



From Economic Equality to “Mommy Politics”

Women Artists and the Challenges of Gender in East German Painting¹

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HCM 2 (2): 175–203

DOI: 10.5117/HCM2014.2.EISM

Abstract

This article looks at the impact that East Germany’s gender policies had on the visual arts and especially women painters across four decades. The first two sections focus on women’s participation in the national art exhibitions in Dresden during the Ulbricht and Honecker years, looking at how their artwork responded to official gender policies, and at the emergence of three women – Heidrun Hegewald, Gudrun Brüne, and Doris Ziegler – as nationally prominent painters. The third section focuses on the paintings and agitations of Angela Hampel in the 1980s as an example of a new phase in the pursuit of gender equality in East Germany, one abruptly cut short by the unification process. Ultimately this article argues that East Germany’s gender policies, despite not having achieved the stated goal of true equality, had a positive impact on women artists, and especially painters, in East Germany, increasing the number of women included in major exhibitions, encouraging greater complexity in their work, and ultimately fostering a socialist-feminist critique of lingering patriarchal biases.

Keywords: German Democratic Republic, East Germany, painting, women, art

Introduction

In June 1971, Erich Honecker, the new head of the East German state, declared that “one of the biggest achievements of Socialism, [is] the largely complete equality of women in our State, both in law and in life. No capitalist land on earth can claim the same.”² With these hyperbolic words, Honecker drew attention to an example of what he saw as the superiority of socialist modernity over its capitalist rival – its greater pro-

gress toward attaining a gender-equal society. Whereas women in West Germany needed their husband's permission to work outside the home as late as the mid-1970s, in East Germany, a woman's right to work, and her right to equal pay for equal work, was part of the founding constitution in 1949.³ The 1950 "Law Regarding the Protection of Mothers and their Children and the Rights of Women" similarly assured East German women that they could participate in political, social, and cultural life by taking jobs outside traditional women's work and by training for new careers. This early commitment to women's equality in the workforce stemmed in part from communist ideology, which emphasised equality through economic means, and in part from practical concerns: it helped fulfill the need for workers after the losses of the war. By the end of the 1980s, nearly 90% of women eligible to work were employed or in training.⁴

Despite these numbers and Honecker's claims, however, East Germany never achieved true gender equality. In the 1950s and 1960s, most East Germans assumed that it was just a matter of time as new, socialist modes of living and thinking replaced older, capitalist ones. By the late 1970s and 1980s, however, the discrepancy between governmental claims and lived reality became a point of contention as women began to realise that waiting was not enough. In the art world, women began to ask questions about what it meant to be a woman in a socialist society and about the challenges they faced. Then in the mid-1980s, Angela Hampel (b. 1956) became a leading figure in a vocal critique of continuing gender inequities.

This article looks at the impact that East Germany's gender politics had on society, and in particular on the visual arts, where women played an increasingly prominent role. Already in the 1950s, women were 15% of artists exhibiting at the German Art Exhibition, a prestigious exhibition of contemporary art in East Germany that was held every four to five years in Dresden during the Cold War period.⁵ By the end of the 1980s, women were more than 25% of the artists in those exhibitions. They were also 33% of the Association of Visual Artists (*Verband Bildender Künstler*) and over 40% of the students in the four main art academies.⁶ While far from true equality, these percentages were nonetheless significantly higher than in the West, where women in the documenta exhibitions ranged from just 4% in the 1950s to 13% in the 1980s.⁷

A close examination of the German Art Exhibitions in Dresden (called the Art Exhibition of the GDR after 1971), which spanned the entire Cold War period, offers a valuable overview of East German art and cultural policies that allows us to better understand how gender policies affected the visual arts. In the first two sections of this article, I look at how works

by and about women in these exhibitions responded to these policies, especially in the Ulbricht era (1949-71), and at the emergence of a number of women as nationally prominent painters in the Honecker era (1971-89).⁸ I then offer a case study of the changes that had begun to take place in East Germany in the 1980s with regard to gender issues, changes that were abruptly cut short by the unification process. This third section focuses on Hampel, a young artist who emerged onto the East German art scene in the mid-1980s with Neo-expressionist paintings of strong women from mythology and the Bible that catapulted her into the national spotlight, a position from which she advocated for true gender equality. Ultimately this article will argue that East Germany's gender policies, despite not having achieved the stated goal of true equality, had a positive impact on women artists, and especially painters, in East Germany, increasing the number of women included in major exhibitions, encouraging greater complexity in their work, and ultimately fostering a socialist-feminist critique of the patriarchal bias of East German society by the late 1980s that brought women together and led to the founding of an artists' association and gallery for women in Dresden.

Towards a Socialist Modernity (1949-1971)

The East German emphasis on women's equality reflected both the practical economic needs of the post-war nation and an effort by its leaders to implement communist ideals. The concern for women's equality did not, however, reflect the beliefs of the larger East German public in the early post-war years: most men and women at the time would have agreed with their West German counterparts that a woman's place was in the home. Gender equality, and especially the idea of women working outside the home, was thus an ideal that was propagated from above and required effort and time before it was adopted by the people. Art played an important role in the latter, helping to visualise a reality that did not yet exist.⁹

The artistic response to the state's policies on gender equality was evident at the Third German Art Exhibition in Dresden in 1953, the first to open after the founding of the GDR. Not only were women 15% of the artists included, but they appear as equals in a large number of paintings. In the catalog, for example, sixteen of the paintings illustrated show women alongside men in meetings, demonstrations, and both urban and rural scenes of work.¹⁰ These paintings stand in sharp contrast to the emphasis on women as mothers and wives evident in major exhibitions dur-



Figure 1: Johanna Starke, *Chemistry Teacher (Chemielehrerin)*, c. 1953, oil painting, 140 x 160 cm (SLUB/Deutsche Fotothek (Third German Art Exhibition, 1953))
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ing the Third Reich (1933-45), and as prostitutes and symbols of bourgeois decadence in the Weimar period (1919-33) before it. In some, women are simply present, included in the discussions taking place about rebuilding, such as Ernst Günter Neumann's *Students Help with the Construction of Berlin*. In others, women play an active role. In *Project Team of the Construction Union Bitterfeld* by Walter Doetsch and Bernhard Franke, for example, men and women are working together in the rebuilding of the city. Similarly, in Hanns Kralik's *Philipp-Müller-Contingent*, it is a woman signing the petition in the center of a large group of people who have gathered to remember the death of a communist protester at the hands of the police in West Germany two years earlier.

Despite the large number of women artists in the exhibition, most of the paintings that showed women as active participants in the workplace and at important political and social events were created by men. Paintings of similar subjects by women, by comparison, were far fewer and tended to be more conservative.¹¹ Only three of the paintings they exhibited at the Third German Art Exhibition show women at work. One shows

an agricultural scene in which the women wear long skirts and kerchiefs. The women in the image, however, are not actually working; rather, they are resting or sleeping.¹² The other two paintings show women as grade school teachers. In both cases, the type of work shown – farming and teaching – was not unusual for women.

The most interesting of the paintings by a woman is Johanna Starke's *Chemistry Teacher* (figure 1), which focuses on a group of six students, primarily girls, and a female teacher. In the background, beakers and a chalkboard with equations are visible. The choice of chemistry as the class subject resists expected gender stereotypes. Yet Starke's emphasis is on the teacher's dress, which is light in colour and takes up a third of the image, perhaps an overcompensation for it being a chemistry class: whereas grade school teachers are traditionally women, the sciences are traditionally associated with men. Similarly, in Jutta Damme's *Lesson in Small Caliber Rifles*, the gender-unconventional material is subtly undermined by the emphasis on the male teacher. He takes up half the composition and is separated from the three female students by a table and the dark background colour behind him. This painting, like Starke's, thus subtly enforces gender stereotypes at the same time that it challenges them.

The vast majority of the paintings at the German Art Exhibitions in Dresden in the 1950s that were by women were not complex, multi-figure compositions, but rather still lifes, landscapes, and especially portraiture, with children being a favored subject. Significantly, these are the genres and subjects in which women painters have traditionally excelled. At the Fourth in 1958, Hildegard Stilijanov (1905-1981), for example, showed a smiling young girl holding flowers next to a table filled with food and containers in *Gisela Expects a Guest* (1958), while Jutta Damme (1929-2002) focused on eleven children in *Child Gymnastics* (1958). Both of these artists had graduated from the Dresden Academy in the early 1950s and went on to exhibit regularly in the national Art Exhibitions in Dresden. Stilijanov was best known for her many "portraits, landscape paintings and especially still lifes, in which she conveyed her love for everyday beauty",¹³ while Damme, who became a painting professor at the Dresden Academy in the mid-1960s, excelled at creating "images of people and their environment".¹⁴

It was first in the 1960s that paintings by women of women in the waged work force began to appear in the national art exhibitions in Dresden.¹⁵ At the Fifth German Art Exhibition in 1962, Johanna Starke (b. 1925) exhibited two. In one, a portrait titled *Young Working Woman Hannelore H* (figure 2), the young woman stands in front of a bulletin board covered with neatly posted notices. She wears a dark-coloured factory smock over a dark turtle-



Figure 2: Johanna Starke, Young Working Woman Hannelore H (Jungarbeiterin Hannelore H), c. 1962, oil painting, 75 x 60 cm (SLUB/Deutsche Fotothek (Fifth German Art Exhibition, 1962))

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neck, her hair cut short or pulled back under a hat sitting on the back of her head. She holds her hands clasped in front of her stomach and looks at us almost warily, yet her upright posture suggests confidence. In the other, *Instruction Day on the Shop Floor*, a woman in a similar outfit sits at a machine while another stands over her. They are clearly working together on the job before them. A man looks over the standing woman's shoulder, although it is unclear whether he is watching to learn how the process works or to observe whether it is being done correctly. In the background, another figure looks over at them with a smile, while three others, two of whom appear to be men, similarly group around another machine. Born in Leipzig in 1925, Starke trained at the Dresden Academy at the same time as Stilijanov and Damme. After exhibiting at the Third and Fifth in Dresden, she largely disappeared from the national scene, although she continued to show works in Leipzig on a regular basis until the late 1970s.

In the wake of the building of the Wall in 1961, the GDR shifted its policies to emphasise a “scientific-technological revolution”. One of the results was a reevaluation of women in the workforce and, in particular,

what jobs they were doing. In December 1961, the *Politbüro* published a communique titled “Women – Peace and Socialism” that criticised the underrepresentation of women in leading functions and technical professions. Shortly thereafter, in 1962, they created a commission to look into women’s positions in the GDR. Finding that women tended to do unskilled labor, which resulted in their overrepresentation in lower-paid jobs, they reorganised job training programs to be more accessible to women and implemented affirmative action measures that encouraged women to study engineering in college. By 1975, women were 35% of engineering students – versus just 6% ten years earlier.¹⁶ They were also 34% of physicians and 53% of district judges and teachers.¹⁷

Although the policy was implemented in the 1960s, its impact first appeared in paintings by women at the Seventh in 1972/73. Perhaps the best known was Barbara Müller’s *Building Apprentice Irene* (1971, figure 3).¹⁸ This painting focuses on a young woman with long blond hair adjusting the hard hat on her head while looking at the viewer. The title, together



Figure 3: Barbara Müller, Building Apprentice Irene (Bauarbeiterlehrling Irene), 1971, oil on hard fibre, 80 x 60 cm (inv. Lo2726. Kunstfonds, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen, Dresden, Germany, Photo: Herbert Boswank (Seventh Art Exhibition of the GDR, 1972/73))

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with the hard hat identifies her as a woman in training for a technical job. In comparison to Hannelore H. from ten years earlier, she appears confident. The bright colours and loose brushwork further suggest an air of both competence and optimism.

According to the East German art historian Joachim Uhlitzsch, *Building Apprentice Irene* was “one of the most beloved paintings at the Seventh Art Exhibition of the GDR [...] A *joie de vivre* springs from this young personality. The light colours, vivaciously portrayed, make clear the character, intelligence and charm of the girl [...]”.¹⁹ Similarly, Günter Meier stated, “Irene is a good looking, confident, intelligent person. The responsibility for the expected achievement is not visible in her face. It has become so much a part of the everyday, that it’s not necessary to think about it [...] she does it, full stop. The joy in the working day is reflected in the unremarkable, nearly banal gesture of putting on a hardhat.”²⁰ Although neither of these authors pointed to gender issues per se, it is clear that part of the charm of this painting is that the young woman is going to work, a reflection of the promise – and modernity – of the East German state. Müller (b. 1938), for her part, mentioned gender specifically when she talked about the image, “one can’t paint often enough how much the girls in our country have blossomed (*gemausert haben*)”.²¹ Her use of the word “gemausert” (literally, “to molt”) suggests that she sees girls as throwing off old expectations. A few years later, in 1976, an article in *Neue Berliner Illustrierte* further encourages this reading, stating of the young worker in Müller’s painting, “equality of the sexes – guaranteed by law and societally practiced – is already a self-evident part of her life feeling, her aspirations go beyond this (*zielt weiter*). For her and her generation, the largely realised ideal of equality is the starting point for new goals, desires and dreams.”²²

In a Socialist Modernity (1971-89)

The idea expressed in the 1976 review of Müller’s painting that East Germany had largely achieved gender equality was commonplace in the 1970s, presumably encouraged by Erich Honecker’s speech to this effect in 1971. Although his statement exaggerated East Germany’s achievements, the GDR had made real progress with regard to gender equality. By the early 1970s, 66.1% of all women were in the work force, and the taboo against working women that had been so strong in the immediate post-war years had been largely eliminated. Indeed, according to the American historian Donna Harsch, “The majority of women, including young mothers, saw waged

labor as a central feature of their identity", and "the majority of husbands accepted that their wives worked for wages".²³ It was also in these years that the first generation of men and women born in the GDR were entering into the workforce. For them, gender equality seemed self-evident, even if the reality was that women tended to work lower-wage and lower-prestige jobs, with leadership positions being almost exclusively male.

Not coincidentally, it was in the 1970s that women began to emerge in greater numbers and with more complex works at the national exhibitions in Dresden. This increase stemmed in part from a greater tolerance in the visual arts indicated by another speech Honecker gave shortly after coming to power in 1971 in which he stated, "when one starts from the firm position of Socialism, there can be [...] no taboos in the realm of art and literature. That concerns the question of content as well as style [...]"²⁴ This change in policy led to a greater variety of artistic styles in East German art as well as new content, including mythological and Biblical subject matter, and images that focused on the everyday (rather than the heroic), including the problems experienced.

One of the women to emerge at this time and whose work both engaged with gender issues and was the focus of much attention by scholars and the public alike was Heidrun Hegewald. Born in 1936, Hegewald had witnessed the bombing of Dresden as a child and later settled in East Berlin, where she studied printmaking. After establishing herself as a prize-winning illustrator and raising her son to an age where he could take better care of himself, Hegewald returned to school in 1971, studying painting as a graduate student at the Akademie der Künste Berlin.²⁵ As she stated it, she "came to painting not because I had to paint but rather because the material was there, because it pushed me to engage with certain problems in my work".²⁶ One of her best-known and earliest successes as a painter was with *Child and Parents* (1976, figure 4), which she exhibited at the Eighth Art Exhibition of the GDR in 1977/78. This painting, which was the focus of numerous articles and discussions among the public, reflected upon family life in East Germany and, in particular, the difficulties some families experienced in the face of changing expectations and possibilities for women.

At the upper center of the horizontal composition, a young child with short blond hair stands in front of a door that is cracked open, bathing the figure in light coming from an unseen room behind. The figure stands before a large, round table that stretches out to take up most of the bottom half of the composition. In the bottom left, the child's father sits at the table, his back to us. At the bottom right, the mother appears. Her body faces us, but she turns her head away and toward the right edge of the canvas. Both



Figure 4: Heidrun Hegewald, Child and Parents (Kind und Eltern), 1976, oil on fibreboard, 110 x 190 cm (inv. A IV 537. bpk, Berlin / Nationalgalerie, Staatliche Museen, Berlin, Germany / Andres Kilger / Art Resource, NY (Eighth Art Exhibition of the GDR, 1977/78))

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parents, their right elbows on the table, appear to be consciously ignoring the other, perhaps having been caught by the child in the midst of a troubling conversation. A triangle of lines connects the three figures in an otherwise unadorned and darkened room. It is an image that suggests the isolation existent within a crumbling family structure, with the child caught between parents who can no longer communicate with each other.

In 1977, the popular weekly magazine *Für Dich* published a series of articles about Hegewald's painting.²⁷ In one, Ulrike Krenzler began by discussing images of children created by Käthe Kollwitz and Gabriele Münter. She then turned to Hegewald's painting, mentioning that the impact of a divorce "is much stronger on the developing child than the adults. Men and women usually find a new partner; the child has only one of each parent." Krenzler's article was followed by a number of quotes from visitors who had seen the painting when it was exhibited in Berlin a few months before appearing at the national exhibition in Dresden. Some readers wondered if the child was the reason the parents were staying together, while another believed that "the line between the child and the open door shows the parents the right way [out]."²⁸ Others called the work "shocking", although whether that was meant as positive or negative varied.

This engagement with Hegewald's work by ordinary East Germans was

an important aspect of her work and fit well within East Germany's view of the visual arts as playing a key role in helping to mold the well-rounded socialist personality. In the late 1940s and early 1950s, artists were encouraged to create didactic works that emphasised role models and optimistic world views for their audience to consume. In the 1960s, a number of artists, including Fritz Cremer and Bernhard Heisig, challenged this approach to art, arguing that East Germany needed a more complicated art suitable for its educated audience. By the 1970s, didacticism had been replaced by a dialogic mode of engagement, one that presented contemporary problems for discussion rather than pre-digested answers. It is in this context that Hegewald created her paintings, works that successfully inspired a reaction from their audience.

She later explained this painting and her work more generally as follows:

I have the intent to make reality transparent. *Child and Parents* is an almost terse presentation of reality. The development of the family in socialism shows certain features, the result of changes to the traditional family structure. These features can be evaluated objectively when we try to distance ourselves from bourgeois models of family and marriage. Statistically the divorce rates in socialist lands are high. But that is no reason to discuss it behind our hands. Rather we should accept this side of reality openly [...]. Socialist morality cannot be identical with bourgeois morality [...].

Hegewald was speaking here of an unintended consequence of increasing gender equality: no longer financially dependent on their husbands to survive, women expected more and were less willing to remain in unhappy relationships. As a result, there was a fairly high rate of divorce in East Germany.²⁹ In an interview published in the *Ostsee Zeitung* two years later, Hegewald mentioned *Child and Parents*, stating that "I paint things that really exist. I don't make them up. With them I want to tackle the problems that appear on a large scale in society."³⁰

With *Child and Parents*, Hegewald created an important work about contemporary issues faced by people living in East Germany as a result of changes in women's roles in society, and in particular, about the impact of gender equality on relationships. Rather than trying to solve these issues or pointing blame, Hegewald offered them for discussion, as important aspects of society that needed to be dealt with rather than swept under the carpet.³¹

Whereas Hegewald confronted the impact of gender policies on the family at the Eighth (1977/78), Gudrun Brüne explored the difficulties of being a woman working in the male-dominated medium of painting at the

Ninth (1982/83). In *Self-Portrait with Models* (1982, figure 5), she engaged in particular with the question of how women can portray themselves in a medium defined by men and in which women are frequently portrayed as passive objects for the male gaze.³² This was one of the earliest paintings in which she engaged directly with gender issues.



Figure 5: Gudrun Brüne, Self-Portrait with Models (Selbstbildnis mit Vorbildern), 1982, oil on fibreboard, 100 x 130 cm (inv. 82/39. bpk, Berlin / Galerie Neue Meister, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen, Dresden, Germany / Art Resource, NY (Ninth Art Exhibition of the GDR, 1982/83))

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Born in East Berlin in 1941, Brüne trained at the Leipzig Academy from 1961-66 under Heinz Wagner and Bernhard Heisig. She began exhibiting at the Art Exhibitions of the GDR already in 1972, but it was another decade before she found her artistic voice. Before this time, Brüne's aesthetic evidenced the expressive brushwork and influence of Heisig, who was both her teacher and life partner. It was first at the Ninth (1982/83) that she began exhibiting work that demonstrated the smoother surface and engagement with women's issues that would become hallmarks of her later work.

In *Self-Portrait with Models*, Brüne depicted herself between the framed portraits of two of her female inspirations. The one on her left shows the Marxist theorist and social revolutionary Rosa Luxemburg (1871-1919), who helped found the German Communist Party; the one on her right, a self-portrait by the German painter Paula Modersohn-Becker (1876-1907), whose letters and diaries many East German women artists have cited as an inspiration for their own work.³³ Modersohn-Becker herself, wearing a long-sleeved dark blue shirt, sits in front of this portrait, obscuring the nudity of the 1906 painting. Sitting next to Brüne, she holds up a red flower from the earlier painting and stares intently at the viewer as if to say that she is a person rather than simply an object to be looked at. Brüne, on the other hand, holds a paintbrush in front of her. Together with the many tubes of paint on the table she shares with Modersohn-Becker, the brush identifies her as the creator of this work. In this painting, all three women are clothed and meet the viewer's gaze; they appear confident, and unlike more traditional portraits, none smile.

A comparison of this painting with three earlier versions, each done in 1980, shows significant changes that are revealing in what they say about the artist's views toward herself and her struggles as a painter. The most significant difference is that in these earlier paintings, the artist does not appear as a person but rather as a painting, a self-portrait. Similarly, the person of Modersohn-Becker disappears, leaving only her nude self-portrait. These earlier versions are thus paintings of paintings. In each, Brüne's self-portrait stands in the middle, but it is behind and partially obscured by those of Luxemburg and Modersohn-Becker. These earlier portrayals, together with Brüne's averted gaze in all but the final painting, seem to reflect Christiane Müller's observation in her 1989 dissertation about women artists in East Germany, that women often faced the challenge of being too modest, too quiet in an art world that rewarded confidence.³⁴ The final version, on the other hand, seems to be an assertion of herself as an artist.

A comparison of the four paintings also shows Brüne wearing different clothes in each, suggesting that how she portrayed herself was a matter of concern. How does a female artist portray herself in a medium defined by men? Does she portray herself as a nude, as an object of beauty to be looked at, as Modersohn-Becker did? To what extent should an emphasis on feminine beauty play a role in her images of women? In one of the paintings, Brüne wears a dark, non-descript long-sleeve shirt. In another, that shirt is punctuated with a scarf. In a third – the only self-portrait without a frame – she wears a relatively low-cut pink shirt. In each, she holds the paintbrush in her right hand as if taking a pause in the midst of

painting to examine her subject. For the painting exhibited at the Ninth, Brüne portrayed herself in a dark pink shirt with feminine folds and a slight yet non-revealing V-cut in the center, a seeming compromise – feminine but not sexual.

In an article about Brüne's work at the Ninth, particular attention was paid to *Self-Portrait with Models*, seen as “unusual” in its comparison of the artist with “the ‘greats’ [Modersohn and Luxemburg] of the past”.³⁵ The author interpreted the work as “an attempt at self-understanding”. Two years later, this painting was chosen as the “art work of the month” at the Kunstgalerie Gera, where it was viewed as a “searching” and “artistically valuable contribution” to art in the GDR, both in its engagement with Modersohn-Becker and Luxemburg and in the pacifist message it expressed – in the face of the NATO threat in those years – through the inclusion of Albrecht Altdorfer's apocalyptic painting, *The Battle of Issus* (1529), on the background wall.³⁶

Another important artist to emerge in the 1970s was Doris Ziegler, a painter whose work, like Brüne's, raised important questions about how to portray women in art. Born in Weimar in 1949, Ziegler studied painting at the Leipzig Academy from 1969-74 under Werner Tübke and Wolfgang Matheuer. After graduating, she was given a commission (*Förderungsvertrag*) with a vehicle transmission factory in Leipzig, where she observed and got to know some of the workers.³⁷ Fascinated by the theme of women in the workforce, she created five oil paintings of the all-female “Rosa Luxemburg” brigade. These paintings, two of which she exhibited to great success at the Eighth Art Exhibition of the GDR in 1977/78, marked her emergence onto the national art scene in East Germany and were an important example of a woman artist engaging with the theme of women in the workforce.

In the largest and most detailed of the five paintings, *Brigade Rosa Luxemburg – Portrait of Eva* (1974/75, figure 6), a heavyset woman wearing dark clothes, work boots, a cap and smock leans against a brick building that is presumably the factory in which she works. Standing in the middle of the image, she appears to be taking a momentary break. At her feet, various scraps of wire appear, discarded and ignored. The leafless branches of a tree beyond the wooden fence before her suggest it is winter and contribute to the uninviting look on her face. She meets our gaze but does not smile. Behind her, through a window into the building, another woman in a similar short-sleeved dark shirt but wearing a kerchief in her hair, pulls at a lever on a row of industrial machines. She, too, looks over her left shoulder, meeting our gaze as she works. It is a portrait of a woman



Figure 6: Doris Ziegler, Brigade Rosa Luxemburg, 1974-75, five oil paintings (Lindenau-Museum Altenburg, Germany)

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during a momentary break; tired, she is nonetheless self-possessed and uninterested in “looking pretty” for the viewer.

The other four paintings in the series are more conventional portraits, each focusing on a member of the brigade who is seated indoors with her hands clasped or arms folded across her body. None smile, thus disrupting the expectation of women posing for the viewer. Three of the women face to the right; one, like the full-sized portrait of Eva, faces to the left. These women, all but Frau Jazwiak middle aged, appear lost in their own thoughts, unconcerned with the artist painting them or the impression they will make.³⁸ They wear neither makeup nor jewelry, and the blank backgrounds – broken only by the chair in which they sit, or in one case, a window without a view – offer no insight into who they are. Like in Brüne’s painting, these women challenge expectations for how women should be portrayed. One newspaper article described the work as “relentless realism, sober and without makeup. Even her drawn portraits breathe real life, appear at first glance unapproachable and unfriendly, yet through this awake in the viewer feelings, are in the end at least trusted, because they are genuine.”³⁹

According to journalists at the time, Ziegler’s goal with these paintings was to show “societal problems in concrete people”.⁴⁰ Ziegler herself stated: “I didn’t want to paint a passport picture, rather I wanted to express

something binding, [something] universal. I believe that the viewers can understand themselves in the women I portray, can discern for example: that's what I look like after work too. That way they begin to reflect on their own work world. That is what I can achieve and would like."⁴¹ She also explained that she had "tried to paint a brigade of men, but [...] couldn't find a relationship. They saw my interest as an affront, [they] didn't understand my working motivation."⁴² Three years later, she received the first Critics Prize of the Culture Journalists of Leipzig, who stated, "in the images of the young artist [Ziegler], we find the everyday of our city, our country, with a poetic world view and engagement for the working people".⁴³



Figure 7: Doris Ziegler, Self with Son (Selbst mit Sohn), 1987, egg tempera and oil on hard fibre, 169 x 115 cm, (Klassik Stiftung Weimar, Neues Museum Weimar (Tenth Art Exhibition of the GDR, 1987/88))

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Ten years later, Ziegler exhibited what is perhaps her most famous work, *Self with Son* (1987, figure 7), at the Tenth (and final) Art Exhibition of the GDR in 1987/88. In this painting, she played with societal expectations for

mothers, women, and artists in a work that was the center of heated discussion at the time. The painting focuses on the artist and her nine-year-old son: They sit next to each other on simple wooden chairs in the middle of her studio. Both figures are pale, naked, and similar in physique and pose: They rest their left hands on their legs – one faced up, the other down – and extend their right feet slightly in front of their left. Neither smiles, nor do they look uncomfortable. Were they clothed, the painting might at first seem to be just another portrait of a mother and child. And yet, even with clothes, the lack of sentimentality clashes with our expectations for what such an image should look like.

Although the painting shows the artist as a mother, Ziegler also draws attention to her role as artist by placing herself directly below a bare light bulb and a painter's palette. And yet unlike most self-portraits, she does not make eye contact with the viewer. Instead, she appears in the stereotypical role of the passive and nude female model in an image that clashes with her role as artist. The dissonance in the painting is further emphasised by the inclusion of Christian Schad's 1927 painting, *Count St. Genois d'Anneaucourt*, on the wall behind them – the man wears a tuxedo and confidently meets the viewers' gaze, just as the boy meets our gaze, and yet the boy is not the creator of this painting. He is a model, and he is nude. Perhaps he created the skull hanging on the wall, but he is not an artist (at least not yet). It is Ziegler who is the painter of this work as well as the cityscape hanging on the wall in front of her. She is also the creator of the boy seated next to her. The painting therefore also calls attention to the fact that she, as a woman, has access to two forms of creation: artistic and biological.

According to Cornelia Briel in a short article about the painting that was printed in several venues, Ziegler's painting shows "the tension between the worry about the adolescent child on the one side and the artistic work on the other", both of which require the artist's attention.⁴⁴ But she also saw it as commenting on a "complex of problems that are forced into private, but that in reality affect many". These problems are the fact that the "inner biography of women is until now hardly described in its single moments without direct or indirect reference to a man or/and being formed by the norms of patriarchal society. Only recently have women artists, in an attempt to remain truthful, asked themselves and begun to work through questions about problems such as puberty, the contradictions of motherhood, aging, the reactions to demands and expectations for 'women', that have taken shape through millennia of societal development."⁴⁵

Hegewald, Brüne, and Ziegler are three of a handful of artists in the East German art scene in the 1970s and 1980s who produced paintings that

addressed the challenges women faced in a society that was publicly committed to gender equality. Both the artists and their work are evidence of the success of East German gender policy – in the number of women exhibiting and in their increasing prominence within the East German art world – but also of the obstacles that still remained despite official claims to the contrary.

Contradictions within a Socialist Modernity (1971-90): The Case of Angela Hampel

When Honecker came to power in 1971 and declared that women's equality had been largely achieved in East Germany, he was focusing on the large percentage of women in the workforce. Significantly, he did not mention the continuing disparity between men and women in terms of childcare and housework. According to Harsch, women did 90% of the housework in East Germany in the early 1970s, which meant that they spent as much time working at home as they did in their full-time jobs.⁴⁶ In an attempt to ease this "double burden", the state shifted its emphasis in the 1970s from economic equality to what the American sociologist Myra Marx Ferree has termed "mommy politics".⁴⁷ This "second stage" in East German gender policies attempted to make full-time employment and motherhood more compatible. In 1972, the GDR legalised abortion and made contraception free so that women could plan their reproductive lives. They also continued to expand the system of daycare, kindergartens and after-school care to make it easier for women to combine a full-time job with motherhood. By the 1980s, more than 80% of children under the age of six were in a nursery school or kindergarten. The "baby year" was also introduced, in addition to the existing subsidies for children.

These changes made it easier for women to balance a career with family life. But they also led to setbacks in women's equality by helping to cement women in the role of mother and homemaker. While some men may have helped out around the house, official policy had seated the responsibility for such tasks firmly in the laps of women. And over time, some employers began to see women of childbearing age as unreliable since they might become pregnant and leave for a year. It was in this context, and especially in the 1980s, that many women began to question why the rhetoric of equality did not match their own experiences. As we have seen, artists like Brüne and Ziegler began to create works that addressed the challenges they faced as women working in a traditionally masculine discipline. It was

also at this time that female sociologists began to investigate the continuing gender inequality. In addition to the impact of the policies implemented in the early 1970s, sociologists like Irene Dölling realised that a more subtle reason for continuing gender inequities was the different expectations and socialisation men and women experienced.⁴⁸ As children, for example, boys were encouraged to be active; women, to be pretty and polite. It is some of these expectations that Ziegler was exploring in her painting, *Self with Son*.

And yet despite the increasing awareness among women that they were not equal, direct confrontation was rare, and raising awareness was difficult due to official proclamations that equality had been achieved as well as East German limits on the numbers of people who could gather together without first getting official permission.⁴⁹ Nonetheless, women began to organise and work for change in the mid-1980s.

No artist better exemplifies the emergence of a socialist feminist vision in art than Angela Hampel.⁵⁰ Part of the last generation of artists trained in the GDR before the Wall fell, Hampel became a leading voice in women's issues in the visual arts and an unusually vocal critic of the gender status quo after gaining the national spotlight for her Neo-expressionist paintings of strong women from mythology and the Bible. Her life and art offer a case study of the problems and potentials in the pursuit of gender equality in the GDR in its final years.

Born in 1956, Hampel studied painting at the Dresden Academy of Arts from 1977-82. It was here that she first began to notice that women were treated differently from men.⁵¹ She saw, for example, that there were fewer women – both as students and as teachers – at the Academy. She also had to deal with sexual innuendos and advances made by male colleagues and professors. And like most women artists, she had to confront the frequent assumption at art openings that she was a wife or girlfriend of an artist rather than an artist in her own right. This latter experience was one she encountered many times, but perhaps never as traumatically as in 1984, two years after she graduated. In this year, she was offered a solo exhibition at the Galerie Mitte in Dresden. She accepted but invited another artist, Wolfram Adalbart Scheffler, to join her. Rather than being seen as a cooperative exhibition as Hampel had intended, however, it was ultimately thought by many visitors to be his show. As Hampel stated it, "in the end it appeared that he had an exhibition and some young woman or other was also there".⁵²

Despite the disappointment she experienced with the Galerie Mitte exhibition, 1984 proved to be a pivotal year for Hampel as it was in this

year that she found her artistic voice – large, Neo-expressionist paintings in bright colours that focus primarily on confident, even aggressive women sporting punk hairstyles such as mohawks in a variety of vivid colours. The impetus for this change was Christa Wolf's recent best-selling book, *Cassandra* (1984), which focused on a minor character from the Trojan war to criticise the continuation of war in the present. This book, which blamed the patriarchy for war and saw matriarchy as an important counter to it, played an important role in women's rising consciousness in the 1980s. Released at the height of the Pershing II cruise missile crisis, the book resonated with Germans, especially women, on both sides of the Berlin Wall. Hampel later explained the impact of the book on her thinking as such: "When Christa Wolf's *Cassandra* came into the book stores, it was for me [...] a kind of revelation. It was a possibility for identification, as a woman, as a woman artist. It was encouragement and confirmation. And it was for me the beginning of a persistent search for feminine roots, for my roots in this world, that continues to the present."⁵³

In direct response to the book, Hampel created a series of black-and-white lithographic prints portraying a modern-day Cassandra and the warrior queen Penthesilea, before expanding into an exploration of women in myth more generally. As she stated it in 2005, "inevitably I came across Penthesilea, Medea [...] and their mutilation within an almost exclusively male-defined world".⁵⁴ Between 1985 and 1986, she created at least three paintings of Medea, the great sorceress from antiquity who fell in love with the hero Jason and promised to help him in his quest to obtain the golden fleece from her father if he promised to marry her. He agreed, she helped him, and they later married and had two children together. But then Jason left her for another woman. Enraged, Medea took revenge by killing their children, as well as the new woman.

In all of Hampel's paintings of Medea, the sorceress appears with her children, and there is an aggressive strength in the figures expressed by the loose brushwork and bright colours. In *Medea* (1985, figure 8), Medea dances with her children, one of whom walks in front of her with its arms out to the sides as if pretending to fly. Medea holds the other by the scruff of the neck – its pitiful eyes meeting our gaze – a pointed dagger clearly visible in the hand behind her back. Covered in seeming leopard spots, her hair pulled back in a bright red pony tail, Medea bends her knees, as if losing the ability to stand in the face of the daunting task before her. It is an image of women and motherhood that shocks the viewer in its rejection of all norms, including the expectation that women in art – no matter the subject – be beautiful objects for the (male) viewer's gaze.



Figure 8: Angela Hampel, Medea, 1985, mixed media on cardboard, 166 x 122 cm (inv. A IV 584. bpk, Berlin / Nationalgalerie, Staatliche Museen, Berlin, Germany / Karin März / Art Resource, NY)

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From images inspired by classical mythology, Hampel expanded into the portrayal of women in the Bible. These include the iconographically similar *Judith* (1985/86), depicted with the head of Holofernes on the plate in front of her, and *Salomé* (1985), with the head of John the Baptist. But in sharp contrast to their usual portrayal as femme fatales, Hampel depicted them as fierce yet vulnerable individuals. They do not seduce us, the viewer. Rather, they appear as tragic figures, the heavy use of blue in the canvases emphasising melancholia. Hampel also created many images of women with snakes, works that reflect upon the association of women with evil existent since Eve was tempted by Satan in the guise of a snake in the Garden of Eden.

Although inspired by *Cassandra*, Hampel's investigation of mythological figures from antiquity and the Bible also fits into a larger turn in East German art of the 1970s and 1980s toward mythological and biblical subjects, the result in part of the relaxation of artistic policy and of a desire to discuss current events through the guise of allegory. Unlike male figures such as Icarus and Sisyphos, who were the foci of hundreds of works, images of strong female figures were rare. Indeed, Medea, Salomé and Judith do not even appear on a list of mythological figures in East German art compiled by the art historian Peter Arlt in the 1980s.⁵⁵ Hampel's focus on strong female mythological figures in her work thus points to – and begins to address – a significant absence in the mythological subjects being created by visual artists in East Germany in the 1980s, an absence that reflects upon an issue that Wolf had addressed in her book: the marginalisation of the female perspective in patriarchal society.

Hampel's rise to fame was quick and intense, beginning in 1984, the year she read *Cassandra* and found her artistic voice. By 1986, one of her paintings of Medea was the cover image for an issue of *Bildende Kunst*, East Germany's most important journal for the visual arts. She was also included in at least five exhibitions of East German art in West Germany in the late 1980s as well as the Venice Biennale in 1988. For several of these exhibitions, she was allowed to travel to the West, where she spoke with women about her work and women's issues, and often brought back literature to read and share with her colleagues in the East. These exchanges with the West helped to radicalise Hampel's stance on equality.

The catalyst for Hampel's change from a painter of women's issues to an activist was her experience with a controversial exhibition titled *Inside/Outside*. It was an exhibition that she, together with three other women, took part in at the Galerie Mitte in Dresden in 1987. This exhibition combined over-life-size figures expressionistically painted in red and black on cardboard created by Hampel and Gudrun Trendafilov, and installations such as an inverted forest made of old Christmas trees wrapped in netting that hung from the ceiling. Viewers had to walk through this forest to reach a boat propped up against the back wall that was filled with fliers containing poetry. Although it was one of the first exhibitions of installation art in East Germany, the medium was less controversial than the exhibition's lack of male artists.⁵⁶ According to Hampel, they had inadvertently broken an unspoken taboo in East Germany. As she explained it: "Do you have something against men?" was the nicest of the criticisms" they received from visitors to the exhibition.⁵⁷ Hampel was struck by the hypocrisy of these comments, and began to question why men could work together

without controversy, but when a group of women did the same, they were branded misandrists.

In the wake of the *Inside/Outside* exhibition, Hampel began organising regular meetings of women artists. Each month approximately twenty-five women would meet in each other's homes and studios to discuss their work, to suggest and read books together, and to meet with women from other careers to discuss the challenges they shared as women. These monthly meetings offered a valuable opportunity for companionship and support. They also led to the organisation and implementation of the first Plein Air – or multi-day workshop – at the national level for women artists with children. This workshop, which included childcare, enabled women artists with children to work and exchange ideas for several days in a supportive, communal environment.

The meetings also led Hampel to take on a more outspoken role for women in East Germany, protected as she was by her relative fame. In November 1988, for example, she gave a now-famous speech at the Tenth Congress of the Association of Visual Artists in which she pointed out the absence of women in leadership positions within the organisation. She then singled out Dresden for particular criticism: "the list of candidates from Dresden for the Central Commission is either a joke or a mistake – with a ratio of 20 male colleagues to 2 female ones". She then went on to point out that there were only five women (versus forty-three men) on the jury for the Tenth Art Exhibition, and ended by stating that the "thousands of years of male dominance in politics, economics, culture and religion [...]" needs to be complimented by a "feminization of society", or else "humanity will not have a future".⁵⁸

Hampel's criticisms came just one year before the Berlin Wall fell. In the months leading up to that momentous event, women had begun to pull together into organised groups, and many saw the changes taking place in the summer and fall of 1989 as a chance for substantial reforms.⁵⁹ At that point in time, there was no thought of or desire for unification with West Germany. Instead, the focus was on reforming East Germany. For many women, the charged political atmosphere seemed to offer a chance to advocate for greater equality between men and women, especially in the sharing of child rearing and taking care of the home. One goal they had, for example, was to make the baby year either gender neutral or shared between mother and father.

In the jubilant atmosphere following November 9, a time in which anything seemed possible, Hampel and twenty-two other women in Dresden met at the Galerie Mitte, where they decided to found their own artists'

association, the Dresden Sezession 89. The word Sezession was chosen in reference to past artist groups who had seceded from a dominant but out-moded art scene – in this case, from an art system that did not include women on an equal basis. Within months they had their founding exhibition. True equality seemed to be just around the corner.

Conclusion – After Unification

Less than a year after the Dresden Sezession 89 was founded, East Germany was gone. While unification led to greater freedoms in a number of areas, including free speech, travel, the ability to assemble, and voting, it also led to high levels of unemployment, especially for women.⁶⁰ Additionally, it led to setbacks in women's rights. As Ferree stated it in 1993, “[women’s] effort to find an alternative to ‘mommy politics’ was superseded by a defensive struggle to maintain the employment and reproductive rights they had taken for granted”.⁶¹

In the visual arts, unification led to a significant decrease in the numbers of East German women included in major exhibitions, including those focusing specifically on East German art. Whereas in East Germany, women were an important – and ever increasing – part of the art scene, making up 33% of the Association of Visual Artists in East Germany and more than 25% of the artists in major exhibitions by the mid-1980s, their numbers dropped to under 10% in most books and exhibitions about East German art after 1990.⁶² Of the 137 artists in the award-winning blockbuster exhibition, *Kunst in der DDR*, in 2003, for example, only thirteen were women, and of them, only three were painters.

This absence or downplaying of women artists in post-socialist exhibitions and publications about the GDR has been remarked upon by a number of German scholars, including Hiltrud Ebert and Heidi Stecker.⁶³ Then in 2009, Kathleen Schröter showed that this exclusion of East German women artists from western exhibitions dates back to at least the 1980s and is thus part of a long-term tendency in the West to remove women from exhibitions of East German art.⁶⁴ This tendency worsened after unification with the loss of an East German corrective voice.

For the twentieth anniversaries of the fall of the Berlin Wall and unification, the relative absence of women from narratives about East German art was addressed by a number of exhibitions in Germany focusing on women, including *und jetzt. Künstlerinnen aus der DDR* (2009) and *Entdeckt! Rebellische Künstlerinnen in der DDR* (2011). Most of these exhibi-

tions, however, focused on performance art, showing little interest in painting despite the fact that it was the GDR's most prestigious visual medium. Similarly, major exhibitions such as the Los Angeles County Museum of Art's *Art of Two Germanys. Cold War Cultures* (2009) included women from East Germany primarily as photographers.⁶⁵ Such exhibitions, while important for bringing a number of women to public attention, nonetheless unwittingly support western expectations about what kinds of art women produce. With the exception of two exhibitions, *Diva und Heldin* and *Role Models*, both of which were small and held in marginal locations, women as painters continue to be overlooked in scholarship about East German art.⁶⁶

This paper has offered an historical overview of women's painterly production in East Germany, revealing the development of a complex and interesting art by the final decades of the Cold War, art that challenged not only the continuation of patriarchal biases in socialist society but also in the tradition of painting itself. The erasure of this art and these artists from the canon of East German art thus elides not only an important part of the story of East German art – that of half the East German populace and one third of its practicing artists – but also the challenge that these artists pose to the often unconscious and yet deeply entrenched belief that painting is primarily a masculine endeavour.⁶⁷ Similarly, the elision of women from the story of East German art obscures the achievements, however incomplete, that had been made toward gender equality in the socialist modernity of the GDR.

Notes

1. The research for this paper was funded by an American Association for University Women Postdoctoral Research Leave Fellowship. I would like to thank Grant Arndt, Katrin Bahr, Jelena Bogdanovic, Paula Hanssen, Marlene Heidel, Joes Segal, and the blind reviewers at *HCM* for valuable feedback on earlier drafts of this article. I am also grateful to Gudrun Brüne, Angela Hampel, Heidrun Hegewald, and Doris Ziegler for meeting with me to discuss their work and experiences.
2. Honecker at the eighth Parteitag der SED in June 1971, as quoted in Carmen Lode, "Einige Aspekte der Frauenkunst und -kulturpolitik in der DDR," in *OSTARA. Künstlerinnen aus Ost Berlin* (Bonn: Zentrum für Kunstaustellungen, 1990). Unless otherwise stated, the translations in this text are my own.
3. In comparison, West German law was amended in 1957 by the Act of Equal Rights for Men and Women, but it was not until 1977 that the articles stipulating a woman's role in marriage as primarily that of wife and mother – rather than partner – were finally changed. Moreover, in the 1950s and 1960s, there were campaigns in West Germany

against double wage earners and many women were dismissed from work as soon as they were married. Marilyn Rueschemeyer, "Women in East Germany: From State Socialism to Capitalist Welfare State," in *Democratic Reform and the Position of Women in Transitional Economies*, ed. Valentine M. Moghadam (Oxford: Clarendon: Press, 1993), 75-91.

4. Rueschemeyer, "Women in East Germany," 78.
5. There were ten of these exhibitions between 1946-1988. The first three included artists from both the eastern and western halves of Germany; thereafter it was an exhibition of contemporary East German art.
6. VBK percentage from Christiane Müller, "Bildende Künstlerinnen der DDR – soziales Umfeld und Werk. Versuch einer Situationsanalyse zu Beginn der 80er Jahre," (PhD diss, Humboldt Universität, 1989). The percentage of students in the art academies who were women is from Annette Brinkmann, Bärbel Mann, and Andreas J. Wiesand, *Frauen im Kultur- und Medienbetrieb II. Fakten zu Berufssituation und Qualifizierung* (Bonn: ARCult MEDIA, 1995), 130.
7. 4% of the artists at the first documenta (1955) were women; 4.43% at the second (1959). At both the seventh (1982) and eighth (1987) documentas, women were 13%. These numbers are based on counting the artists listed at the back of the catalogs. Although the East German exhibitions were national and documenta was international, this difference reflects how each country viewed art, with West Germany emphasizing its integration into an international art scene. Like the German Art Exhibitions, documenta took place every four to five years (frequently in the same years as the exhibitions in Dresden) and offers an overview of contemporary art in the West.
8. This study is based on a close examination of the paintings women exhibited at the eight national exhibitions that took place in Dresden between 1953 and 1988. I first made a list of all the women artists and their work and then tracked down an image for each. The Deutsche Fotothek was an invaluable resource in this study as it has images for many of the paintings in these exhibitions, including ones not reproduced in the catalogues: deutschefotothek.de.
9. The Formalism Debates (1948-51) determined art policy in East Germany until the mid-1950s: art was to be realistic and optimistic, and to help with reeducating the public in the wake of twelve years of Nazi rule.
10. Altogether sixty-two paintings were illustrated. Of these, at least twenty were portraits and nine were landscapes or cityscapes without people; approximately twelve were images of pairs or groups of whom none appear to be a woman.
11. For more on how the subjects in men's and women's art differed, see Heidi Stecker, "Künstlerinnen in der DDR: Eine Suche nach den Anderen," *Frauenleben – Frauenliteratur – Frauenkultur in der DDR der 70er und 80er Jahren* (Leipzig: Leipzig Universität, 1997), 11-24.
12. Margarete Jürgens, *Ruhende Erntearbeiter*.
13. K. G. "Ihr bildnerisches Schaffen bleibt in guter Erinnerung. Zum Ableben von Hildgard Stilijanov-Kretschmar," *Sächsische Zeitung*, 12/13 September 1981, 6.
14. *Maler und Werk: Damme* (Dresden: Verlag der Kunst, 1990) 29. Another important artist from Dresden was Lea Grundig (1906-1977): she had work in eight of the ten national exhibitions and was the only woman to be president of the national Association of Visual Artists. As a graphic artist, however, she falls outside the purview of this article.
15. There are two possible exceptions to this statement, both at the Third: *Wir, Mansfeld-Kombinat Wilhelm Pieck* by Pia Janika and Walter Ebeling, and *Methanol wird geprüft* by Susanne (Kandt-)Horn. I was unable to locate a reproduction of these works and thus am unable to ascertain their exact contents.

16. Donna Harsch, "Squaring the circle: the dilemmas and evolution of women's policy," in *The Workers' and Peasants' State: Communism and Society under Ulbricht, 1945-71*, eds. Patrick Major and Jonathan Osmond (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002) 151-170.
17. Harsch, "Squaring the circle," 159.
18. Barbara Müller (b. 1938) studied art education at the Humboldt-Universität Berlin from 1958-60, where she later worked in the art education department; she also received her diploma (external) in painting from the Hochschule für bildende Kunst Berlin-Weißensee in 1966.
19. Joachim Uhlitzsch, "Bauarbeiterlehrling Irene' von Barbara Müller," *FDGB Rundschau*, 7/8, 1973, 7-9.
20. Günter Meier, "Bauarbeiterlehrling Irene,' Gemälde von Barbara Müller," *Kulturelles Leben*, 6/1973.
21. Dr. Irmtraut Wecks, "Tendenz: Steigend. Junge Künstlerinnen auf der VII. Kunstausstellung," *Für Dich* 13, 1973.
22. G. B. "Arbeiterporträts," *Neue Berliner Illustrierte*, 32/18, 1976, 48.
23. Harsch, "Squaring the circle," 151.
24. Honecker at the Fourth Conference of the Central Committee of the SED as reported in *Neues Deutschland* on 18 December 1971.
25. Suse Rosenbaum, "Ihre Spezialstrecke ist der Schock," *Deutsche Volkszeitung*, 24 January 1986.
26. Ilse Grunert, "Über Probleme, die uns alle angehen," *Ostsee Zeitung*, 3 August 1979.
27. "Noch ist die Tür offen" and "Im Gespräch mit den Besuchern," *Für Dich*, 15/1977.
28. "Noch ist die Tür offen,".
29. Marilyn Rueschemeyer and Hanna Schissler, "Women in the Two Germanys," *German Studies Review* 13, DAAD Special Issue (1990) 71-85.
30. Grunert, "Über Probleme," 1979.
31. For more about Hegewald, see April A. Eisman, "Heidrun Hegewald and the Cold War Politics of the Family in East German Painting," in *Bildgespenster. Künstlerische Archive aus der DDR und ihre Rolle heute*, eds. Elize Bisanz and Marlene Heidel (Bielefeld: Transcript Verlag, 2014) 205-229.
32. Art Resource NY dates this painting to 1980. The 1984 catalog for the exhibition *DDR-Heute* dates it to 1982. I believe 1982 is the more accurate date for this particular painting. 1980 is the year she first began work on this topic.
33. Müller, "Bildende Künstlerinnen der DDR," 249.
34. *Ibid.*, 32-44.
35. N. Landsberg, "Gudrun Brüne: 'Selbst mit Vorbildern,'" *DDR-Revue*, 3/1983, 8-9.
36. Gerhard Winkler, "Gudrun Brüne, 'Selbst mit Vorbildern,'" *Volkswacht*, 1 August 1985.
37. "Auf eigenen Beinen?" *Sonntag*, 24 April 1977.
38. From the top left, moving clockwise, the women in the smaller portraits are Frau Stolpe, Frau Köhler, Frau Nickisch, and Frau Jazwiak. The portraits of Nickisch and Jazwiak were the ones included in the Eighth Art Exhibition of the GDR in 1977/78.
39. "Vertraut und ungeschminkt," *Thüringer Tageblatt*, 21 November 1985.
40. Dr. Arno Neumann, "Malerei der DDR," *FF Dabei*, 12 (1980).
41. Karin Großmann, "Auf Suche nach einem knallblauen Himmel," *Sächsische Zeitung*, 23 July 1982.
42. *Ibid.*
43. "Kritikerpreis der Sektion Kulturjournalisten der DDR," *Mittel Neueste Nachrichten*, 25-26. Oktober 1980.

44. Cornelia Briel, "Zu 'Selbst mit Sohn' von Doris Ziegler," *Sächsische Zeitung*, 30. Oktober 1987.
45. Ibid.
46. Harsch, "Squaring the circle".
47. Myra Marx Ferree, "The Rise and Fall of 'Mommy Politics': Feminism and Unification in (East) Germany," *Feminist Studies* 19 (Spring 1993).
48. Irene Dölling, "Frauen- und Männerbilder als Gegenstand kulturtheoretischer Forschung," *Weimarer Beiträge*, 4/1988. Irene Dölling, "Culture and Gender," in *The Quality of Life in the GDR*, ed. Marilyn Rueschemeyer (New York: M. E. Sharpe, 1989), 27-47.
49. Ferree, "The Rise and Fall of 'Mommy Politics,'" 96.
50. The term "feminism" is one that most women in East Germany, including Hampel, rejected as a label for their own agitations for equality. For them, the term referred to their western counterparts and a militancy evident in the west that most believed was unnecessary in the GDR.
51. Interview with Angela Hampel and the author, 4 March 2013.
52. Interview with Hampel, 2013.
53. "Das Herstellen von Schönheit – ein ungeheurer Akt.' Angela Hampel – Klaus Trende – Ein Gespräch," in *Frauensachen I: Angela Hampel. Malerei, Zeichnungen, Grafik* (2005), 16.
54. "Das Herstellen von Schönheit," 16.
55. Peter Arlt, "Mythos – Phantasie – Wirklichkeit," *Bildende Kunst* 3 (1985), 115-117. Women who do appear in his list – besides Cassandra, who is the exception – are Aphrodite, Leda, and the Muses.
56. Interview with Hampel, 2013.
57. Angela Hampel, ed. *Dresdner Sezession '89, eine Chronik*, 1989-2009 (Dresden: Dresdner Sezession 89, 2009), 8.
58. Hampel, *Dresdner Sezession '89*, 43.
59. Ferree, "The Time of Chaos was the Best," 597-623.
60. Rueschemeyer, "Women in East Germany," 75-76.
61. Ferree, "The Rise and Fall of 'Mommy Politics,'" 103.
62. Kathleen Schröter, "(Keine) Frau im Blick. Zur Westdeutschen Rezeption von Künstlerinnen aus der DDR vor 1989/90," in *und jetzt. Künstlerinnen aus der DDR*, eds. Angelika Richter, Beatrice E. Stammer, and Bettina Knaup (Verlag für moderne Kunst Nürnberg, 2009) 39-44.
63. Hiltrud Ebert, "Wo sind die Bildenden Künstlerinnen? Erklärungsversuch über das Verschwinden einer ostdeutschen Künstlerinnengeneration," in *Erfolgreiche Künstlerinnen. Arbeiten zwischen Eigensinn und Kulturbetrieb*, ed. Susanne Binas (Essen: Klartext, 2003), 106-115. Stecker, "Künstlerinnen in der DDR," 11-24.
64. Kathleen Schröter, "(Keine) Frau im Blick," 39-44.
65. Seven of the eight women artists from East Germany were photographers.
66. These were both important contributions to the topic, but their size and locations reflect the art establishment's relative lack of interest in the artistic production of women from East Germany. Simone Tippach-Schneider and Manfred Schweiker, eds. *Diva & Heldin. Frauenbilder in Ost und West* (Berlin: Star Media, 2012). Claudia Jansen, ed. *RoleModels! Die Frau in der DDR in Selbst- und Fremdbildern* (Bönen: Kettler, 2012).
67. This belief, though rarely stated outright, can be seen in the relatively low numbers of women represented by galleries and included in major exhibitions. For recent statistics, see "The Great East London Art Audit" <http://elf-audit.com/the-results/> and "Brainstormers" www.brainstormersreport.net/Research.html.

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