

Trading Modernity. Female gallerists at work for the art of their time in the first half of the 20th Century

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This contribution is dedicated to women in the art trade and specifically in their engagement with modern and contemporary art in the first half of the 20th century in three time periods. The specific art historical, political and social challenges of the respective decades will be taken as a starting point to discuss gender and the art trade in the context of threshold periods and epochal upheavals. This will be done with a view to Germany or a geographical widening that can be explained by exile. In terms of time, the essay will focus on 1. the art trade and the avant-garde in the transition from the Kaiserreich to the Weimar Republic, 2. continuity and new beginnings in exile in London after 1933, 3. women gallery owners after 1945 and their efforts to deal with the art of the interwar period and its present.

The history of female art dealers in Germany and beyond has yet to be written and systematically researched, also in order to be able to pursue overarching questions. In the context of a comprehensive study, for example, it would be necessary to ask under what circumstances women founded art galleries, whether family constellations or previous burdens were decisive. The social, religious or ethnic background of early women art dealers would also have to be considered – who was able to take up this profession? Does the work as a self-employed art dealer or gallery owner also imply a form of emancipation, of participation in society? So far, there are no studies on this, but research on German Jewish female students of the interwar period could be helpful to learn more about possible contexts and motivations. Hiltrud Häntzschel has shown in her studies on ‘Frauen jüdischer Herkunft an bayerischen Universitäten’ (Women of Jewish origin at Bavarian universities) that the percentage of Jewish students (also from confessionally assimilated families) was large. Häntzschel explains the assumed familial support of the daughters (or the tolerance towards their wishes to study) with a ‘pressure for advancement’; studying and an academic profession promised ‘Jewish women’ entry into the educated bourgeoisie.¹ Perhaps a similar argument can be made for the women in the art trade, for whom the work may have been a path to educational advancement, empowerment and recognition. The following explanations will focus on the career pathways of women gallery owners – some of

¹ Hiltrud Häntzschel, ‘Frauen jüdischer Herkunft an bayerischen Universitäten. Zum Zusammenhang von Religion, Geschlecht und “Rasse”’ in Hiltrud Häntzschel, Hadumod Bußmann, *Bedrohlich gescheit. Ein Jahrhundert Frauen und Wissenschaft in Bayern*, Munich: C.H. Beck, 1997, (105–126) 109. Translations by the author.

them Jewish, others not –, the program represented by the women gallery owners in the local contexts in order to work out strategies for professional success, but also to grasp the effect on the art scenes.

1.

In the 1910s and 1920s, female art dealers such as Maria Kunde (Kunstsalon Maria Kunde, Hamburg) and Johanna Ey (Junge Kunst – Frau Ey, Düsseldorf) advocated the art of their time. The private art institutions they ran, which self-confidently bore the name of their founders, were forums for an often regional contemporary art production. In addition to Kunde and Ey, Anna Caspari in Munich is also worthy of mention.² Other art dealers such as Maria Almas-Dietrich (who had been selling art to Hitler since 1936) and Maria Gillhausen in Munich profited from the persecution, expulsion and murder of Jewish art dealers after 1933 and enriched themselves within the Nazi system by trading in confiscated or looted art.³

However, with a view to the overall situation of the art trade in the Wilhelminisches Kaiserreich and the Weimar Republic, no distorted picture should be drawn. Women were rather in the minority or even the exception in the business of dealing in art. The business was dominated by art dealers such as Wolfgang Gurlitt, Alfred Flechtheim, Herwarth Walden (gallery and publishing house Der Sturm), Ferdinand Möller in Berlin, Herbert von Garvens-Garvensburg in Hanover, in Düsseldorf Kunstsalon Ludwig Schames, Herbert Cramer (Galerie Cramer) and again Alfred Flechtheim, among others, in Munich Heinrich Thannhauser (Galerie Thannhauser) and Wilhelm Suhr (Galerie Commeter) in Hamburg. These names and institutions are mentioned in publications on modern art, were regarded as decisive and widely visible patrons of the art of their time – and their owners were all male. It can therefore be stated that the modern art trade in Germany from the turn of the century around 1900 to 1933 was predominantly determined by male art dealers, and that these are mentioned above all in the literature on that decade.⁴

Other female art dealers, however, showed a great commitment to the art of their time. Since 1911, Maria Kunde ran a graphic cabinet under her name, which was located at Ernst-Merck-Straße 9 close to Hamburg's main railway station in the

² On Anna Caspari see Sebastian Peters, *Die Galerie Caspari in München, 1913–1939. Netzwerke und Handlungsspielräume einer jüdischen Kunsthändlerin im Nationalsozialismus*, master thesis, LMU Munich, Historisches Seminar, 2016, https://epub.ub.uni-muenchen.de/41213/1/Sebastian_Peters_Die_Galerie_Caspari_in_Muenchen_MA.pdf. Accessed 29.10.2021.

³ On Maria Almas-Dietrich and Maria Gillhausen see Nadine Bauer, *Kunstlieferantin des "Dritten Reichs". Umkreis und Wirkungsradius von Maria Dietrich*, diss. thesis, TU Berlin, 2020.

⁴ The male art dealers mentioned are comprehensively acknowledged in: Maike Bruhns, *Kunst in der Krise*, vol. 1: *Hamburger Kunst im "Dritten Reich"*, Hamburg and Munich: Dölling and Galitz 2001, 223–228; Andreas Hasert, *Frankfurter Kunsthandel in der Moderne*, in *Expressionismus im Rhein-Main-Gebiet. Künstler – Händler – Sammler*, exh. cat. Museum Giersch, Frankfurt/Main, 2011, 216–223; Andreas Hasert, 'Freund und Vermittler der Expressionisten. Ludwig Schames und sein Frankfurter Kunstsalon' in *Expressionismus im Rhein-Main-Gebiet. Künstler – Händler – Sammler*, exh. cat. Museum Giersch, Frankfurt/Main, 2011, 233–241.

so-called Bieberhaus. Her work and that of her successors has hardly been researched to this day, although they were among the few female protagonists in the art trade scene of the city of Hamburg (and the Empire). Their portfolio included new and recent art, such as Hans Leip, Franz Radziwill, Jussuf Abbo. In addition, Kunde ran a framing workshop and published graphic portfolios, for example by Karl Prah and Ulli (Ulrike) Wolters. Maria Kunde was also involved in the 1914 *World Exhibition of Book and Graphic Arts* (Bugra) in Leipzig; within the section 'Woman as Collector', she curated the activities of women as art dealers.⁵ In this way Kunde reflected her own profession as a female gallerist.

In 1917, Maria Kunde married the artist Karl Prah and moved to the countryside with him two years later. The Kunstsalon Maria Kunde was again taken over by two women: Gertrud Magnussen and Anna Menke. Magnussen had experience from working at the Hamburg gallery Commeter, and the art historian Rosa Schapire wrote an enthusiastic review of the opening exhibition: 'The Kunstsalon Maria Kunde has passed into new hands. The directors Gertrud Magnussen and Anna Menke – the former well established in Hamburg collector circles through her many years at Commeter – have opened their graphic cabinet with a Nolde exhibition that is of programmatic importance.'⁶

In the 1920s, the Kunstsalon made a name for itself with a commitment to contemporary art from Hamburg and beyond. Eduard Bargheer or Emil Maetzel and Dorothea Maetzel-Johanssen were shown, thus featuring artists from the Hamburgische Secession. In addition, both Maria Kunde and her successors Magnussen and Menke repeatedly exhibited female artists, such as the aforementioned Ulli (Ulrike) Wolter, Dorothea Maetzel-Johanssen (1920) and Elfriede Lohse-Wächtler, whose Friedrichsberg heads they showed in 1929 – works, which had been created in the Hamburg mental hospital Friedrichsberg.⁷

With reference to the exhibition chronology, one could ask about Kunstsalon Maria Kunde's role as a promoting institution: for it was precisely the commitment of galleries and the art trade that brought contemporary art into view – at a time when museums were often still hesitant.⁸ For this purpose, the concept of

⁵ *Das Haus der Frau auf der Weltausstellung für Buchgewerbe und Graphik*, Leipzig: Verlag des Deutschen Buchgewerbevereins, 1914, 155.

⁶ Rosa Schapire, 'Hamburger Ausstellungen', *Der Cicerone*, 11:22, 20 November 1919, (742–744), 744, <https://doi.org/10.11588/diglit.21394.243>. Accessed 24 August 2023.

⁷ See M. Bruhns, *Kunst in der Krise*, op. cit., 225.

⁸ Gustav Pauli, director of the Hamburger Kunsthalle since 1914, saw private collections of his time as an important indicator of the quality of an artist and his work. In 1931, he wrote: 'Especially in view of contemporary art, the museum should give way to private collectors. Their mistakes are easier to correct and to bear than those of the museums. [...] Only from a certain distance can the gallery director recognise with reasonable certainty what has stood the test of time among contemporary art.' ('Gerade angesichts der zeitgenössischen Kunst soll das Museum den privaten Sammlern den Vortritt lassen. Ihre Irrtümer sind leichter zu verbessern und zu verschmerzen als die der Museen. [...] Erst aus einem gewissen Abstand kann der Galerieleiter mit leidlicher Sicherheit erkennen, was unter der gegenwärtigen

‘matronage’ should be applied as a category of analysis. The historian Anna-Carolin Augustin has dedicated an extensive study to Jewish women patrons of the arts and has chosen the concept of art matronage, which is a counterpart to male art patronage.⁹ Augustin’s study carefully balances the nuances between dilettante support, art connoisseurship and professionalisation. Kunstsalon Maria Kunde is an example for the professionalised practice of matronage; the commitment of the gallery owners to the art of their time, especially to women artists, was in part radical and consistent, which can be seen in precisely that commitment to the painter Elfriede Lohse-Wächtler, who had the status of an outlaw due to her own life circumstances – as a patient in a psychiatric ward and artistically active in the red-light milieu of St. Pauli.

The directors of the Kunstsalon Maria Kunde shared with other art patrons the experience of a working life under threat after 1933. Anna Menke left the gallery in 1938; as a Jew she was not admitted to the Reichskulturkammer (Reich Chamber of Culture), Gertrud Magnussen continued to run the Kunstsalon until 1939, when it was taken over by the married couple Friedrich and Ingeborg Hammer.¹⁰

2.

While it was not yet possible to trace the life and work of Anna Menke and Gertrud Magnussen further, the second chapter of this essay will focus on the exile of German-speaking women art dealers and their work in London. The British capital was a particularly important place for the work of art dealers and gallery owners, especially for emigrants from Germany and Austria – under them women such as Lea Bondi Jaray, Erica Brausen and Ala Story.¹¹ The following will connect their work in London with questions on gender, exile and their exhibition programs.

London was the destination of numerous emigrants who fled Nazi Germany and the occupied countries in the wake of the war. It was not easy for the arriving artists in the city: the art dealers mostly traded with historical – often English – art, with Old Masters, and the French Impressionists were also highly popular.¹² But by

Kunst sich bewährt habe.’) Gustav Pauli, *Die Kunsthalle zu Hamburg 1930. Jahresbericht der Verwaltung*, Hamburg 1931, 6–7.

⁹ Anna-Carolin Augustin, *Berliner Kunstmatronage: Sammlerinnen und Förderinnen bildender Kunst um 1900*, Göttingen: Wallstein, 2018.

¹⁰ See Werner J. Schweiger, ‘Kunsthandlung Maria Kunde’, 2005–2011, <https://sammlung-online.berlinischegalerie.de/eMP/eMuseumPlus?service=ExternalInterface&module=collecti-on&objectId=231362&viewType=detailView>. Accessed 22 August 2023

¹¹ This contribution was written within the author’s ERC Consolidator Grant project “Relocating Modernism: Global Metropolises, Modern Art and Exile” (METROMOD), funded by European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union’s Horizon 2020 research and innovation program (grant agreement No 724649 – METROMOD). Research results are published on the project’s website: metromod.net. Please consider the archive page to find more information on Hanover Gallery, St. George’s Gallery, Ala Story and Rosa Schapire.

¹² Keith Holz points out that German art in particular received little attention or recognition in England until the late 1930s, and that English-language art criticism derived its standards from French art over a long period of time. See Keith Holz, *Modern German Art for Thirties*

the mid-1940s at the latest, a new progressive art scene had formed in the city with protagonists such as Francis Bacon, Frank Auerbach or Lucian Freud, who were supported in particular by emigrant gallery owners and who also helped continental modern art to gain greater visibility. These art dealers used specific strategies to assert themselves in the art scene and at the same time to contribute to the recognition of the art they represented.

From 1943, Lea Bondi Jaray ran St. George's Gallery at 81 Grosvenor Street in the district of Mayfair. The gallery sold books and applied art, but also held exhibitions of contemporary artists such as the sculptor Heinz Henghes (1945). The gallery also issued editions, such as a group of six lithographs by the artist Alva (1949). Both Heinz Henghes and Alva (actually Solomon Siegfried Allweiss) came from Germany and had arrived in England via different migration routes. In St. George's Gallery, many German-speaking artists – not only these – found a resonance space. Lea Bondi Jaray herself had emigrated from Vienna to London in 1939. In the Austrian capital, she had been working at the renowned Würthle Gallery since 1919, taking over its management in 1926. The gallery's portfolio included Expressionist artists such as Egon Schiele, Oskar Kokoschka and Emil Nolde, whom Bondi was able to show and represent in Vienna partly on the basis of a cooperation with the Flechtheim Gallery in Berlin.¹³ Bondi was also a collector of 'her' artists and, when she left Vienna, was not only forced to hand over her gallery to the art dealer Friedrich Welz, but also to leave her collection behind. Bondi Jaray was only able to take works on paper with her. The bitter dispute over restitution after 1945, including the iconic painting *Wally* by Egon Schiele, has had a lasting impact on the reception of Leo Bondi Jaray; she is usually only mentioned in this context.¹⁴

Only gradually is Jaray's work as a London gallery owner and art dealer coming into focus,¹⁵ although the gallery's exhibition chronicle has not yet been reconstructed. Bondi's partner at St. George's Gallery, Otto Brill, had already been a partner in the Würthle Gallery in Vienna.¹⁶ Brill was a factory owner and collector. In 1938 he was arrested, expropriated and was able to flee to London in the autumn of that year. In the process, he managed to execute at least some works – mainly

Paris, Prague, and London. Resistance and Acquiescence in a Democratic Public Sphere, Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2004, 127–131.

¹³ Cherith Summers, 'St. George's Gallery', in: *Brave New Visions. The Émigrés who transformed the British Art World*, Ausst.-Kat., Sotheby's, St. George Street Gallery, London, 2019, 28, *issuu*, https://issuu.com/bravenewvisions/docs/brave_new_visions. Accessed 22 August 2023.

¹⁴ See studies such as Gabriele Anderl and Alexandra Caruso, eds., *NS-Kunstraub in Österreich und die Folgen*. Innsbruck: Studien Verlag, 2005; Gunnar Schnabel and Monika Tatzkow, *Nazi Looted Art. Handbuch Kunstrestitution weltweit*, Berlin: Proprietas-Verlag, 2007.

¹⁵ See C. Summers, 'St. George's Gallery', op. cit.; Richard Aronowitz and Shauna Isaac, 'Émigré Art Dealers and Collectors' in *Insiders Outsiders. Refugees from Nazi Europe and their Contribution to British Visual Culture*, ed. by Monica Bohm-Duchen, London: Lund Humphries, 2019, 129–135.

¹⁶ Susanne Rohringer, 'Recollecting. Raub und Restitution: Entzogenes Leben', 31 January 2009, *artmagazine*, <https://www.artmagazine.cc/content38095.html>. Accessed 22 August 2023.

works on paper – by Kokoschka and Schiele, among others. It is likely that these works were shown at the St Georges Gallery, where art of Expressionism and artists such as Oskar Kokoschka (for example, in a show on artists' self-portraits in 1949), Max Beckmann, Ernst Ludwig Kircher and Wassily Kandinsky were exhibited.¹⁷ In 1950, the year it closed, Lea Bondi Jaray's gallery presented a group exhibition of Austrian Expressionist painters, including the artist Anton Kolig, arranged in collaboration with Albertina Museum in Vienna and the Austrian Federal Ministry of Education, among others.¹⁸ St. George's Gallery also offered some artists their first ever appearances in London, including exhibitions for the Norwegian-Canadian artist Waldemar Stabell (1947). St. George's Gallery had a focus on 19th century and contemporary French art, showing André Beaudin (1947) and Paule Vézelay (1949). In 1946, an exhibition and catalogue were devoted to Honoré Daumier's lithographs (fig. 1).

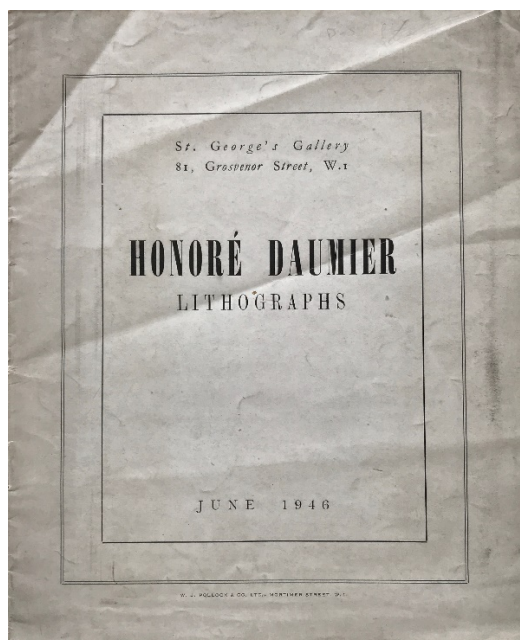


Figure 1 Honoré Daumier. *Lithographs*, exh. cat. St. George's Gallery, London, June 1946, cover (METROMOD Archive).

St. George's Gallery was also significant for the career paths of other gallery owners and art book dealers, and can be described as a node within an emigrant network: Erica Brausen, who later ran the Hanover Gallery, worked here, as did Harry Fischer of the Marlborough Gallery, founded in 1946. Agatha Sadler, another emigrant from Vienna and the daughter of Otto Brill, ran an antiquarian art bookshop in the rooms of St. George's Gallery from 1945.¹⁹

¹⁷ R. Aronowitz and S. Isaac, 'Émigré Art Dealers', op. cit., 135.

¹⁸ See C. Summers, 'St. George's Gallery', op. cit.

¹⁹ See Anonymous, 'Our London Correspondence', *The Manchester Guardian*, 12 December 1949, 4; Diana Scarisbrick, 'Obituary: Agatha Sadler: Refugee from the Nazis who became a much admired bookseller and art collector' in *The Independent*, 2 February 2016,



Figure 2 Review of the exhibition of Mary Swanzy and Mary Krishna at St. George's Gallery, London, in *The Observer*, 30 March 1947, p. 2 (Photo: Private Archive).

Although Lea Bondi Jaray's St. George's Gallery only existed for a comparatively short period of time (1943–50), it was an important private art institution and social contact zone for German-speaking actors in the London art and book market, as well as for emigrant artists such as Alva, Heinz Henghes or Oskar Kokoschka. In addition, the gallery considered itself a display for lesser-known positions, some of which were able to make their first appearance in London. St. George's Gallery was also a place where women artists exhibited: Mary Swanzy and Mary Krishna were shown in a double exhibition (1947, fig. 2) or the avant-garde New Zealand painter Frances Hodgkins, to whom two exhibitions were dedicated in 1945 and 1949. In 1947, an exhibition entitled *The New Generation* opened at St. George's Gallery, featuring Lucian Freud, John Craxton and William Scott, among others. This exhibition was probably able to build on the collaboration with the British Council.²⁰ Lea Bondi Jaray's commitment to the art of her time was recognised by the art critic. Maurice Collis wrote in the *Observer* in 1946:

To conclude, I should note that the St. George's Gallery, Grosvenor-street, a small establishment which has been steadily building up a name for discriminating taste, has already opened up an autumn exhibition of painting, several of its exhibitors being young artists of talent, such as Rosoman, Montlake, Petley Jones, and Mounsey. One cannot but commend it for bringing forward these promising painters.²¹

The same author emphasised in another article, that St. George's Gallery 'has a flair for catching hedgerow genius'.²²

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/obituaries/agatha-sadler-refugee-nazis-who-became-much-admired-bookseller-and-art-collector-a6849596.html>. Accessed 22 August 2023.

²⁰ C. Summers, 'St. George's Gallery', op. cit.

²¹ Maurice Collis, 'Art', *The Observer*, 1 September 1946, 2.

²² Maurice Collis, 'Paintings. A Gallery Reopens', *The Observer*, 22 December 1946, 2.

Bondi Jaray operated within established networks: her working relationship with Otto Brill dated back to her collaboration in Vienna, and Bondi Jaray also dealt in part with artists she had already represented at the Würthle Gallery in Vienna. In this respect, St. George's Gallery is an example of the importance of established working relationships for exile and the impact of emigrant networks in London.

A different strategy of place-making is demonstrated by Erica Brausen with her Hanover Gallery, founded in 1947, which was also located in Mayfair at 32a St George Street. Erica Brausen was born in Düsseldorf and went to Paris in 1930, where she stayed until the early 1930s, moving in the artistic milieu. She arrived in London via Mallorca at the end of the 1930s.²³ She obtained a job at the Storrans Gallery, which was run for some time by the Viennese émigré Ala Story, and worked at Lea Bondi Jaray's St. George's Gallery, among others.

In 1946 Brausen acquired Francis Bacon's *Painting* (1946), which she sold to the Museum of Modern Art in New York in 1948. This deal established the longstanding professional relationship with Bacon and gave the British artist international visibility.²⁴ At the end of 1947, Erica Brausen opened the Hanover Gallery and dedicated her first exhibition to the well-known contemporary British artist Graham Sutherland's work in 1948, held in London in the summer of the Austerity Olympics, when an international audience was in town.²⁵ With Graham Sutherland, Erica Brausen relied on an established position and in return was able to support young artists and/or unconventional positions. Hanover Gallery decisively supported the young careers of artists such as Francis Bacon (to whom it dedicated a first solo exhibition in 1949), Lucian Freud (he exhibited with it in 1950 and 1952), Marlow Moss (on view in 1953 and 1958) and Ian Stuart (exhibition in 1964).²⁶

In her gallery, Erica Brausen presented a program that spanned between the interwar modernism rediscovered after 1945 and contemporary positions. Hanover Gallery showed exhibitions by Hans Hartung (1949), Paul Klee (1954 and 1956, fig. 3) and Marino Marini (1952 and 1956), helping to establish them in London and beyond. Erica Brausen showed modern sculptors such as Germaine Richier, Jean Arp and Alberto Giacometti – the latter, for example, as a participant in the group exhibition *Post-Picasso Paris* (1957) and displayed works of three modern classics in

²³ See Jean-Noël Liaut, *The Many Lives of Miss K. Toto Koopman. Model, Muse, Spy*. Translated by Denise Raab Jacobs, New York: Rizzoli, 2013, 120ff.

²⁴ See Jean-Yves Mock, *Erica Brausen. Premier Marchand de Francis Bacon*, Paris: L'Échoppe 1996, 4.

²⁵ Private Wire, 'Our London Correspondence', *The Guardian*, 9 June 1948, 4; Gill Hedley, 'Three female gallerists who changed the course of British art', 29 September 2016, *Royal Academy*, <https://www.royalacademy.org.uk/article/movers-and-shakers-female-gallerists-british-art>. Accessed 22 August 2023.

²⁶ Francis Bacon's first solo exhibition at the Hanover Gallery in November 1949 already caused a sensation among critics. See among others Pendennis, 'Table Talk', *The Observer*, 13 November 1949, 5. Hanover Gallery held solo exhibitions of Bacon almost annually until 1959, when he moved to Marlborough Gallery, which had been founded in 1948 by the two Viennese émigrés Frank Lloyd and Harry Fischer.

one exhibition in 1968: Marcel Duchamp, Picabia and Man Ray. At the same time, Erica Brausen consistently focused on lesser-known artists until the closure of her gallery: in 1964 and 1969, the Hanover Gallery showed works by the artist Niki de Saint Phalle, who was hardly known in London at the time. Fernando Botero was also shown by Brausen in 1970, early in his career.

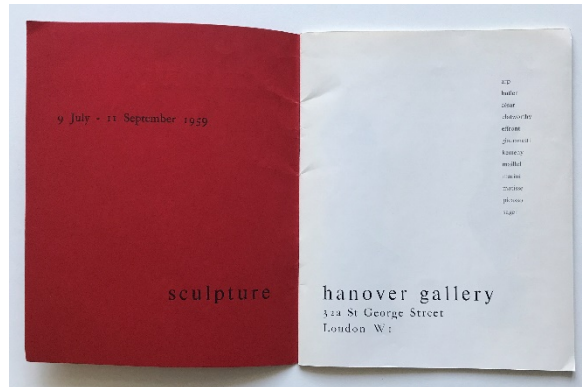


Figure 3 Review by Eric Newton of the Paul Klee exhibition at Hanover Gallery in *The Guardian*, 20 June 1956, p. 7 (Photo: Private Archive).

Figure 4 *Sculpture*, exh. cat. Hanover Gallery, London, 1959, title page (METROMOD Archive).

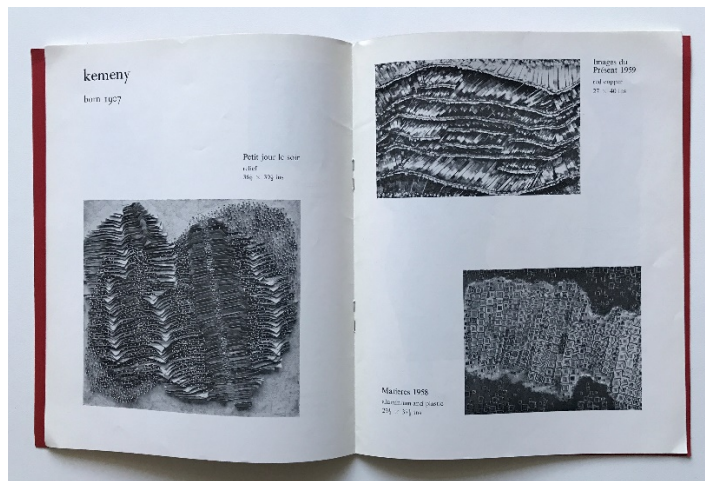


Figure 5 *Sculpture*, exh. cat. Hanover Gallery, London, 1959, double page with works of Zoltán Kemény (METROMOD Archive).

Figure 6 Pendennis, 'Table Talk', *The Observer*, 13 November 1949, p. 5 (Photo: Private Archive). A critical review of Francis Bacon's exhibition at Hanover Gallery 1949 under the headline "Art for the Few".



With her gallery, which existed until 1973, Erica Brausen was one of the progressive gallery owners in London who helped contemporary art gain recognition with great commitment and strategically planned exhibitions. In addition to painting, an important emphasis was placed on sculpture: in group exhibitions such as *Sculpture* from 1959 (fig. 4, 5), Hanover Gallery not only brought together abstraction (Zoltán Kemény) and figuration (Aristide Maillol) and artists of different generations. It also showed lesser-known sculptors such as César, Robert

Clatworthy and Marino Marini in the context of established positions – Aristide Maillol, Henri Matisse, Pablo Picasso. In this way, she was able to draw the attention of collectors and critics to new artists and thus open a door to the London art market for them.

With reference to Erica Brausen, the significance of queer networks for her work is to be considered. One of her most important artists, Francis Bacon (fig. 6), actively addressed his homosexuality in his works: his painting *Two Figures* (1953), which shows two men having sex, was shown at the Hanover Gallery shortly after it was created; she also exhibited the queer artist Marlow Moss.²⁷ Brausen lived from 1946 in a relationship with the model Toto Koopman, who also supported the management of the gallery.²⁸ Both undertook joint studio and art trips on the European continent, for example to the Venice Biennale, to find new artists for the gallery.²⁹ Brausen's queer networks, which may have helped her to make contacts and meet new artists, have not yet been decisively investigated.



Figure 7 Portrait of Ala Story, no date, in *The Ala Story Collection of International Modern Art*, exh. cat. Santa Barbara Museum of Art, Santa Barbara, 1984, frontispiece (Courtesy of the Santa Barbara Museum of Art).

The gallerist Ala Story (fig. 7) also operated in queer private and professional networks: she was born under the name Emilie Anna Maria Heyszl von Heyszenau in Vienna, initially studied art at the Academy, but dropped out and moved to

²⁷ Gregory Salter, 'Francis Bacon and Queer Intimacy in Post-War London', *Visual Culture in Britain*, 18:1, 2017, (84–99) 84f., <https://doi.org/10.1080/14714787.2017.1302817>. Accessed 24 August 2023.

²⁸ J. Liaut, *The Many Lives of Miss K. Toto Koopman*, op. cit., 135.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 190.

London in her twenties, where she worked at various galleries such as the Beaux Arts Gallery, Redfern Gallery, Wertheim Gallery and Storrans Gallery, often in leading positions.³⁰

At the end of 1938, Ala Story opened the Stafford Gallery in St James's, from which she developed the British Arts Centre after 1939, working to keep works by contemporary artists visible and to facilitate acquisitions even in wartime.³¹ The British Arts Centre's first exhibition featured new works by Esther Borough-Johnson, John Murray and Robert Buhler.³²

Around 1940, Ala Story left England for New York, where she became a founder of the American British Art Center in New York. The centre, which was organised as a gallery and clubhouse, had the purpose of making British and US artists known and counteracting the isolation of the British art scene caused by the war.³³ From 1952 to 1957, Ala Story was director of the Santa Barbara Museum of Art. There she curated exhibitions such as *Impressionism and its influence in American Art* (1954) or *Paintings by Oskar Kokoschka* (1954) – shows that focused on the artistic exchange between Europe and the USA or made European artists better known.

After leaving the Santa Barbara Museum of Art, Story travelled extensively and was employed in the 1960s until her death at the Art Gallery of the University of California at Santa Barbara, founded in 1959, which awarded her an honorary doctorate in 1968. At the Art Gallery, Story organised exhibitions on modernist artists such as William Merritt Chase (1964), Paul Klee (1967) and Max Weber (1968), but also presented surveys such as *Trends in Twentieth Century Art* (1970) and *Constructive Tendencies* (1970).³⁴

Ala Story (fig. 8) consistently supported contemporary art in her places of exile and was a transatlantic mediator, acting as a mediator and multiplier of British art. In addition, Ala Story was socio-politically engaged, for example in the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.³⁵ And she was a protagonist of the queer scenes in London, New York and Santa Barbara and supported other emigrants in their queer networks, such as Erica Anderson (née Erika Paula Kellner, 1914–1976). Story helped Erica Anderson, a photographer who had fled to London, find temporary work in galleries; they both came to New York in the same year,

³⁰ See Thomas Carr Howe, 'Introduction', in *Two Collections. Margaret Mallory. Ala Story*, exh. cat. Santa Barbara Museum of Art, Santa Barbara, 1966, n. p.; see also Anonymous, 'Ala Story 1907–1971', in *The Ala Story Collection of International Modern Art*, exh. cat. Santa Barbara Museum of Art, Santa Barbara, 1984, (11–14), 11.

³¹ See Private Wire, 'Our London Correspondence' *The Guardian*, 30 September 1939, 8.

³² Jan Gordon, 'Art and Artists', *The Observer*, 19 November 1939, 8.

³³ See Anonymous, 'British Art', *The Herald Statesman*, 28 January 1941, 8.

³⁴ See also T. Carr Howe, 'Introduction', op. cit., n. p.

³⁵ Anonymous, 'Mrs. Ala Story, Was Director of Museum of Art', *The Berkshire Eagle*, 7 April 1972, 13, <https://archive.metromod.net/viewer.p/69/1470/types/all/geo/>. Accessed 23 August 2023.

1940, and Anderson moved into a flat above Story's American-British Art Center.³⁶ Anderson, who had a career as a cinematographer, and Story remained friends throughout their lives and were also connected professionally. Story's life partner, filmmaker Margaret Mallory, made Anderson the chief cinematographer of their production company, Falcon Films. In 1950, Erica Anderson made a film about the US painter Grandma Moses, whom Story supported through exhibitions at the American British Art Center and whose works she collected.³⁷



Figure 8 Brian Connelly, *Ala Story*, 1954, Oil on panel, 42 x 30,5 cm, private collection, reproduction permission by National Portrait Gallery, Washington, DC.

During her time in London and as founder of the American-British Art Center in New York, Ala Story built up her own art collection together with her life partner, the filmmaker Margaret Mallory, with key works such as Max Beckmann's painting *Quappi with Fur* (*Quappi mit weißem Pelz*, 1937) and Egon Schiele's *House with Drying Laundry* (1917).³⁸ In 1966, the art collections of Ala Story and Margaret Mallory were shown at the Santa Barbara Museum of Art (fig. 9).³⁹ Works from their

³⁶ Andreas Brunner, 'Die queeren Netzwerke der Erica Anderson', in *Doing Gender in Exile. Geschlechterverhältnisse, Konstruktionen und Netzwerke in Bewegung*, edited by Irene Messinger and Katharina Prager, Münster: Westfälisches Dampfboot, 2019, 142–155.

³⁷ Anonymous, 'Ala Story 1907–1971', op. cit., 12; see also Andreas Brunner: 'Erica Anderson (1914–1976). Lesbische Netzwerke im Exil' *Lambda Nachrichten*, 39:172, 2017, 46–48, https://lambdanachrichten.at/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/LN_2017-05.pdf. Accessed 23 August 2023.

³⁸ Story acquired the latter at the St. Etienne Gallery in New York, i.e. after her emigration. See Sonja Niederacher, 'Dossier zu Egon Schiele Deuring-Schlösschen, 1912, Leopold Museum Privatstiftung LM Inv. Nr. 2373', 31 December 2014, *docplayer*, <http://docplayer.org/66704325-Dossier-egon-schiele-deuring-schloesschen-1912.html>. Accessed 23 August 2023.

³⁹ Harriette von Breton, 'Margaret Mallory and Ala Story Collections', *Artform International*, 4:7, March 1966, 18, www.artforum.com/print/reviews/196603/margaret-mallory-and-ala-story-collections-75317. Accessed 23 August 2023. On the 1966 exhibition see Henry J. Seldis,

joint collections were donated to the museum, and the Art Gallery at the University of California also holds holdings from Margaret Mallory's collection; in 1961, what is now known as the AD&A Museum purchased a body of Old Master and 20th century prints.⁴⁰

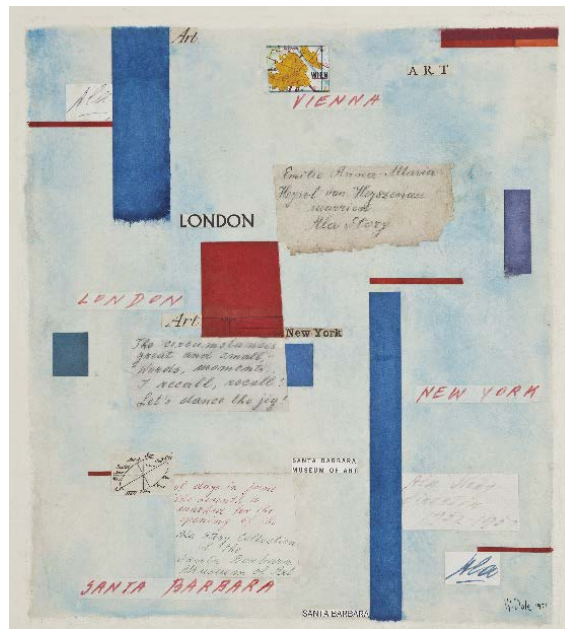
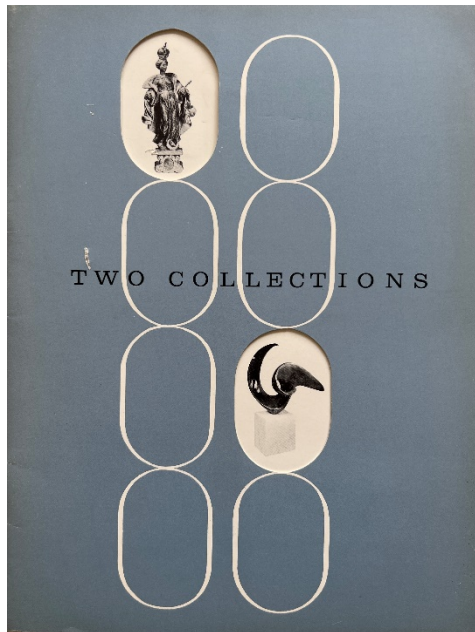


Figure 9 *Two Collections*. Margaret Mallory. *Ala Story*, exh. cat. Santa Barbara Museum of Art, Santa Barbara, 1966, cover, Private archive (Courtesy of the Santa Barbara Museum of Art).

Figure 10 William Dole, *Ala's Story*, 1971, collage, 34.9 x 30.8 cm, Santa Barbara Museum of Art (Santa Barbara Museum of Art, Gift of Margaret P. Mallory, Object number 1991.154.9, © artist or artist's estate). The collage is dedicated to the life and work of Ala Story in Vienna, London, New York and Santa Barbara and is a visual transcultural narrative.

The collage *Ala's Story* by William Dole (1971, fig. 10) came to the Santa Barbara Museum of Art as a gift from Margaret Mallory. The title of the painting alludes to the name Ala Story and is dedicated to the transcultural life story of the curator and gallery owner, which took her from Vienna via London and New York to the American West Coast. This life on the route with different stations of emigration is described with the work itself as a collage.⁴¹

'Introduction', in *Two Collections*. Margaret Mallory. *Ala Story*, exh. cat. Santa Barbara Museum of Art, Santa Barbara, 1966, n.p.

⁴⁰ *The Ala Story Collection of Art in the Santa Barbara Museum of Art*, exh. cat. Santa Barbara Museum of Art, Santa Barbara, 1971, n.p.

⁴¹ Dole's collage is reproduced on the cover of the catalogue *The Ala Story Collection of International Modern Art* (1984) of the Santa Barbara Museum of Art. Until now still little source based information is available on Ala Story's work in London. Story's extensive estate in the Smithsonian Archives of American Art is limited to the period in America 1941–1970 and was part of a donation by her partner Margaret Mallory.

<https://www.aaa.si.edu/collections/ala-story-papers-9485>. Accessed 23 August 2023.

Some of those who advocated the art of their time in London were emigrants, including women such as Erica Brausen, Lea Bondi Jaray and Ala Story. This leads to the thesis that, on the one hand, the emigrants brought with them their diverse experiences with contemporary art in their place of origin and the exile stations along the way. On the other hand, the still under-recognised terrain of contemporary art, with little competition from local art dealers, also offered opportunities to establish themselves in the London art market and scene. The galleries discussed in this lecture, which were founded or run by emigrants such as St. George's Gallery or Hanover Gallery, contributed considerably to the establishment of often radical contemporary art positions on the London art market. They supported the polarising work of Francis Bacon (Hanover Gallery), which was controversial in its time, showed works by the young Lucian Freud, provided forums for artists who were still receiving little international attention such as Marino Marini, Niki de Saint Phalle and, in particular, showed works by female artists such as Mary Krishna (St. George's Gallery). They were also private institutions where European continental modernism found an echo at a time when it was still perceived with distance or scepticism in London.

They carried out this work by showing already recognised art (including historical art) alongside new positions, and once their positions were established, they also championed Continental Modernism of the interwar period, for example. Although the selection of three exemplary female art dealers in London exile seems to be a contribution to a success story, it must be clearly stated that many emigrants struggled to continue their careers and survived financially in London with great hardship. The art historian Rosa Schapire, who was one of the great promoters of Expressionism and especially of Brücke artists in Hamburg, tried, mostly in vain, to inspire institutions and specialists for this art movement in London.⁴²

3.

Rosa Schapire leads to a short third chapter of this contribution, which deals with the post-war period. In Germany, Schapire's work and her person were only noticed again after the end of the war, and numerous museum people and art dealers contacted her – also because she was considered an expert on the expressionist Karl Schmidt-Rottluff. In 1953, Schapire was visited by the art dealer and collector Hanna Bekker vom Rath, whom she had known since before her emigration.⁴³

⁴² On Schapire in England see Leonie Beiersdorf, "'Wieder Boden unter den Füßen'" – Rosa Schapire in England (1939–1954)', in *Rosa. Eigenartig grün. Rosa Schapire und die Expressionisten*, edited by Sabine Schulze, exh. cat. Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe Hamburg, Hamburg, 2009, 250–281; Burcu Dogramaci, 'Still Fighting for Modern Art. Rosa Schapire in England.' in *Rosa und Anna Schapire – Sozialwissenschaft, Kunstgeschichte und Feminismus um 1900*, edited by Burcu Dogramaci and Günther Sandner, Berlin: Aviva, 2017, 229–256.

⁴³ Karl Schmidt-Rottluff arranged the contact and visit between Hanna Bekker vom Rath and Rosa Schapire. See Rosa Schapire, Letter to Karl Schmidt-Rottluff, 8.12.1953, Brücke-Museum Berlin/Karl und Emy Schmidt-Rottluff Stiftung. Six days later, Schapire mentioned the visit by Hanna Bekker. 'The reunion after nearly 20 years gave us both much pleasure, she is after all a very famously lively woman and has rebuilt her life well.' ('Das Wiedersehen nach

Bekker vom Rath also had contact with the artist Else Meidner, who was exiled in London. She showed her works – Meidner was hardly able to exhibit throughout her life – in her Frankfurt art cabinet in 1955 and 1957.

This connects the work of emigrants with the German post-war period and one of its pioneers in art dealing and art mediation: Hanna Bekker vom Rath, herself a painter, who systematically collected the art of her time from the early 1920s onwards. She was not subject to persecution during the National Socialist era. However, she not only collected modern art that no longer had a forum in the Nazi regime and specifically supported artists with purchases (such as Jawlensky, Schmidt-Rottluff), but also organised, as Marian Stein-Steinfeld writes, ‘secret exhibitions of many artists condemned as “degenerate”’ in her Berlin studio flat (Regensburger Straße 34).⁴⁴ In 1947, Hanna Bekker vom Rath, who had her home in Hofheim im Taunus, opened the Frankfurt Kunstkabinett Hanna Bekker vom Rath in Frankfurt’s Kaiserstraße 5 and two years later moved into new premises on Börsenplatz.⁴⁵ The gallery was particularly committed to the reappraisal of art from the interwar period, whereby Hanna Bekker vom Rath’s commitment was not only based on her own collecting activities, but – as with Rosa Schapire or Else Meidner – also reactivated her old network from the early 1950s onwards, establishing contacts with emigrants and also buying from them. In 1955, Bekker vom Rath acquired a work by Emil Nolde from the New York estate of Curt Valentin, an emigrated art dealer.⁴⁶

The exhibitions in the Frankfurt Kunstkabinett have a canonical character – in terms of modernism rediscovered after 1945: the first exhibition was dedicated to the graphic work of Käthe Kollwitz and paid tribute to a position that was relevant for many artists of the following generations after Kollwitz (also for exiled artists). Expressionism in particular received extensive recognition; in the first three years of its existence, the Kunstkabinett showed exhibitions on Karl Schmidt-Rottluff, Alexej von Jawlensky, Christian Rohlf, Ida Kerkovius.⁴⁷ In the brochure for the opening of

beinahe 20 Jahren hat uns beiden viel Freude gemacht, sie ist ja doch eine sehr famose lebendige Frau und hat ihr Leben gut neu aufgebaut.’) Rosa Schapire, Letter to Karl Schmidt-Rottluff, 14.12.1953, Brücke-Museum Berlin/Karl und Emy Schmidt-Rottluff Stiftung.

⁴⁴ Marian Stein-Steinfeld, “‘Aus kleinen Anfängen’”. Hanna Bekker vom Rath – Künstlerin, Sammlerin und Händlerin’, in *Expressionismus im Rhein-Main-Gebiet. Künstler – Händler – Sammler*, exh. cat. Museum Giersch, Frankfurt/Main, 2011, (315–321) 315.

⁴⁵ The Kunstkabinett still exists under the name Galerie Hanna Bekker vom Rath, located at Braubachstraße 12 in Frankfurt/Main.

⁴⁶ M. Stein-Steinfeld, “‘Aus kleinen Anfängen’”, op. cit., 320. See also Hanna Bekker vom Rath: “‘Soweit ich zurückdenken kann...’ Eine kurze Autobiografie (1973)”, in *Zwischen Brücke und Blauem Reiter. Hanna Bekker vom Rath als Wegbereiterin der Moderne*, exh. cat. Museum Wiesbaden, Wiesbaden, 2013, (8–9) 8.

⁴⁷ On Hanna Bekker vom Rath and her artists see Vera Klewitz: ‘Gleich einer Wächterfigur. Hanna Bekker vom Rath und Karl Schmidt-Rottluff’, in *Zwischen Brücke und Blauem Reiter. Hanna Bekker vom Rath als Wegbereiterin der Moderne*, exh. cat. Museum Wiesbaden, Wiesbaden, 2013, (31–41) 38. See also Marian Stein-Steinfeld: ‘Eine Aufständische für Künstler. Hanna Bekker vom Rath. Biografie’, in: *Zwischen Brücke und Blauem Reiter. Hanna*

the *Kunstkabinett*, she programmatically stated her agenda: 'My goal: bridging the gap created by the Third Reich. To acquaint young people with the art of the last forty years and to introduce them to contemporary art in the fields of painting, sculpture, graphics and works of art.'⁴⁸ She also organised exhibitions on figurative positions of her time, such as Arthur Fauser, HAP Grieshaber, Johnny Friedlaender and Horst Antes. Since much has already been published on Hanna Bekker vom Rath as an art dealer and collector, future research on her could focus on two questions: on the one hand, it could be interesting to explore how and with which goals she came into contact with emigrated artists, art critics and collectors. On the other hand, her *Kunstkabinett*'s commitment should be contextualised with other institutions and people who stood up for a re-recognition of banned modernism. A prominent example would be the Kassel exhibition *documenta I*: some positions were shown at the same time by Bekker vom Rath (such as Nay, Schmidt-Rottluff) and also in Kassel in 1955. However, as an exhibition at the Deutsches Historisches Museum (German Historical Museum) in Berlin on *documenta. Politics and Art* showed, Rudolf Levy, an artist who had fallen victim to Nazi terror, was dropped from the planning process for *documenta I* – even though the *documenta* saw itself as an instance of reparation for modernism ostracised by the Nazis.⁴⁹ Hanna Bekker vom Rath, however, dedicated a memorial exhibition to Rudolf Levy in her Frankfurt art cabinet in 1959.⁵⁰

With a view to the presence of women art dealers and gallery owners of the modern era and their momentous commitment to the art of their time, the following theses can be formulated: Contemporary art, which first had to be given recognition, offered a special opportunity for women to be active in the art system. Since only a few museums initially supported contemporary art, private art institutions and private collectors were the main promoters of the art of their time. The female actors discussed in this article were active in a field of contemporary art less burdened by competition with male colleagues. The protected space of galleries, art salons or cabinets offered them opportunities for profiling and commitment. At the same time, it can be argued that modern art received a significant boost from the activities of these and other female actors. The gender-specific perspective on gallerist can provide valuable insights into women's options for action in the modern art scene,

Bekker vom Rath als Wegbereiterin der Moderne, exh. cat. Museum Wiesbaden, Wiesbaden, 2013, (158–177) 169–170.

⁴⁸ 'Mein Ziel: Überbrückung der durch das Dritte Reich entstandenen Kluft. Heranführung der Jugend an die Kunst der letzten vierzig Jahre und Einführung in das Schaffen der Gegenwart auf dem Gebiet der Malerei, Plastik, Graphik und Werkkunst.' Hanna Bekker vom Rath, 'Leaflet Kollwitz exhibition', 1947, <https://hanna-bekker-vom-rath.org/vermittlerin/kunstkabinett/>. Accessed 23 August 2023.

⁴⁹ Zu Werner Haftmann, *documenta I* und Rudolf Levy siehe Julia Voss: 'Das Werner-Haftmann-Modell. Wie die *documenta* zur Bühne der Erinnerungspolitik wurde', in *documenta. Politik und Kunst*, ed. by Raphael Gross et al., exh. cat. Deutsches Historisches Museum, Berlin, 2021, (68–76) 72–75.

⁵⁰ The exhibition took place from 20 February to 26 March 1959. A small catalogue with a text by Gustav Maria Hartlaub was published.

which can be seen as complementary to the matronage – the supporting collectors and patrons. In order to examine these hypotheses more thoroughly, it was important to focus on three distinct decades under different political and social conditions. Beyond individual case studies, overarching observations brought gender, (art) politics and the art trade together.

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