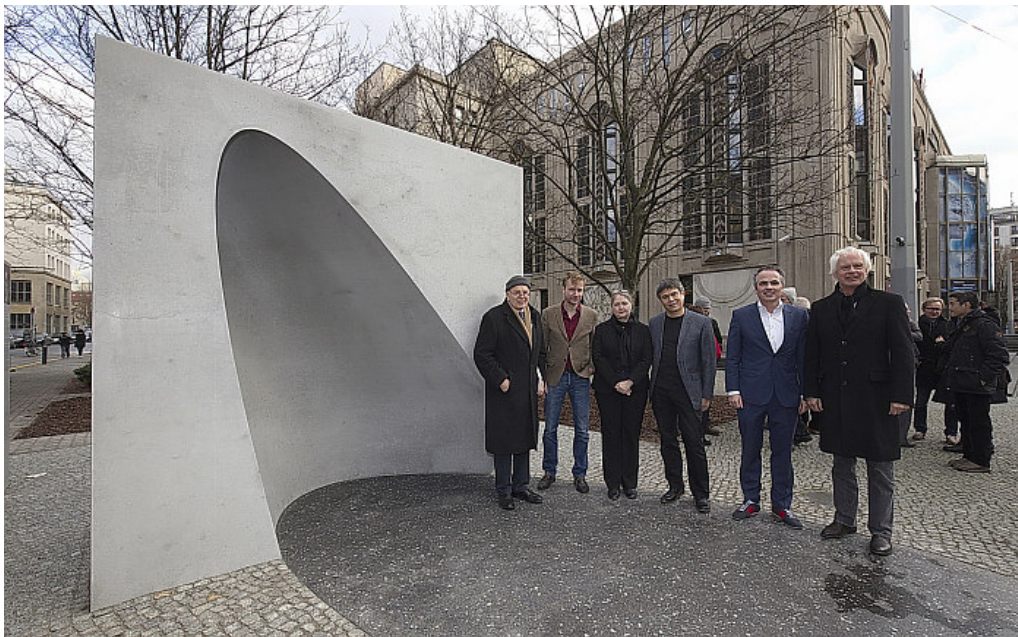


PRESS RELEASE

## In honour of the founders: Friedrichstadt-Palast Berlin celebrates memorial inauguration

Berlin, 19 November 2015



(l. to r.) Prof. Dr. Christoph Stölzl, Permanent Secretary for Cultural Affairs Tim Renner, artists Cisca Bogman and Oliver Störmer, theatre director Dr. Berndt Schmidt, and Peter A. Poelzig, grandson of Hans Poelzig.  
Photo: Pedro Becerra

**In honour of its founders Max Reinhardt, Hans Poelzig and Erik Charell, Friedrichstadt-Palast Berlin has officially inaugurated a memorial at Friedrichstrasse 107. Among the eighty people present were Permanent Secretary for Cultural Affairs Tim Renner, Prof. Dr. Christoph Stölzl (President of the University of Music Franz Liszt, Weimar), the two artists Oliver Störmer and Cisca Bogman (stoebob), and Peter A. Poelzig, grandson of the esteemed expressionist architect.**

This history of the Friedrichstadt-Palast theatre begins on 28 November 1919 with the opening of the Großes Schauspielhaus (Great Theatre). This Berlin entertainment theatre achieved world fame thanks to three outstanding artists: Max Reinhardt, Hans Poelzig and Erik Charell. Reinhardt was the most visionary theatre producer and theatre owner of his time. Poelzig was an influential architect – his works in Berlin include the Haus des Rundfunks and the Babylon cinema. Charell shaped the grand revue shows of the 'Golden Twenties' in Berlin, discovered Marlene Dietrich and the Comedian Harmonists, and wrote the international hit operetta 'White Horse Inn'.

From 1933, the National Socialists denied all three the ability to work in Germany. Reinhardt and Charell went into exile because of their Jewish origins. Charell was in additional danger because of his homosexuality. Poelzig found himself subjected to

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Europe's Show Palace

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10117 Berlin-Mitte  
In the East End Theatre District

Theatre Director/General Director:  
Dr. Berndt Schmidt

Chairman of the Supervisory Board:  
Tim Renner, Permanent Secretary for  
Cultural Affairs



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increasingly repressive treatment because of his expressionist ('degenerate') architecture.

'In view of the fact that our theatre has survived two dictatorships in its 96-year history, today the Palast consciously supports freedom, diversity and tolerance. In honour of our three founding fathers, who shaped our style and later had to suffer under the Nazis, we dedicate this prominent memorial on Friedrichstrasse,' said theatre director Dr. Berndt Schmidt. On 18 January 1934, the newly renamed 'Theatre of the People' became a platform for 'Strength through Joy' propaganda. In his address, the theatre director noted that the Nazi theatre opened with Schiller's play 'The Robbers': 'the name alone is a revealing and painful irony of everything that was still to come until 1945.' In 1947, the theatre received its current name, the Friedrichstadt-Palast.

'The memorial reminds us to remember those who were forced to flee at that time and had to find a new home, as we see again today with the refugee situation,' said Tim Renner, Permanent Secretary for Cultural Affairs of the City of Berlin. A closed competition to design the memorial was held in 2014, and the project was awarded to Störmer & Bogman (stoebo). Dutch media artist Cisca Bogman also works as a painter and graphic designer. Oliver Störmer is an artist, sculptor and art lecturer.

In his speech, Prof. Dr. Christoph Stölzl drew a connection between culture and politics: 'The founders represent the invention of a mass culture which had not existed before – a new democratic form of entertainment.'

The memorial takes the form of a cast-concrete cuboid that is cut into by an eccentrically displaced truncated cone. The negative in the block represents the imaginary beam of light from a theatre spotlight. On the ground, the projection of the 'beam' continues as an oval area of the pavement consisting of dark, polished asphalt with a glitter effect. The cone of light from the spotlight, which results solely from its negative circumscription, remains immaterial. As a universal symbol of the world of theatre and of revue, it forms a link between yesterday and today, and references the absence of the protagonists.

Duisburg-based architect Peter A. Poelzig was impressed and moved by the project: 'My grandfather influenced an entire generation of architects and there was hardly any construction project in which he did not set examples. Nearly eighty years after his death, this work of art is a truly sublime, very beautiful and clear tribute to him.'

Web links:

Max Reinhardt: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Max\\_Reinhardt](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Max_Reinhardt)

Hans Poelzig: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hans\\_Poelzig](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hans_Poelzig)

Erik Charell: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Erik\\_Charell](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Erik_Charell)

Großes Schauspielhaus: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Großes\\_Schauspielhaus](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Großes_Schauspielhaus)

Friedrichstadt-Palast Berlin: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Friedrichstadt-Palast>

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