

Zurich, 29. August 2022

Joint media release

Evaluation of Bührle Collection provenance research: round table headed by Felix Uhlmann

The City and Canton of Zurich and the Zürcher Kunstgesellschaft have finalised the plan for an independent evaluation of the provenance research carried out to date on the Emil Bührle Collection. They have appointed Professor Felix Uhlmann as delegate to implement it. As a first step, he is to organise a round table to secure the involvement of relevant (including critical) voices in the preparations for the evaluation.

The works from the Bührle Collection have been displayed on long-term loan in the new Chipperfield building of the Kunsthaus since October 2021. With the opening of the presentation, responsibility for researching the provenance of the works was transferred to the Zürcher Kunstgesellschaft, the patron association of the Kunsthaus.

Independence and scientific quality are priorities

The City and Canton of Zurich and the Zürcher Kunstgesellschaft wish to obtain an evaluation of the existing research into the provenance of the works in the Bührle Collection. The evaluation should be independent and meet the highest scientific standards. It is also enshrined in the new subsidy agreement between the City of Zurich and the Zürcher Kunstgesellschaft, which the City Council forwarded to the City Parliament for approval in spring ([media release, 10 March 2022](#)).

The aim of the evaluation is to establish whether the provenance research conducted to date is in line with the international state of the art and constitutes a reliable foundation for the

Kunsthaus to decide on further action to be taken in respect of individual works, and on additional provenance research work. It is also intended that the project should yield recommendations regarding such decisions. The goal is to ensure that no works are shown at the Kunsthaus where there are substantiated indications that they are cultural property confiscated as a result of Nazi persecution («NS-verfolgungsbedingt entzogene Kulturgüter»).

Next objective: consensus on the expert mandate at the round table

The evaluation is being jointly commissioned by the City and Canton of Zurich and the Zürcher Kunstgesellschaft. They have finalised a plan for carrying it out that is designed to guarantee the highest possible degree of independence. It consists of two stages: during the preparatory phase, the content of the evaluation mandate is to be defined and an expert or team of experts chosen; the evaluation itself will then be carried out in the main phase.

The commissioning bodies have appointed Felix Uhlmann, holder of the Chair for Constitutional and Administrative Law as well as Legislative Studies at the University of Zurich, as their joint delegate to implement the plan. He has an impressive track record in managing sensitive projects combined with wide-ranging specialist knowledge, which also extends to issues surrounding the provenance of cultural property.

The delegate will make preparations for the evaluation, oversee its conduct, and report on the results. He will also ensure that relevant (including critical) voices are involved in the upcoming preparatory phase. To this end, Felix Uhlmann will put together a round table and work with the participants to reach a consensus on the content and principal focus of the mandate and the selection of experts. The commissioning bodies are not themselves part of the round table.

Final report expected in the first half of 2024

The commissioning bodies will appoint the expert or experts on the basis of the results from the round table. This is likely to be in early 2023. It is currently estimated that the results of the evaluation will be available in the first half of 2024. The costs of the evaluation will be borne by the three commissioning bodies. The cost of the actual scientific work will depend on the mandate which is to be drawn up at the round table.

Note to editors:

For further information, contact Mayor Corine Mauch, tel. +41 44 412 31 20, today between 2.30 p.m. and 3.15 p.m.

The project plan is available to download from the [City of Zurich website](#).

Felix Uhlmann, delegate of the commissioning bodies, will be available to provide information to the media from Tuesday, 30 August 2022: tel. +41 61 279 70 00.