



Driving north-easterly along the Kurfürstendamm, we found ourselves in an increasingly dense landscape of poster images covering entire house fronts to advertise the latest cinema releases: sinking ships, asteroids, gargantuan Zeichentrickmännchen, all lodged between shoe shops and restaurants. These painted posters - illuminated by night - belonged to 1990s Kudamm like the techno tunes emanating from the New Yorker store, illegal street races in tuned Opels, and girls in Buffalo shoes. The blown-up faces of DiCaprio peering down on us one day and dinosaurs the next, disrupting the sameness of our surroundings, transporting us into imagined film worlds before we even set foot in the cinemas. The sequences of images alongside the street formed ever new constellations and montages: we glimpsed starships and portals to alien worlds hovering above striped ice cream marquees and Currywurst vendors.

Some film ads would become fixtures of the skyline: Filmbühne Wien showed the Titanic colliding with the iceberg for almost an entire year. The face of the Kudamm changed with little warning. Cinemas folded within a matter of weeks: UFA's Marmorhaus, Gloria Palast, Filmbühne Wien - lights went out in houses that had been playing films since the Kaiserreich. Many cinemas were gutted and repurposed with only their outer walls retained, becoming prime examples of Berlin Fassadismus. The rest were demolished altogether, heralding the arrival of high street brands like Benetton, Zara and Apple.

This, then, is a ghost map. It delineates what has become a cinema cemetery. It memorialises Charlottenburg's relationship with cinemas and their capacity for distraction and dreaming, as noted by Krakauer and Benjamin, citing an age when the Kudamm was Berlin's Broadway.

As well as being an extended obituary to former cinemas, this map charts a current free-of-charge open air exhibition: fresh poster paintings continue to be made and mounted atop Cinema Paris, Astor Film Lounge, Delphi and sometimes Zoo Palast.

Artist Götz Valien has been painting film posters since the early 90s and his work has not only enlivened my own teenage journeys in Berlin's West end, but continues to enrich the visual landscape of the city. Walking along the Kudamm with Götz's guidance, we become aware of the empty spaces on facades and glass vitrines displaying remnants of cinematic history. This map is also an archive of three decades of his work, using previously unpublished images. Most of his 3000+ poster paintings remain undocumented.

Manually painted posters have been an anachronism since the 1970s

when colour printing became cheaper. The extra effort involved in commissioning and installing hand-painted cinema posters is testament both to cinema's importance in Berlin's Kulturleben as well as Valien's continued commitment and efficiency: to keep the job viable he has to work as fast as an inkjet printing machine, covering up to 50 square meters a day. The process also requires constant destruction of his previous paintings: as canvases are reused and remounted, old work vanishes under layers of emulsion paint, forming palimpsests that each weigh up to 200 kilos and need to be craned into place. The physicality of the paintings cannot be underestimated: accustomed to 4k high resolution photographic printing, our eyes trip up on these surfaces, their small imperfections resisting speedy readings - making us look twice.



CINEMA PARIS (1951–present)
Kurfürstendamm 211
10719 Berlin

The cinema is part of the 'Maison de France', established by Allied forces to promote French culture in the post-war years. It remains open today thanks to a recent citizens' initiative.

Poster Paintings: Monsieur Claude 2 (2019), Götz Valien.
Poster 360 x 840 cm / 4 panels at 360 x 210 cm each.

FILMBÜHNE WIEN (1913–2000)
Kurfürstendamm 26
10719 Berlin

Formerly known as UFA-Theater Kurfürstendamm, Union-Palast, U.T. Lichtspiele. Purpose-built cinema by architects Nentwich & Simon in 1913. It was formerly known as UFA-Theater Kurfürstendamm, Union-Palast, U.T. Lichtspiele. The cinema is now an Apple store.

Poster paintings: Late Show (1999), 8MM (1999), American History X (1999), Götz Valien.
Poster in 3 parts ca. 450 x 500 cm each. Usually several different films were advertised simultaneously.

ASTOR FILM LOUNGE (1948–present)
Kurfürstendamm 225
10719 Berlin

Formerly a Kindl Brewery, it was converted in 1948 into a cinema, and then redesigned by famous cinema architect Gerhard Fritsche in 1952. Known as Kiki (Kino im Kindl), UFA Pavilion, UFA Film Palast.

Poster painting: Snowden (2016), Götz Valien.
Poster 405 x 450 cm / 3 panels at 135 x 450 cm each.

GLORIA PALAST (1953–1998)
Kurfürstendamm 12-13
10719 Berlin

The new Gloria Palast was built in 1952 after the original from 1926 was destroyed during the war. Occupied for a few years by clothing retailer United Colours of Benneton, the building was subsequently demolished.

Poster painting: Die Verurteilten (1994), Götz Valien.
Poster: 300 x 1250 cm / 5 panels horizontally arranged of two films.



MARMORHAUS (1913–2000)
Kurfürstendamm 236
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Purpose-built by Hugo Pal in 1912/1913, this cinema's marble-clad facade has lost its hipped roof and the large blue neon lettering spelling Marmorhaus. The spaces lacking windows in the empty central part framed by pilasters indicate the former position of the poster paintings. Today it is a Zara shop.

Poster Paintings: Star Wars Episode 1 (1999), Götz Valien.
Poster: 450 x 500 cm / 3 panels.

ROYAL PALAST (1965–2004)
Taentzienstr. 9
10789 Berlin

Purpose built cinema in 1965 by Helmut Hentrich, Hubert Petschnigg und Partner as part of the Europa Center shopping mall. It was demolished and rebuilt as a Saturn shop.

Poster paintings: 13. Panorama 48. Internationale Filmfestspiele Berlin (1998), Event Horizon (1998), Cop Land (1998), Götz Valien.
Poster panels left side (facing Europa Center) 1410 x 650 cm, right side (facing Taentzienstrasse) 940 x 650 cm. Like the Zoo Palast the cinema often advertised several films simultaneously.

ZOO PALAST (1957–present)
Hardenbergstr. 56
10362 Berlin

Built in 1956/57 by Paul Schwebes, Hans Schosberger and Gerhard Fritsche as a 'Bikino' novel double cinema.

Poster painting: Air Force One (1998), Götz Valien.
Poster: 1175 x 650 cm / 10 panels at 280 x 235 cm + 5 panels at 90 x 235 cm. Sometimes the whole space was used to portray one film; sometimes parts were for different films. Now it only commissions posters for special occasions - eg. Berlinale film festival.

DELPHI FILM PALAST AM ZOO (1949–present)
Kantstr. 12A
10623 Berlin

Former art deco dance hall turned cinema. Originally built in 1928 and restored from war damage in the late 1940s.

Poster painting: Der Junge muss an die frische Luft (2018), Götz Valien.
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Kino Karte

Host **Götz Valien**
Guest **Janina Lange**







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