

Media release
Zurich, 19 June 2024

Kunsthhaus Zürich actively implements new provenance strategy

The Zürcher Kunstgesellschaft, the patron association of the Kunsthhaus Zürich and owner of its collection, on 5 June 2024 agreed with the heirs of the Jewish industrialist and art collector Carl Sachs on a 'just and fair solution' for the painting 'L'Homme à l'ombrelle' by Claude Monet. This is an important step in the systematic implementation of the new provenance strategy which the Kunsthhaus Zürich presented in March 2023. The work is now to be sold under the terms of the amicable agreement.

Dr Philipp Hildebrand, Chair of the Zürcher Kunstgesellschaft, says: 'I am grateful that, through constructive dialogue based on the extensive research work, we have been able to reach an agreement with the heirs of Carl Sachs. Naturally, we regret that this wonderful painting will probably leave the Kunsthhaus after its sale, as part of the just and fair solution arrived at. At the same time, this step underlines the seriousness of our provenance strategy and our fundamental approach of acting transparently and seeking solutions for any work in our collection where there are substantiated indications of duress resulting from Nazi persecution.'

Speaking on behalf of her client, lawyer Dr Imke Gielen of von Trott zu Solz Lammek attorneys in Berlin comments: 'The heirs of the Sachs family welcome the Zürcher Kunstgesellschaft's readiness to arrive at a just and fair solution for the work, which Carl Sachs was compelled to dispose of after emigrating to Switzerland.'

RESEARCH CONFIRMS DURESS RESULTING FROM PERSECUTION

Monet's 'L'Homme à l'ombrelle' (1865/1867) is from the collection of the Jewish textile entrepreneur Carl Sachs, and was one of a number of works that entered the Kunsthhaus Zürich on loan in 1934.

Carl and Margarete Sachs, who were leading patrons of cultural life in their home city of Breslau, were subject to collective persecution by the Nazi regime on account of their Jewish ancestry. The repressive measures imposed on Jewish citizens on the basis of laws enacted by the Nazis led the couple to flee Germany in 1939 for Switzerland, where Monet's 'L'Homme à l'ombrelle' had already been since 1931. Carl and Margarete Sachs were only permitted to take 10 Reichsmarks each with them when they fled. They also had to raise a loan against the works at the Kunsthhaus in order to fund their entry into Switzerland. Up until Carl Sachs's death in December 1943, records confirm that he sold 13 artworks

which he had deposited in Switzerland. The sale of Monet's 'L'Homme à l'ombrelle' to the Kunsthaus Zürich was the first case in which Sachs was obliged to sell a work on account of acute financial hardship, just a few weeks after fleeing Nazi Germany. A swift sale was needed to provide the couple with money to live on, and he was therefore acting under duress.

Having assessed the facts and the historical circumstances, the Zürcher Kunstgesellschaft sought dialogue with the representative of Carl Sachs's family, with whom it has reached an amicable agreement. In accordance with the ICOM Code of Ethics, the share accruing to the Zürcher Kunstgesellschaft will be transferred to the Kunsthaus's collection fund.

KUNSTHAUS ZÜRICH PROACTIVELY IMPLEMENTS PROVENANCE STRATEGY

In October 2022, Philipp Hildebrand and Ann Demeester took up their positions as Chair of the Zürcher Kunstgesellschaft and new Director of the Kunsthaus Zürich, respectively. Since then, one of their top priorities has been to expand provenance research at Switzerland's largest art museum by building up a team, led by Joachim Sieber. Just a few months later, in March 2023, the board of the Zürcher Kunstgesellschaft and the director of the Kunsthaus Zürich adopted a new provenance strategy committing it to deal more proactively with works that, following in-depth research, could be categorized as cultural property confiscated as a result of Nazi persecution.

This may, under specific conditions, also include artworks sold by emigrants in third countries outside the area of Nazi rule, such as Switzerland. The research prioritizes the Kunsthaus's own collection as well as new acquisitions. The ongoing systematic review of the collection holdings is being continued and conducted in greater depth, with the provenance of works created prior to 1945 that changed hands between January 1933 and May 1945 being investigated.

FURTHER INFORMATION ONLINE / CONTACT FOR THE MEDIA

[Provenance report: Claude Monet, L'Homme à l'ombrelle, 1865/1867](#) (German)

Detailed provenance strategy:

www.kunsthhaus.ch/en/sammlung/provenienzforschung

Findings and results from provenance research to date are also noted in the online collection (collection.kunsthhaus.ch).

Specific archival materials can be viewed on the online platform for the archives of the Zürcher Kunstgesellschaft and the Kunsthaus Zürich (digital.kunsthhaus.ch).

Media releases and illustrations are available for download at www.kunsthhaus.ch/en/medien-bereich.

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