

## Press Release

### The German travelling exhibition MODERNISM IN UKRAINE

#### will be shown in Kharkiv, Ukraine

Scheduled opening: 6 May 2025

Additional program/discussions: 7 May 2025

The exhibition series *Modernism in Ukraine - Modern Roots and Heritage of Kharkiv and Lviv* is to make a stop in Ukraine over the next few weeks. This transfer was supported by the German Federal Foreign Ministry and other partners. The exhibition venue will be the iconic Derzhprom complex in Kharkiv, a gigantic constructivist building from the late 1920s, which was already considered a potential UNESCO World Heritage Site by experts, but has recently been hit by Russian bombs.

The Berlin exhibition series, shown in cooperation with the local *Yermilov Centre* in the *Kharkiv Media Hub Gallery*, consists of 283 panels that show and explain outstanding modernist buildings in Ukraine.

The exhibition, developed in Berlin, was shown for the first time in 2022 as part of the *Triennial of Modernism* festival. It is the result of cooperation between Ukrainian and Polish photographers and scholars with the curators of the Berlin festival program. It is fitting that the offshoot of a *European Triennial of Modernism (ETOM)* was also founded in 2022, which cooperates with the global expert networks of *ICOMOS* and *DOCOMOMO International*, acts as a laboratory within the framework of the *New European Bauhaus* and comprises around 40 partners from 14 countries.

Almost half of the panels plus a sixth chapter added in 2024 were last shown as part of the opening of Chemnitz as *European Capital of Culture 2025*. This EU focus fits in with the aim of raising awareness of the special significance of modernity in Ukraine within a transnational history of values and ideas. As in many places in Europe, Kharkiv and Lviv – which for a time belonged to Poland and was home to many Jewish – saw the emergence of a society that was long characterized by the peaceful coexistence of different cultural identities as a result of industrialization.

In view of the diversity of Ukraine's architectural heritage, the exhibition draws a link to German cities such as Berlin, Magdeburg, Frankfurt, Dessau and Chemnitz as well as many other centres of the *New Objectivity* in Architecture in Europe in the 1920s. The exhibition shows that the building culture of this era is an expression of a common European heritage. These underlying values and their architectural witnesses must be saved and communicated in the face of destruction and current anti-modern political agendas – also in order to jointly explore ways of restoration that are necessary in many places.

#### Brief profile of the individual parts of the exhibition and participating partners:

<https://triennale-der-moderne.de/2022/modernism-in-ukraine-travelling-exhibition/>

**Part 1/6:** *Lviv Modernism*, the first part of the exhibition series by Ukrainian journalist Myroslava Liakhovych, shows the history of modern residential buildings in Lviv. The spectrum ranges from villas and individual buildings to ensembles and housing estates, with a focus on the 1930s.

**Part 2/6:** The second part *City, Architecture, Modernism* focuses on public buildings that were built in Lviv between World Wars I and II. The buildings shown in photographs by Pawel Masur are a selection from an exhibition held at the International Cultural Centre in Krakow in 2017

**Part 3/6:** The third part, developed by a collective, is about the contribution of Jewish architects to the cultural melting pot of Lviv, where over 3,000 buildings were erected. Special attention is paid to *Ferdynand Kassler - the inventor of Galician modernism*.

**Part 4/6:** The exhibition chapter developed by Svitlana Smolenska focusses on the urban ensemble on Sovoba (Freedom) Square in the metropolis of Kharkiv. The square is dominated by the *Derzhprom* complex, probably the most important and iconic modernist building in Ukraine, which was hit by a Russian bomb at the end of 2024.

**Part 5/6:** The chapter *Ukrainian Socialist Postmodernism*, developed in cooperation with the Urban Forms Centre in Kharkiv, deals with the late postmodern socialist period in Ukraine and its significance for the development of Ukrainian architecture. The exhibition with photos by Pavel Dorogoy shows buildings in cities around Kharkiv and documents the war damage in 2022.

**Part 6/6:** This is about the 1930 multilingual competition for the 'Theatre of Mass Musical Action' and some of the designs submitted. The competition shows how strongly the Ukraine was in the focus of international modernism. Architects from the USA, Japan, Russia, Ukraine and, of course, various Central European countries took part in the competition.

#### Realisation

Curation: Robert K. Huber (BHROX bauhaus reuse / zukunftsgeraeusche GbR), Ben Buschfeld, Peter Winter  
Produktion: Peter Winter (BHROX bauhaus reuse / zukunftsgeraeusche GbR)

Layout / Kommunikation / Social Media: Ben Buschfeld (buschfeld.com – graphic and interface design)

Funding: German Federal Ministry of Housing and Urban Development (BMWSB), (BMWSB), Landesdenkmalamt Berlin – Partners: European Triennial of Modernism (ETOM), DOCOMOMO International, ICOMOS

#### Sponsorship of the travelling exhibition

Federal Foreign Ministry of Germany, Kul'tura e.V., Ukrainian Institute in Germany, in co-operation with:

Städtepartnerschaftsverein Steglitz-Zehlendorf e. V., BHROX bauhaus reuse / zukunftsgeraeusche GbR, buschfeld.com

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**Venue:** Kharkiv Media Hub Gallery, Svoboda Square 5

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## Press-Images



Derzhprom Building at Svoboda Square, Kharkiv / Ukraine

Photos 2/3/4/7: zukunftsgeraeusche, Michael Setzpfandt



Svoboda Square, Kharkiv 2022, © Photo: Stanislav Ostrous



Exhibition, chapter 2/6, at the BHROX bauhaus reuse, Berlin



Derzhprom Building, Charkiw, Photo: Ben Buschfeld 2017



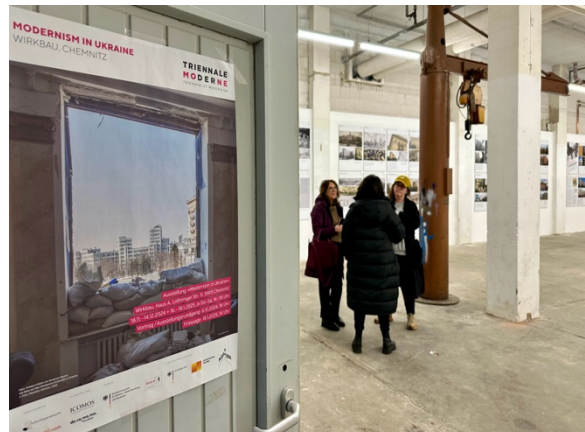
Exhibition, chapter 3/6, in the Technical University Berlin



Experts talk about of chapter 6 + Docomomo Journal No.67



Exhibition, chapter 2/6, at the BHROX bauhaus reuse, Berlin



Exhibition in Chemnitz, European Capital of Culture 2025