

Anna Spitzmüller (1903–2001), the first female custodian at the Albertina Museum in Vienna

Ursula Drahoss



Figure 1 Anna Spitzmüller with students, twentieth century. Photography.
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Introduction

Anna Spitzmüller is considered the first woman to hold the position of curator in an Austrian museum. Women's studies took notice of the art historian only late and only rudimentarily.¹ Today, the proportion of women in the curatorial field and in leading positions in museums is high.² This was not always the case. In this essay, I will focus on Anna Spitzmüller particularly in regard of the situation of women in museums in the interwar period. Contemporary witnesses with whom Anna Spitzmüller worked at the Albertina, the Kunsthistorisches Museum and the Austro-American Institute of Education (*Amerika-Institut*) in Vienna remembered

¹ Ilse Korotin and Nastasja Stupnick, *Biografien bedeutender österreichischer Wissenschaftlerinnen. Die Neugier treibt mich, Fragen zu stellen*, Wien: Böhlau 2018, 810.

² A quota of women at the Albertina drawn up on 31.12.2020 lists the proportion of women at management level as 50%, at chief curator level 50%, at curator level 67% and at department head level 75%.

her as a warm-hearted person with a great deal of humour and a fine sense of irony.³ (Fig. 1)

Despite her modesty, discretion and unobtrusive manner, Anna Spitzmüller managed to penetrate and literally man up in a male-dominated domain at a time when a traditionally 'patriarchal'⁴ understanding of gender roles made the careers of women in higher positions in museums the exception rather than the norm.

In recent years, entries in encyclopaedias and in Wikipedia testify to a steadily growing interest in Anna Spitzmüller and her work as an art historian. In 1994, two Albertina staff members drew attention to her for the first time, when on the occasion of her 90th birthday Michaela Pappernigg and Wolfgang Schreiner conducted an interview with her and recorded it on videotape.⁵ In the interview, Anna Spitzmüller talks about her childhood and youth in Prague and Vienna, her student days and how, when being a staff member of the Albertina, she had experienced the interwar period, the time under National Socialist oppression and the period of reconstruction after the Second World War. She also reminisces about her business trips to Italy, England, France and the USA. Her enthusiasm cannot be overheard when she talks about her encounters with colleagues from other museums and, among others, with personalities from the European aristocracy, who she often met as a guest at elegant receptions in stately surroundings. Her stories reveal that she had no reservations about exclusive societies and even sought encounters with members of the former Austrian monarchy and the Prussian or English high nobility; it was probably the consciousness of her own origins that made her move so confidently and naturally in these circles. Not only had Anna Spitzmüller's grandfather, Franz von Spitzmüller-Tonalwehr, but also her cousin Alexander, whom she called her uncle, been raised to the nobility.⁶ Even towards the end of his life in the times of the Second Republic, Alexander Spitzmüller von

³ Lucia Gunz, 'In memoriam Anna Spitzmüller', in *Kunsthistoriker Aktuell*, 19:1/02, 1996, 8; Hermann Weissgärber, 'You Can't Copy Tradition. A view on the eventful history and bilateral work at the Austro-American Institute of Education from 1926-2016. Volume 1 (1926-1971)', Books on Demand, 2016, 87-88, (note 147).

⁴ See for instance: Jo Ziebritzki, *Stella Kramrisch. Kunsthistorikerin zwischen Europa & Indien. Ein Beitrag zur Depatriarchalisierung der Kunstgeschichte*, Marburg: Büchner Verlag, 2021, 14, (note 12).

⁵ Michaela Pappernigg and Wolfgang Schreiner, 'Albertina-Gespräche. Erinnerungen von Mitarbeiterinnen und Mitarbeitern der graphischen Sammlung Albertina', Graphische Sammlung Albertina Wien, 1994, K.S.NBM-7, Videotapes 1-3, (in total 190 Minuten VHS Video).

⁶ Franz Spitzmüller von Tonalwehr (1838-1913), was ennobled for his services to the fortification of the Tonale Pass in South Tyrol; Alexander Freiherr von und zu Spitzmüller-Harmersbach (1862-1953) was a confidant of the heir to the throne Franz Ferdinand and subsequently rendered special services to the Monarchy and the young Republic of Austria in various ministerial posts and in banking - among other things, he was governor of the Austro-Hungarian Bank and then of Creditanstalt, which emerged from it in the First Republic. He was raised to the peerage by Emperor Charles I.

und zu Harmersbach made no secret of his attachment to a 'black-and-yellow'⁷ attitude in his posthumously published 'Memoirs'; the origin of her family from a privileged class of the imperial and royal monarchy may have influenced Anna Spitzmüller. It was part of her self-image that women were charitable. The education of art for interested lay people and the commitment to the advancement of women were special concerns of Anna Spitzmüller. She held lectures and courses, which she offered for the *Volksbildungswerk* at the *Volkshochschule* (folk high school or adult education centre) in the Urania but also at the Albertina.⁸ In 1930 she began teaching art history to American students at the Amerika-Institut; she volunteered for ZONTA⁹, an international women's movement which is still active today worldwide in promoting disadvantaged women in society, politics, business and culture and whose Vienna branch Anna Spitzmüller co-founded in 1930. As part of her commitment to women, she took part in conferences of the International Federation of Women in Mexico City in 1962 and in New Delhi in 1967.¹⁰

Aim of the essay

The American art historian Erika Esau, who not only wrote the entry on Anna Spitzmüller in Wikipedia,¹¹ but also the first monograph on her published in 2020, provides comprehensive information on Spitzmüller's origins and life.¹² Esau was a lifelong friend of Spitzmüller. She had spent a year of overseas study in Vienna as a

⁷ Alexander von Spitzmüller-Harmersbach, '... und hat auch Ursach, es zu lieben', Wien: Frick 1955, S. 20-21 ('Ich war immer durch und durch ein schwarzgelber Österreicher'; See also: Erika Esau, 'You Must Look at the Whole Thing Not Just Part: Anna Spitzmüller (1903 - 2001)', in *Three German Women. Personal Histories from the Twentieth Century*, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2020, (9-63), 18-19. (I have always been a thoroughly black-and-yellow Austrian)

⁸ Urania Wien, 'Volkshochschulkurse Winterhalbjahr 1930/31', in *Verlautbarungen des Volksbildungshauses Wiener Urania* 13. September 1930, 21:30, September 1930, 16 (Anna Spitzmüller offered the following courses: 'Zeichnungen und Graphiken an der Albertina' and 'Die Kunst der Barockzeit').

⁹ ZONTA is an organization of professional women whose aim is to promote and improve the position of women in legal, political, economic, social and professional fields. The Confederation of ZONTA Clubs was founded in 1919; the first ZONTA meeting was held in Rochester New York in 1920. The Vienna ZONTA Club is the first of its kind on the European continent,

https://www.zonta.org/Web/About/100_Years_Zonta_International.aspx, accessed March 4, 2023.

¹⁰ Esau 'You Must Look at the Whole Thing Not Just Part: Anna Spitzmüller (1903 -2001)', 53.

¹¹ Esau 'You Must Look at the Whole Thing Not Just Part: Anna Spitzmüller (1903 -2001)', 2-3.

¹² Esau, 'You Must Look at the Whole Thing Not Just Part: Anna Spitzmüller (1903 -2001)', 9-61. Esau, 'You Must Look at the Whole Thing Not Just Part: Anna Spitzmüller (1903 -2001)', 9-61.

student of the women-only Temple Buell College¹³ in 1969/70 and was taught art history by Spitzmüller at the Amerika-Institut.¹⁴

My paper focuses on Spitzmüller's studies and her work at the museum from 1921 to 1954, a period marked by enormous political upheaval and by changes in the museum landscape. The monarchy disintegrated and the former imperial art collections, including those of the Albertina, became the property of the young Republic of Austria. The museums, among them the Albertina, were reorganised. The fortunes of the Albertina were guided exclusively by men; Josef Meder was the first director. I look at the conditions Anna Spitzmüller found as a student at the Institute of Art History at the University of Vienna, the structures she subsequently encountered at an Austrian state museum, the career opportunities open to the young art historian at the Albertina, the networks she built up and the strategies she pursued in her career in a male-dominated environment in order to succeed as the first woman in the custodial staff of a museum.

In my contribution, I supplement the interview conducted by Pappernigg and Schreiner as well as the biography of Erika Esau with information from primary sources, such as service cards, civil status data and correspondence, which have been preserved in the Austrian State Archives, the archives of the Albertina and the Kunsthistorisches Museum, and compare them with secondary sources that provide information about the actions and biographies of her contemporaries at the Albertina. Since the videotapes are only available in one copy at the Albertina and are difficult to access, and Esau's book, which was only recently published by a small American academic publisher, is not yet widely available in public libraries, I will very briefly preface my contribution with some key biographical data based on Esau's biography and on primary sources.

Short biography

Anna Spitzmüller came from an old Austrian officer's family. She was born in 1903 in Znaim (today Znojmo) in Moravia. In 1913 the Spitzmüllers moved to Vienna. She grew up in Windmühlgasse in the sixth district, where she lived until her death. With the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy in 1918, her father, Amedeo Spitzmüller von Tonalwehr, retired on a low salary. Despite the strained financial circumstances, she enjoyed an education that was privileged for young women in her time: she attended Vienna's first girls' grammar school in Rahlgasse, which was close to her home, and studied art history with Josef Strzygowski at the First Institute of Art History at the University of Vienna from 1921 to 1926. She received her doctorate in 1926 and subsequently inventoried the art monuments of Villach, a small town in southern Austria, for the volume *Die Kunstdenkmäler des politischen*

¹³ 'Temple Buell' was the name of Colorado Women's College in Denver in use from 1967-1973, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Colorado_Women%27s_College, accessed March 4, 2023.

¹⁴ See for instance: Hermann Weissgärber, *You Can't Copy Tradition.*, (Hermann Weissgärber deals with the history of this educational institution, which began to address American-Austrian cultural relations in 1926. Spitzmüller taught there not only students from Temple Buell College, which had grown out of Colorado Women's College, but later also students from other universities, such as Hope College, located in Holland, Michigan).

Bezirks Villach in the series *Die Kunstdenkmäler Kärntens* (Art monuments of Carinthia) published by Karl Ginhart from 1929 to 1934.¹⁵ Spitzmüller's activity in Carinthia lasted only one summer. In 1927 she joined the Albertina as a 'scientific assistant', in 1929 her employment became permanent and from 1.1.1948 she was listed as 'Custos I. Class', as can be seen from her personnel file.¹⁶ In 1954 she went to the Kunsthistorisches Museum, where she expanded the museum's educational service, which was still in its infancy.¹⁷ In 1969 she was appointed *Hofrätin* and retired; she died in Vienna in September 2001 at the age of 98.

The study of art history at the University of Vienna

A tapestry exhibition at the Belvedere had impressed Anna Spitzmüller so much that in 1921, against her father's wishes to study chemistry, she decided to enrol in art history at the University of Vienna. When Spitzmüller began her art history studies, after the death of Max Dvorák, two professorships each claimed to continue the traditional Viennese school of art history founded by Franz Wickhoff and Alois Riegl. Josef Strzygowski was the chair of the First Viennese Institute of Art History; Julius von Schlosser presided over the Second Viennese Institute of Art History.¹⁸ The two chairs differed primarily in terms of methodology, but Spitzmüller's choice to enrol with Strzygowski was due less to a dispute over methods than to pragmatic considerations. In the video interview, she admits that her choice fell on Strzygowski because she appreciated him as an exciting and stimulating teacher, in contrast to Dvorák's successor Julius von Schlosser, who, despite his erudition, was, in her opinion, more inclined to 'intellectual chit-chat'¹⁹ than to in-depth teaching of art history. In the interview, Anna Spitzmüller does not say a word about Strzygowski's later academic aberrations, which brought him close to National Socialism. Spitzmüller studied with Strzygowski at a time when he not only

¹⁵ Karl Ginhart (1888-1971) from Carinthia had received his doctorate under Strzygowski, was his assistant at the 1st Institute of Viennese Art History and from 1926-1939 worked at the Federal Monuments Office as State Conservator, from where he promoted the inventorying and scientific indexing of Carinthian architectural monuments in particular. In doing so, Ginhart followed the model of the so-called Dehio-Handbook published by Georg Dehio (1850-1932) in Germany, which was conceived as a handbook and travel guide for excursions focusing on architectural monuments. The German 'Dehio' was joined by an Austrian 'Dehio' only from 1933. The Austrian manual was edited by Dagobert Frey and Karl Ginhart. Ginhart was an intermittent member of the NSDAP and played a dubious role in the confiscation of Jewish property by the National Socialists in Carinthia; he received the Austrian Cross of Honour for Science and Art in 1960.

¹⁶ Archive Kunsthistorisches Museum Wien: Standesausweis mit Laufbahn, Personalakte Dr. Anna Spitzmüller III 1695, 2.

¹⁷ Archive Albertina Wien: Korrespondenz des Ministeriums für Unterricht an den Direktor der Graphischen Sammlung Albertina vom Oktober 1954 (Aktenzahlen 14.902/III-12 a/C/1954 and Zl. 54.529-II/6/54), Z. 1546 and 1566.

¹⁸ The two chairs differed above all methodologically: Strzygowski rejected what he saw as Dvorák's too Eurocentric, historical-philosophical approach to art history, oriented towards the exemplary nature of Italian art, and instead preferred a method with which he compared European art with art forms of 'northern' and non-European art provinces.

¹⁹ Michaela Pappernigg and Wolfgang Schreiner, 'Albertina-Gespräche', Videotape 1.

employed and promoted Jewish staff and had a large influx of Jewish students, but was also considered a promoter of women at universities. According to Friedrich Polleroß, Strzygowski's approaches to including non-European cultures in art history '[...] made it easier for Jewish women in particular to pursue academic careers beyond the traditional fields of Western art, which were already dominated by men.'²⁰ Strzygowski's method of art history was particularly well received in the USA.²¹ American universities invited him to lecture. Bryn Mawr College, which was one of the first educational institutions in the USA to offer university degrees to women, even offered him a chair in 1926, but Strzygowski turned it down.²²

Strzygowski's exchanges with American universities coincided with initiatives emanating from the USA, which, against the backdrop of the collapse of the European order in the First World War, sought a new and peaceful mutual understanding between nations by founding language and cultural institutions. With the support of influential American philanthropists and patrons, for example, the Austrian educator Paul Leo Dengler founded the Austro-American Institute of Education (*Amerika-Institut*) in Vienna in 1926.²³ How Anna Spitzmüller found her way to this cultural institute, where she taught American female students from 1930 onwards, is not known; it seems possible that Strzygowski's reputation in the USA and her membership of ZONTA encouraged her in her personal concern to become involved in the education of young women to accept a teaching position at an American cultural institute, especially when teaching was dominated by male professors at Vienna university and it would not have been easy there for her to access.

Four years earlier, Anna Spitzmüller had completed her studies with her dissertation on *Die Brüder Strudel als Plastiker. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Hofkunst Kaiser Leopolds I.* (A Contribution to the History of Viennese Court Art by Emperor Leopold I) with Strzygowski. The conflict between the opposing art history faculties at Vienna University was apparently also fought out on the backs of the students. As Spitzmüller confessed in the interview, students had to take their final exams at both institutes and it was said that one failed more easily if one had studied with Strzygowski.²⁴ Spitzmüller passed the viva, but with regard to the doctoral thesis, one of the examiners of the dissertation, Dr Emil Reisch from the Institute of

²⁰ I am grateful to Friedrich Polleroß for the kind reference, 'Josef Strzygowski: Seine Teil-Nachlässe sowie seine Schüler und Schülerinnen zwischen Zionismus und Nationalsozialismus', in *Mitteilungen der Gesellschaft für vergleichende Kunstforschung in Wien*, 73: 3, October 2021, 13. (',... es jüdischen Frauen leichter machen konnten, auch jenseits der bereits von den Männern dominierten traditionellen Bereiche der abendländischen Kunst wissenschaftliche Karriere zu machen.')

²¹ Christopher S. Wood, 'Strzygowski und Riegl in den Vereinigten Staaten', in 'Wiener Schule. Erinnerung und Perspektiven', (*Wiener Jahrbuch für Kunstgeschichte* 53), Wien: Böhlau 2004, 217-233.

²² Christopher S. Wood, 'Strzygowski und Riegl in den Vereinigten Staaten', 219 (note 11), Instead, he recommended his student and collaborator Ernst Diez (1878-1961).

²³ Hermann Weissgärber, 'You Can't Copy Tradition', 33.

²⁴ Michaela Pappernigg and Wolfgang Schreiner, 'Albertina-Gespräche', Videotape 1.

Archaeology,²⁵ noted that the candidate was often under the influence of preconceived opinions and assessed it with a 'Sufficient'.²⁶ The wording of the expert opinion makes it clear that the criticism was actually directed against Strzygowski's view of art. Incidentally, Reisch had also been one of the supervisors of Erica Conrat's (1883-1958) dissertation.²⁷ He had also given Conrat's dissertation, which she submitted in 1905, a 'Sufficient' grade in the face of otherwise excellent assessments by the other professors.²⁸

Comparing Careers: Anna Spitzmüller and Erica Tietze-Conrat at the Albertina and Agnes Mongan at the Fogg Art Museum

In Erica Tietze-Conrat we meet an art historian whose life path must have crossed that of Anna Spitzmüller, even though we have no evidence of direct contact between the two women. Both worked for the Albertina in the 1920s and 1930s: Anna Spitzmüller in a permanent employment relationship; Erica Tietze-Conrat in a contractual relationship of unknown nature. Conrat was a generation older than Anna Spitzmüller and the first woman to study art history in Vienna. When she began her studies, the proportion of women at Vienna University was still 2.3%; when Spitzmüller began studying, it was 18%.²⁹ Erica Conrat received her doctorate under Franz Wickhoff and Julius von Schlosser in 1905, the same year she married her fellow student, Hans Tietze, three years her senior. After completing her studies, she initially assisted her husband as an assistant in the inventory of art monuments as part of the series *Österreichische Kunsttopographie* initiated by the Central Office for the Preservation of Monuments, now the Austrian Federal Monuments Office. She described her collaboration as that of a *famulus*, a trainee who served her

²⁵ Emil Reisch was a full professor of classical archaeology in Vienna from 1898 and researched classical antiquities in Greece and Rome. He belonged to the 'third' camp, in which mainly German nationalist forces gathered and he was a member of the so-called 'German Club' founded in 1908, which was concerned with the promotion of 'Deutschtum'. Reisch died in 1933, but at a time when the right-wing camp had already begun to radicalise in Austria and was preparing the way for National Socialism.

²⁶ Archives of the University of Vienna: Rigorosenakt Anna Spitzmüller Nr. 9309, Seite 2: Gutachten des zweiten Referenten: „Die Cand. steht vielfach unter dem Einfluss vorgefasster Meinungen. So kommt sie immer darauf zurück, dass in den Werken der Strudel, die gewiss auf deutsche Ahnen zurückblicken konnten, noch Spuren ihres «nordischen Blutes» zu finden sein müssten, erkennt aber zuletzt doch die *italianità* Pauls an, der vom ersten Augenblick, da er uns bekannt wird, als „welscher Bildhauer“ uns entgegentritt“. ('The candidate is often under the influence of preconceived opinions. Thus, she always comes back to the fact that in the works of the Strudel brothers, who certainly could look back on German ancestors, traces of their 'Nordic blood' must still be found, but in the end she acknowledges the *Italianità* of Paul, who confronts us as a "Welsh sculptor" from the first moment he becomes known to us') 1 July 1926, Prof. Dr. Emil Reisch.

²⁷ Erica Conrat, *Beiträge zur Geschichte Georg Raphael Donners*, Diss. phil., Universität Wien, 1905.

²⁸ Almut Krapf-Weiler, *Erica Tietze-Conrat. Die Frau in der Kunstwissenschaft. Texte 1906-1958*, Wien, 2007, 285.

²⁹ Almut Krapf-Weiler, *Erica Tietze-Conrat. Die Frau in der Kunstwissenschaft. Texte 1906-1958*, 285.

husband by carrying and setting up the photographic equipment, among other things. In her autobiographical writings, she herself did not regard their work as equal either,³⁰ which is why Hans Tietze appears as the sole author of the volumes of the *Österreichische Kunsttopographie* from 1907 to 1919. After his work for the Austrian Federal Office for the Preservation of Monuments, Hans Tietze became a high-ranking civil servant in the Ministry of Education in the department for museum and monuments' preservation affairs, who was decisively responsible for the reorganization of Vienna's museum landscapes. Hans Tietze's most public-spirited deeds were his journalistic agitation and persuasion of public officials to save the Albertina's collection from being sold.³¹

Erica Tietze-Conrat, on the other hand, worked as an art publicist and scholar away from public office. In 1925, Hans Tietze retired from the civil service and took up a career as a private scholar, whereupon his wife apparently decided to run the household for the family with their four children with the help of a housekeeper and to assist her husband in his freelance work.³² In 1933, the couple, together and in collaboration with Otto Benesch and Karl Garzarolli-Thurnlakh, published Volume IV and V respectively of the *Beschreibender Katalog der Handzeichnungen in der Graphischen Sammlung Albertina*, which provides a scholarly description of the drawings of the German schools up to Neoclassicism acquired by the Imperial House and Albert of Saxe-Teschen.³³ The first presentation and publication of the sheets, on the other hand, which were acquired by Alfred Stix on the German art market from the proceeds of the not uncontroversial sale of duplicates in the 1920s,³⁴ was the responsibility of Anna Spitzmüller, who organized an exhibition of German drawings and watercolours in 1931 and published an essay accompanying it in the art journal *Belvedere*.³⁵ Prior to this, she had been responsible,

³⁰ ('Wenn ich jetzt 'wir' zu schreiben beginner, soll das heißen, dass ich dabei war, nicht daß [sic] unser Anteil der leistung gleich war') 'When I now begin to write "we", it is only to say that I was there, not that our share of the achievement was equal', Erica Tietze-Conrat, autobiographical writings, quoted from: Almut Krapf-Weiler, *Erica Tietze-Conrat. Die Frau in der Kunstwissenschaft. Texte 1906-1958*, 286.

³¹ Walter Koschatzky and Alice Strobl, *Die Dürer Zeichnungen der Albertina*, Salzburg 1971, 102; Barbara Dossi, *Albertina. Sammlungsgeschichte und Meisterwerke*, Munich/New York, 1998, 42.

³² Almut Krapf-Weiler, *Erica Tietze-Conrat. Die Frau in der Kunstwissenschaft. Texte 1906-1958*, 288.

³³ Alfred Stix, *Die Zeichnungen der deutschen Schule bis zum Beginn des Klassizismus (bearbeitet von Hans Tietze und Erica Tietze-Conrat, Otto Benesch, Karl Garzarolli-Thurnlakh), Beschreibender Katalog der Handzeichnungen in der Graphischen Sammlung Albertina, Band IV (Textband), Bd. V (Tafelband)*, Wien 1933. Karl Garzarolli-Thurnlakh was head of the Styrian Landesgalerie Joanneum at this time and later head and director of the Albertina for a few months from 1946-47.

³⁴ Barbara Dossi, *Albertina. Sammlungsgeschichte und Meisterwerke*, 42.

³⁵ Anna Spitzmüller, 'Deutsche Zeichnungen und Aquarelle' 1770 – 1830, in: *Belvedere* Nr. 10/1931/I, S. 57-62, S. 57: „Unter diesem Titel zeigt die Albertina eine Ausstellung, die aus altem Bestand und ungefähr zu drei Vierteln aus Erwerbungen der letzten Jahre besteht ...'. ('Under this title, the Albertina is showing an exhibition consisting of old holdings and approximately three quarters of acquisitions from recent years ...')

together with others, as an assistant for the inventory of the holdings that accompanied the restructuring measures at the Albertina.³⁶ As freelance research assistants, the Tietzes were not involved in the administrative work. They ended their collaboration with the Albertina with the publication of the catalogue of the holdings of German drawings and turned to Italy to devote themselves to work on their jointly authored corpus of Venetian Renaissance drawings;³⁷ in 1938 the couple emigrated to the USA due to the Nazi takeover.

In 1935 the Albertina was again threatened by plans to sell parts of its drawing collection.³⁸ Again, they were to be sold to museums and collectors in the USA. The negotiations were conducted in the utmost secrecy; with the exception of the then director of the Albertina, Josef Bick, who informed the Federal Chancellor of the proceedings, 'under no circumstances should the curators of the Albertina or anyone else in Vienna learn of this'³⁹. The preparations for the sale were already so far advanced that an American delegation, including the American private collector and director of the Fogg Art Museum J. Paul Sachs, accompanied by his young assistant Agnes Mongan, who was curator of the Sachs drawing collection, came to Vienna to draw up lists of the works to be considered for sale after an initial inventory had already been made in the Albertina's study room. The sale ultimately failed and the negotiations were broken off. The extent to which the Albertina staff, including Anna Spitzmüller, had no idea of what was going on, given the activities in the study room, must remain an open question. It seems possible that the duty of secrecy imposed on Austrian officials never allowed Anna Spitzmüller to comment on this affair. Whether Anna Spitzmüller had already met Agnes Mongan at that time is also unknown. A meeting and friendly relationship between the two women is only documented later, around 1953, when Anna Spitzmüller was on a study trip also in Boston.⁴⁰ The manner of the secrecy remains puzzling, especially when one reads Mongan's explanations of it. One feels transported into a detective novel

³⁶ When Anna Spitzmüller joined the Albertina, the restructuring of the collection, formerly administered by the imperial house on a fideicommissarial (fideicommissum) basis, into an institution of the Republic under public law was in full swing. Josef Meder had begun the restructuring; in 1923 he retired and Alfred Stix succeeded him as director of the Albertina. He increased the number of staff in order to cope with the numerous tasks that the new 'museum' had to fulfil. Among others, Dr Spitzmüller, Dr Eva Hajos, Eva Steiner and Elisa Podloucek were taken on as assistants for the inventory in 1927, Archive Kunsthistorisches Museum Wien: Z.3327-I-6 (Kst).

³⁷ Hans Tietze und Erica Tietze-Conrat, *The drawings of the Venetian painters in the 15th and 16th centuries*, New York, 1944.

³⁸ Archduke Albrecht, the universal heir of Archduke Frederick and son of the last owner of the Albertina, had granted two Boston museums the option to acquire a large part of the collection formerly left to the imperial house by Duke Albert of Saxe-Teschen on a fideicommissarial (fideicommissum) basis via the art market in England and the USA.

³⁹ Barbara Dossi, *Albertina. Sammlungsgeschichte und Meisterwerke*, 43: „[...] unter keinen Umständen sollten aber die Kuratoren der Albertina oder sonst jemand in Wien davon erfahren’.

⁴⁰ Esau 'You Must Look at the Whole Thing Not Just Part: Anna Spitzmüller (1903 -2001)', 41.

when she tells of how she felt pursued by journalists and alleged spies and detectives in Vienna.⁴¹

Agnes Mongan's and Spitzmüller's careers ran parallel and partly similar; both learned and studied at women's schools, both completed their studies in art history almost simultaneously.⁴² Mongan was in charge of the Paul J. Sachs collection and worked as a student at the Fogg Art Museum, where she encountered more reservations about women than Spitzmüller did at the Albertina: in an oral history interview, Mongan describes how women had to use side entrances to get into the faculty club and were paid much less than men, even though they did the same work.⁴³ It was only in 1947 and after the annulment of the regulations according to which women were not allowed to accept curatorial positions at the Fogg Art Museum⁴⁴ that she was appointed 'curator of first degree' at the Fogg Art Museum – a title that is reflected in the wording in German 'Kustos I. Klasse seit 1.1.1948'⁴⁵ in Spitzmüller's *Standesausweis* providing information about her educational and professional career and in her personnel file from 1952.⁴⁶

Spitzmüller's entry into the Albertina, on the other hand, was less discriminatory. Without a formal letter of application, she had verbally submitted an unsolicited application to Otto Benesch, which was granted after Benesch had consulted with the director Alfred Stix. Benesch had completed his doctorate with Julius von Schlosser three years before Anna Spitzmüller, joined the Albertina in 1923, was initially an assistant and became second-class curator in 1937. The fact that Anna Spitzmüller, as a woman, was able to pursue her career as a civil servant in the Albertina's higher service is undoubtedly due to her university studies, for which the Austrian hierarchy of civil servants mandatorily provided for a higher position.

⁴¹ See the transcription of an interview with Agnes Mongan from 26 October 1991: Museum Curator Agnes Mongan Interviewed by Taina Rikala de Noriega and Richard Cándida Smith. Art History Oral Documentation Project Completed under the Auspices of the Oral History Program, University of California Los Angeles and the Getty Center for the History of Art and the Humanities, 1994 The Regents of the University of California and the J. Paul Getty Trust, Tape Number II, Side Two, Oct. 26, 1991, 89-93.

⁴² Agnes Mongan was studying at Bryn Mawr College when the university offered the chair to Josef Strzygowski in 1926; she graduated with a Bachelor of Arts Degree in 1927 and finished her art history studies with a Master of Arts Degree at Smith College, another prestigious and women-only college. Agnes Mongan would later become the first female museum director at the Fogg Art Museum in Cambridge, Massachusetts, the second woman nationwide to hold that position in the US.

⁴³ See the transcription of an interview with Agnes Mongan from 26. October 1991, 61-62 (Mongan experiences discrimination as a woman at Harvard).

⁴⁴ Sorensen, Lee, ed. 'Mongan, Agnes.' *Dictionary of Art Historians*, <https://arthistorians.info/>, accessed March 4, 2023.

⁴⁵ Archive Kunsthistorisches Museum Wien: *Standesausweis mit Laufbahn, Personalakte* (personnel file) Dr. Anna Spitzmüller III 1695, 2.

⁴⁶ Archive Albertina Wien: *Dienstausweis* issued on 20. October 1952.

*Die gute Perle*⁴⁷ and the New Woman

As there were hardly any women in Austria with a university degree, female employees were mainly employed as civil servants in the *mittlerer Dienst*⁴⁸ of the Austrian civil service career. One example is Eva Steiner, who had not studied at the university and who was hired in 1927 for the inventory of drawings at the Albertina.⁴⁹ She was then employed as Otto Benesch's scientific secretary at the intersection of scientific and administrative collection work. Eva Steiner is not mentioned on the title page, but in the acknowledgements in the preface of the catalogue raisonné of *Netherlandish Drawings of the Albertina* edited by Stix and written by Otto Benesch in 1928.⁵⁰ Eva Steiner and Otto Benesch married in 1934.⁵¹

For my study of Spitzmüller, the video interview mentioned at the beginning of this essay was invaluable, because in the format of oral history not only fact-based content can be perceived, but also the trivial, the casually spoken. For the present article, for example, I examined how Spitzmüller saw the role of women at the Albertina.⁵² She does not spare disparaging irony when she is critical of the role of women as the female support behind a man. She refers to some female employees at the Albertina as *gute Perlen*, meaning a type of woman who was all too willing and over-eager to do tasks in order to please her male superior or spouse and meet his demands. *Gute Perlen* would get the work ready for print so that the male art historians could publish on a grand scale. This custom apparently had a tradition at the Albertina, for Anna Spitzmüller also mentions, among others, Poldi Meder, the niece of the Dürer researcher and former director of the Albertina Josef Meder. In the preface to his groundbreaking publication of 1919, Meder thanked his niece for proofreading, creating the index of persons and subjects and the image plates.⁵³ Anna Spitzmüller also calls Eva Steiner a *gute Perle*, whose extensive support as secretary to her husband Otto Benesch contributed significantly to his immense production of art historical writings and ultimately to his fame in the relevant scholarly community, but she herself is thanked only in a subordinate capacity.⁵⁴

⁴⁷ Remark of the author: *Gute Perle* is a casual Austrian term sometimes disparagingly used for female servants or maids who do their work all too dutifully and by sometimes even surmising the feelings and wishes of their superiors.

⁴⁸ *Mittlerer Dienst* is a service rank in the career of Austrian state officials; in the advancement of the careers of Austrian state officials 'mittlerer dienst' is located between lower and higher occupation, the latter provided only to academically trained persons).

⁴⁹ Among others, Dr. Spitzmüller, Dr. Eva Hajos, Eva Steiner and Elisa Podloucek were taken on as assistants for the inventory in 1927, Archive Kunsthistorisches Museum Wien: Z.3327-I-6 (Kst).

⁵⁰ Alfred Stix, *Die Zeichnungen der niederländischen Schulen des XV. und XVI. Jahrhunderts*, (bearbeitet von Otto Benesch, Beschreibender Katalog der Handzeichnungen in der graphischen Sammlung Albertina, Bd. II), Wien 1928.

⁵¹ Eckhart Knab, *Österreichisches Biographisches Lexikon, 1815-1950*, Bd. 9 (Lfg. 41) Wien 1984, 28.

⁵² Michaela Pappernigg and Wolfgang Schreiner, 'Albertina-Gespräche', Videotapes 1-3.

⁵³ Josef Meder, *Die Handzeichnung. Ihre Technik und Entwicklung*, Wien 1919, VI.

⁵⁴ Alfred Stix, *Die Zeichnungen der niederländischen Schulen des XV. und XVI. Jahrhunderts*

Anna Spitzmüller saw herself as a strong advocate of gender equality. The education at Vienna's first girls' grammar school and her involvement with ZONTA may have encouraged her in this. At the Amerika-Institut, Spitzmüller taught students at the Colorado Women's College, which was founded in the western USA in response to the Seven Sisters Colleges in the New England states. The insight that women should become independent of men and how they should have equal access to education and into working life had started in the USA in the late 19th century and radiated to 'old' Europe in the 20th century. In literature, the new self-confidence of women was made popular by Anglo-Saxon and American writers such as Henry James; the reception of feminism coined the term 'New Woman'.⁵⁵ The Austrian-American journalist Ann Tizia Leitich⁵⁶ wrote columns for Austrian and German magazines in the USA, including Austria's *Neue Freie Presse*,⁵⁷ which Anna Spitzmüller must have read. In her articles, Leitich described the greater opportunities for women to develop in the USA and their greater recognition of achievements in the professional and public spheres.⁵⁸ Leitich was one of the founding members of the *Amerika-Institut* and, after her return to Vienna in 1928, a lecturer and welcome guest at various events of the Institute,⁵⁹ where she and Spitzmüller must have met. Like Leitich, who did not question the fundamental opposition of the sexes, Spitzmüller also took it for granted. She answered the question about perceptions of gender-specific experiences in her working world at the end of the video interview by saying that in her opinion women were the better connoisseurs of the art of drawing because their approach to looking at and judging drawings was guided by 'instinct'⁶⁰, whereas for men it depended on the mind, which made it more difficult for them to look at drawings.

With her gentle criticism of the undervaluing of women's achievements at the Albertina, Spitzmüller anticipated an issue that has recently become topical.

⁵⁵ Elisabeth Klaus und Ulla Wischermann, 'Journalistinnen. Eine Geschichte in Biographien und Texten 1848-1990, in: *Journalismus: Theorie und Praxis*, Bd. 18,', LIT Verlag: Wien und Berlin 2013, 188.

⁵⁶ Ann Tizia Leitich (1891-1976) left Austria in 1921 in view of the bleak political and economic situation, went to the USA and worked as a maid, governess and translator in Chicago and New York. She studied art history in Des Moines, Iowa and, in addition to her work as a foreign correspondent for German-language newspapers, wrote popular science books, including *Verklungenes Wien*, published in 1942 and reissued after the Second World War with the omission of dubious passages. Leitich's biography and work was received primarily in the USA: See Brooke Marie Wright, *Ann Tizia Leitich. New Voice, New Women. Packaging America for Vienna*, Diss. Phil. Brigham Young University 2004 and Rob McFarland, *Red Vienna, White Socialism And The Blues: Ann Tizia Leitich's America*, Camden House, 2015 (= Studies in German Literature Linguistics and Culture).

⁵⁷ Siehe beispielsweise Ann Tizia Leitich, 'Dorothy predigt den Männern', in: *Neue Freie Presse*, Nr. 22108 (1. April), 1926, S. 11-12, zitiert aus Elisabeth Klaus und Ulla Wischermann, *Journalistinnen. Eine Geschichte in Biographien und Texten 1848-1990*, 192-193.

⁵⁸ Elisabeth Klaus und Ulla Wischermann, *Journalistinnen. Eine Geschichte in Biographien und Texten 1848-1990*, 188.

⁵⁹ Hermann Weissgärber, 'You Can't Copy Tradition', 59

⁶⁰ Michaela Pappernigg and Wolfgang Schreiner, 'Albertina-Gespräche', Videotape 3.

Following a motion by a political group in the district committee,⁶¹ the renaming of the Otto Benesch Park in Vienna's 10th district to the Otto and Eva Benesch Park was approved in 2021. The impetus for this was research by historian Stefan Rastl at the Institute for Austrian Legal History and the Academy of Sciences.⁶² Eva Benesch, *née Steiner*, was removed from office during the Nazi era for 'racial' reasons and her husband was suspended from service; like the Tietzes, the Fröhlich-Bums, and others (for example Benno Fleischmann), the couple left Austria. Karoline Bum was the collaborator of her later husband Otto Fröhlich. He was the editor of the *Internationale Bibliographie der Kunstwissenschaft*, for which she worked on the volumes 1907-1909. Her dissertation, published in 1913 in the *Jahrbuch der Kunsthistorischen Sammlungen in Wien*, and her publication on Parmigianino and Mannerism⁶³ made her an expert on Italian art and drawings and thus recommended her for collaboration on two of the Albertina inventories edited by Stix. Like the Tietzes and the Benesch, Karoline Fröhlich-Bum was also one of the authors of the Albertina's *catalogue raisonné*⁶⁴ and, like the Tietzes and the Benesch, left Austria because of her Jewish origins. The Fröhlich-Bums emigrated to London in 1938.⁶⁵

The Benesch couple went into exile in the USA. There, they prepared their return to Austria for after the end of the Second World War. In his essay, Stefan Rastl, shed light on the role of the Benesch couple among others in the resistance against the National Socialists. The Benesch couple joined a group of American intellectuals and European exiles at Harvard University who were involved in the resistance against Nazi Germany. Initially, they were involved in the *Lenkungsausschuss*⁶⁶ for the Protection of European Monuments and compiled monument lists of cultural possessions in Austria and Czechoslovakia.⁶⁷ In addition, Otto and Eva Benesch joined the American Defense Harvard Group (ADHG), from which the first American intelligence service (Office of Strategic Services OSS) emerged with the aim of defending America and liberating Europe from Nazi rule

⁶¹ 20200930_1100_Application_to rename the park Otto & Eva Benesch-Park submitted on 25.9.2020 by Christine Hahn and Roman Sonderer.

⁶² Stefan Rastl, 'Harvard und das Office of Strategic Services. Ein akademischer Beitrag zu einem freien und unabhängigen Österreich, BRGÖ (*Beiträge zur Rechtsgeschichte Österreichs*), Band 1', Wien 2020, 61-86.

⁶³ Lili Fröhlich-Bum, 'Andrea Meldolla, genannt Schiavone', in *Jahrbuch der Kunsthistorischen Sammlungen in Wien*, Band 31, Wien 1913, 137-220; Lili Fröhlich-Bum, *Parmigianino und der Manierismus*, Wien 1921.

⁶⁴ Alfred Stix, *Die Zeichnungen der venezianischen Schule* (bearb. von Alfred Stix und L. Fröhlich-Bum), *Beschreibender Katalog der Handzeichnungen in der Graphischen Sammlung Albertina, Band I*, Wien 1926; sowie Alfred Stix, *Die Zeichnungen der toskanischen, umbrischen und römischen Schulen* (bearb. von Alfred Stix und L. Fröhlich-Bum). *Beschreibender Katalog der Handzeichnungen in der Graphischen Sammlung Albertina, Band III*, Wien 1932.

⁶⁵ Siehe Ulrike Wendland, *Biographisches Handbuch deutschsprachiger Kunsthistoriker im Exil. Leben und Werk der unter dem Nationalsozialismus verfolgten und vertriebenen Wissenschaftler, Teil 1, A-K*, München 1999, 180-188.

⁶⁶ Steering Committee.

⁶⁷ Stefan Rastl, 'Harvard und das Office of Strategic Services', 65.

and to restore democratic structures in Austria. Together with other Austrian emigrants, they took on the role of informants who checked certain people for their political reliability. They recommended people who, after the war, were of a suitable mindset to take on responsibility in high office in Austria and to work with the American government in a trustworthy manner.⁶⁸ It can be assumed that Otto Benesch already built up a corresponding network in the USA, which helped him to take on the position of director at the Albertina after his return to Austria in 1947 and during the occupation, which he held until 1962.

Anna Spitzmüller at the Albertina during the National Socialist era and the Second World War

Anna Spitzmüller participated in the protection of cultural property in a different way. She had not left Vienna for personal reasons;⁶⁹ moreover, she did not face any persecution from the ruling powers, as she was inconspicuous to the National Socialists in terms of origin and politics. Together with Alfred Stix, Spitzmüller wrote the last volume of the *catalogue raisonné* of the Albertina's drawings in the series of publications which was started in the interwar period. This volume was edited by Anton Reichel.⁷⁰ Stix had been appointed director of the Picture Gallery at the Kunsthistorisches Museum in 1934, where he was removed from office by the National Socialists in 1938. At the Albertina, he was succeeded by Josef Bick, who in turn was dismissed by the National Socialists in 1938 of the posts of Director General of the Austrian National Library and Director of the Albertina. After the exodus of the Albertina's Jewish staff and Stix's transfer to the Kunsthistorisches Museum, Spitzmüller was burdened with both the scholarly work on the Albertina's catalogue raisonné of holdings and the arrangements ordered with the outbreak of the Second World War to relocate the Albertina's art treasures to bomb-proof storage premises. In 1942 she also travelled to Berlin and Prague, where she studied the Berlin collection of architectural drawings and worked as a consultant on the creation of a *Kupferstichkabinett* (print collection) in Prague.⁷¹

The Albertina had been given a new director who conformed to the regime: Josef Bick was succeeded by Anton Reichel, who was a member of the NSDAP but a mild director, as Anna Spitzmüller said in the interview. She suspected him to be

⁶⁸ Stefan Rastl, 'Harvard und das Office of Strategic Services', 65.

⁶⁹ Anna Spitzmüllers Mutter starb 1941, der kranke und pflegebedürftige Vater 1945.

⁷⁰ Anton Reichel, *Die Schulen von Ferrara, Bologna, Parma und Modena, der Lombardei, Genuas, Neapels und Siziliens mit einem Nachtrag zu allen italienischen Schulen (bearbeitet von written by Alfred Stix und Anna Spitzmüller), Beschreibender Katalog der Handzeichnungen in der Albertina, Bd. VI, Wien 1941.*

⁷¹ Archiv Albertina Wien: (Abschrift), Schreiben des Reichsstatthalters in Wien vom 23. Jänner 1942, Z/GK – 4 4 7 – M/42; Archiv Albertina Wien: (Abschrift), Schreiben des Reichsstatthalters in Wien vom 2. Juli 1942, Z/GK 5117/b/42. (Archive Albertina Wien: (transcript), letter from the Reichsstatthalter in Vienna dated 23 January 1942, Z/GK - 4 4 7 - M/42; Archive Albertina Wien: (transcript), letter from the Reichsstatthalter in Vienna dated 2 July 1942, Z/GK 5117/b/42).

less of an ideologue than an opportunist. She also described his deputy Heinrich Leporini as harmless.⁷² However, this contradicts the research findings of the *Kommission für Provenienzforschung* (Commission for Provenance Research), according to which Leporini was a pronounced National Socialist who had pushed for the dismissal of Eva Benesch and replaced her with Magdalena Junk, the daughter of the artist Rudolf Junk, or obtained the suspension of Otto Benesch.⁷³ Due to Reichel's illness, he took on more and more of the Albertina's official duties. After Reichel's death in 1945, Leporini became short-term director of the Albertina. In the interview, Anna Spitzmüller talks about the dark period during these years.⁷⁴ It is probably due to the obligation of Austrian officials to maintain secrecy that she revealed little in the interview about even dubious events at the Albertina. She does describe the dreary and terrible circumstances at the Albertina and that, for example, she organised exhibitions until the very end, but which had to be covered with facsimiles for lack of the originals that had been secured, and that hardly any visitors came and that she and her colleagues spent a lot of time in the air-raid shelter. She does not mention, however, the forced acquisitions in Vienna, Munich, Berlin and Leipzig from the property of persecuted Jewish collectors or the allocation of seized collections by the state art administration or the Central Office for the Preservation of Monuments, which handed over Jewish art property to various institutions, including the Albertina.⁷⁵ The scope and extent of the dispossessions was only disclosed and restituted to the families of the former owners through the revealment of the *Kommission für Provenienzforschung* (Commission for Provenance Research), which was set up on the basis of the Restitution Act passed by the Republic of Austria in 1998.

George Saiko was put at Leporini's side. Together they ran the Albertina for a few weeks until the end of the war. Saiko's role in the service of those in power is difficult to assess today.⁷⁶ He succeeded Benno Mühlmann⁷⁷ and, in place of the ill Anton Reichel, also took charge of the Albertina's salvage measures, which for reasons of secrecy were reserved exclusively for the director. Since 1939, the salvage measures 'to protect or salvage the collection items as far as possible in the event of an air raid'⁷⁸ were a strictly confidential task. The drawings were temporarily stored

⁷² Michaela Pappernigg and Wolfgang Schreiner, 'Albertina-Gespräche', Videotape 2.

⁷³ Pia Schölnberger, 'Albertina', in: *Lexikon der österreichischen Provenienzforschung* <https://www.lexikon-provenienzforschung.org/albertina>, accessed March 4, 2023.

⁷⁴ Michaela Pappernigg and Wolfgang Schreiner, 'Albertina-Gespräche', Videotape 2.

⁷⁵ Pia Schölnberger, 'Albertina', in: *Lexikon der österreichischen Provenienzforschung*.

⁷⁶ Pia Schölnberger, 'Hier feiert der Luftschutz' Orgien. Die Bergungsmaßnahmen der Graphischen Sammlung Albertina unter George Saiko', in: *Bergung von Kulturgut im Nationalsozialismus, Mythen-Hintergründe-Auswirkungen, Schriftenreihe der Kommission für Provenienzforschung Band 6*, Böhlau: Wien 2016, 131.

⁷⁷ Benno Mühlmann had been employed at the Albertina Graphic Collection since 1932 and was a research assistant from 1936. In 1938/39 he was given leave of absence because of his Jewish grandparents and retired.

⁷⁸ Pia Schölnberger, 'Hier feiert der Luftschutz' Orgien', 132, n. 11 with reference to Albertina archive, Zl. 781/39 ('die Sammlungsgüter nach Tunlichkeit für den Fall eines Luftangriffs zu schützen, bzw. zu bergen').

in the vault of the National Bank. The *Augustinerkeller*, once used as a restaurant and today again in this function, was used during the Second World War for the storage of sculptures, but not as an air-raid shelter for people; the underground vaults of the neighbouring Augustinian monastery were preferred for this purpose. On 12 March 1945, the Albertina and surrounding buildings were severely damaged by an air raid (fig. 2).



Figure 2 *Das zerstörte Wien: Albertina*, 1946. Photography, 18 x 24,4 cm.
Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek ÖNB.

Spitzmüller recounts how, with the help of a restorer and due to a lack of male workers, she herself put tiles on the roof truss of the Albertina Palace to protect the building from water ingress.⁷⁹ She was also responsible for the repatriation of the Albertina's art treasures from the places where they had been moved, and during the occupation she travelled, among other places, to the *Salzkammergut*, and to the various zones of the occupying powers where the Albertina's works were safely stored, as well as to Munich, where the American occupying forces had taken heritage assets after the liberation of Austria, which Spitzmüller had to identify and return to their destination.⁸⁰ From 1946, she

⁷⁹ Michaela Pappernigg and Wolfgang Schreiner, 'Albertina-Gespräche', Videotape 2.

⁸⁰ Guest commentary by Erica Esau, in: Hermann Weissgärber, 'You Can't Copy Tradition', 139.

organised a series of exhibitions, including one on French art, which was the first event of its kind after the Second World War.⁸¹

She was not thanked for all this. Apparently, Anna Spitzmüller was to be promoted when Reichel retired. The relevant authorities sought information about her reputation, which was considered 'politically impeccable'.⁸² In the end, George Saiko became director after the war. He invoked his ban from working as a writer to increase his chances for the post.

A promotion or advancement of Anna Spitzmüller found support only in 1948, when she was appointed *Kustos I. Klasse*. The year before, Otto Benesch who had meanwhile returned from the US, was appointed director of the Albertina. Under his directorship a further promotion, whose nature is unclear, of Anna Spitzmüller at the Albertina did not take place. A qualification commission that assessed the performance of civil servants in the ministry in 1950 found Anna Spitzmüller 'not suitable'⁸³ for a higher-ranking position. Impairments to her ability to concentrate were cited and her popular scientific publishing activities were criticised.⁸⁴ This presumably referred to her contributions to the magazine *Kunst dem Volk*,⁸⁵ which she had published in 1939. Following the publication's profile, her contributions revolve around the German and Dutch art of drawing, but unlike those of other authors, they refrain from a form of expression that appropriated an art description for the ruling ideology.⁸⁶

In 1954 Anna Spitzmüller was transferred to the Kunsthistorisches Museum at her own request. In the interview, she mentions, among other things, misunderstandings with Otto Benesch, the new director of the Albertina from 1947. The dispute over a drawing by Egon Schiele, which Otto Benesch's father, Heinrich,

⁸¹ *Französische Phantastik*, Sommerausstellung Albertina, Wien 1946

⁸² State Archives: AT-OeStA/AdR UWFuK BMU PA Sign 3 Spitzmüller Anna, No. 266: Z/GK 6727 - d/44, letter from the Reich Governor in Vienna dated 13 January 1945. (Staatsarchiv: AT-OeStA/AdR UWFuK BMU PA Sign 3 Spitzmüller Anna, Nr. 266: Z/GK 6727 – d/44, Schreiben des Reichsstatthalters in Wien vom 13. Jänner 1945)

⁸³ State Archives: AT-OeStA/AdR UWFuK BMU PA Sign 3 Spitzmüller Anna, Nr. 178: 1950, Standesausweis qualification table for Anna Spitzmüller. (Staatsarchiv: AT-OeStA/AdR UWFuK BMU PA Sign 3 Spitzmüller Anna, Nr. 178: 1950, Standesausweis Qualifikationstabelle für Anna Spitzmüller)

⁸⁴ Anna Spitzmüller actually suffered from narcolepsy (kind communication from Margareta Weissgärber).

⁸⁵ Christina Schedlmayer, *Die Zeitschrift „Kunst dem Volk. Populärwissenschaftliche Kunstliteratur im Nationalsozialismus und ihre Parallelen in der akademischen Kunstgeschichtsschreibung*, Phil. Diss., Wien 2010.

⁸⁶ Anna Spitzmüller, 'Bildniszeichnungen aus fünf Jahrhunderten', in *Kunst dem Volk. Monatsschrift für Bildende und Darstellende Kunst, Architektur und Kunsthandwerk*, 10:3, März 1939, 5-9; Anna Spitzmüller, 'Pieter Brueghel als Schilderer seiner Zeit', in *Kunst dem Volk. Monatsschrift für Bildende und Darstellende Kunst, Architektur und Kunsthandwerk*, 10:5, Mai 1939, 5-7; Anna Spitzmüller, 'Zeichnungen der Romantiker', in *Kunst dem Volk. Monatsschrift für Bildende und Darstellende Kunst, Architektur und Kunsthandwerk*, 10:10, Oktober 1939, 3-6.

who was a passionate Schiele collector, had given her as a present, shattered the good relationship between Benesch and Spitzmüller, that had prevailed before the war.⁸⁷ From an interview with Paula Biedermann, an employee of the Albertina from 1942 to 1952⁸⁸ one finds out that 25 collaborators of the Albertina left the Albertina in the years when Otto Benesch directed the Albertina, including George Saiko who was dismissed in 1950.⁸⁹

In any case, after Spitzmüller's transfer to the Kunsthistorisches Museum, the wording in the minutes of the qualifying commission at the Ministry changed in that Spitzmüller's achievements in public relations and art education at the Kunsthistorisches Museum were particularly emphasised from 1954 onwards.⁹⁰ She remained true to her passion for art education even after her retirement; she continued to teach American students at the Austro-American Institute of Education. Thus, the art historian Anna Spitzmüller, who was a lively networker, deserves every recognition for her achievements as a popular educator and for her activities in public relations.

Ursula Drahoss is an academic collaborator at the Albertina Museum in Vienna, working in the Department of Drawings and Prints. Her dealing with the former Albertina curator Anna Spitzmüller results from her research into the Albertina Museum's Collection strategies between 1920 and 1954, when, among other things, the holdings of 19th-century art were expanded.

u.drahoss@albertina.at



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⁸⁷ Michaela Pappernigg and Wolfgang Schreiner, 'Albertina-Gespräche', Videotape 3.

⁸⁸ Michaela Pappernigg and Wolfgang Schreiner, 'Albertina-Gespräche. Erinnerungen von Mitarbeiterinnen und Mitarbeitern der graphischen Sammlung Albertina', Graphische Sammlung Albertina Wien, 1995, K.S.NBM-6, Videotape, (in total 25 minutes VHS Video).

⁸⁹ I am grateful to Heidrun Rosenberg for this information.

⁹⁰ Austrian State Archives: AT-OeStA/AdR UWFuK BMU PA Sign 3 Spitzmüller Anna, Nr. 134: 1968, Standesausweis qualification table for Anna Spitzmüller. (Staatsarchiv: AT-OeStA/AdR UWFuK BMU PA Sign 3 Spitzmüller Anna, Nr. 134: 1968, Standesausweis Qualifikationstabelle für Anna Spitzmüller.)