

At home with Heartfield

What was Heartfield's home like? The private photographs in the Akademie's archives afford a glimpse of how the artist lived. The interior reflects the tastes of a couple who loved collecting, featuring simple German folk art alongside art and cultural objects from outside Europe. The solidly bourgeois setting in which Heartfield spent his final years had more in common with Biedermeier than with the Bauhaus.

On Bertolt Brecht's advice Heartfield, who was in poor health, visited a health resort in the Märkische Schweiz region. In 1957 he leased a piece of land by Große Däbersee lake and built a summer house using parts of a former first-aid post at Strausberg airport. Heartfield himself designed many of the fixtures and fittings, such as the stove and the curtain rails. He displayed some of his toy and ceramics collections in colourful display cases on the walls. In the garden Heartfield built a play house for his grandchildren. The house is currently maintained by a voluntary organisation, Freundeskreis John Heartfield-Waldsieversdorf, and is open to visitors at weekends during the summer and for events.