PROGRAM

ALL EVENTS ARE FREE TO ATTEND AND WILL INCLUDE FOOD SHARED AROUND THE COMMUNAL KITCHEN TABLE.

PLEASE CHECK NGBK.DE FOR MORE INFORMATION.

OPENING
Friday, June 28
Municipal Kitchens Launch!
Collaborative feast with social gastronomy organization Über den Tellerrand
16:00 Communal „chop and chat" and cooking workshop (please email anmeldung@ngbk.de to register)
19:00 Speeches and reading by Annett Gröschner
19:30–21:00 Community feast and gathering

Friday, July 5
The Choice Is Yours
17:00 Discussion at the dinner table led by artist Franziska Pierwoss exploring the democratic potential of a supermarket. An organic feast.

Friday, July 12
Milpa Pluriverse
18:00 Cocina CoLaboratorio in collaboration with Satellit host a public gathering borne out of a week-long slow-cooking process built on collective small actions of care, inspired by the plural languages of the Milpa.

Saturday, July 20
Cooking Palm
15:00 Indonesia is the primary producer of Red Palm Oil yet it barely features in Indonesian food culture and is instead mainly exported to West Africa. In this cooking workshop with artist Elia Nurvista, Indonesian food knowledge will be applied to "appropriate" the ingredient and create a brand new dish.

Thursday, July 25
Pierogi Dreams
Almost every food culture features some sort of dumpling. The Pierogi Princesses pay tribute to one of the greatest, the dynamic, the humble, the Pierogi.
17:00 Flavor ballot
17:30 Communal pierogi preparation
18:30 Pierogi party

Saturday, July 27
Rural Undercurrents Day Trip
Join Myvillages for a day trip to community project Gutsgarten in Hellersdorf + station urbaner kulturen/ nGbK Hellersdorf, including foraging of herbs and an introduction to Company Drinks.
11:00 First meeting point nGbK am Alex
12:00 Second meeting point Gutsgarten Hellersdorf
14:00 Pot Luck Picnic
15:00 Visit station urbaner kulturen

Sunday, July 28
Rural Undercurrents Communal Meal
13:00 Communal meal highlighting ingredients from Hellersdorf, hosted by Myvillages at nGbK am Alex

Saturday, August 10
Papitas Tarpuycha – Earthing Potatoes
13:00 A workshop which weaves together stories of places told through recipes. Led by Gatari Surya Kusuma, Åsa Sonjasdotter + Daniela Zambrano Amidón participants will make food together and reflect on embodied knowledge of food and cooking as ways of socializing and sharing.

Sunday, August 18
Küfa (Küche für alle/kitchen for all)
Municipal Kitchens' closing event features a collective cooking, chopping and feasting event with Torhaus Koch Kollektiv. Bring ingredients – leftovers from your fridge or produce from your garden, bring your friends or just your curiosity. The event will bring together artists and food activists from Berlin and beyond to discuss the possibilities of a kitchen for everyone.
14:30 Ingredients drop-off
15:00 "Taste the Waste": panel discussion with dumpster cake
17:00 Community feast

ART WORKS

At the starting point of the exhibition is a working kitchen hosted by food artist/curator **Cherry Truluck**. This leads to a "kitchen table" installation created by **Another Provision** where communal meals, discussions and events are held connecting international struggles and inspiring local action. These workshops, talks, performances and actions are realized collaboratively by the participating artists and Berlin-based food justice organizations including **Gutsgarten Hellersdorf, Satellit, Torhaus Koch Kollektiv** and **Über den Tellerrand**, who are working in different locations throughout the city.

Just inside the event space is a reading corner, where a collection of texts illustrate the research context within which the curatorial vision of the exhibition is framed. This includes a specially commissioned poetic narrative of the nGbK site (which stands on the foundations of the former Central Market Hall at Alexanderplatz) by writer **Annett Gröschner** (also found on the reverse of this leaflet).

Hanging on the opposite wall are **Johann Arens'** collages created from reclaimed display materials, gathered from local food venues around London. The layers of used acrylic, handwritten signage, print outs and packaging form a ply of "public glass", drawing tender and abstract portraits of the socially significant spaces they stem from.

Moving through the space, the wall-size installation *I know what you drink and I don't know it* by **Myvillages** extends their lumbung network to Berlin – the Indonesian word "lumbung" referring to a communal rice barn was established at documenta fifteen for an alternative economy of collectivity. Here, they open a shelf to collect and connect land-based knowledge that goes into the making of drinks, such as horse milk capsules from Friesland, dairy milk from the Netherlands, and BAD Cola, Sour Brexit and Japanese Knotweed Soda from **Company Drinks** in East London. The collection will grow with drinks made, collected and enjoyed in Berlin.

A collaborative project, *Papitas Tarpuycha – Earthing Potatoes* by **Gatari Surya Kusuma, Åsa Sonjasdotter**, and **Daniela Zambrano Amidón** breaks down the role of potatoes in international traditions and is presented through a three-channel video work. Their ongoing collective practice is engaged in re-learning and recognizing practices based on their shared place of origin, the mother Earth.

To the rear of the space, a film work by **Franziska Pierwoss** dissects the relevance of local supermarkets in times of inflation and the decay of the state. *Mad3oum – value in a state of economic crisis* was filmed in Lebanon in August 2021 and features interviews with managers of local supermarkets, consumers and employees of small and large scale family and corporate businesses, looking at the supermarket as the epicentre of the ongoing economic crisis.

Turning back towards the entrance, a new textile work in four pieces by **Elia Nurvista** is unpicking the global networks and history of colonial palm oil trade. *The Route* uses batik technique to retell the complex history of migration and displacement between palm oil and Dutch wax spanning West Africa, Europe and Indonesia.

Beyond the hanging batik pieces, a video work by **Mimi Ọnụọha** challenges the narrative of progress by highlighting the issues of labor conditions, waste in the food industry and agricultural systems geared towards ever-increasing production and yield rather than equitable distribution. *40% of Food in the US is Wasted (How the Hell is That Progress, Man?)* is composed of archival footage from the 1950s–1980s.

Facing this, a Berlin-specific installation by the **Cocina CoLaboratorio** collective, *Milpa Pluriverse*, is activated by communal gatherings during the course of the exhibition. It is a space that embodies the pluriverse of the "Milpa", a convivial place to slow down, chat with someone, listen to stories, ferment and to grow.

Finally, an undercover audio tour of your local supermarket (for example the Kaufland branch downstairs from nGbK) by **Alicja Rogalska** introduces a disruption into daily shopping habits whilst addressing the politics of food production, distribution and consumption. *Pretend You've Got No Money* can be accessed on a mobile phone in German, English and French using a QR code.

The whole space is brought alive by the program of co-facilitated events and meals, which are free of charge and open to all and include a Pierogi party, walking tours, community feasts, round table discussions and more. They create engagement with questions such as: How can we make kitchens part of public urban space and deprivatize the labor of cooking? How can food become a common good that connects residents from different communities? What if affordable, around-the-clock meals were available across our cities in spaces that include child care provisions? In the process, the exhibition aims to spark new international dialogues and solidarities across disciplines.

1 *Communal kitchen* [Installation] activated by **Cherry Truluck**
2 **Johann Arens:** *& Chic, Imbis I, Just?, Off-Licence I&II, Sea of Food, Sea of Foods, Soda I&II* [Collages]
3 **Another Provision:** *Kitchen table* [Installation]
4 **Myvillages:** *I know what you drink and I don't know it* [Wall installation with videos and drink shelves]
5 **Gatari Surya Kusuma/Åsa Sonjasdotter/Daniela Zambrano Amidón:** *Papitas Taypuycha – Earthing Potatoes* [Installation with 3 video works]
6 **Franziska Pierwoss:** *Mad3oum – value in a state of economic crisis* [Video work]
7 **Elia Nurvista:** *The Route* [Hanging textiles]
8 **Mimi Ọnụọha:** *40% of Food in the US is Wasted (How the Hell is That Progress, Man?)* [Video work]
9 **Cocina CoLaboratorio:** *Milpa Pluriverse* [Installation with audio and gathering space]
10 **Alicja Rogalska:** *Pretend You've Got No Money* [Audio tour]

Use QR Code › › ›

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Tuesday-Sunday
12:00–18:00

Friday
12:00–20:00

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MUNICIPAL KITCHENS

29.6. – 18.8.24

neue Gesellschaft
für bildende Kunst

Municipal Kitchens reimagines communal eating in cities. The exhibition gathers works by international and local artists and collectives that expose the current state and injustice of food systems, as well as ones that propose new forms of community-based eating. The artworks are accompanied by a weekly event program and free-of-charge communal meals, transforming the nGbK space – previously a fast food restaurant in a former market hall – into a public kitchen. This multitude of artistic practices is brought together around a central kitchen table installation by **Another Provision**. In dialogue with the program, the works develop visions for a different kind of food culture.

Artists
Alicja Rogalska
Another Provision
Cherry Truluck
Cocina CoLaboratorio
Elia Nurvista
Franziska Pierwoss
Gatari Surya Kusuma/
Åsa Sonjasdotter/Daniela
Zambrano Amidón
Johann Arens
Myvillages
Mimi Ọnụọha
Pierogi Princesses

nGbK work group
Johann Arens, Hanna Baumann, Miriam Lowack, Alicja Rogalska, Cherry Truluck

ngbk

Among Market Women

Berlin's Central Market Hall at Alexanderplatz

I have occasionally wondered, sitting on the regional express or the S-Bahn, why a track on the railway viaduct, coming from Friedrichstrasse, abruptly ends in the gravel just before Alexanderplatz station.

It's a relic from a bygone era. The track was part of the freight station of Berlin's Central Market Hall, which was located in front of the passenger station. When it was still the hub supplying everyday goods to the people of Berlin, an average of 120 freight cars were unloaded here every day, after which goods were transported to the halls via hydraulic elevators.

The market hall is still there, at Alexanderplatz. But all that is left is the structure, its space filled by a supermarket, its name erased. There are no longer any market women calling out special offers, but there are still plenty of people standing at the corner, gaping. The only reminder of the old market hall days is a fountain sculpture by Gerhard Thieme from 1973 in the passage between Rosa-Luxemburg-Strasse and Rochstrasse. It is populated by the very same Berlin types that enlivened a market hall – market crier, sausage man, vegetable woman, fishmonger, tailor and farmer.

It is essentially thanks to the railway line that, at the end of the 19th century, market halls were built in Berlin's inner city and not in the fields on the outskirts of the city: the central market hall on Alex with its two buildings that incorporate seven city railway arches, and 13 smaller market halls distributed across the city, four of which still exist today.

In his book *Berlin Childhood around 1900*, Walter Benjamin memorialized the market women he knew from the market hall on Magdeburger Platz:

> *Behind wire partitions, each bearing a number, slow-moving market women were enthroned – priestesses of a venal Ceres, purveyors of all fruits of the field and orchard, all edible birds, fishes, and mammals – procuresses, unassailable wool-clad colossi, who communicated with one another from stall to stall, whether by a flash of their great shiny buttons, by a smack on their aprons, or by a bosomswelling sigh. Was there not to be found, beneath the hem of their skirts, a bubbling, oozing, and welling, and was this not the truly fertile ground? Did not a god of the market himself spill the wares into their laps – berries, shellfish, mushrooms, chunks of meat and cabbage – invisibly cohabiting with those who gave themselves to him? While, heavy and immobile, leaning against barrels or holding the scales, chain slackened, between their knees, they surveyed in silence the procession of housewives who, loaded with bags and reticules, endeavored to pilot their brood through the slippery, foul-smelling lanes.*

Berlin market women, called *Hökerinnen*, were feared because of their loose mouths, *Kodderschnauzen* in Berlin dialect. The hope had been that they would restrain themselves once they had a roof over their heads. But as soon as the market halls had established themselves, the women's manners became more relaxed again.

The first private market hall opened on Schiffbauerdamm in 1864; it was modeled on the Parisian halls but soon closed again due to high stall rents and was converted into a circus. Before that, markets in Berlin were held in open spaces for 600 years, with Scharrenstrasse being a prime example. Or markets like the one on Gendarmenmarkt, about which E.T.A. Hoffmann wrote his final text from 1822, *My Cousin's Corner Window*. Cousin, the author's alter ego who, due to paralysis in his legs, is only an observer of the market goings-on below his window, tells the wildest stories:

> *In the past, the marketplace was the hotbed of bickering, brawls, bamboozlement, and petty theft, and no honest woman would dare do her own shopping there lest she expose herself to such unsavory goings-on. [...] "This market," said my cousin, "is even now a faithful likeness of the eternally meandering course of life. Brisk activity, the necessity of the moment drove the crowd together; in a matter of minutes the whole place is deserted, the voices that had until now become entangled in a chaotic din fell silent, and the desolate square all too vividly illustrates the grim saying: "What was, was!""*

After a market day, the stench, the garbage and the rats remained. 25 years later, after a bad harvest in April 1847, the Berlin potato riots broke out; the price of basic foodstuffs had increased sixfold within a few weeks. Women dashed at the stalls at Molkenmarkt and Gendarmenmarkt, and later at all other markets, cutting open the potato sacks and plundering them. The so-called potato revolution was the vanguard of the German revolutions that came one year later. As early as 1848, the city council had an initial plan for a municipal market hall, also to control prices and curb price gouging. But it was not until 1883 that the first market hall was built under municipal direction on Alexanderplatz.

On May 3, 1886, it was opened between Panoramastrasse, Neue Friedrichstrasse, Kaiser-Wilhelm-Strasse and Stadtbahn, but soon after, it was already too small. By 1893, the Berlin Market Hall Company's Market Hall Ia had been built between Kaiser-Wilhelm-Strasse and Rochstrasse. From then on, the first market hall was used for wholesale trade, and the latter, also known as the Kleinmarkthalle, for retail trade. Wholesale trade began as early as 1 a.m., retail trade at 6 a.m. in summer and 7 a.m. in winter, and there was a break for everyone at lunchtime. Unlike markets up until this point, the halls were open on working days. A stall fee was charged for the booths made of sheet metal and zinc plates with marble-covered sales tables, which many market traders could not afford. "Those with cash can show their wares in the market hall, those without will have to do without a stall," the saying went at the time. "Perambulatory trade," i.e. selling from a vendor's tray, was strictly prohibited. The goods sold included "raw natural products," fresh food of all kinds, and manufactured goods whose production was directly related to agriculture, forestry, gardening, fruit growing, or fishing, including rough wooden goods, aprons, wooden clogs, stockings, trimmings, basketry, wash tubs, kitchen utensils, paper goods, and shoe polish – but spirits were excluded. From this point on, there were municipal sales agents and public auctions. This was intended to avoid monopolized wholesale trade and prevent price gouging.

Fish auctions for pike, bass, roach, eel, burbot, tench, carp, crucian carp, pikeperch and crabs took place every weekday from 6 a.m. to 10 a.m. by the first railway arch on Panoramastrasse, where 80 tons of live fish were kept in fish basins with inflow and outflow. First the live, then the dead sea fish were auctioned off to the highest bidder; in contrast to the open market, the wares were strictly monitored by the veterinary police. The market halls were a great success and quickly overcrowded, so vegetable farmers soon had to move to the street to sell their goods. In 1901, the wholesale meat market was relocated. The new wholesale market hall, for which the city had bought land on Beusselstrasse in Moabit, was only built during the time of Berlin's division; it is still located there today.

When penniless people from all over the world come to Berlin today, they often work as parcel couriers or food delivery drivers. A job at McDonald's or other burger restaurants can also serve as an initial anchor in the city. A hundred years ago, the destitute came from rural areas east of the Oder, where they had been surplus mouths to feed on small farms or country estates. Many found jobs that still had something to do with their agricultural origins – growing, harvesting, slaughtering and distributing.

Many of them lived in the overcrowded Wilhelminian-era districts north and east of Alexanderplatz, in Wedding, Prenzlauer Berg or Friedrichshain. Brigitte Eicke, who was born in 1927 on Immanuelkirchstrasse in Prenzlauer Berg, described it:

> *My father worked on the cattle farm, "cattle dispatcher" was his somewhat pompous title, but actually he was a hog driver. The neighbor below us worked in the market hall, as did my future father-in-law, who also lived in the building, and another was a coal carrier. They set off at the crack of dawn. At three, four in the morning, they had to be at work, but then they were home by lunchtime. Either they stopped at Sadowski's on the corner of Greifswalder or they took a nap first. Then they'd say "be quiet, daddy is sleeping" and I couldn't bring any other children up with me. That's another reason why we always played down in the street.*

In one of the viaduct arches on Kaiser-Wilhelm-Straße, there was also a restaurant belonging to the Central Market Hall – a tradition in almost every market hall in the world, even today. The meals there are generally cheaper than elsewhere because the food from the hall is used to prepare it. During the First World War, especially in the so-called turnip winter of 1916/17, the entire Market Hall I was used as a public canteen and warm room for the starving and freezing population of Berlin.

The Central Market Hall's restaurant had a general contract for supplying the stall employees with drinks. Since open fires were prohibited at the stalls, the traders could have the kitchen fry meat or eggs for them. The restaurant was also a place for business deals, but in general it made its profits from walk-in customers and passers-by, even those who just wanted to have a quick pint. One of those often turned into seven or ten. Over the years, an illustrious community assembled. After all, Alexanderplatz was a transport hub. Alfred Döblin watched the hustle and bustle from the top floor of a bus in 1929:

> *If you look out, you wonder how people manage to cross the street at all. Where all these people come from, on the left they come from the court or the police headquarters, on the right from the market hall, others want to go to the train station, why don't you stay here, isn't it pretty nice in Berlin? I'll just drive down Königstrasse, what's the point of life, there's nothing going on in Werneuchen either.*

In November 1943, the two buildings of the central market hall were badly damaged in several bomb attacks on the city center. They were repeatedly hit in later attacks and during the battle for Berlin, until in May 1945, only a few walls were left standing. The traders took all usable bricks from the rubble and built small shops with solid roofs inside the open walls. Retail trade predominated, selling more vegetables than meat, and if the latter was sold, then as live animals to lay eggs. In 1949, the Konsum cooperative joined the private traders and soon took up more and more space.

"Those who sit and trade in the Central Market Hall are a tough bunch. We greet the blue sky without any obstacles, if it appears," said the daily newspaper *Neue Zeit* on April 13, 1949. At that time, there were already 480 stalls in the retail hall, and illegal trade flourished all around. With the city's division starting in 1948, East-West trade proliferated too. The area was often the scene of police raids, as was the case on December 23, 1946, when 60 police officers, 30 criminal police officers and 30 members of the Allied Police carried out a nine-hour raid on and around Alexanderplatz against "black marketeers, smugglers, unregistered persons and drifting youths of both sexes" and also passed by the Central Market Hall.

From 1948, the egg distribution office and the fruit and vegetable center of the Konsum cooperatives had their storage rooms in the basement of the central market hall, as did the school meal supplier and the purchasing cooperatives that supplied the *Volksgaststätten* public restaurants and workers' canteens. With the different currencies in the divided city from 1948, trade concentrated on East Berlin. In 1958, food stamps were abolished in East Berlin and a uniform price level was introduced; all haggling ceased.

In 1960, up to 12,000 visitors were counted daily in the central market hall, the first arriving at 7 a.m. before work, the last in the late evening before finishing work. The wholesale flower market had spread out in the Wholesale Hall I, while Ia was still the small market hall. "Textiles, shoes, mountains of carrots, cabbage, delicious sausages, meat, raincoats, rabbits munching on fresh fish, clucking chickens," wrote the *Berliner Zeitung* on August 6, 1960. In the meantime, there was also a "shopping street of 1,000 small things," mainly industrial goods. But the building structure had deteriorated over the years, the hygiene conditions were no longer tolerable, the elevators were from 1886, the roofs were made of makeshift wood and rats were swarming on the stall ledges. The market hall "no longer meets the requirements of a modern point of sale," according to the *Berliner Zeitung*. Some saleswomen were the third generation in their families to work here, and they stayed when the old halls were demolished and the new hall was built in 1968.

One of my favorite stories about the market hall during the time of the Berlin Wall is that of the shoemaker Kurt K. from Hohen Neuendorf. One day before Christmas Eve, on December 23, 1965, he took the S-Bahn to Berlin to get three pounds of meat and three pounds of sausage from his in-laws' butcher shop. At Alexanderplatz, because it was still early in the day and he was on holiday, he decided to have a beer in the nearby market hall. One beer turned into many, day turned into evening. It was already dark when he left the market hall to walk home. Drunk and without knowing the city's layout. Instead of heading north, towards Hohen Neuendorf, K. walked south, further and further, until he suddenly came across an obstacle. It was the first East-facing barrier of the Berlin Wall on Vossstrasse, but he didn't know that. He climbed over it, continued straight ahead and came across a second obstacle, a signal fence, which he surmounted effortlessly, despite – or perhaps because – of his blood alcohol levels. Then shots were fired. Frightened, he dropped his string bag and didn't move, until the border guards picked up the drunken man. K. had almost made it to Potsdamer Platz and into the West, where he didn't want to go at all – as he was able to credibly assure them.

With the conversion of the city center into a socialist capital at the end of the 1960s, the market halls became a relic, they stood in the way. The base of the Television Tower was built on part of the site of Market Hall I and the road between the halls was widened and diverted.

On New Year's Eve 1968, the old Market Hall closed. A new hall was built in ten months, barely visible from the outside as it was part of a prefabricated 13-story residential block; later, it was expanded. The building was modern, but it lacked ventilation, cooling options at the stalls level, adequate sanitary facilities and a women's break room, as Ursula Höntsch-Harendt found out when she interviewed the saleswomen in 1974. "In the new hall, it's not like a big family, there's cliques here, no contact with the management of the market hall, I would quit if I could find something better, and I'm not the only one," said a cashier in the department store who had been working in the market hall for 12 years. But Berliners remained loyal to the new hall. It was an insider tip for people from the provincial backwaters and foreign tourists. There was a large café at the entrance, and in the hall there were shopping streets with a modern design and a department store.

In the 1979 DEFA film by Dietmar Hochmuth, *Heute abend und morgen früh*, shot in black and white, a woman in her mid-30s lets herself drift around Berlin after finishing her work as a dentist in a polyclinic because she doesn't want to be the first one home, but wants to be expected by her husband and son for once. On her foray through the city, she also comes to the market hall at Alex. She strolls indifferently through the crowd, holding up the traffic of those trying to quickly do their shopping after work. "We want to get home too," they grumble as she calmly chats to an ancient saleswoman about her West Prussian dialect. Intermittently, you can hear public announcements: "A cash register mechanic is needed at stall 3" – "Sonja Kutter from Lauchhammer, 4 years old, is missing" – "Full range of offers available until 7 p.m.", or the calls of the *BZ am Abend* newspaper salespeople: "BZ today with the lucky numbers."

The woman has herself weighed, receives a garden gnome from an American who bought too many, takes her time selecting goods and observes the passers-by.

With the end of the state-run retailer HO and the Kosum cooperative in 1990, everything changed for the market hall too. People preferred to shop in the West. In 1991, the market operators joined together to form a cooperative and bought the market hall from the city in order to have it converted into the Berlin Carrée shopping center for many millions. But from the very beginning, it could not keep up with the new shopping malls and deteriorated over the years. The beautiful blue and white tiled facade with the many Ms disappeared under a layer of insulation, a supermarket took up the space. At some point, even McDonald's moved out. There is nothing about the building that reminds us of the market hall, just as perhaps soon nothing will remind us of the department store on Alexanderplatz, its eternal competitor.

Annett Gröschner is an interdisciplinary writer who has lived in Berlin since 1983 and writes about Berlin. Her most recent work is "Drei ostdeutsche Frauen betrinken sich und gründen den idealen Staat" (Three East German women get drunk and found the ideal state), with Peggy Mädler and Wenke Seemann.

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