

1989 – 20 Years Fall of the BERLIN WALL ART – 2009

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ICD – Institute for Cultural Diplomacy

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Introduction by Walter Momper (Mayor of Berlin 1988-1990)

On November 9th, 1989 the Wall that once divided Berlin lost its function. It was a product of the Cold War. But with the pulling-down of the Wall, many of the sometimes beautifully painted parts are bound to disappear as well. We have no regrets for the Wall but we will sure miss the Wall Art. It is therefore important and enriching to document these artworks for the generations to come. It is important for the Wall to be remembered for being a concrete proof of political failure as well as for the way people got adjusted to and integrated it into everyday life by painting it. Art challenged concrete and art won.

Introduction by Heinz J. Kuzdas

The Berlin Wall was also a unique collective artwork, which changed daily and often overnight – paint actions disappeared the next day by somebodies new work of art or was modified in new surprising ways. There was of course controversy – some people saw in painting the Wall only disgusting cosmetics, others similar to the historical wall-newspapers in China, a somehow index of »Zeitgeist« – mood index continuum – as one wrote on the Wall. But here we observed colourful, new irony art, misusing and transforming a depressing horrible perfected inhuman and dangerous borderline and turning it into the longest canvas of art. Something came into existence for what we owe recognition and gratefulness to the many known and unknown who participated. So far there was no such intention from the official public. There are so many who only desire to keep alive the memory of the Wall of death and barbed wire.

Berlin will be Wall Free

The prophecy scrawled on the Wall in 1988 »Berlin wird mauernfrei« (Berlin will be wall free) came to pass at midnight on November 9th, 1989. The Government of the GDR in those days, yielding to pressure from the people, announced unrestricted freedom to travel, effective immediately. That very night, Berliners from both East and West danced on the Wall in front of the Brandenburg Gate. Politicians of all parties and countries were equally surprised by the course of history. For months there was only one word heard so often »WAHNSINN« (insane). Souvenir hunters and other »wall peckers« made the wall practically thread bare. The Wall was soon pockmarked and perforated. Steel reinforcement plates were needed to prevent the Wall from collapsing. The Berlin Wall, for 28 years the physical proof of division and political oppositions, became a place of meeting and of the opening and unification of Germany and prepared at last the path to a really united Europe.

Heinz J. Kuzdas was born in Künzelsau, in South-West Germany. He has been residing in Berlin since 1972 and has lived in France, the USA, Canada and South America. Kuzdas studied Philosophy and Medicine at the *Freie Universität Berlin*, has worked as a medical coordinator, as a journalist and photo journalist and has organised and curated several exhibitions abroad and within Germany.

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