



PRESS RELEASE

Light and Dark: Photographs from Germany by Barbara Klemm

Exhibitions Open January 14 at Goethe-Institut and Leica Store Gallery DC

January 14 - February 27, 2015

**Goethe-Institut Washington
812 7th St. NW
Washington, DC 20001**

Download images from Dropbox [here](#).

www.goethe.de/washington

(Washington, DC, December 17, 2014) – Barbara Klemm, one of Germany’s most distinguished women photographers, comes to Washington to open an exhibition of her works, [Light and Dark: Photographs from Germany](#), on Wednesday, January 14, at the Goethe-Institut and Leica Store Gallery DC. The exhibition will be on display through February 27, 2015.

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Above: Fraternal Kiss between Leonid Brezhnev and Erich Honecker, East Berlin, 1979;
Below: Helmut Kohl in Dresden, 1989
© Barbara Klemm

Spanning forty years, Barbara Klemm’s works bear witness to Germany’s recent history, and to a country that was divided for decades. Many of her pictures have become “icons of contemporary,” shaping the cultural memory of several generations. She has created a body of photographs which combine the documentary and the artistic in a manner seldom encountered in German press photography. She adds her own perspective to the documentary genre, following artistic principles of composition.



Although the majority of these photos were commissioned for the daily newspaper *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, they represent far more than coverage of the day’s events. Barbara Klemm first joined the newspaper in 1959, working in the photo lab and producing photographic plates, before becoming a photographer on the editorial board for art, culture and politics in 1970.

Her commissioned work for the newspaper took her to many of the most important events and places in the Federal Republic of Germany, the German Democratic Republic and numerous other countries.

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Photos of East and West Germany before and after unification are clearly the focus of this exhibition. It includes pictures from Germany from every sphere of society: from politics, culture and the economy, photos that capture unique and often tense moments as well as plain everyday life, photos of demonstrations, protests and of immigrants, of cultural events, mass gatherings and urban spaces. And again and again Barbara Klemm portrays people in those rare moments of being that make life so special.

Barbara Klemm's photographs stand for concrete social reality. Her sure sense of the true essence of an event allows her to capture moments that tell stories far beyond what the pictures seem to show at first glance. These photos are 'action in condensed form', as Klemm puts it, and thus also a condensed image of history.

Her photos of the fall of the Berlin Wall are a dramatic climax to her own narrative of history, and in retrospect, her earlier photos from both sides of the Wall seem to be tracing the two Germanys on their path towards reunification, while her later photos closely observe the consequences of the new order.

Opening receptions with photographer Barbara Klemm on Wednesday, January 14:
6 - 7 pm: Opening at Leica Store Gallery DC (977 F St. NW) of a selection of portraits depicting iconic figures and everyday people. Accompanied by a book signing with Barbara Klemm. RSVP to exhibition@leica-store-dc.com
7 - 8:30 pm: Opening at the Goethe-Institut of 84 iconic documentary photographs capturing forty years of cultural, social, and political history in Germany. RSVP at www.goetheinstitutwashington.eventbrite.com

Made possible with support from ifa (Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen) and Friends of the Goethe-Institut. In cooperation with Leica Store Gallery DC.

A complementary exhibition of photographs by Barbara Klemm, *Photographs from Tbilisi in 1991*, depicting the Georgian capital after the fall of the USSR in a unique light, opens on Monday, January 12, following the first film in the series [Discovering Georgian Cinema](#), a collaboration with the National Gallery of Art.

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 in the lively 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.

The Goethe-Institut's FotoGalerie, conceptualized to showcase the work of young German photographers, brings German photography, long at the forefront of contemporary art, to Washington.

Gallery Hours: Monday to Thursday 9 to 5; Friday 9 to 3.