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PRESS RELEASE

Hamburger Bahnhof – Nationalgalerie der Gegenwart

Invalidenstraße 50, 10557 Berlin

Tue, Wed, Fri 10 am – 6 pm; Thu 10 am – 8 pm; Sat + Sun 11 am – 6 pm

Giulia Andreani. Sabotage

27 February 2026 – 13 September 2026

A special exhibition of Nationalgalerie – Staatliche Museen zu Berlin

Press preview: Wednesday, 25 February 2026, 11 am

Opening: Thursday, 26 February 2026, 7 pm

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Giulia Andreani opens the anniversary programme of Hamburger Bahnhof – Nationalgalerie der Gegenwart presenting paintings that expose fractures within official narratives. Andreani's artistic practice of "painting with photographs" thrives on the tension between authoritarian figures and forgotten characters of the past. The starting point for her figurative, monochromatic paintings are family albums or archives. Andreani's anniversary contribution reinterprets historical collections through a contemporary lens: 36 works by the artist are shown alongside exhibits from the Antikensammlung, the Kunstgewerbemuseum, the Museum Europäischer Kulturen, and the Kupferstichkabinett. Two paintings inspired by ancient objects are exhibited as an intervention at Altes Museum.

Giulia Andreani (b. 1985, Venice, Italy) explores the 20th century's shifting regimes of power. The protagonists of her paintings are mostly women who do not appear in history books: factory workers, nurses, female fire-fighters, railway workers, or single mothers, as well as marginalized female artists. The artist's first institutional solo exhibition in Germany brings together 32 paintings and four sculptures at Hamburger Bahnhof – Nationalgalerie der Gegenwart. Andreani's paintings are preceded by research in libraries, institutional collections, family albums and other archives. Like the historical Dadaist precursors around Hannah Höch, she first creates photomontages. However, she then transfers these to the canvas so that the underlying montage becomes invisible. Andreani paints exclusively in Payne's Grey. The London-based watercolourist William Payne patented the grey tone at the end of the 18th century. Payne's Grey recalls the look of early photographs and evokes associations with the past and memory.

"Paint Unbidden (Palimpsest)" (2025) combines archival images into collage-like narratives that connect figures across time and place. At the centre stands the Italian anarchist writer and publisher Leda Rafanelli (1880–1971). The American artist Georgia O'Keeffe (1887–1986) appears in old age preparing herbs. The German artist Sigmar Polke (1941–2010) searches for hallucinogenic mushrooms, while the British suffragette Edith Garrud (1872–1971) trains in the Japanese martial art of jujitsu. Like a palimpsest—a manuscript overwritten several times—the painting unites

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traces of multiple histories. "The Frilly Collars" (2025), in turn, is based on a photograph from the artist's family album, taken around 1930 in Chioggia, near Venice. It depicts Andreani's grandmother and her younger sister as children. The blurred faces recall the long exposure times of early photographic processes, while the frilly collars are rendered with precision and rigidity. "The Frilly Collars" links personal family history to Venice's female-dominated lacemaking tradition. "Der Zauberberg (Montdevergues)" (2025) refers to the 1924 novel by German author Thomas Mann (1875–1955) and recounts the story of the French sculptor Camille Claudel (1864–1943).

Andreani's contribution to the museum's 30th anniversary reframes historical collections from antiquity to the 20th century through contemporary perspectives: visitors experience Andreani's monochrome everyday scenes and anonymous portraits of children, cats, or working women surrounded by everyday objects from the late 19th century, such as an industrial sewing machine from the Museum Europäischer Kulturen or an armchair with a side table from the Kunstgewerbemuseum. Andreani's sculpture "Cianophilia" (2025), made of Murano glass, is exhibited in a 1970s incubator from Berliner Medizinhistorisches Museum der Charité. This is complemented by prints by Käthe Kollwitz (1867–1945) or early 20th-century watercolours by Hannah Höch (1889–1978) from Kupferstichkabinett, as well as a bust of the ancient Roman goddess Juno Sospita (500–480 BCE) from Berliner Antikensammlung.

The exhibition architecture, in its material semi-transparency, refers to Sigmar Polke's exhibition "Die drei Lügen der Malerei" at Hamburger Bahnhof, which was shown in 1997 shortly after the former station building opened as a museum for contemporary art. Polke's print "Freundinnen I" (1967) from Kupferstichkabinett is a further reference to this connection. On the occasion of Hamburger Bahnhof's anniversary, the exhibition "Sabotage" addresses questions of memory and historiography. Andreani questions political, military, or religious power and the power of images that construct authorities. She recalls Polke's claim that paintings lie and that painting's claim to illusion, representation, and originality must be recast. Institutions must also ask what is concealed behind their own continuity and which histories remain untold. Only then can they recognize fractures and understand the silence of the past as part of their own present.

The paintings "Genitae Manae" (2022) and "Le songe d'Ulysse" (2022), inspired by ancient objects, are presented as an intervention in the Alte Museum on Museum Island.

The exhibition is part of the **30 Years Hamburger Bahnhof** anniversary programme. In 2026, Hamburger Bahnhof celebrates its 30th anniversary with a programme that spans from the history of the site to the future: eight special exhibitions, a new collection presentation, as well as performances and concerts, carry the museum far into the urban space. The highlight is the anniversary weekend from 13–15 November, featuring an

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Staatliche Museen zu Berlin
Preußischer Kulturbesitz

30 Years
**Hamburger
Bahnhof**

international conference on the future of contemporary collection museums, with the building open continuously for 30 hours.

The exhibition is curated by Sam Bardaouil and Till Fellrath, Directors of Hamburger Bahnhof – Nationalgalerie der Gegenwart, and Emily Finkelstein, Researcher at Hamburger Bahnhof – Nationalgalerie der Gegenwart.

Accompanying the exhibition is the 17th edition of the Hamburger Bahnhof catalogue series, published by Silvana Editoriale Milano.

The exhibition is made possible by the Hamburger Bahnhof International Companions e.V.

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