



Berlin, 2 February 2026

EXHIBITION PREVIEW

Neue Nationalgalerie

Potsdamer Straße 50, 10785 Berlin

Tue – Wed 10 am – 6 pm, Thu 10 am – 8 pm, Fri – Sun 10 am – 6 pm

Ruin and Rush. Berlin 1910–1930

25 April 2026 – 3 January 2027

A special exhibition of the Neue Nationalgalerie – Stiftung Preußischer Kulturbesitz

Press preview: Friday, 24 April 2026, 11 am

Opening: Friday, 24 April 2026, 7 pm

NEUE NATIONALGALERIE

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With the exhibition *Ruin and Rush*, the Neue Nationalgalerie focuses on selected works from its outstanding collection of Classical Modernism that address the Berlin of the 1910s and 1920s. These decades – marked by the First World War and the Weimar Republic – constantly oscillated between opposites: Excess and poverty, emancipation and extremism went hand in hand in the rapidly growing, cosmopolitan metropolis. With around 45 works representing various stylistic directions, the exhibition brings to life the ambivalence of glamour and misery, rise and fall in Berlin between 1910 and 1930.

At the beginning of the 20th century, in the wake of industrialization, Berlin developed into not only an economic center but, above all, a political and cultural hub. With the establishment of “Greater Berlin” in 1920, the population jumped to around 4 million people, making Berlin the second largest city in the world in terms of area after London. Numerous innovations in construction and transportation were accompanied by social upheavals such as democratization and women's emancipation. However, the trauma of the First World War and the rise of National Socialism overshadowed the so-called “Golden Twenties”. The metropolis, already mythologized by contemporary voices as “Babylon”, was in turmoil on many levels: commercial abundance and excess stood in stark contrast to growing poverty and unemployment.

Located on the collection level of the Neue Nationalgalerie, the exhibition traces Berlin's polarized metropolitan life between 1910 and 1930 across three sections. After initially focusing on the dynamism of the growing metropolis in terms of architecture, traffic, and lavish nightlife, the second section is dedicated to the social abysses that defined the lives of the working class. The final chapter of the exhibition focuses on urban women, reflecting on their desire for freedom, emancipation and queer life, as well as prostitution. The polyphony of the interwar period in Berlin is fanned out through works of various styles, including Expressionism, Dadaism, and New Objectivity (Neue Sachlichkeit).

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All of the approximately 45 works on display have an explicit connection to the city of Berlin, either through their motifs or the artists' biographical ties to the city. The exhibition includes key works from the collection of the Neue Nationalgalerie such as Ernst Ludwig Kirchner's *Potsdamer Platz* (1914), George Grosz's *Grauer Tag* (*Gray Day*, 1921) and Lotte Laserstein's *Abend über Potsdam* (*Evening over Potsdam*, 1930). A special loan complements the exhibition as a standout key work of the 1920s: Otto Dix's *Bildnis der Tänzerin Anita Berber* (*Portrait of the Dancer Anita Berber*, 1925) from the Landesbank Baden-Württemberg collection at the Kunstmuseum Stuttgart.

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The collection's focus on painting and sculpture is enriched by graphic works and objects from neighboring institutions at Berlin's Kulturforum, the Museum of Prints and Drawings (Kupferstichkabinett), the Art Library (Kunstabibliothek) and the Museum of Decorative Arts (Kunstgewerbemuseum). Furthermore, excerpts from Fritz Lang's silent film classic *Metropolis* (1927) and Walther Ruttmann's experimental documentary *Berlin – Die Sinfonie der Großstadt* (*Berlin – Symphony of a Metropolis*, 1927) will be shown. In each section, in addition to in-depth texts, audio stations will feature thematically congenial poems by protagonists of the time, including Anita Berber, Mascha Kaléko and Erich Kästner.

Featured Artists: Otto Dix, Heinrich Ehmsen, Paul Fuhrmann, George Grosz, Hans Grundig, Karl Hofer, Hannah Höch, Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, Oskar Kokoschka, Georg Kolbe, Käthe Kollwitz, Will Lammert, Lotte Laserstein, Tamara de Lempicka, Jeanne Mammen, Carlo Mense, Otto Nagel, Oskar Nerlinger, Ernest Neuschul, Renée Sintenis, Jakob Steinhart, Georg Tappert, Lesser Ury and Gustav Wunderwald.

The exhibition is accompanied by a diverse educational program featuring guided tours and workshops for families, students and adults, as well as an event program including concerts and lectures.

Ruin and Rush. Berlin 1910–1930 is curated by Uta Caspary and Irina Hiebert Grun, curators at the Neue Nationalgalerie. Curatorial assistant: Noor van Rooijen.