

## Tourist information for Worpswede and the Teufelsmoor



Are you interested in following in Paula's footsteps and would you like to visit Worpswede, the artists' village? Get in touch with us! We will be happy to advise you on cultural presentations, events and local tours, overnight stays and restaurants, tickets and arrangements, and help you with your booking. Visit us at the Worpswede Tourist Information.

### Information and bookings:

Bergstraße 13, 27726 Worpswede

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Fax: +49 4792 935823 [www.worpsswede-touristik.de](http://www.worpsswede-touristik.de)

### Opening times:

April – October: Mon – Sat 10 a.m. – 5 p.m.  
Sun 10 a.m. – 3 p.m.  
November – March: Mon – Sun 10 a.m. – 3 p.m.

### Opening times on public holidays:

[www.worpsswede-touristik.de/oeffnungszeiten/](http://www.worpsswede-touristik.de/oeffnungszeiten/)



**Museum am Modersohn-Haus**  
[www.museum-modersohn.de](http://www.museum-modersohn.de)

**worps^wede**  
die museen

**Die Worpsweder Museen**  
[www.worpsweder-museen.de](http://www.worpsweder-museen.de)

**Galerie**  
Altes Rathaus

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[www.galerie-altes-rathaus-worpswede.de](http://www.galerie-altes-rathaus-worpswede.de)

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TEUFELSMOOR

Gästeführer  
WORPSWEDER-TEUFELSMOOR e.V.  
[www.worpswede-fuehrung.de](http://www.worpswede-fuehrung.de)

*“... the fact that I'm getting married  
shouldn't be a reason for me  
not to become anything.”*

Paula Becker, letter to her mother, 3<sup>rd</sup> November, 1900



Modersohn family, around 1901, © Archive of the Otto-Modersohn-Museum, Fischerhude

Paula Modersohn-Becker (1876-1907) is now an internationally recognised artist. She was denied this fame during her lifetime. Ridiculed and criticised as a “Malweib” (derogatory term for a woman painter), Paula Modersohn-Becker lived at a time when women were not perceived as independent artists. It was only through her unwavering tenacity and her courage to accept personal limitations that she succeeded in pursuing her own aims and in continuously working on her artistic forms of expression.

Paula Becker was born in Dresden 8<sup>th</sup> February, 1876. Her well-to-do middle-class family moved to Bremen in 1888. Paula Becker's interest in art became apparent early on; however, after her school education, at the urging of



frauенORTE Niedersachsen is an initiative of the Lower Saxony State Women's Council that brings the lives and work of important historical female personalities to the fore and makes them known to the general public. The initiative also sets out to ensure that women's history and women's culture have a permanent place in the spectrum of activities offered by cultural tourism providers.

Further information at: [www.frauenorte-niedersachsen.de](http://www.frauenorte-niedersachsen.de)

Gefördert durch:



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**worps^wede**  
die gemeinde

[www.gemeinde-worpswede.de](http://www.gemeinde-worpswede.de)

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Stand: November 2025

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**Cover photos:**

Paula Modersohn-Becker, Self-portrait with Hand on Chin, 1906, WV No. 676,  
photo © Landesmuseum Hannover

**Detail-photo** © Archive of the Otto-Modersohn-Museum, Fischerhude



Paula Modersohn-Becker, Old Barn in the Evening Light, circa 1900, WV 84, Worpsweder Kunsthalle,  
© Rüdiger Lubricht/Worpsweder Museumsverbund

her parents, she first attended a teacher training college. During a stay in England she received her first drawing lessons, and later took painting lessons at the Berlin Women Artists & Art Friends Association.

In the summer of 1897 she stayed in Worpswede for the first time. There, she made contact with the artist Fritz Mackensen, who is considered as the founder of the artists' colony. He became her teacher when she moved to the artists' village in the autumn of 1898. In 1901, she married the landscape painter Otto Modersohn, whose first wife had died a year earlier. Contrary social convention, which dictated that a married woman should devote herself exclusively to household duties and raising children, she kept her studio and continued her artistic work.

Between 1900 and 1907, Paula Modersohn-Becker frequently travelled to Paris – without her husband – and, during her stays of several months, studied at the Colarossi Academy and the École des Beaux-Arts. Paris offered better educational opportunities for women, and museums and galleries encouraged interaction with the great masters and the artistic avant-garde. Works by Cézanne and Gauguin had a strong influence,

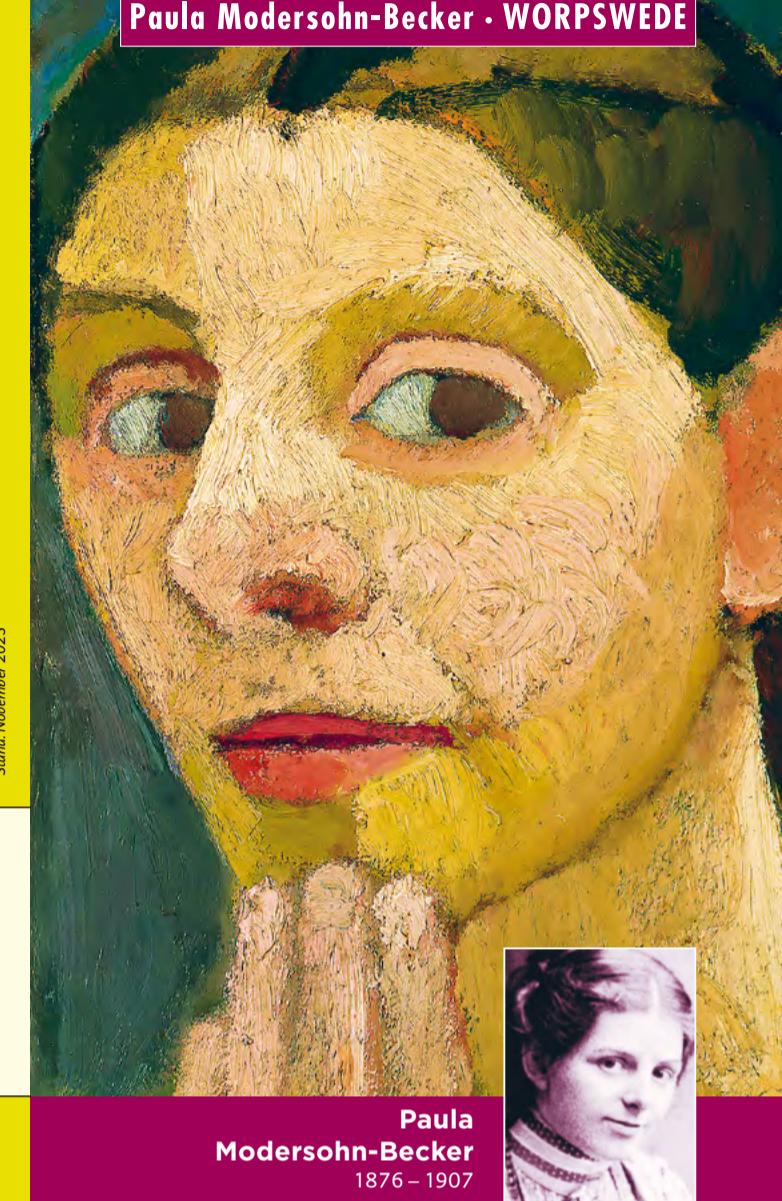


Paula Modersohn-Becker, Elisabeth with a Blue Bow in her Hair, around 1902, WV 267,  
Museum am Modersohn-Haus, © Eike Knopf

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Paula Modersohn-Becker · WORPSWEDER



**Paula  
Modersohn-Becker**  
1876 – 1907

and Paula Modersohn-Becker was one of the first artists in Germany to recognise their significance. The marriage to Otto Modersohn was not without its tensions. An equal marriage between artists was hardly possible given the prevailing conventions. Her inner drive to make something of herself and gain recognition as an artist grew ever stronger. Despite the lack of understanding in a man's world, the resistance of her family and the ridicule of art critics, Paula Modersohn-Becker continued to paint undeterred.

In 1906, she planned a longer stay in Paris and decided to separate from her husband. When economic worries overshadowed her dream of independence, she gave up the idea and, after a happy reconciliation, returned to her former life in Worpswede. During this time, she created groundbreaking works. Her pregnancy fulfilled a long-held wish, but a few days after her daughter Mathilde's birth,

Paula Modersohn-Becker died of an embolism at the age of just 31 – on 20<sup>th</sup> November, 1907.

An immense body of work came to light posthumously. Rural women and children, self-portraits – she was the first woman to paint herself as a nude – and still-life subjects determined her choice of motifs. Starting from the natural lyricism of the turn of the century, the painter achieved an artistic style in her pictures that established her as a pioneer of German expressionism.

In addition to her art, there are letters and diaries – important documents that describe her inner struggle as a woman and artist.

In 1927, the world's first museum dedicated solely to a female artist opened in the Böttcherstrasse in Bremen. Masterpieces by its namesake Paula Modersohn-Becker are now permanently on display there.



Paula Modersohn-Becker, Woman Farmer with Headscarf and Raised Hand, around 1905, WV 555, Museum am Modersohn-Haus, © Eike Knopf

# FOLLOWING IN PAULA'S FOOTSTEPS IN WORPSWEDE

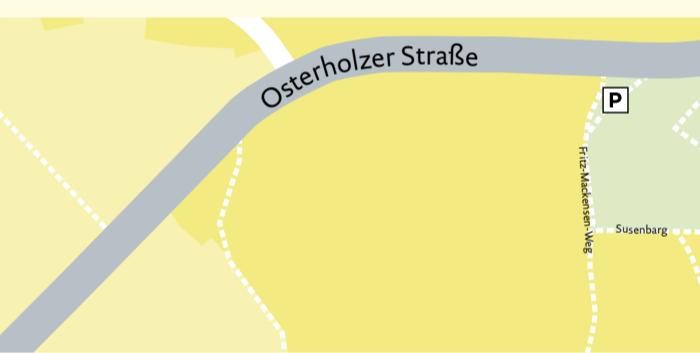
*"And it's wonderful to be here! ... and in between our little girl chirps and laughs and laughs."*

*Paula Becker, letter to Marie Hill, 23<sup>rd</sup> March, 1901*

**1** When she married in May 1901, Paula Modersohn-Becker moved into Otto Modersohn's small wood-panelled house, where he lived with his daughter Elsbeth. Paula enthusiastically designed the new home and the garden. From then on, family life was based there; a maid supported the lady of the house in her everyday life. After Paula Modersohn-Becker's early death, Otto Modersohn sold the house. He left Worpswede and moved to Fischerhude. The house was used as a police station for a time, but in 1997 it was opened to the public. Now a private museum with its own collection of Worpswede art, it displays over 20 of the artist's works.



*Museum am Modersohn-Haus, Hembergerstraße 19*



*"We call ourselves: the family ... To live my whole life like this is wonderful."*

*Paula Becker, letter to Marie Hill, 30<sup>th</sup> December, 1900*

**4** Around 1900, an illustrious community of artists met at the Barkenhoff, which Heinrich Vogeler had designed as a total work of art. Meetings were held in small groups on Sundays. In addition to the owner of the house, Heinrich Vogeler, and his muse and later wife Martha, Paula Becker also enjoyed the gatherings, along with Otto Modersohn and Clara Westhoff, as well as Rainer Maria Rilke. They called themselves the "family" and celebrated the artist's residence as an "island of beauty."



Today, the Barkenhoff is the Heinrich Vogeler Museum. In addition to a comprehensive exhibition of the artist Heinrich Vogeler's work, special exhibitions can also be seen there.

*Barkenhoff/Heinrich-Vogeler-Museum, Ostendorfer Straße 10*



© Klaudia Krohn

*"Today I drew a ten-year-old girl from the poorhouse."*

*Paula Becker, diary, 18<sup>th</sup> October, 1898*

**2** The Worpswede poorhouse was located in the immediate vicinity of her home during Paula Modersohn-Becker's lifetime. The residents of the poorhouse, young and old, were welcome and inexpensive models for the artist. Initially, she created large-format drawings, later strongly coloured paintings that show her development.

Today, the municipal "Altes Rathaus (Old Town Hall) Gallery" is based there. It offers local artists a platform for exhibitions. The art school "PAULA – living gallery space" with its creative programs is also based there.

*Galerie Altes Rathaus, Bergstraße 1*



*"... it rings and sounds and clangs over the Weyerberg until we are tired."*

*Paula Becker, letter to her mother, 13<sup>th</sup> August, 1900*

**5** In the Zion's Church, built in 1759 on the Weyerberg, you can discover wall paintings by Paula Modersohn-Becker that were the result of a punishment – a true anecdote. In the summer of 1900, the artist and her sculptor friend Clara Westhoff rang the church bells in cheerful exuberance. The young women were unaware that the ringing was also a fire alarm. As neither of them could afford a fine, they devised a design for the church interior: Clara sculpted small cherubs and Paula painted floral motifs.

*Zionskirche, An der Kirche 1*

*"This is the most beloved living space of my entire life."*

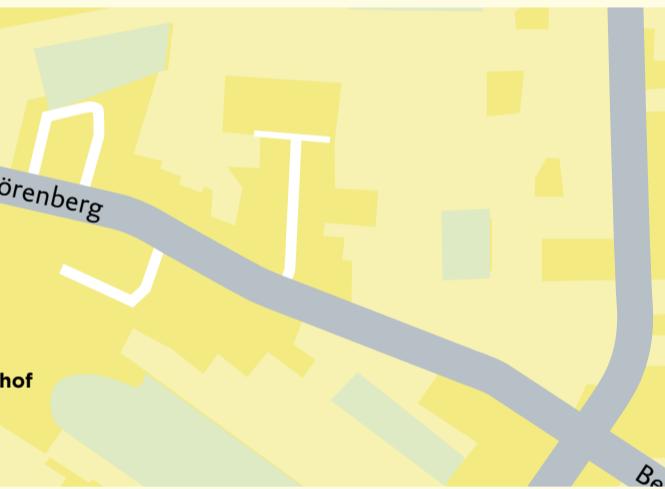
*Paula Modersohn-Becker, letter to Rainer Maria Rilke, 5<sup>th</sup> April, 1907*

**3** Paula Modersohn-Becker rented a studio in the Brünjeshof, which she kept after her marriage. It served as both her workplace and her private refuge. The walls, painted ultramarine below and turquoise above, were separated by a reddish-brown band, forming the background for numerous works. She rarely received visitors. In reference to the pattern of a wall hanging, her poet friend Rainer Maria Rilke poetically referred to it as the "lily studio". Otto Modersohn had a skylight built into the thatched roof, which is still clearly visible from the streetside today.

In 1913, the house was sold to the artist Carl Emil Uphoff, whose descendants currently rent out the former studio as holiday accommodation.



*Brünjeshof, Ostendorfer Straße 25 (private)*



*"I sometimes thought about my grave ..."*

*Paula Becker, diary, 24<sup>th</sup> February, 1902*

**6** In her diaries, Paula Modersohn-Becker thought early on about her death and her grave. According to her plan, roses and carnations as well as a bench would decorate her simple grave. However, things turned out differently. The sculptor and architect Bernhard Hoetger designed a large grave monument. The sculpture "Dying Mother with Child" (inspired by the group of figures that the sculptor had created shortly before for the Plane Tree Grove in Darmstadt) was made of shell limestone. It still stands today in the rear part of the Worpswede cemetery and honours Worpswede's most famous artist.



*Friedhof Worpswede, An der Kirche 1*

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