



NEW RELEASE 2025

Helga Paris *für uns*

Texts by Udo Kittelmann, Helga Paris, Marina Paulenka

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Five decades of work by the exceptionally talented Berlin photographer

»I have always only been interested in people,« once stated Helga Paris (1938 – 2024), one of the most significant photographic voices of East Germany. This deep interest in people consistently ran through the artistic work of the photographer. The publication *für uns* accompanies the eponymous exhibition by Helga Paris, on view at Fotografiska Berlin from September 6, 2025 to January 25, 2026. It provides extensive insights into her impressive life's work and presents key series spanning five decades, including the previously unpublished *New York* series.

Helga Paris was a chronicler of her time—through her honest, unembellished, and intimate photographs, she captured the stories of the people living within the collective system of the GDR. She photographed houses and street scenes, as well as factory workers, garbage collectors, children, and ordinary citizens. In doing so, she always approached the people she photographed with great sensitivity and respect. Her images are not only documents of the socialist era but also portraits of closeness and dignity that capture the lived experience of the time. Through her photographs, she gave a face to those who were neglected in the official representation of the GDR. It is precisely in this attention to seemingly insignificant details that the power of Helga Paris's work lies: it provides profound insights into an era and its various realities of life. Her photography reminds us that history is not only written by politicians but also lived in everyday life—on streets, in factories, and bars—by the people who bear their own struggles, hopes, and fears.

In addition to the previously unpublished series and rarely shown photographs, this special publication also presents for the first time original texts that Helga Paris personally typed on a typewriter. Her lines offer rare insights into her thoughts. Filled with quiet irony, poetic clarity, and political sensitivity, these docu-

ments are as personal and multifaceted as her images themselves. To make the intimacy of her self-portrait series experiential, the pages have been elaborately crafted in an altar fold. This presentation invites the viewer to immerse themselves in Helga Paris's life and actively explore it.

From the essay *foreword* by **Udo Kittelmann**, longtime Director of the National Gallery Berlin and curator of this exhibition, along with Marina Paulenka, Exhibitions Director at Fotografiska Berlin: *This exhibition is not a retrospective. It aims to be nothing less than an act of remembrance, solidarity, and gratitude. It honors a woman who dedicated her life to revealing the invisible and who, with the gentle click of her camera shutter, said: » I see you.«*

Helga Paris was born in May 1938 in what is now Polish Gollnow. She grew up near Berlin in Zossen. After studying fashion design at the Berlin School of Clothing from 1956 to 1960, Paris initially worked as a lecturer in costume design, as well as a graphic designer and photo lab technician. In the mid-1960s, she turned to photography autodidactically; with a keen sensitivity to people and their everyday lives, she became a defining voice in East German photography. In 2004, Helga Paris was awarded the Hannah Höch Prize for her photographic life's work. Her archive, including all negatives, is preserved by the Academy of Arts.



Exhibitions

Helga Paris. für uns

Fotografiska Berlin

06.09.2025–25.01.2026

Fotografiska Tallinn: Spring – Summer 2026

Fotografiska Stockholm: Fall 2026

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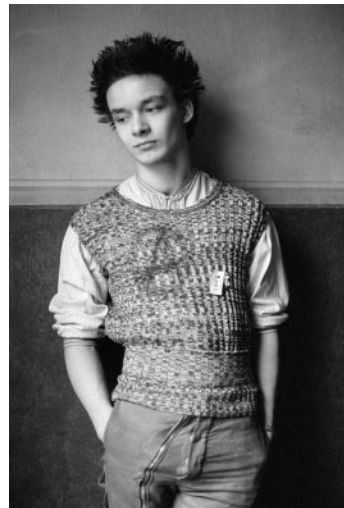
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