

## Barlach in Wismar

### Artworks from the Ernst Barlach Foundation Güstrow

Duration: 12 April to 15 May 2024  
Opening hours: April to September daily from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.  
October to March daily from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.  
Opening: Friday, 12 April 2024, 5 p.m. Free admission  
Guided tour: Sunday, 21 April 2024, at 11 a.m. with Franziska Hell, M.A.  
Saturday, 11 May 2024, at 3 p.m. with Franziska Hell, M.A.  
Curator: Franziska Hell, M.A., Ernst Barlach Foundation Güstrow

KUNSTRAUM St. Georgen  
St.-Georgen-Kirche, St.-Georgen Kirchhof 1A, 23966 Wismar

Hansestadt Wismar Amt für Tourismus und Kultur

St George's Church in Wismar is a jewel of historical architecture and a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Its monumental interior, characterised by Gothic brickwork, provides an extraordinary space for presenting contemporary art while relating it to both history and location.

#### Images:

- 1 Der Spaziergänger, 1912, Zink (Guss 1940)
- 2 Tanzende Alte, 1920, Bronze (Guss nach 1951)
- 3 Tot im Leben, 1926, Bronze (Guss seit 1981)
- 4 Das Wiedersehen, 1926, Bronze (Guss seit 1930)
- 5 Pietà, 1932, Bronze (Guss seit 1980)

Text: Franziska Hell, M.A.

Sponsored by the Federal State of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, the district of Nordwestmecklenburg and the Hanseatic City of Wismar



## Biography

1870 Ernst Heinrich Barlach is born on January 2 in Wedel/Holstein, Northern Germany  
1888–1891 Barlach studies to become a drawing teacher at the Allgemeine Gewerbeschule Hamburg. He later transfers to the sculpture class  
1891–1895 He studies sculpture at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Dresden and becomes a master student of Robert Diez (1844–1922)  
1906 Barlach travels to Southern Russia. His son Nikolaus (1906–2001) is born.  
1907 Barlach achieves widespread artistic recognition at the spring exhibition of the Berlin Secession and subsequently becomes a member of the art movement  
1908 He enters into contract with art dealer and publisher Paul Cassirer (1871–1926)  
1910 Barlach moves to Güstrow, Northern Germany  
1912 His first drama “Der tote Tag” (The Dead Day) is published by Paul Cassirer. Seven more plays follow  
1913 Barlach leaves the Berlin Secession  
1915/16 He begins training as a Landsturmmann (member of the home reserve). He is discharged early due to a petition from friends in the art community  
1919 Barlach is appointed a full member of the Prussian Academy of Arts  
1921–1931 He creates his Memorials for the cities of Kiel, Güstrow, Magdeburg and Hamburg  
1928 Barlach publishes his autobiography “Ein selbsterzähltes Leben”. He starts to experience the first nationalist-conservative attacks in response to his memorials  
1930 The studio building is constructed. Barlach enters into a contract with art dealer Alfred Flechtheim (1878–1937) for casting selected bronze sculptures.  
1933 In a radio speech as part of the „Künstler zur Zeit“ series, he makes a plea in favour of artistic and intellectual freedom. Barlach is awarded the “Pour le Mérite” medal  
1934 The Magdeburg memorial is removed for “mocking” war volunteers  
1936 The book Ernst Barlach Zeichnungen (Ernst Barlach Drawings), recently published by Piper, is confiscated and destroyed.  
1937 The Kiel and Güstrow memorials are removed. Artworks by Barlach are displayed in the defamatory “Degenerate Art” exhibition. Almost 650 of his works are confiscated from public collections. He is forced to resign from the Prussian Academy of Arts and is temporarily banned from exhibiting his work.  
1938 Barlach dies on 24 October in Rostock. The funeral service takes place in his studio building in Güstrow. He is buried in the family plot in Ratzeburg.

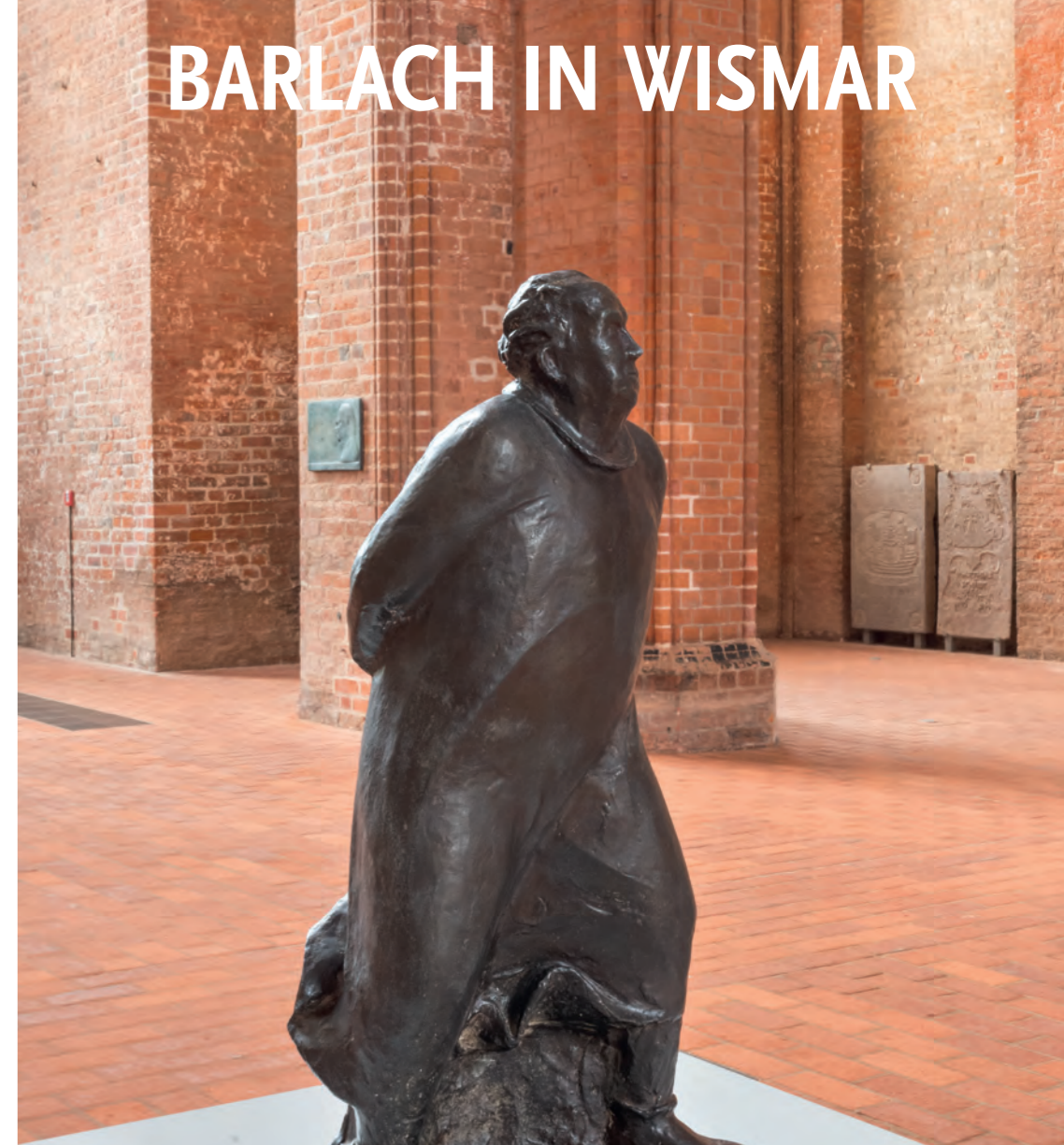
## Ernst Barlach in the Hanseatic City of Wismar

During August 1913, artist Ernst Barlach (1870–1938) and poet and writer Theodor Däubler (1876-1934) travelled through Mecklenburg and Western Pomerania. Their destinations included Rostock, Doberan, Stralsund and Neubrandenburg as well as the Hanseatic city of Wismar. Barlach had previously visited the city with its imposing churches and found it to be „appealing“. His visit in the summer of 1913 again made a favourable impression on the sculptor and he later included the town’s scenery in various passages of his fragmentary literary work “Seespeck” (1913/14, 1916). The tower of St George’s Church which no longer exists in its original form seems to have made a particularly lasting impression on Barlach. In his writing, the artist renamed it the „Däubler Tower“, whose „broad shoulders“ and „short neck“ symbolised the burly stature of his travelling companion whilst at the same time being a prominent feature of the town’s skyline.

It therefore seems perfectly logical to present a selection of Ernst Barlach’s most important and best-known works in St George’s, allowing his artistic creation to unfold in this spiritual setting. His sculptures Mann im Stock (Man in Stocks)(1918), Das Wiedersehen (The Reunion) (1926) and Pietà (1932), for example, refer to Barlach’s lifelong preoccupation with religious and spiritual content, which had a decisive influence on his art. His Der Melonenschneider (The Melon Eater) (1907) and Das Russische Liebespaar (The Russian Lovers) (1908) also represent an important thematic cluster. They tell of the sculptor’s journey to southern Russia in 1906, which had a decisive effect on his artistic development. With their animated and lively lines, Der Spaziergänger (The Walker) (1912), Der Ekstatiker (Man in Ecstasy) (1911/12) and Tanzende Alte (Old Woman Dancing) (1920) reveal yet another dimension of Barlach’s diverse oeuvre. Finally, his sculptures Gruppe aus drei Figuren (Group of Three Figures) (1925), Tot im Leben (Death in Life) (1926), Sitzende Alte (Sitting Old Woman) (1933) and Hockende Alte (Squatting Old Woman) (1933) are an impressive demonstration of the artist’s profound empathy for his fellow human beings.

Taken as a whole, the exhibited pieces by Ernst Barlach demonstrate the artist’s unique ability to create sculptural works of enduring relevance and a universal significance which he achieved through reduced lines and closed contours. At the same time, they provide an insight into his multi-layered artistic work, which made him one of the most important artists of German modernism.

# BARLACH IN WISMAR



KUNSTRAUM SANKTGEORGEN



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