

...verändern kann man eigentlich wenig
(...*there is actually very little one can change*)

May 23 – July 5, 2026

Wolf D. Harhammer created an extensive photographic body of work during the 1970s and 1980s, which, however, received little attention in its own time. It was only after his 80th birthday that some of his photographs were “rediscovered” and, in 2024, presented in an exhibition at the Museum Folkwang in Essen in the context of photographic positions from the last one hundred years. Further institutional recognition followed, yet large parts of Harhammer’s archive remain unexplored to this day.

From May to July, Kunstbunker e.V. presents parts of an early series from 1973 comprising more than one hundred photographs taken at the Stuttgart State Academy of Art and Design. Alongside producing these photographs, Harhammer conducted a small sociological study which, until a few years ago, might have been described as a form of so-called institutional critique. He distributed questionnaires among his fellow students, asking about their family backgrounds, their goals in life, the reasons for their decision to study art, and similar topics. This way of working artistically was shaped by the politically motivated questioning of bourgeois institutions and convictions, an approach that today appears deeply rooted in its specific historical context. Transcripts of all surviving completed questionnaires are also presented as part of the exhibition.

The resulting documentation of the various motivations (and illusions) underlying the decision to pursue a particular course of study can be viewed from different perspectives. On the one hand, it raises the question—still rarely addressed—of family background and class affiliation; the dream of immersing oneself in “free art” is something one must first be able to afford, both materially and symbolically, and this is truer today than ever before. On the other hand, such an investigation also represents an attempt to translate the subjective motivations and fantasies that led individuals to choose “art”—motivations that are only partially, if at all, accessible to them—into the registers of bureaucracy and statistics, however futile such an undertaking may appear from a psychoanalytic perspective. Looking back, it also prompts broader questions concerning social reproduction and the persistence of social constellations that have long been recognized as dysfunctional. An accompanying booklet featuring texts on the individual contributions seeks to encourage a deeper engagement with these questions.

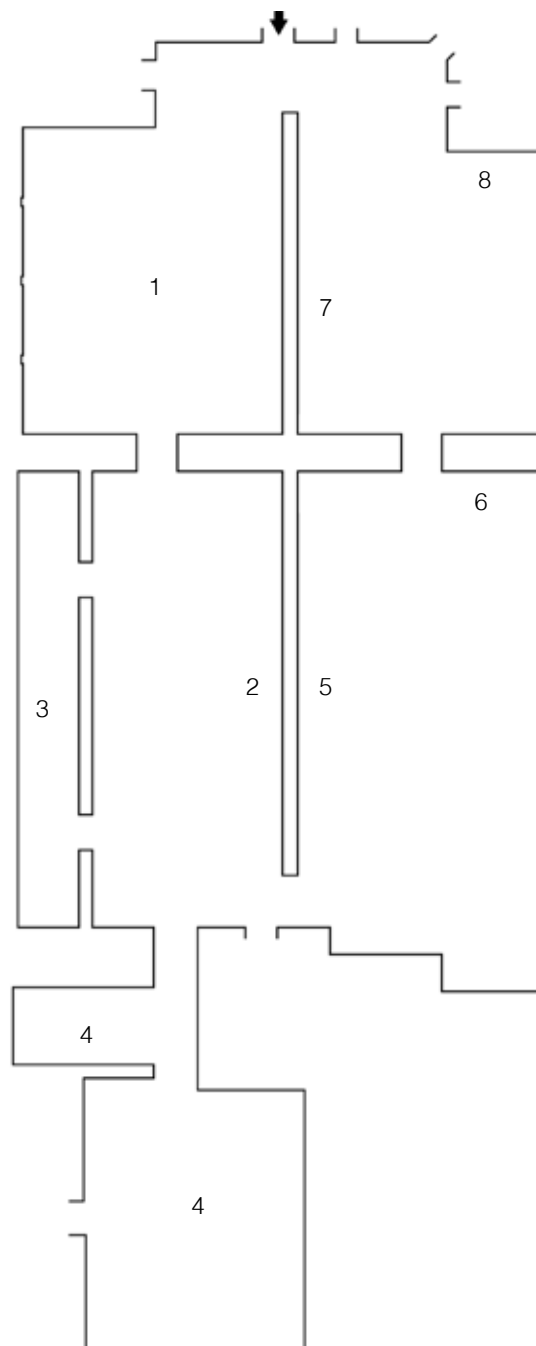
Within the exhibition, the works described above are accompanied by selections from three additional photographic series by Harhammer, each focusing on sociocultural phenomena of their time. Also on view is Renate Härtl’s 1980 filmic analysis of the professional prospects of graduates of art schools, from which the exhibition takes its title, as well as contributions by Leonie Nagel and Julius Jurkiewitsch. These works address similar questions concerning the social and economic status of artistic labour and the promises and frustrations associated with studying art from a contemporary perspective. The exhibition was curated in collaboration with the artist Anna Holtz, Wolf Harhammer’s daughter, whose involvement made this project possible in the first place.

The title of the exhibition—...there is actually very little one can change—initially sounds strikingly negative when considered in relation to the context described here. At the same time, however, it also implies that change is not entirely impossible. A realistic description of existing conditions can contribute not only to making the available room for manoeuvre more effectively usable, but also, in the long term, to expanding it.

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- 1 Leonie Nagel
HOBBYS, 2026
Laserprint on paper, tape, 160 × 172.2 cm,
40 × 344.4 cm, 140 × 258.3 cm
- 2 Wolf D. Harhammer
Akademie der Bildenden Künste Stuttgart, rooms,
1973, 35mm black and white film, digitized
- 3 Wolf D. Harhammer
Survey among students of Akademie der
Bildenden Künste Stuttgart, 1973, questionnaires,
transcripts
- 4 Julius Jurkiewitsch
1978 und 2018, 2026
22 glossy photographic prints from the last of 15 rolls
of 35mm color film (shot on disposable cameras)
during the 2018 field trip to Boston, MA, USA, by the
„Dynamic Acoustic Research“ Interactive Media pro-
ject class from the Academy of Fine Arts Nuremberg,
149 × 102 mm each; Jan Bortfeld: Field trip by the
Jewelry class of the Academy of Fine Arts Nuremberg
to the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, 1978,
Super 8 film, silent, 36:36 min., digitized
- 5 Wolf D. Harhammer
Actors, Staatstheater Stuttgart, 1976, Gelatin silver
prints on Agfa P90 paper, test prints, each about
29.7 × 21 cm
- 6 Wolf D. Harhammer
New York City Dance School, Hertie fashion show,
Königsstraße Stuttgart, late 1970ies, color prints Ko-
dakColor mounted on paper, each 29.7 × 21 cm
- 7 Wolf D. Harhammer
Street photographs, Stuttgart, 1970ies,
Gelatin silver prints on Agfa Brovira paper,
various formats
- 8 Renate Härtl
... verändern kann man eigentlich wenig, 1980
16mm film, color, sound, 63:55 min, digitized



kunstbunker

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ÖFFNUNGSZEITEN

Donnerstag – Samstag, 16-20 Uhr
Sonntag, 14-18 Uhr
und nach Vereinbarung