTANZ to accompany the exhibition. Along with a contemporary art-historical contextualization by Kerstin Schankweiler, the publication includes a literary essay on the artist's life by the author Carolin Würfel. A conversation with Amrei Bauer, the estate's administrator as well as founder and curator of the Annemirl Bauer Haus in Brandenburg, and an essay by the author, psychologist, and close friend of the artist, Doris Paschiller, offer poignant perspectives on the biographical, painterly, social, and political aspects in Annemirl Bauer's work as well as personal experiences and memories of the artist.

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The exhibition is curated by Marie Gerbaulet with Luisa Bachmann as Curatorial Assistant. It is developed in close collaboration with Amrei Bauer, estate administrator and founder and curator of the Annemirl Bauer Haus in Brandenburg.

Exhibition in the Cabinet at DAS MINSK

In the cabinet space, parallel to the exhibition *Annemirl Bauer: A Rupture in the World*, DAS MINSK will present the exhibition *The Ceramic Workshop of Wilfriede Maaß*, which assembles ceramic objects and paintings to trace the history of Wilfriede Maaß's workshop in East Berlin. In the 1980s and 1990s, the ceramic workshop at Schönfließer Straße 21—which later also became a gallery—was an important free space for non-conforming art in the GDR.

The exhibition is curated by Daniel Milnes.

About Annemirl Bauer

Annemirl Bauer was born on April 10, 1939 in Jena, as the second child of the painter Tina Bauer-Pezellen—who was persecuted by the National Socialist regime as “degenerate”—and Siegbert Bauer, a Bauhaus photographer and lecturer who died in the Second World War. Annemirl Bauer grew up in Weimar.

After training as a toy designer in Sonneberg (1955–58) and taking foundation studies in painting and graphic art, she studied architectural art at the Hochschule für bildende und angewandte Kunst in Berlin-Weissensee from 1962 to 1965. After receiving her degree, Annemirl Bauer worked as a freelance painter in a storefront space in Prenzlauer Berg that she used as an apartment and studio, and was accepted into the Association of Visual Artists of the GDR (VBK). Shortly thereafter, the Ministry for State Security (MfS) tried to recruit the artist as an “Unofficial Collaborator” (IM)—which she turned down.

In 1969, her daughter Amrei was born and went on to become a frequent motif in her works.

In the years that followed, she created several commissioned works—architecture-based murals for public buildings in Berlin and Thuringia—including *Fliegendes Pferd* [Flying Horse] (1981/82), which was the only commissioned work to remain visible after German reunification and is now on permanent loan to Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, and the “Berlin Triptych” *Der Himmel über Berlin ist unteilbar* [The Sky Over Berlin Is Indivisible] (1980), which was later rejected by the X. Kunstausstellung der

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DDR in Dresden and now hangs on permanent loan in the Deutscher Bundestag (Jakob-Kaiser-Haus).

In 1976, Annemirl Bauer purchased a former parsonage in Brandenburg and divided her time between Brandenburg and Berlin.

After drafting a so-called public petition—among other things, denouncing the law introducing military service for women and travel restrictions in the GDR—Annemirl Bauer was expelled from the VBK in 1984, which was tantamount to a ban on practicing her profession. Under the code name “Zelle”, the Stasi carried out “Zersetzungsmaßnahmen”, systematic subversion measures, against her: interrogations, break-ins, and tax reprisals. Nevertheless, she refused an offer to leave the country. In 1986, with the support of artist friends, she was rehabilitated and readmitted to the VBK.

During her lifetime, Annemirl Bauer undertook study trips in different foreign socialist countries and occasional trips to Western Europe. However, the SED’s restrictive border policies largely restricted her desire to travel. Annemirl Bauer consistently advocated for the freedom of travel for citizens of the GDR.

In August 1989, Annemirl Bauer died of cancer in Berlin—several weeks before the fall of the wall. Since then, her daughter Amrei Bauer has administered her artistic estate and curated the presentations of the Annemirl Bauer Haus in Brandenburg. Annemirl Bauer’s work can additionally be found in public collections like the Berlinische Galerie, the Brandenburgisches Landesmuseum für moderne Kunst, the Kunstsammlung der Berliner Volksbank, and the Kunstsammlung des Deutschen Bundestages. The Annemirl-Bauer-Platz at Berlin Ostkreuz has carried her name since 2010.

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We would be happy to assist you if you need further information or images.

FURTHER INFORMATION

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OPENING HOURS
Daily except Tuesdays
Wednesday to Monday 10 am – 7 pm

ADMISSION
10 Euros, 8 Euros concession

Combined ticket Museum Barberini and DAS MINSK
20 Euros, 12 Euros concession

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