

Putting Every Brick to Use: “Rubble Woman” Removing Mortar Remnants (1946)

Abstract

A Berlin “rubble woman” [*Trümmerfrau*] chips mortar away from a brick, thereby making it usable again. The number of soldiers killed in battle, together with the number of men who were missing or imprisoned, led to a significant demographic imbalance in the postwar period, when women outnumbered men 2:1. But the importance of women in everyday life and their role in rebuilding a devastated society did not translate, at least beyond the local level, into political influence. The so-called rubble women first achieved belated recognition for their material and social contributions to the Federal Republic in 1987, when women born prior to 1921 were awarded a symbolic payment known as the rubble-women’s pension.

Source



Source: A Berlin rubble woman knocking off the mortar remains – each brick is precious. Photo: Carl Weinrother.

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