



Architecture of the 1950s to 1970s in the Ruhr Area

When the Future was Built

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- A journey through the architecture of the Ruhr district, in Germany
- Postwar modernism from the 1950s to the 1970s
- A project under the initiative of 'Big Beautiful Buildings'

The boom years from the 1950s to the 1970s were marked by a pioneering spirit and a great drive for innovation in the Ruhr district as well as in many other regions and cities throughout Europe. Modern schools, universities, city halls, churches, shopping malls, and housing estates popped up as a result of ambitious architectural and urban planning projects. While back then they were created as a visual expression of a hope for a better future, a large number of these buildings are now falling into decay. Others are disdainfully ignored or have their merits concealed behind crumbling facades and are regarded as symbolic of failed social utopias. Frequently this architecture does not enjoy the appreciation it deserves simply because people have no information about it. Only very few such buildings therefore have gained their due recognition: Essen's Grugahalle for instance, Dortmund's Florianturm, or Gelsenkirchen's music theatre. The current guide invites you to explore the forgotten gems of this period of architecture in the Ruhr district. In total, the book sheds light on 54 structures, throughout 17 cities, all of which were specially selected, photographed, and described for this publication. Joined together they offer a vivid and comprehensive panorama of their era. Text in English and German.