

Medienmitteilung
Zurich, 26 May 2025

Zürcher Kunstgesellschaft and Foundation E. G. Bührle Collection define next steps

In light of national and international developments in provenance research, the intense public debate surrounding the presentation of the long-term loan at the Kunsthaus Zürich, and the independent review of the Bührle Foundation's provenance research by Prof. Raphael Gross, the relationship between the Zürcher Kunstgesellschaft and the Foundation E. G. Bührle Collection (hereinafter: Bührle Foundation) required reassessment and a new framework.

Following in-depth discussions, the Zürcher Kunstgesellschaft and the Bührle Foundation today, 26 May 2025, adopted a set of guidelines outlining the key elements and next steps of their continued collaboration:

- The Bührle Foundation's works will remain on long-term loan and accessible to the public at the Kunsthaus Zürich.
- The Zürcher Kunstgesellschaft will conduct provenance research on the collection at the Kunsthaus over the next five years in accordance with its subsidy agreement with the City of Zurich and the long-term loan agreement with the Bührle Foundation. Through this commitment, it affirms its institutional responsibility to actively engage with history and its complexities, and to do so with due urgency.
- The Bührle Foundation reiterates its commitment to seek fair and just solutions in cases where there are substantiated indications of cultural property confiscated as a result of Nazi persecution.
- Three new exhibition formats will offer new perspectives on the works and deepen their historical contextualisation.

The report reviewing the Bührle Foundation's provenance research was commissioned by the City and Canton of Zurich and the Zürcher Kunstgesellschaft and published in June 2024. The three recommendations set out in section 4.2 of the report have been taken into account in the agreed continuation of the

collaboration. The implementation of these measures reflects the urgency arising from the societal relevance of the issue, the historical responsibility and the public interest involved.

‘It is a very positive outcome that this collection will remain at the Kunsthaus for the coming years. Following intense but constructive negotiations, we have succeeded in establishing a coherent framework for provenance research that meets the high standards of the Zürcher Kunstgesellschaft. We welcome and acknowledge the Bührle Foundation’s commitment to seeking fair and just solutions.’

– Philipp Hildebrand, Chair of the Zürcher Kunstgesellschaft

The Zürcher Kunstgesellschaft and the Bührle Foundation are supplementing their existing contractual agreements with a set of guidelines that clearly define and extend key areas of collaboration.

I. Provenance Research

The Zürcher Kunstgesellschaft will intensify and take responsibility for provenance research relating to the 205 works on long-term loan from the Bührle Foundation held at the Kunsthaus. This is part of its mandate under the long-term loan agreement of 22 February 2022 and the subsidy agreement of 29 May 2023, which had been temporarily paused due to the Gross review. The works will be examined in accordance with the Kunsthaus’s own provenance research strategy, applying the same high standards used for its own collection.

The research strategy as published in March 2023 acknowledges the International Council of Museums (ICOM) Code of Ethics and the Washington Conference Principles on Nazi-Confiscated Art and subsequent declarations. It is based on the concept of ‘cultural property confiscated as a result of Nazi persecution’ as set out in the Terezin Declaration (2009).

The five-year research project will build on the Bührle Foundation’s research documents as well as on the findings published in the report by Prof. Gross. The Zürcher Kunstgesellschaft will conduct a systematic initial review of the 205 works, categorising them according to its own standards and decide on the basis of a prioritization which works require more extensive, in-depth research.

In doing so, the ZKG is implementing the first recommendation of Prof. Gross: that provenance research on the Bührle long-term loan must be continued and intensified.

The Bührle Foundation for its part confirms its readiness to seek fair and just solutions in cases of substantiated indications of cultural property confiscated as a result of Nazi persecution. Where agreed with the respective heirs, it aims to

ensure that affected works can remain at the Kunsthaus Zürich, as was the case recently with Manet's 'La Sultane'. This commitment is accompanied by substantial financial contributions from the Foundation.

Both parties are thus contributing to ensuring that these outstanding works continue to be researched and made accessible to the public.

In light of the establishment of an independent national commission for historically burdened cultural heritage – which the ZKG fully supports – the Kunsthaus will not establish its own international commission. Instead, it is responding to Prof. Raphael Gross's recommendation to set up a committee with multiple professional and biographical perspectives with a multi-level model: in addition to the peer review process of provenance research, as is common in the academic environment, the ZKG is applying an internal evaluation framework and endorses the appeal of the national commission when needed.

II. Three new exhibitions with distinct thematic focus, over a five-year period

Following a preparatory phase of up to 18 months, three new curatorial formats offering new and complementary perspectives will be presented simultaneously, two of which are based directly on recommendations from the Gross report:

- An exhibition highlighting the role of Jewish collectors in the promotion of modern art.
- A permanent contextual presentation on the history of the Bührle Collection, the life of Emil Bührle and his connection to the Kunsthaus Zürich, and the broader historical context to be shown in the Chipperfield Building.
- A third exhibition presenting the works as artworks, focusing on the artists, their subjects and their place in art history, and – where possible – placing them in dialogue with other works from the Kunsthaus collection.

III. Evaluation of the partnership in 2030

Under the current long-term loan agreement, the partnership runs until 2034. A comprehensive evaluation of the collaboration and potential extension beyond 2034 will take place in 2030.

Implementation

The Bührle Foundation's long-term loan is closely linked to Switzerland's 20th-century history, its ambivalences, conflicts and its contradictions. The extended provenance research and newly developed exhibitions are part of an active culture

of remembrance. They also demonstrate the Zürcher Kunstgesellschaft's commitment to responsibly communicating complex historical and ethical issues. The research and exhibition projects, based on the recommendations of Prof. Gross, are time-sensitive and require additional resources. Their scope and ambition exceed what the Kunsthaus Zürich can achieve within its regular operating framework in a five-year timeframe. The Zürcher Kunstgesellschaft has therefore submitted a funding request for CHF 3 million to the City of Zurich to enable implementation.

To allow the research project to begin as soon as possible, this additional public funding is required urgently.

Appendix

[Guidelines for the further presentation and research on permanent loan from the E.G. Bührle Collection Foundation at the Kunsthaus Zürich in accordance with the permanent loan agreement dated 22 February 2022 \(German only\).](#)

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