

An alternative guide to

BERLIN

THE ALLEYS AND BACKWATERS OF THE GERMAN CAPITAL ARE A RICH SOURCE OF INSPIRATION, AND A MEANS OF COMMUNION WITH DEAR-DEPARTED TALENT. POINTING THE WAY: SINGER-SONGWRITER **LAUREN NAPIER**



NICO @ SCHILDHORNWEG 33

Entering the S-Bahn, I quickly noticed that the lights were off and a grey had settled over the traincar: an unusual occurrence at midday in Berlin, but suitable for visiting Nico's grave. She rests in a former suicide cemetery. Here she is kept company by: her mother; suicides that washed ashore the Havel over a hundred years ago; Russian prisoners of war; and unknown German soldiers. Though incongruent with her life of fame as an Andy Warhol creation — a character in the cast of *Chelsea Girls* or a resident of the Velvet Underground realm — there is something apt about her final surroundings. The mature trees enrobe and embrace. And the myriad of personalities beneath the soil mirrors the societal outcasts and rebels once present on the 5th floor of a Manhattan building.



RAMONES MUSEUM @ KRAUSNICKSTRASSE 23

Born to die in Berlin, or so the museum's tagline declares. The notion of death invites the implication of a fading, a forgetting. The presence of the Ramones is far from succumbing to such fates. There is not an inch of blank space upon these walls: visiting musicians from MURS to Frank Turner to CJ Ramone have signed from floor to ceiling; Joey's entertainment centre once filled a wall in his New York apartment and now calls Berlin home; Dee Dee's shoes have found their last tour stop. Armchairs, and an endless queue of Ramones' footage, provide the backdrop for coffee and pastries or, if you prefer, whiskey and a slice of vegan cake. Perfection can come at the modest price of simple chords and small spaces.



CORE TEX @ ORANIENSTRASSE 3

The record stores in Berlin are more divided than others in other cities in my experience. Techno resides at Hardwax or SpaceHall. Wowsville has all the rockabilly or garage vinyl a collection may desire. But CoreTex refuses to reveal a softer side: T-shirts printed with unapologetic "fucks" and anti-racist slogans; the dull thud of records being browsed, resounds. The Adolescents. Subhumans. Conflict. Total Chaos. They all await within the walls of CoreTex. Here is where I allow myself to give a nod to Penny Lane and to pay a visit when things get too serious or the city gets too lonely.



TEUFELSBERG @ TEUFELSSEECHAUSSÉE 10

Devil's mountain. Where spies once built their homes amongst the clouds over Grunewald, the crumbling buildings and sonic domes have housed an NSA Cold War listening station, a squat and artists' community, and the possibility of David Lynch's meditation college. The hill is artificially made from post-war rubble: a spy station hovering over the remains of an earlier Berlin. The walls are now covered in street art and the dome's balconies are a playground for those with blankets, jazz cigarettes and curiosity about what watches — and watched — over the city. It's oddly quiet up here for a place meant to steal secrets.