

von sukzessive angekauft wurden. Glaser hatte auch den Kontakt zwischen dem norwegischen Künstler und dem Direktor des Kunsthauses hergestellt: Die ausführlich dokumentierten Verhandlungen zeigen gegenseitige Wertschätzung und den gemeinsamen Wunsch, diese Bilder im Kunsthaus Zürich der Öffentlichkeit zugänglich zu machen. Auch seine zweite Ehefrau Maria handelte in diesem Sinne.

Jennifer Tonkovich von der Morgan Library behandelt eine kleine Gruppe von Zeichnungen Alter Meister aus der Sammlung Curt und Elsa Glaser, die die Witwe Glasers der Morgan Library vermachte (157ff.). Sie waren zuvor unverkauft geblieben, weil sie sich wohl keinen großen Künstlernamen zuordnen ließen. Der Zürcher Staatsrechtler Felix Uhlmann möchte zur „Versachlichung der Debatte“ (178) um die Glaser-Restitution beitragen. Vor dem Hintergrund der dezentralen Zuständigkeiten in der Schweiz und mit Einblicken in die juristische Lage vor Ort legt er die

Herausforderung dar, eine Entscheidungsinstanz einzurichten, die dem Recht, den Institutionen und den Anspruchsteller*innen gerecht wird. Sie sollte, so Uhlmann, dabei auch offen für neue Positionierungen bleiben und ein schematisches Vorgehen vermeiden.

Der Katalog ist ein gelungener Beitrag zur Geschichte des Sammelns, zur Geschichte der Kunstgeschichte und zu den Auswirkungen der NS-Verfolgung auf das Fach und die musealen Institutionen bis heute, in dem der Kunst ein ebenso großer Stellenwert zugestanden wird wie den Zeitumständen und den Menschen, die sich mit ihr befassen.

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On the Importance of In-Depth Case Studies

Meike Hoffmann/
Andreas Hüneke (eds.)
**„Entartete Kunst“ in Breslau, Stettin
und Königsberg / “Degenerate Art”
in Breslau, Stettin and Königsberg.**
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In March 2018 the Art History Institute of the Freie Universität (FU) in Berlin announced the completion of the Database “Entartete Kunst”: a detailed index of artworks defined by the Nazis as “degenerate” and confiscated from German public museums between 1937 and 1938. This impressive research tool forms the outcome of several decades of studies, carried out initially by individual scholars, and since 2002

developed within the framework of the newly established “Degenerate Art” Research Centre at the FU Berlin. In this timespan the scholars involved in the project meticulously reconstructed and verified the fate and the photographic images of many artworks, discovered and published unknown sources relevant to the history of the confiscations. Moreover, they also carried out groundbreaking research projects relevant both to the history of art and art institutions at the time of National Socialism and to Nazi-era provenance research. To celebrate the completion of the Database, the Research Centre organized a symposium entitled “*Degenerate Art*” in *Breslau, Stettin and Königsberg* (March 15–16 2018) – a fruitful encounter between German and Polish scholars who debated problems pertinent to Nazi-era confiscations and to the history of modernist art, its institutions and collections. The diversity of the research viewpoints and the significant amount of

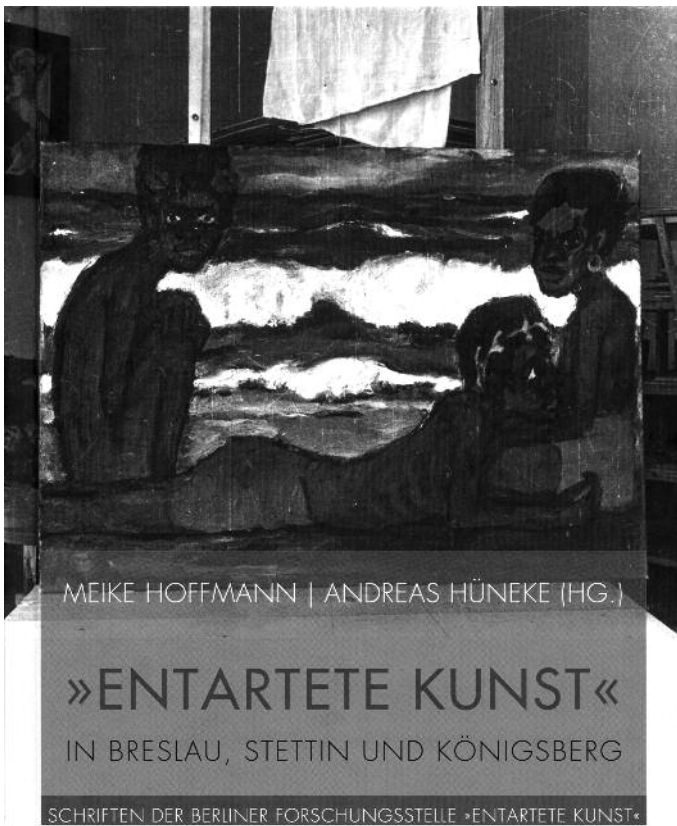


Fig. 1 Cover of Meike Hoffmann, Andreas Hüneke (ed.), "Degenerate Art" in Breslau, Stettin and Königsberg, Paderborn 2021

unpublished or hardly known material resulted in an important overview of the current state of "degenerate art" studies and, furthermore, in a clear delineation of research paths and perspectives for the future.

The volume reviewed here is published in the *Schriften der Berliner Forschungsstelle "Entartete Kunst"* series. Edited by Meike Hoffmann and Andreas Hüneke, it brings together all papers presented in 2018. Its cover illustration **Fig. 1** exploits an intriguing juxtaposition of two documentary photographs representing Emil Nolde's *Papua Youths* (1914) and the view of the depot of confiscated "degenerate" artworks in Schloss Schönhausen. Indeed, in the general research on the Nazi campaign against "degenerate art", Nolde is an emblematic and well-studied figure. Moreover, the Database reveals that between 1937 and 1938 the Nazis had confiscated more works by Nolde than by any other artist. This research has also provided important materials for the study of their displacements. In the book, the uncovered facts from the turbulent history of the

reception, confiscation and rehabilitation of the *Papua Youths* – a painting purchased by the Städtische Kunstsammlungen at Königsberg in 1930, confiscated in 1937, kept till 1947 by the dealer Bernhard A. Böhmer in Güstrow, finally transferred to the Nationalgalerie in East Berlin in 1949 – form a thread of opening and final chapters. Meike Hoffmann uses the example of this painting to outline the research issues and problems of the "degenerate art" campaign and its consequences in the context of the museums located in the territory of the Free State of

Prussia, which, following the provisions of the Potsdam Treaty, was placed under Polish or Soviet rule. In this regard, Petra Winter's final chapter, while referring to the example of the allocation in 1949 of a group of the confiscated artworks (including the *Papua Youths*) to the Nationalgalerie in East Berlin, discusses the status of displaced artworks in the Soviet occupation zone.

Four articles, dealing with the Database entries of the artworks from the museums in the three centers mentioned in the title, explore the context and explain more general aspects of the confiscations. Dariusz Kacprzak, who, with Szymon Kubiak, has for several years studied the history of the Städtisches Museum in Stettin, summarizes the findings pertinent to the confiscations and sales of "degenerate art". In particular, he analyzes the archival sources kept today in the Polish institutions, which throw new light on the Database entries. Hüneke, by analyzing the formation and the confiscation of the collection of modernist art of the Städtische Kunstsammlungen at Königsberg, explores the peculiarity of the Prussian museums

signaled in Hoffmann's introduction, i.e. the principles of cultural policy of the Prussian Cultural Ministry based on freedom and decentralization and supportive to the institutionalization of contemporary art. In turn, Christoph Zuschlag, while focusing on Max Liebermann's *Portrait of Gerhart Hauptmann*, a painting sold in 1943 by the Schlesisches Museum in Breslau, points out that museums eagerly recurred to sale and to exchange of the modernist artworks in order to adjust the collection to the official line.

Zuschlag argues that what we call today "de-accession" was an established practice in German museums well before the 1930s. With regard to the institutional overturn of 1933, when around 35 museum directors were replaced by functionaries of the Nazi party, Zuschlag calls for an in-depth general research of the phenomenon in the National Socialist era, that should consider not only the ideological background, but also the context of the art market and the motivations of the individuals involved. In the next chapter, Małgorzata Stolarska-Fronia examines the significant number of entries in the Database of works of Jewish artists confiscated from the Schlossmuseum and the Schlesisches Museum in Breslau. In this regard, she reconstructs the history of the annihilation of this important center of Jewish art and the dramatic fate of its protagonists.

Diana Codogni-Łańcucka, by focusing on Silesia, shows that the impact of the Nazi cultural policy on the development of the official art in the region was different from the one exercised in the main artistic centers of the Third Reich. Her contribution defines the phenomenon as a "process of adaptation and inclusion" strongly conditioned by the local artistic tradition and by the permissive and inconsistent attitude of the local civil servants. Nawojka Cieślińska-Lobkowicz scrutinizes the fate of the International Collection of the "a.r." group in Lodz, one of the first public collections of avant-garde art in the world. She also addresses the history of the occupation of Lodz (renamed Litzmannstadt) and the Nazi cultural policy in this city. In particular, her detailed analysis has revealed a peculiar "anti-Polish" framing and reading of

"degenerate art", subordinated to the local political and propaganda needs of the Nazi administration.

The book thus forms a good overview of the present-day and future development of the research on "degenerate art", which in the decades following the rise of the interest in the exhibition organized in Munich in 1937 has not only resulted in the detailed knowledge of the confiscations as presented in the Database "Entartete Kunst", but also fostered wider research agendas on German museum institutions in the National socialist period. These include studies on personalities of museum directors (like Alfred Rhode, Adolf Jannasch, Ludwig Justi, and Walter Frenzel discussed in detail in this volume), on the impact of Nazi ideology on the development of official art, and on the legal and administrative premises of the confiscations. At the same time, the book highlights the importance of in-depth case studies, which should be at the basis of any general conclusion on the history of the Nazi cultural policy. Indeed, there is still much to be done, since the papers also reveal important unresearched areas and ask new fundamental questions – such as the vagaries that accompany the implementation of state policies in diverse local settings.

The book is published in two parallel German and English language versions (regrettably with the exception of Małgorzata Stolarska-Fronia's contribution which is published only in German). Hopefully this bilingual edition will ensure impact and visibility of the research done so far. In fact, this is a compulsory reading on the bookshelf of every museum, provenance research expert and anyone interested in avant-garde art and the cultural policy of the Nazi-era. In particular, it should find its place in the libraries of Polish museums, where there is still much to be done in the area of Nazi-era provenance research.

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