

Ernst von Siemens Kunststiftung

www.ernst-von-siemens-kunststiftung.de



The Ernst von Siemens Kunststiftung owes its existence to the generosity of the man whose name it bears. Ernst von Siemens (1903-1990) was an industrialist and a patron of the arts. As chief executive and chairman of the supervisory board he played a major role in the post-war reconstruction of the family business, setting a distinctive stamp on the Siemens Group with his personality. Ernst von Siemens, who never married and had no children, was not merely a prominent entrepreneur, but remained true to the arts all his life. Ensuring that his own and future generations had access to knowledge and education, but also to art, was a matter close to his heart. Indeed, he saw this mission as the duty of any successful entrepreneur.

When Ernst von Siemens set up his art foundation in 1983, his aim was to offer fast, unbureaucratic assistance for the purchase of major works of art, notably if a collection was hoping to acquire an additional highlight, to help bring lost works back to Germany, or to acquire outstanding specimens of cultural heritage for public collections. This sat well with his wish to acquaint the broader public with important artists and collections by means of exhibitions, catalogues and monographs. As a result, the Ernst von Siemens Kunststiftung has been a steadfast partner for German museums for many years.

Dr. Heribald Narger († 2015), the former chief financial officer at Siemens AG, who presided over the Board of Trustees for a long time as chairman and honorary chairman, was a valuable adviser to Ernst von Siemens both in setting up the foundation and in subsequent years, providing significant input and suggestions for promoting the fine arts.

The company Siemens AG was a founding contributor and has regularly supported the Ernst von Siemens Kunststiftung with generous endowments. The company's own action-oriented foundation, the Siemens Stiftung, also funds projects in the cultural field.

Since its creation in 1983 the Ernst von Siemens Kunststiftung (EvSK) has supported the **acquisition** of more than 450 art objects and sets of work. For many more works and collections it has provided **advance financing**.

- Giambologna's *Mars* 2019 purchased for Dresden in partnership with state and federal agencies and the Cultural Foundation of the German Federal States (KSL)
- Hubert Gerhard's *Mercury* 2009 purchased for the Bavarian National Museum in Munich at a cost of several million euros put up solely by EvSK
- Rudolf Schlichter's *Helene Weigel* for the Lenbachhaus in Munich, 2017 bought at auction by EvSK

- Return of five valuable Old Masters stolen from Gotha in 1979; EvSK is organising and funding the project (<https://www.theartnewspaper.com/news/five-old-masters-return-to-german-castle-40-years-after-theft>)

Over 300 **restoration projects** have been sponsored, and between 2014 and 2018 the foundation was a major partner in the alliance KUNST AUF LAGER, which set out to rediscover art lying unseen in museum storage facilities (www.kunst-auf-lager.de).

- Restoration of damaged Renaissance works recovered from an anti-aircraft bunker in Friedrichshain (Berlin) after the Second World War, held by the Bode Museum in Berlin and the Pushkin Museum in Moscow (<https://www.ernst-von-siemens-kunststiftung.de/objekt/kriegsschaden-an-skulpturen-des-15-16-jahrhunderts-in-berlin-und-moskau.html>)

More than 1,000 **exhibitions** have been funded, together with nearly 300 **collection catalogues**.

Some of these **collection catalogues** are large-scale projects involving the German Research Foundation (DFG) or the academic foundations. One is devoted to cataloguing the art collection of the former dukes of Württemberg, who amassed some 1,700 objects of various genres.

Institutions like the Staatliche Kunstsammlungen in Dresden are opting for digital catalogues to deal with such copious collections as August the Strong's 8,000 items of Chinese and Japanese porcelain. A similar strategy has been chosen by the archives of the Academy of Arts in Berlin, which aims to publish a digital catalogue of its John Heartfield fonds. Many of the 5,000 objects here, including collage made from photographs, paper, drawings and retouching, demand careful conservation. (<https://heartfield.adk.de/>)

One of these new digitised catalogues is “**Digital Benin**”. This virtual platform will compile and connect the works removed from the Kingdom of Benin in 1897 along with relevant archive and research material. The project was designed as a research partnership, bringing together researchers from Nigeria, Europe and America to lend fresh public visibility to this art.

Ernst von Siemens Kunststiftung
Dr. Martin Hoernes (Secretary General)
Nonnendammallee 101, D-13629 Berlin
(for visitors: Magnus-Haus, Am Kupfergraben 7)
Phone: +49 172 7409823
hoernes.evs-kunststiftung@siemens.com
www.ernst-von-siemens-kunststiftung.de