

**Burkhard von Harder**  
**The Scar. Westberlin (West)**

Part 1; 76 Min / Sound

Camera: Evert Cloetens

Editing: Alex Beyer

Original Soundtrack: FM Einheit in combination with some compositions by Klaus Wiese (1942-2009)

BVH Pictures GmbH, Deutschland 2009

*When I was growing up, I more or less consciously suffered from the division of the country. The intellect seemed to be cut off from the heart. Without really knowing much about it, I was convinced that it was all connected with the Second World War, rather than alone with the confrontation between East and West. I experience my insistent retracing of the former inner German border as a late ritual of crucial healing.*  
Burkhard von Harder

»The Scar (1)« is a film dealing with the former division of the city of Berlin into East Berlin, the capital of the GDR, and West Berlin, a symbol for Western freedom of thought and movement. The Wall was carved into the landscape in 1961 and fell in a peaceful revolution in 1989. 20 years after the eradication of the German divide, »The Scar« features the total length of the approximately 156 km-long former Death-Strip isolating West Berlin within the East German State: this heavily guarded zone that reinforced the »antifascist protection bulwark« was between 70 and 500 meters wide.

Filmmaker and visual artist Burkhard von Harder has enlisted the aid of a helicopter and pilot to keep precise course on the former divide line. Starting and ending at Schönefeld airport, this real time film documentation shows the »Scar« still in the process of healing and visually encircling the Western city.

In all cases where walls are constructed to forcibly contain an ideological divide, the issue of control is visibly highlighted, and tragically enacted. In Germany, the Wall became a visual symbol to divide time: German history up until Nazism and modern Germany as it was defined from 1945 onwards. The dueling ideologies of the 20th century hijacked Germany from a continuity with its past and played out its divisive political experiment on the war scarred landscape of the German psyche. If ever there was an architectural monument to a collective wound, the Wall was that edifice.

For von Harder, as for many German families, the divide had a personal resonance. The artist's mother's family was from Leipzig in the East, and his father's family from Hamburg in the West. The family legacy and histories were captive to the political forces that enclosed them. After the war, his divorced parents lived on a north south polarity, creating a personal compass for the artist, where his own travels to his family homes created an interior split.

In some instances, where the scar seems to have healed over, the camera is temporarily visibly lost and follows the wrong trail – a navigation aid, running in parallel to the film, shows us the authentic situation. The attempt

to find the »path« once again is akin to the attempt to permanently recall the past as part of the struggle of contemporary German society to comprehend its history. The land itself carries invisible traces of what has been written on the ground. It is the retracing of the trace that is the intent of this film. By doing so, Burkhard von Harder seeks to create a meditation on the past and to perform an act of cinematic healing.

The soundtrack is composed by percussionist FM Einheit, former member of the band Einstürzende Neubauten, in combination with compositions by Klaus Wiese, former member of Popul Vuh. Both sound researchers underline the magical aerial views of the city under snow with a definite uneasiness, permanently reminding us of the past and of our longing for redemption. When the helicopter reaches Wannsee, the city turmoil runs into a more meditative rhythm.

»The Scar. Westberlin (West)« is part one of a dual project. Part two, »The Scar. From Prex To Priwall«, is an approximately 15 hour-long voyage through Germany from Saxony to the Baltic Sea and is currently in production for 2010.

Special thanks to: Helen Adkins, Eckhart Gillen, Hana Iverson, and Reinhard Schulz

