

PRESS RELEASE | Berlin, May 12, 2026

Berliner Originale and *BerlinDiscoveries* are our new formats for photography from the capital. Once a year, f³ – freiraum für fotografie transforms into a platform that makes the diversity of photographic perspectives from Berlin visible. In two parallel exhibitions, we present iconic works by renowned photographers from Berlin and offer the opportunity to discover new talents.

f³ – freiraum für fotografie presents

Berliner Originale VOL. I: ROBERT LEBECK

May 22 – June 21, 2026



As the opening of this series, no one is more fitting than the native Berliner **Robert Lebeck**. He is one of the defining figures of photojournalism in postwar Germany. In an era when the country was reorienting itself and global politics were in flux, he developed a visual language that did more than document, it told stories. Born in Berlin in 1929, the self-taught photographer began working as a photojournalist in 1952 for various newspapers and illustrated magazines including *Revue* and *Kristall*. He worked for over three decades for the magazine *Stern*. His work, shaped by empathy and curiosity, forms the visual memory of the young Federal Republic.

Lebeck traveled around the world and photographed in major cities as well as rural regions, at political events and in everyday life. He portrayed politicians, artists, and intellectuals just as much as people far removed from the public eye. All of his photographs convey a sense of closeness and capture his subjects in authentic moments of openness.

He became famous for his 1960 report from the Congo: during the independence celebrations, a young man snatches the ceremonial sword from the King of the Belgians, a single fleeting moment in which the end of colonial power structures becomes visible. Such photographs established **Robert Lebeck** as a chronicler of times of upheaval. Yet his quieter observations behind the scenes of major events are just as significant: the world star Romy Schneider in striking vulnerability, exhausted prisoners of war returning home at the Friedland camp, Elvis Presley fans celebrating in East Berlin, or the grieving Jacqueline Kennedy at the coffin of her husband, the U.S. president who was assassinated in 1963.

Robert Lebeck was a pioneer of photojournalism: his images combine journalistic precision with poetic depth. They tell of a world in transition—and of the people within it.

Biography

Robert Lebeck was born in Berlin in 1929. During his studies in ethnology in Zurich and New York, he became interested in the photojournalism of magazines such as *Life* and *Look*, which led him to pursue a career as a photographer. From 1952 onward, the self-taught photojournalist worked for various newspapers, and later for illustrated magazines such as *Revue* and *Kristall*. For more than thirty years, he worked as a photo reporter for *Stern*, interrupted only by a one-year position at *Geo*, where he served as editor-in-chief from 1977 to 1978. His photographs earned him numerous awards and honors, including the *Dr. Erich Salomon Prize* of the *German Society for Photography* in 1991 and the *Henri Nannen Prize* for lifetime achievement in 2007.

In addition to his work as a photographer, **Robert Lebeck** also made a name for himself as a collector. His collection documents the history of photojournalism and comprises more than 30,000 items, including first editions and unique copies of newspapers, journals, and magazines dating from 1839 to 1973. **Robert Lebeck** died in Berlin in 2014.

OPENING: Thu., May 21, 2026, 7–9 PM. Speakers: Katharina Mouratidi, Artistic Director f³ – freiraum für fotografie, and Cordula Lebeck, Archive Robert Lebeck. Free admission!

GUIDED-TOUR with Cordula Lebeck, Sun., June 7, 2026, 11 AM.

GUIDED-TOUR & DRINKS with Katharina Mouratidi and Cordula Lebeck, Thu., June 18, 2026, 7 PM.

In cooperation with *Archiv Robert Lebeck*

f³ – freiraum für fotografie | Prinzessinnenstraße 30 | 10969 Berlin

Opening Hours: Tue – Sun, 1 – 7 PM | **Admission:** 7 €, reduced 5 € | www.fhochdrei.org | [@fhochdrei](https://twitter.com/fhochdrei)

Press contact: Ana Maria Sales Prado | presse@fhochdrei.org | +49 30 6040 7748

f³ – freiraum für fotografie presents

BerlinDiscoveries

4 Weeks | 4 Exhibitions | 4 Photo-Talks | 16 Photographers

May 27 – June 21, 2026

BerlinDiscoveries sees itself as a platform that makes the diversity of photographic positions from Berlin visible. Across four exhibitions, each lasting one week, it presents photographic series or cohesive bodies of work from the fields of documentary, portrait, conceptual-artistic, and experimental photography. The focus is on photography with a clear standpoint, distinctive visual languages, and works that critically reflect relevant issues of our time—whether in an urban context, in private spaces, or within broader social discourse.

The works were selected by a jury consisting of Valentina Crosato (*laif Foundation*), Helena Melikov (publisher of *SHIFT Books* and book designer), Katharina Mouratidi (artistic director of f³ – freiraum für fotografie), and Ingo Taubhorn (exhibition curator and photographer, former chief curator at the *House of Photography, Deichtorhallen Hamburg*).

BerlinDiscoveries 2026 #1 | May 27 – 31, 2026

Photo-Talk on May 27, 2026, 7 PM

Anne Barth, Johanna Eckhardt,
Anjali Janssens, Sina Opalka

BerlinDiscoveries 2026 #2 | June 2 – 7, 2026

Photo-Talk on June 3, 2026, 7 PM

Marshl Ceron / Laszlo Randelzhofer,
Rokas Jankus, Marina Mónaco, Niklas Schader

BerlinDiscoveries 2026 #3 | June 9 – 14, 2026

Photo-Talk on June 10, 2026, 7 PM

Lucia Jost, Masha Kushnir,
Ana Maria Sales Prado, Alena Schmick

BerlinDiscoveries 2026 #4 | June 16 – 21, 2026

Photo-Talk on June 17, 2026, 7 PM

Maria Bolz, Cecilia Gaeta,
Rainer Christian Kurzeder, Olivia Noss

BerlinDiscoveries Print and Book Fair on June 13 and 14, 2026 from 1–7 PM at

f³ – freiraum für fotografie. Admission: 7 €, reduced 5 €.



**Kofinanziert von der
Europäischen Union**



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IMAGE MATERIAL

The images may only be used for current editorial coverage of the exhibition. The images may not be modified, cropped or overprinted. **f³ – freiraum für fotografie**, the artist as well as the location and dates of the exhibition and the caption must be mentioned in any publication.

High-resolution print data is available for download at the following link:

[*Berliner Originale VOL. I: Robert Lebeck*](#)



Romy Schneider during a break in filming, Berlin 1976
© Archiv Robert Lebeck



Rudi Dutschke during his speech at Charles-University,
Prague 1968 © Archiv Robert Lebeck



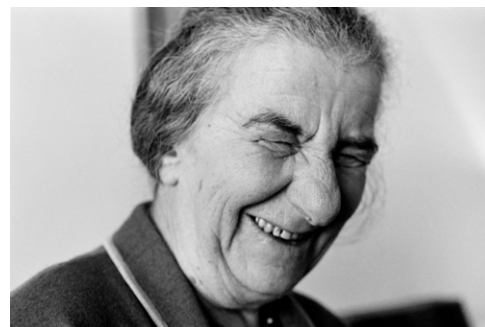
Willy Brandt in the dining car while on an election campaign tour,
southern Germany 1973 © Archiv Robert Lebeck



Jackie Kennedy and Lee Radziwill at the coffin of Robert Kennedy,
New York 1968 © Archiv Robert Lebeck



Konrad Adenauer receiving Winston Churchill at Palais
Schaumburg, Bonn 1956 © Archiv Robert Lebeck



Golda Meir, Jerusalem 1969
© Archiv Robert Lebeck

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A Congolese man snatches the sword from King Baudouin of Belgium Leopoldville 1960 © Archiv Robert Lebeck



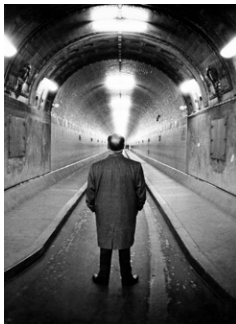
Washerwoman in Cullera, Spanien 1964 © Archiv Robert Lebeck



Karl-Marx-Strasse, Berlin-Neukölln 1960 © Archiv Robert Lebeck



Grandfather and grandson in Sevilla, Spain 1964 © Archiv Robert Lebeck



Alfred Hitchcock in the old Elbe tunnel, Hamburg 1960 © Archiv Robert Lebeck



Elvis Presley in Friedberg, Hesse 1958 © Archiv Robert Lebeck