

MARK REEDER: "She said: 'I'll meet you at the Palast der Republik in the cocktail bar.' I was a bit wary about what this could be." (p.30)
YASMINE HAMDAN: "It's sexual harassment but with humour." (p.38)
PETER GREENAWAY: "You know and I know that most artists only have one or two ideas." (p.43)

ERLIN
LOODSUCKER

interview with
vampire

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LAYING
O LOSE

look behind
casino doors

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AHOLICS

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Best chairs for a good cause

Looking for some handmade local furniture with a great backstory? Kreuzberg-based organisation **CUCULA** sells simple wooden chairs, shelves and tables, the kind that wouldn't look out of place in an artist's loft or third-wave café – designed by 1970s Italian modernist Enzo Mari, built by refugees. The project was initiated in late 2013, when local designer Sebastian Däschle began teaching five young West African asylum seekers staying at the youth organisation Schlesische27 how to create furniture for their rooms based on Mari's 1974 book *Autoprogettazione*. The idea caught on, quickly growing into a workshop spearheaded by the refugee group, Däschle and designer Corinna Sy. They now sell 12 different Mari designs, with the money going towards the refugees' education and cost of living. Thanks to over €120,000 in crowdfunding, they've expanded this year to include a learning programme that teaches 15 refugees German. The furniture itself – plain wood, hard lines, boxy shapes – doesn't look too comfortable, but it does look classic, and the child-sized chair ("the Bambino", around €130) would probably be a nice, durable choice for a playroom. You can order online or visit the workshop, a small, bright space off Schlesische Straße, by appointment. Any orders you place now might take a while: Cucula is exceptionally busy this spring as the team works on the 330 chairs ordered as part of the crowdfunding campaign. But with record numbers of refugees coming to Germany this year (see page 3), we can expect more community-based programmes like this one to help integrate the new arrivals into Berlin with style. **JBE** ▶ Cucula, www.cucula.org

Best scratch 'n' sniff street

Walking along Karl-Marx-Allee, do you ever wonder what Berlin's widest, most imposing boulevard was like during its socialist glory days? **CENTRAL BERLIN, DDR LIMITED** (€29.90) is a bilingual coffee table book that celebrates the Ku'damm of the East and its central square, Strausberger Platz. While the bulk of the book is devoted to interior design photos showing the contemporary use of the buildings that line the street, the real highlights are the black-and-white pictures of everyday life along the boulevard from the 1960s-1990s by photographers like Max Ittenbach and Harald Hauswald. There's also a chapter about the street's construc-

tion in the 1950s and the challenges of chief architects Henselmann and Paulick. The most surprising inclusion is the last chapter, "The Smell of History" – a scratch-and-sniff page that gives off a faint aroma of tar and paper: "scents from Strausberger Platz in the 1950s and now". Beautiful photos of architectural details by Hans-Georg Esch offer peeks into buildings that you wouldn't normally enter, although the accompanying texts and captions can tend toward the clunky, misleading or totally clueless. But then again, the pleasures of this book are from looking rather than from reading. Or smelling. **EL** ▶ *Central Berlin, DDR Limited*, published by Skjerven Group, 2015



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