

Germany and France: Art Market and Art Collecting 1900-1945

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The international conference aimed to investigate the dynamics of art markets, the making of public and private art collections, and the processes of artistic legitimization in France and Germany between 1900 and 1945 with a transnational perspective.¹ Not only did the conference aim to shed new light on the national and transnational market networks, it also aimed at exploring underlying French, German and, more broadly, European cultural policies and politics.

The first section „Germany and France I: The Power of Art Publishing“ questioned the role of art publishing. In her talk FRIEDERIKE KITSCHEN (Berlin) discussed how art book series were launched by art dealers not only to exploit the commercial gains through expensive limited editions, but also as (political) tools of artistic legitimization. For example, Eugène Druet in collaboration with the Librairie de France created an art book series to popularise its artists among the larger public, whereas Christian Zervos' series wished to contribute to the crossing of French and German perspectives on contemporary arts. The ensuing two papers focussed on Christian Zervos and his *Cahiers d'art*. In her paper CHARA KOLOKYTHA (Newcastle / Berlin) demonstrated the discourse stemming from the pages of *Cahiers d'art*, urging French museums to acquire modern art pieces. Seeking to emphasize the delay of the French state in creating a collection of international modern art, Zervos presented German museums as outstanding examples for having started collecting French and German modern arts and himself as an 'in-between' figure, promoting German artists in France and vice versa. By doing so, he expressly forgot to mention local-municipal experiences

such as the renewal of the art collection of the Musée de Grenoble headed by Andry-Farcy. KATE KANGASLAHTI (Leuven) offered an overview of the international – though largely Paris-based – avant-garde art networks that surfaced through the pages of *Cahiers d'art*.

The afternoon session, titled „Germany and France II: Confrontations, Networks and Economics“, dug into socio-economic questions. LÉA SAINT-RAYMOND (Paris) could evaluate the presence of German buyers on the Parisian art market – thanks to an accurate reconstruction of the Parisian auction market from 1830 to 1939, based on more than 2,000 auction catalogues and the minutes of auction sales stored at the *Archives de Paris*. Her paper illustrated the disproportion between the French hostility towards German collectors of modern art, often depreciatively labelled 'les Boches', and their actual presence on the French market of visual arts, which shrunk during the interwar years in comparison to the first four decades of the Third Republic. An asymmetry between the ideological representations of German collectors in France and reality was thus revealed. DAVID CHALLIS (Melbourne) addressed the interconnectedness of economic, political and cultural capitals. He particularly showed the impact of the devaluation of the franc on the global translocation of French modern art. The talks by MARYKATE CLEARY (Edinburgh) and YVES GUIGNARD (Lausanne) focussed on two art dealers, respectively Paul Rosenberg and Wilhelm Uhde, their politics and their identities. The former illustrated the eminent role that Rosenberg had in placing French modern artists on the German market. To achieve this, the dealer especially leveraged on the Jewish Franco-German artistic networks. The latter reconstructed – despite the lack of archives – Uhde's dedication to the creation and consolidation of a German artis-

¹ The conference is the first gathering of the German-French Research Programme 2018–2019 „Art Market and Art Collecting from 1900 to the Present in Germany and France“. The second conference of the programme will take place in Paris at the Deutsches Forum für Kunstgeschichte Paris from 11 to 13 March 2019. The German-French research programme is organized by the „Forum Kunst und Markt“ (Centre for Art Market Studies) at TU Berlin and the Centre Georg Simmel at EHESS in collaboration with the Deutsches Forum für Kunstgeschichte Paris.

tic network especially intended to promoting naïve painters throughout his life.

The first day of the conference concluded with a lecture by MAREK CLAASSEN (Berlin), managing director of ArtFacts.Net. He presented the artists ranking system that ArtFacts.Net has developed based on various categories specially linked to artists' participation in art exhibitions. During his presentation, the problems linked to, as well as the limits of, the use of big data and algorithms for the evaluation of artists' art works and aesthetics emerged. By not grounding the study of the art market in its political and cultural context, quantitative methodologies may render such a study unable to address the urgent political, cultural and ethical questions behind the past and present art system(s).

The third session, held during the second day of the conference, was titled „Germany and France III: Politics and Markets.“ The day opened with the talk by VÉRANE TASSEAU (Paris). She showed the decisive role that the two artists Le Corbusier and Ozenfant had as mediators. They bid at Daniel-Henry Kahnweiler's sequestration sales (1921-1923) on the behalf of the Swiss art collector and banker Raoul la Roche, who went against the tide and bought many Cubist art pieces, often considered as art 'boche'. The paper by GITTA HO (Paris) revealed the presence of Jewish art dealers who remained active during the years of occupation and collaborated with representatives of the German occupying forces. In her presentation NATHALIE NEUMANN (Berlin) hinted at the political role of art specialists who had to evaluate in commercial and aesthetic terms cultural objects for the ERR: this process was decisive in order to decide the fate of looted artworks. For instance, Walter Borchers often consulted art experts like Heinrich Göbel, who helped the former to categorize and evaluate French tapestries. Finally, in his paper MATTES LAMMERT (Berlin / Paris) aimed to identify the Parisian dealers trading with Berlin Museums and also to address the politics behind these acquisitions. He especially focused on the direct and indirect acquisitions of Islamic art pieces made by Berlin Museums between 1942 and 1943 through Parisian art dealers. His researches revealed that these

dealers were mainly of Armenian origin.

Conclusively, the papers presented at the conference not only reconstructed Franco-German artistic networks but they also drew attention to the cultural, social and political issues behind them. Addressing the art trading activities that occurred in a Europe that was profoundly transformed by two World Wars, the rise of totalitarian regimes and authoritarian powers, nationalisms and xenophobia as well as human migrations, art market studies recognised the interconnectedness of the making of artistic values, politics and cultural policies as urgent to debate. Indeed, the history of art market(s) goes beyond simply economic rationales: it is a history shaped by (shifting) collective identities but also by individual politics; it is influenced by political and cultural representations and disseminated by cultural transfers as much as failed exchanges. At the conference, researches on the study of the *croisements transfrontaliers* critically re-evaluating the role of big centres, such as Paris, or addressing the inclusion of local as much as colonial histories were somehow missing.² Notwithstanding, the conference successfully put into relation economic and aesthetic values, artistic legitimization, Franco-German art networks to the French and German cultural policies and politics of the first half of the twenty-century.

Conference Overview:

Bénédicte Savoy (Berlin / Paris): Welcome

Dorothee Wimmer (Berlin): Introduction

Section 1: Germany and France I: The Power of Art Publishing

Chair: Andrea Meyer (Berlin)

Friederike Kitschen (Berlin): Marketing Instruments? Art Book Series and the Art Market 1900–1930

Chara Kolokytha (Newcastle / Berlin): Museum Acquisition Policies in Germany and France: The Interwar Advocacy of *Cahiers d'art*

²In this regard, see, among others, the plurality of researches conducted by or associated with the research cluster „Translocations – Historical Enquiries into the Displacement of Cultural Assets“ at TU Berlin: <http://www.translocations.net> (11.01.2019).

Kate Kangaslahti (Leuven): *Cahiers d'art* 1926–1940: Modern Painting, *mise en marché* and *mise en page*

Section 2: Germany and France II: Confrontations, Networks and Economics

Chair: Johannes Nathan (Zürich / Berlin)

Léa Saint-Raymond (Paris): Invaders or Ordinary Collectors? German Protagonists at Parisian Auctions (1900–1939)

MaryKate Cleary (Edinburgh): Transnational Networks – Paul Rosenberg and the Rise of Contemporary French Art on the German-speaking Market 1918–1929

Yves Guignard (Lausanne): The French-German Connections of the Art Dealer and Collector Wilhelm Uhde (1874–1947)

David Challis (Melbourne): Currency Devaluation and the Interwar Art Market for French Modernist Art

Keynote Lecture

Marek Claassen (Berlin): Modern and Contemporary French and German Artists: Quality – Value – Ranking

Section 3: Germany and France III: Politics and Markets

Chair: Meike Hopp (München / Berlin)

Dorothee Wimmer (Berlin): Welcome

Elisabeth Furtwängler (Berlin): Introduction

Vérane Tasseau (Paris): Raoul La Roche and the Sales from Kahnweiler's „Enemy Property“ after WW I

Gitta Ho (Paris): Secret Networks. Jewish Art Dealers Active in France during the Occupation

Nathalie Neumann (Berlin): The Power of Experts: Walter Borchers and the ERR

Mattes Lammert (Berlin / Paris): „Before it is too late“: Acquisitions of Islamic Art by Berlin Museums

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