

ABERMILLIONEN

Hannah Höch

ANSCHAUUNGEN

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Hannah Höch vor der Staffelei, um 1926

"MILLIONS OF VIEWS"— HANNAH HÖCH'S AESTHETIC VAGABONDING

"The discourses must be treated as discontinuous practices that overlap and sometimes touch, but also ignore or exclude each other." ¹—Michel Foucault

"I have never looked at things from only one side. I have always gone around things." ²—Hannah Höch

"[...] the physical human being is in constant transformation, the spirit of humankind is always in transformation – the perception of yesterday is not the truth of tomorrow. Everything is only an instantaneous and endlessly changing state of the great process of development [...]" ³—Hannah Höch

On the path to Höch

¹ Foucault, Michel, *The Order of Discourse. Inaugural lecture at the Collège de France*, given December 2, 1970, p. 56. https://www.kit.ntnu.no/sites/www.kit.ntnu.no/files/Foucault_The%20Order%20of%20Discourse.pdf — ² Quoted from Merkert, Jörn / Züchner, Eva, "Der geschlossene Kreis oder ein Vorwort, das ein Nachwort ist", in: *Hannah Höch. Eine Lebenscollage*, Archive edition, ed. by Berlinische Galerie, vol. III, 1st part., 1946–1978. Berlin 2001, pp. 7–10, here p. 10. — ³ Hannah Höch, *Notizbuch 1925*, quoted from Maurer, Ellen, "Der Blick sucht das Leben und findet den Tod. Aspekte zur Selbstdarstellung im Werk von Hannah Höch", in: Dech, Jula / Maurer, Ellen (eds.), *Da-dazwischen-Reden zu Hannah Höch*, Berlin 1991, pp. 48–59, here p. 53. — ⁴ Lavin, Maud, "Aus einem ethnographischen Museum". Allegorien moderner Weiblichkeit", in: ibid., pp. 115–126, here p. 124. — ⁵ Bichof, Rita, "Der neue Raum in der Malerei. Zum Verhältnis von Abstraktion und Gegenständlichkeit am Beispiel von Hannah Höch", in: ibid., pp. 140–161, here p. 146. — ⁶ Paul Scheerbart, in: "Frühlicht", 1921/22, vol. 2, p. 58, here quoted from Bushart, Madgalena, Adolf Behne, "Kunst-Theorikus", in id., Adolf Behne: *Essays zu seiner Kunst- und Architektur-Kritik*, Berlin 2000, p. 53. — ⁷ "Nitte unterm Baum", statement by Höch

The philosopher Michel Foucault pleads for vagabond thinking, a "both/and" consciousness that allows for discontinuity, transformation, caesura, a multiple subject, and demands changes of perspective in debate, in contrast to the hermetic tradition that presupposes unity and linearity in epoch, work, and creation.

Hannah Höch (1889–1978) has nothing directly to do with Foucault. However, it cannot be denied that an irritating volatility, a stylistic contradiction, and multiplicity manifest themselves in her broadly conceived creations. Changing perspectives, fluctuations between distancing and identification,⁴ variable modes of perception, and oscillations from figuration to abstraction characterize her œuvre. Höch designs—seen as a whole—her own singular disorder, an "imaginary logic"⁵ that trusts in metamorphosis, diversity and multiplicity, that juggles with means of expression and achieves a considerable radius. Her method nevertheless betrays system. It is a calculated vagabonding within modernity, or as Paul Scheerbart, esteemed and read by Höch, parodies: "Character is only obstinacy. I move in all directions. Long live the gypsy! Enough!"⁶

Höch's previous historical localization focused largely on the Berlin Dada movement and collage as the constituting and conditioning *movens* of her work par excellence. Höch's first adhesive work dates from 1904,⁷ her first verifiable oil painting likewise.⁸ Would Höch remain a Dadaist and montage her only original achievement until the end of her reception? Is it, therefore, legitimate to evaluate the painterly and

Kat. 31

Kubus (oder: vom Menschen aus), 1926

Gemälde

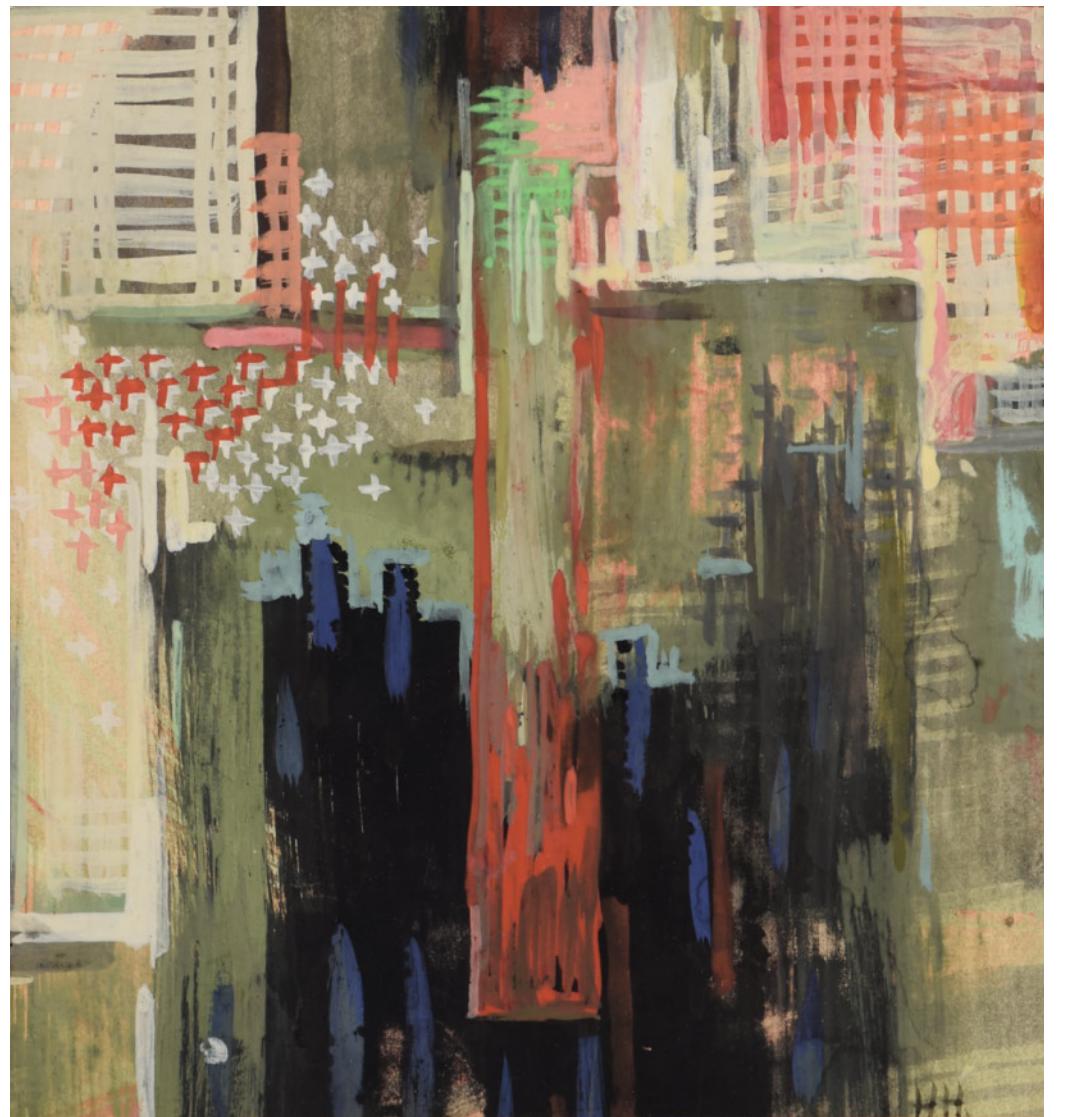
65,5 × 72,5 cm

Berlinische Galerie – Landesmuseum

für Moderne Kunst,

Fotografie und Architektur





Kat. 87

Impression Stadt, 1959

Gouache

16 × 15 cm

Privatsammlung

Kat. 88

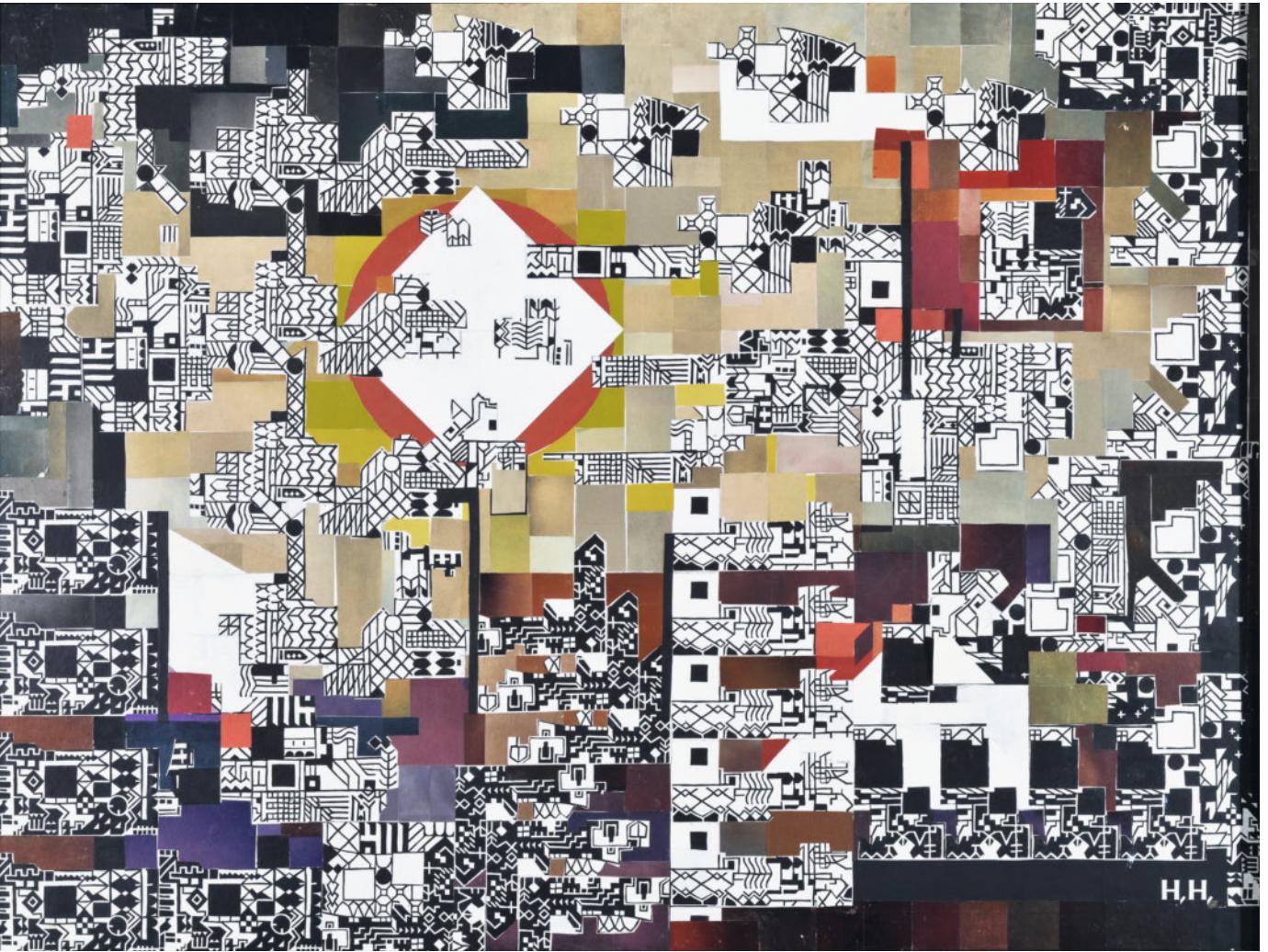
Die Stadt, 1970

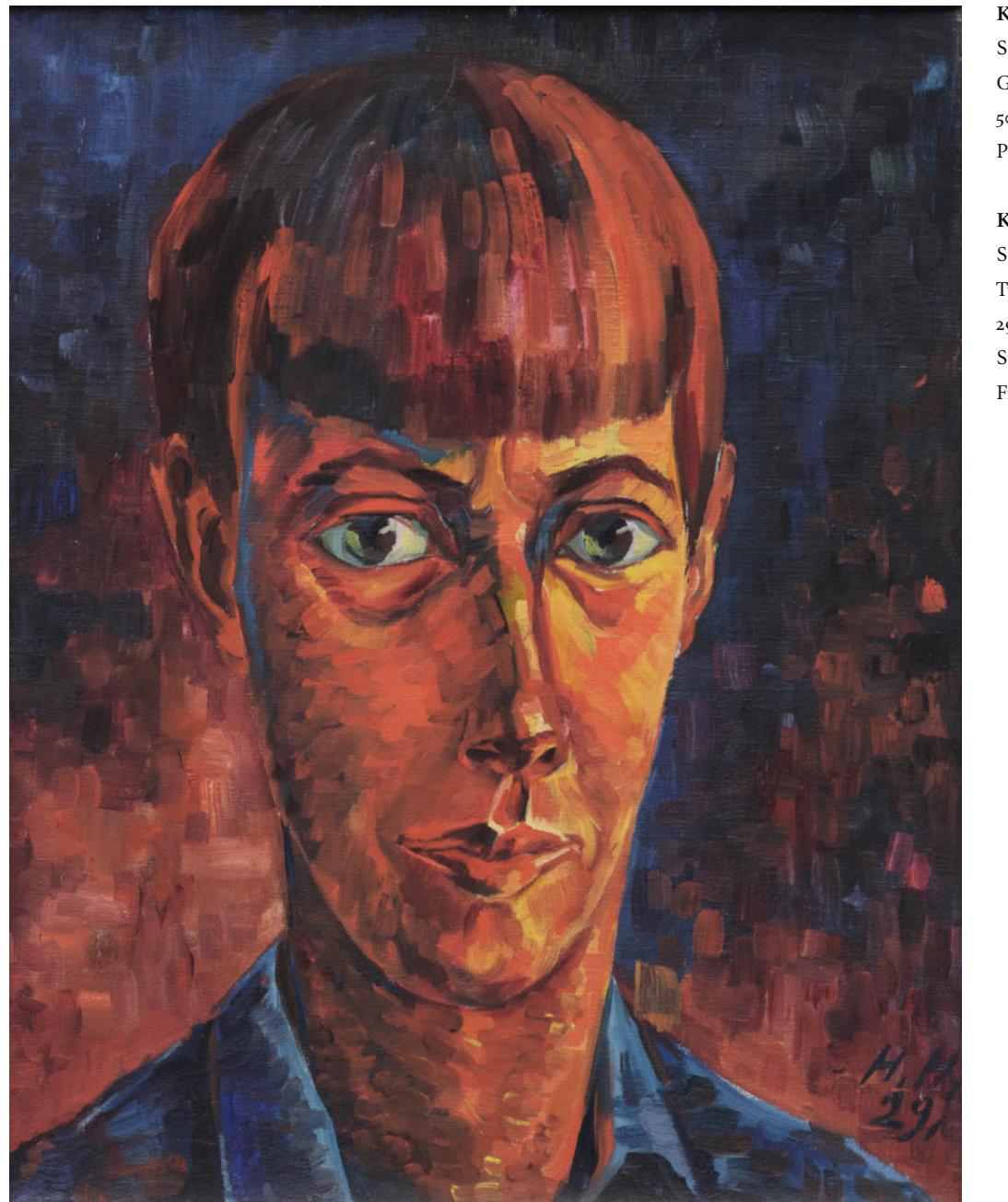
Collage

90 × 120 cm

Stiftung Schloss

Friedenstein Gotha





Kat. n7
Selbstbildnis, 1929
Gemälde
 $50,3 \times 40,5$ cm
Privatsammlung

Kat. n8
Selbstporträt, 1942
Tuschezeichnung
 $29,2 \times 26,5$ cm
Stiftung Schloss
Friedenstein Gotha



"AND IF TODAY SCIENCE AND THE ATOMIC PHYSICISTS ARE REVEALING TO US SUCH NEW WORLDS, AND WE ARE ABOUT TO ADVANCE INTO THE UNIVERSE—HOW SHOULD THIS NOT INFLUENCE ART? I AM ALSO THINKING OF THE TREMENDOUS WEALTH OF FORMS THAT ARE NOW BECOMING VISIBLE TO US FROM THE PRIMORDIAL UNIVERSE, THE ATOMIC WORLD, THROUGH ELECTRON PHOTOGRAPHY. FORMS WHICH A HUMAN EYE HAS NEVER SEEN BEFORE. TINY PARTICLES OF MATTER THAT WE CAN MAGNIFY TO SUCH AN EXTENT THAT WE SHUDDER [...] BEFORE SO MUCH NEW UNKNOWN BEAUTY AND EXCITATION."

HANNAH HÖCH ^{xvi}

„UND WENN HEUTE DIE WISSENSCHAFT, DIE ATOMPHYSIKER UNS SO NEUE WELTEN ERÖFFNEN UND WIR DABEI SIND, IN DAS WELTALL VORZUSTOßen – WIE SOLLTE DAS NICHT AUCH DIE KUNST BEEINFLÜBEN? ICH DENKE DABEI AUCH AN DEN UNGEHEUREN FORMENREICHTUM, DER DA NUN AUS DEM URGESCHEHEN, DER ATOMWELT UNS DURCH DIE ELEKTRONENFOTOGRAFIE SICHTBAR WIRD. FORMEN, DIE BISHER NIE EIN MENSCHLICHES AUGE GESEHEN. WINZIGE TEILCHEN VON MATERIE, DIE WIR SO STARK VERGRÖßERN KÖNNEN, DAB WIR ERSCHAUERN [...] VOR SOVIEL NEUER UNBEKANNTER SCHÖNHEIT UND ANREGUNG.“

HANNAH HÖCH ^{xvi}