

»FINAL SALE – FROM DEPARTMENT STORES TO MUSEUM«

An exhibition about the letterings of former department stores from 1980 until today.

21.05.– 17.09.2023 at the Buchstabenmuseum.

The exhibition »Final Sale – from department store to museum« shows selected letterings of former department stores from 1980 to today.

The era in which these companies had a permanent place in German city centers is over: Horten, Quelle, Hertie, Kaufhof and Karstadt – corporate names that are disappearing from the shopping streets. Galeria Karstadt Kaufhof is currently struggling with closure. The department store's history began promisingly more than 150 years ago. In Europe's first department store, Parisian customers in the mid-19th century could expect a wide range of products at low prices. Then, at the beginning of the 20th century, the luxurious temples of consumption boomed. The regime of the National Socialists put an end to many of these success stories through the so-called »Aryanization«. After the atrocities and destruction of the Second World War, the growing economy in Germany revived the old principle of goods and consumption for all. The basic idea of the department store with fixed prices, cash payment, exchange rights, promotion weeks and advertising worked again. Nevertheless, countless mergers, acquisitions and bankruptcies followed over the next decades. The department store concept had difficulty keeping up with low-price chains, discounters, shopping malls, brand stores and online retailing.

The creeping loss of the corporations also brings with it the disappearance of the distinctive lettering of the department store chains. With the exhibition »Final Sale – from department store to museum« we tell the typographic and urban-historical stories of the lettering that was brought into safety. We show the former importance of the companies with their history and department store architecture - because it often remains, stands empty and would have earned new opportunities and perspectives through reuse.

We invite you to discover the typographic department store icons of this exhibition and their history.

Since 2005, the non-profit association Buchstabenmuseum e.V. has been preserving, restoring and exhibiting letters from Berlin and around the world. For each exhibit we present extensive information on the history, specificity, production, typography and relevance in the urban space.

Exhibition »Final Sale – from department stores to museum«

Duration:	21.05. until 17.09.2023
Address:	Buchstabenmuseum, Stadtbahnbogen 424, 10557 Berlin.
Opening hours:	Thursday to Sunday 1 p.m. to 5 p.m.
Tickets:	12 euros, reduced 6.50 euros
Guided tours:	on request, visit@buchstabenmuseum.de