

*after the butcher* - showroom for contemporary art and social issues  
Spittastr. 25 - 10317 Berlin - [www.after-the-butcher.de](http://www.after-the-butcher.de)

## What are all the cornflowers in the world against a Berlin blue factory?\*

### Helmut and Johanna Kandl

Our exhibition in the project space *after the butcher* focuses on the development of colour production in Berlin during the 'Gründerzeit': Berlin blue, synthetic indigo and alizarin - the artificial madder red. The development of these colours also marked the beginning of a leading position of power for the German chemical industry based in Berlin, whose history is painfully linked to colonialism, war and Nazi fascism. Even the dismantling of the IG Farben Trust after the Second World War didn't prevent the striving for power of its successors BASF and Bayer (today less with a monopoly on dyes than on seeds and pesticides). The exhibition space *after the butcher* fits this colour research in its ambivalent historical reference - after all, it was oil contaminated from bones and slaughterhouse waste, blood liquor salt made from bones, that suddenly and unexpectedly coloured the solution of red cochineal lice blue. In terms of urban geography, the space is located in the immediate vicinity of the industrial-historical area of Rummelsburg, where the Agfa company developed and produced both aniline dyes and the first colour films.

The exhibition is a laboratory and cabinet of curiosities in which research into industrial history is linked to the fascination for this colour.

A wall painting shows the different shades of Berlin/Prussian/Milori/Saxon/China blue. The flacons and glasses depicted in a painting tell the chemical and product history of numerous paints and pigments.... Graphics and wall pieces inform about their commodity flows and protagonists of their production and thematise the connection between military and industrial dominance. A film shows how the red of the cochineal louse is transformed into a blue colour with the help of blood liquor salt. We see cyanotypes and another film about current research and possible applications of Berlin blue as a raw material for modern e-mobility batteries, switchable glass and medicines. The story of Berlin Blue is not over....

With works by Arne Hector, Beate Schachinger and Emil Tomasev. In collaboration with: Francois Pisapia, Scientific advice: Dr. Alexander Kraft, Prof. Philipp Adelhelm Humboldt University and Helmholtz-Zentrum Berlin, Melanie Schwöbel (Heyl company).

Exhibition opening: 22 September from 7 pm

Exhibition: 23 September - 22 October

Finissage: On 22 October 3-7 p.m. from 5 p.m.: Lecture by Dr. Alexander Kraft, chemist and chemical historian: *Sodium-ion batteries, switchable glasses and modern medical technology: What else Berlin blue can do!*, followed by a discussion.

\* Quote from Herr Treibel, owner of a Berlin blue dye factory to Majorin von Ziegenhals. From: Theodor Fontane Frau Jenny Treibel (1892)