

## PRESS RELEASE



### Brilliant Dilettantes

Exhibition presents German subculture in the 80's

**September 8 - October 28, 2017**

[www.goethe.de/washington](http://www.goethe.de/washington)

Images available on [Dropbox](#).

(Washington, DC, September 5, 2017) - "Geniale Dilletanten" was the deliberately misspelled title of a concert that took place at Berlin's Tempodrom in 1981. But over the years since then, it has come to represent an artistic scene in West and East Germany during the mid-1980's, an era of upheaval in which people in all the arts experimented with new ways of expression. Rather than persisting with the cause for world revolution, energies were channeled into achieving alternative ways of life.



Above: Alex Hacke (alias Alexander von Borsig) plays with Kiddy Citny (from the Band Sprung aus den Wolken) for a small audience, Risiko, West Berlin, 1981. © Anno Dittmer

Below: Einstürzende Neubauten, SO36, Berlin, 1982  
© Anno Dittmer



instruments they built themselves. *Dada* and *Fluxus* were revitalized, xeroxed fanzines were circulated, all around the country audiocassette labels shot up out of nowhere, and art galleries were invaded by painters of the *Junge Wilden* (Young Wild Ones) movement.

The intense cultural activity of this period developed particularly in and around art schools, and was marked by cross-genre experimentation and the use of new electronic equipment; musical craftsmanship was frequently spurned. The emergence of new record labels, magazines, galleries and clubs, as well as the plethora of independently produced records, tapes and concerts, illustrate the growth of self-organization and the do-it-yourself spirit of this period. By adopting German rather than English as the language for song lyrics and band names, the protagonists of this new scene set themselves apart from the mainstream, giving credence to the movement's claim to be representing a radical new departure. Its vociferous protest and targeted provocation also brought Germany's alternative artistic scene international acclaim and recognition.

Collectives such as *F.S.K.* and *Die Tödliche Doris* experimented with music, film and language. The *Einstürzende Neubauten* generated as yet unheard-of levels of tumultuous noise with

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# GOETHE INSTITUT

Sprache. Kultur. Deutschland.

What by the mid-eighties began to peter out into the commercialized products of the *Neue Deutsche Welle* (New German Wave) and finally dried up with Reunification was an unprecedented artistic fervency that broke new ground not only in music and the visual arts, but also in design, fashion, literature and film. Anything that transgressed genres and categories, that disrupted or challenged established artistic boundaries - including political divisions between East and West - became an object of intense artistic exploration, enhanced by the number of foreign artists living in Berlin.

This multimedia exhibition will host a collection of videos, photos, posters, audio samples, texts and objects that provide an overview of the subculture in the 1980's. Some photographs are from the artists' private collections, and are being shown in public for the first time. The selection of bands represents the different cities and regions that played an important role in German subculture of the 80's.

The following bands are presented:

*Einstürzende Neubauten* (Berlin)

*Die Tödliche Doris* (Berlin)

*Ornament & Verbrechen* (East Berlin)

*Der Plan* (Düsseldorf)

*Deutsch Amerikanische Freundschaft - DAF* (Düsseldorf)

*Palais Schaumburg* (Hamburg)

*F.S.K. Freiwillige Selbstkontrolle* (Munich)

More: [www.goethe.de/dc/dilletantes](http://www.goethe.de/dc/dilletantes)

**Opening with a concert featuring local punk bands Foul Swoops and Br'er as part of the Goethe-Institut's annual Sommerfest on Friday, September 8, 3 - 9 pm.**

Organized in cooperation with the DC Punk Archive at the Library Express branch of the DC Public Library. More: [www.goethe.de/dc/sommerfest](http://www.goethe.de/dc/sommerfest)

Hours:

Monday - Thursday: 10 am - 6:30 pm

Friday: 10 am - 3:30 pm

**About the Goethe-Institut:**

Mutual understanding among nations by promoting international cultural dialogue: this is the ambitious mission of the Goethe-Institut. On behalf of the Federal Republic of Germany, cultural institutes around the world provide cultural programs, language courses, support to educators, and up-to-date information on Germany in the context of Europe.

Founded in 1990, Goethe-Institut Washington, DC is a center for German culture and language. From its location downtown, the Goethe-Institut Washington reaches out to both individuals and organizations in the community, bridging the past, present, and future with a variety of high-quality events.

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