

FROM MONET TO PICASSO
JEWISH ART COLLECTORS IN GERMANY
11 SEPTEMBER 2026 UNTIL 29 MARCH 2027

The exhibition *From Monet to Picasso. Jewish Art Collectors in Germany* reconstructs fifteen major collections of modern art built up by German Jews before 1945, and thus reunites works now scattered all over the world. Not only does it showcase outstanding early modern art works, but also presents historical documents to trace their journeys and the lives of their former owners. The fate of the collectors during the Holocaust as well as the associated dissolution of their collections are essential elements in the show's conceptual design. The exhibition commemorates the pioneering role of German Jews in establishing, fostering and defending modern forms of art in Germany. The works on show range from the time of Realism and Impressionism to Expressionism and New Objectivity. They include around 100 paintings, prints, graphic works and sculptures by artists such as Paul Cezanne, Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, Paula Modersohn-Becker, Claude Monet, Max Pechstein and Pablo Picasso. The exhibition is designed and curated by Stefan Koldehoff and Dr. Kathrin Baumstark. It is held under the patronage of Frank-Walter Steinmeier, President of the Federal Republic of Germany.

The exhibition focuses exemplarily on fifteen families, couples and individuals from all parts of the former German Reich. Their activities as collectors not only promoted modern art in particular, but in this and other ways also demonstrated a commitment to serving society as a whole, for instance through public institutions. These collectors include, for instance, the Hirschland family, Paul and Clothilde Schüler, Max Meirowsky, Rosa Schapire and Margarete Mauthner. The works from their collections include paintings, drawings, prints, artists' postcards and sculptures by Georges Braque, Paul Cezanne, Lovis Corinth, Vincent van Gogh, Ferdinand Hodler, Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, Franz Marc, Paula Modersohn-Becker, Claude Monet, Edvard Munch, Max Pechstein, Pablo Picasso, Camille Pissarro, Karl Schmidt-Rottluff, Milly Steeger and many others.

The exhibition commemorates these collectors who, after the Nazi Party took power, were often driven into exile or murdered, or had family members suffering this fate. Moreover, by presenting each collector's works in their historical context, the exhibition also does justice to their achievements in cultural history. To pay due tribute to them, each collection is shown in a dedicated room facilitating an encounter with the art works and their journeys to the present day, as well as the figures of the collectors and their stories.

These physical and conceptual spaces show how the individual collections came about, the motivations behind them and the support they received - and

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Ineke Rickerts, Press and Public Relations, Bucerius Kunst Forum,
+49 (0)40 36 09 96 78, presse@buceriuskunstforum.de, buceriuskunstforum.de

the reasons for each collector to focus especially on the cutting-edge art of their day. After all, in contrast to Imperial Germany's official art policy which remained conservative well into the 1910s, they met new movements and styles with an open mind. Through their individual activities, they also contributed to establishing modern art in society. A key role here was played by selecting, presenting and engaging intellectually with the works, as well as the public support for these forms of art in museums, art associations and publications, the cooperation with gallerists, and the direct promotion of the artists.

To illustrate these aspects, contemporary documents and photographs offer an insight into the personalities of the collectors and their individual paths in life. Their biographies were shaped, at the latest during the Nazi years, by marginalisation, a deprivation of rights, expropriation, persecution, forced emigration and murder. As one facet of this history of injustice, the exhibition focuses on how political pressure, confiscatory taxes, bans on leaving the country, the freezing of assets, and foreign exchange controls forced Jewish collectors to surrender their collections.

Furthermore, it explores how networks of art dealers, museum, state actors and international buyers were involved in the exploitation processes. After 1945, the art works were scattered across the globe, ending up in private collections or institutional holdings. In some cases, a work's background was no longer known, although often it was deliberately obscured.

The exhibition's overall design builds a bridge to research and analysis in the history and sociology of art, as well as a contextualisation in cultural policy and reflections on the culture of remembrance. The extensive research over many years for this exhibition has shown that many individuals of Jewish heritage whose collecting practices were an integral factor in German modern art are now only known, if at all, by experts in the field. Rekindling a social awareness of these collectors and their cultural achievements through art is one of the exhibition's core objectives.

Collectors in the exhibition:

Adolf Jakob and Luise Bensinger (Mannheim), Martha and Walter Blank (Cologne), Max Emden (Hamburg), the Hirschland family (Essen), Julie and Wilhelm Landmann (Mannheim), Antonie 'Toni' Lessing (Berlin), Margarete Mauthner (Berlin), Max Meirowsky (Cologne), the Mendelssohn family (Berlin), Martha and Hugo Nathan (Frankfurt am Main), Margarete Oppenheim (Berlin), Rosa Schapire (Hamburg), Clothilde and Paul Schüler (Bochum), Max Silberberg (Breslau), Alfred Wolf (Stuttgart).

The exhibition is accompanied by a catalogue.

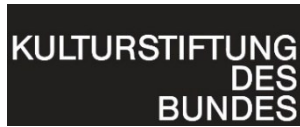
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