



**Tchoban Foundation**  
Museum für  
Architekturzeichnung

## Press Release

Berlin, 21 March 2025

### *Plans and Dreams – Drawn in the GDR*

**Tchoban Foundation. Museum for Architectural Drawing**  
Christinenstrasse 18a, 10119 Berlin, Germany

**Exhibition duration: 24 May – 7 September 2025**

**Opening hours: Mon–Fri 2 pm – 7 pm, Sat–Sun 1 pm – 5 pm**

**Admission: 6 €; reduced: 4 €**

**Press tour: 23 May 2025, 6 pm**

**Exhibition opening: 23 May 2025, 7 pm**

The question whether distinctive features marked the drawings and creative process of architects and planners in the GDR may seem obvious, but looking at individual pictures alone is unlikely to lead to new insights. During the decades of specific GDR architecture, up to the mid-1980s, East German planning offices worked with the standard tools used all over the world. As everywhere, talents were unevenly distributed, each design collective having its own particularly gifted “drawing ace” to provide the decisive visualisations of a building idea for important project presentations or competition submissions. So it would be quite possible to illustrate a stylistic history of four decades of GDR architecture with the help of selected drawings from various years and regions.



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A close-up view of the relevant architects, however, reveals another world of images. This one was about dreams, visions, utopian hopes and comforting personal affirmation. Freehand drawing was intensely fostered at the three GDR architecture faculties. More than a few graduates later supplemented, refreshed or counteracted their mandatory professional training with private drawing work. Or simply used chalk, pencil and brush to relax from the stress or all-too-dreary routine of everyday office life. The desire for freely developed creative ideas was lived out in bold competition designs or in drawings, graphics, watercolours, etc. Comparing the drawing activities of GDR architects (which are distinct from the “paper architecture” of the late Soviet Union) with their respective commissioned work should therefore prove particularly interesting.

Drawing as a leisure pursuit is a passion of architects worldwide. The striking contrast between the routine of everyday construction and the “productions driven by desire” of creative designers captured on paper enriches the view of GDR architectural history with a hitherto neglected facet. Some cities publish books or hold exhibitions about their unrealised building projects. This exhibition reveals the contours of a “dreamed architectural history of the GDR”.

The two exhibition floors of the Tchoban Foundation in Berlin offer the opportunity to get to know the subject from both sides: striking drawings created for specific building projects in different phases of GDR construction history are compellingly contrasted with private drawings that often disclose completely different visions and reflections – on one level commissioned works, on the other images of aspiration and imagination!

The presentation of around 140 drawings draws extensively on the rich holdings of the Scientific Collections of the Leibniz Institute for Research on Society and Space (IRS) in Erkner near Berlin, the most important archive for the architectural history of East Germany in the second half of the twentieth century. Drawings from other archives, museums and private collections will also be on display.



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Two curators are responsible for the content of the exhibition: the historian Dr Kai Drewes, Head of the Scientific Collections of the IRS, and the well-known Berlin architecture critic and journalist Wolfgang Kil.

A catalogue will be published that documents all the exhibits and provides illuminating insights into the concrete working-world of architects in the GDR.

**Institutional lenders:**

Scientific Collections, Leibniz Institute for Research on Society and Space (IRS), Erkner

Berlinische Galerie – Museum of Modern Art, Photography and Architecture, Berlin

Leipzig City Archives

Modernist Archive, Bauhaus University (Weimar)

Saxon State Office for the Conservation of Monuments, Dresden

Weimar City Museum

Werkbundarchiv – Museum der Dinge, Berlin

Archive of the Foundation of Architects from Saxony, Dresden

Klassik Stiftung Weimar

Cultural Office of the City of Frankfurt (Oder)

**Leibniz Institute for Research on Society and Space (IRS)**

The IRS, a non-university research institute, studies interactions between social changes and the transformation of spaces, past and present. Its Scientific Collections are a unique, publicly accessible specialised archive for recent East German building and planning history, with a focus on the GDR era. The extensive holdings include documents from the former Institute for Urban Planning and Architecture of the



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Building Academy, the Association of GDR Architects, and around 150 groups of personal papers, primarily from architects and planners across various disciplines.

### **Tchoban Foundation. Museum for Architectural Drawing**

Tchoban Foundation Museum for Architectural Drawing was built in 2013 on the site of the former Pfefferberg brewery. The foundation was established in 2009 by the architect Sergei Tchoban with the aim of promoting the art of architectural drawing. The Museum for Architectural Drawing shows three exhibitions a year, with works from its own collection and loan exhibitions from international partner institutions, including well-known museums such as the Sir John Soane's Museum in London, the Albertina in Vienna, the École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts in Paris and the DAM in Frankfurt am Main.

**The exhibition is organised in cooperation with:**



**Kindly supported by**



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## Images



1. **Herbert Schneider**. Dresden, city centre competition, Old Market, perspective drawing with high-rise building, 1952, pencil on tracing paper, 49 × 40 cm; Landesamt für Denkmalpflege Sachsen, Nachlass H. Schneider, Mappe 16, 69a/4



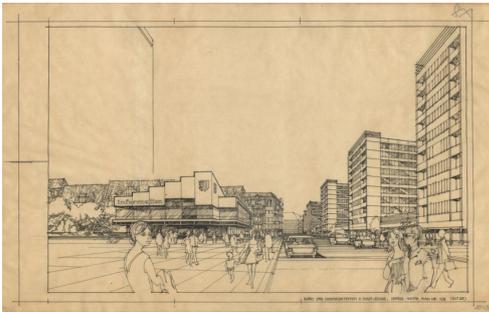
2. **Leopold Wiel**, design team Wiel with Klaus Wever, graphic Angela Waltz. Dresden, Palace of Culture competition, 1960, ink, opaque white on coloured cardboard, 60 × 80 cm; Stiftung Sächsischer Architekten, Stadtarchiv Dresden, 12.10.1 Nachlass Leopold Wiel, Nr. 240, 1960/61



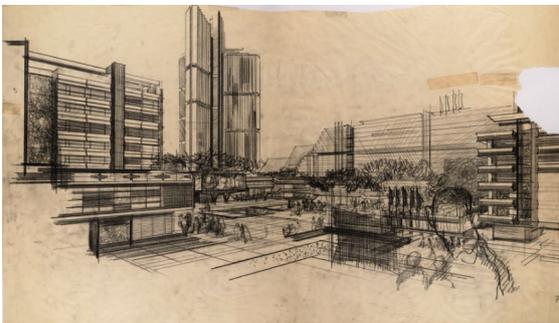
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3. **Heinz Auspurg.** Leipzig, office tower block in Leninstrasse (today: Prager Strasse), 1960s, charcoal on tracing paper, 44,5 × 66,5 cm; Stadtarchiv Leipzig, 0069 BCA Pläne Nr. 4073



4. **Hans-Dietrich Wellner.** Leipzig, Sachsenplatz, 1968, India ink on tracing paper, 35 × 53 cm; Stadtarchiv Leipzig, 0069 BCA Pläne Nr. 3018



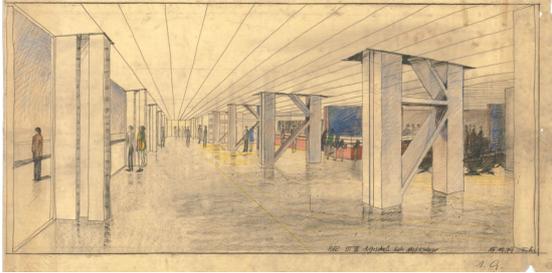
5. **Peter & Ute Baumbach.** Gera, sketch for the city centre competition, 1967/68, Pencil on tracing paper, 56 × 96 cm; IRS, Erkner, C 68



6. **Dieter Bankert.** Berlin, city centre, bird's eye view, 1976, ink and opaque white on tracing paper, 42 × 59 cm; IRS, Erkner, C\_17\_03-40



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7. **Werner Rösler.** Berlin, Palace of the Republic, ground floor foyer, 1974, wax crayon on tracing paper, 80 × 157 cm; IRS, Erkner, C\_17\_03-17



8. **Christian Schädlich.** Quedlinburg, portal at the town hall, 1957, ink, wash on paper, 42,5 × 29 cm; Bauhaus-Universität Weimar, Archiv der Moderne, N/62/65/34



9. **Wolfgang Wähnelt.** Magdeburg, view across the Elbe to Buckau, 1986, ink on paper, 21 × 30 cm © Wolfgang Wähnelt



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10. **Lutz Brandt**. Balcony Reveries 2, 1983, mixed media on cardboard, 34 × 42,2 cm; © VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn 2025



11. **Alfred Pretzsch**. Weimar, Kirms-Krackow House, courtyard view, 1974, pencil, wash on drawing cardboard, 41 × 30 cm; Stadtmuseum Weimar



12. **Michael Kny**. Saxon Babel, 1981, ink on paper, 27,5 × 34 cm; © Michael Kny



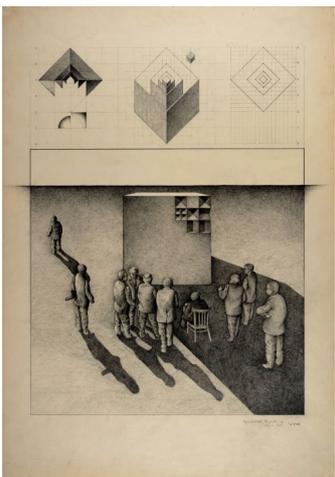
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13. **Hans-Dietrich Wellner.** Querfurt Castle, Princely House, 1986, felt-tip pen and watercolour on drawing cardboard, 32 × 24 cm;  
© Hans-Dietrich Wellner



14. **Rainer Ilg.** Rome, Roman Forum, 1970–1976, ink on drawing paper, 30 × 21 cm;  
© Rainer Ilg



15. **Michael Voll.** Operative Consulting, 1975, pencil on drawing cardboard, 59 × 42 cm;  
© Michael Voll