



A significant part of the Hermann Gerlinger collection finds its purpose

36 Masterpieces for the Nolde Museum in Seebüll

Seebüll (Neukirchen) / Würzburg, September 21, 2022 – Housed in Emil and Ada Nolde's historic residence and studio, the Nolde Museum was only reopened this summer after extensive renovation and technical upgrading observing heritage conservation regulations. Now the museum can report a sensational expansion of its collection. The acclaimed Brücke expert Professor Hermann Gerlinger donated all of Emil Nolde's works in his collection "Die Maler der Brücke" (The Painters of the Brücke), as well as a watercolor self-portrait by Karl Schmidt-Rottluff, to the museum. Additionally, the donation comprises correspondence between Nolde and Schmidt-Rottluff. The 36 works also include the oil painting "Philister" from 1915, one of Nolde's early main works.

A story comes full circle for Professor Gerlinger. Brücke co-founder Karl Schmidt-Rottluff maintained a close friendship with Emil Nolde for many decades and also gave him an important self-portrait in 1906, which is still part of the inventory of the Nolde Foundation Seebüll. Schmidt-Rottluff was a very reserved artist who did not come to trust people easily. However, he understood that Hermann Gerlinger was able to tell the extraordinary story of the artist group Brücke. An especially trustful relationship between Schmidt-Rottluff and Gerlinger developed over many years. In this context, the artist told the collector about his friendship with Nolde. Owing to the lifelong bond between the two artists, Hermann Gerlinger donated a watercolor self-portrait of the 84-year-old Schmidt-Rottluff to the Nolde Foundation in addition to the early self-portrait.

Hermann Gerlinger has always been a collector with heart and soul. With a keen eye for quality and art-historical significance, he has compiled more than 1,000 works of art and collectible items by the Brücke artists over more than 70 years, creating one of the most important collections of German Expressionism. The focus is on works by Erich Heckel, Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, Karl Schmidt-Rottluff and Fritz Bleyl, who founded the Brücke in Dresden in 1905. Works by Max Pechstein and Emil Nolde, temporary members of the group, were added as a matter of course.

Initially, Hermann Gerlinger just wanted to "live among the works of Brücke art", but over the time he grew more and more into the role of an expert in Germany's most important artist group, and also became a confidant of Karl Schmidt-Rottluff. In 1976, after the death of the last Brücke

artist, Hermann Gerlinger saw the commitment he made through publications and exhibitions of the Brücke works as an expression of gratitude for the trust placed in him and for the mutual friendship.

This would become the incentive for Professor Gerlinger's life's work, to present the history and significance of the artist group, the life and especially the cohesion of the Brücke artists as systematically and comprehensively as possible.

The collection catalog "Die Maler der Brücke. Sammlung Hermann Gerlinger" (1995), which Hermann Gerlinger published together with Professor Dr. Heinz Spielmann, turned out a great success and was well-received by both experts and the broad public. In publications such as Brücke almanacs and exhibition reports, Professor Gerlinger recorded the great variety of exciting findings from his collection, findings of great value for both art-historical research and the art trade.

Hermann Gerlinger was looking for a future home for his life's work in a large German museum over decades. The intention was to demonstrate the artists' cohesion, as well as to expand research and to close knowledge gaps about the artist association. "During this quest, my collection was on display in three renowned museums for almost three decades, which I regard the crowning achievement of my work as a collector," explains Hermann Gerlinger.

"I took a lot of time for the scrutiny, in the end I had to understand I would not be able to realize my vision of continuing my work for my entire collection in my lifetime," says Hermann Gerlinger. "If it had been passed on in its entirety, parts of the collection would have ended up in the archive or the depot. I say this without bitterness. It is the reality of museums today. I came to accept that a long time ago."

For three large paintings by Emil Nolde, including the important "Philister" (1915) and "Boot im Schilf" (1909), two watercolors, seven mountain postcards and 23 graphic works, among them the rare portfolio "Märchenholzschnitte" (1906), the large-sized lithograph "Die heiligen drei Könige" (1913) in a rare color version and the woodcut "Prophet" (1912), an incunabulum of Expressionist prints, Seebüll will be the new permanent home, where increased research on Nolde and the history of the Brücke will also be carried out.

"I am expressly handing over the Nolde works to the museum in Seebüll as a sign of my great gratitude for the trust that Nolde's friend Karl Schmidt-Rottluff placed in me. I'm convinced that he would be very happy with my decision," explains Hermann Gerlinger.



Nolde Stiftung Seebüll

Dr. Hans-Joachim Throl, Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Nolde Foundation Seebüll, gives thanks to Professor Hermann Gerlinger: "It is the most important donation that the Nolde Foundation Seebüll has received in its 66-year history. The board of trustees of our foundation accepted this donation with great gratitude and made the irrevocable decision to add the works to the inalienable inventory of Emil Nolde's works, which are part of the endowment capital of the Foundation Seebüll Ada and Emil Nolde. The wonderful works will always remain the foundation's property and will be inextricably linked to the memory of Professor Hermann Gerlinger."

Dr. Christian Ring, director of the Nolde Foundation, is delighted: "Hermann Gerlinger is a friend and partner of German museums. He had close ties with my three direct predecessors for decades, and he deepened and sharpened our view of the Brücke with his tremendous expertise. Hermann Gerlinger gained great and lasting merit with his research on the Brücke and with numerous exhibitions. The fact that he emphasizes these achievements with a generous donation worth millions to our museum is a great honor as well as an obligation for us. I thank him and his wife Hertha Gerlinger from the bottom of my heart. This donation is also an expression of trust and a sign of appreciation of our work, which fills us with pride and incredible gratitude. As of March 1, 2023, the works will be on display as part of the 67th annual exhibition 'Zurück Zuhause. Emil Nolde – Welt und Heimat', additionally, they will be honored with a special publication."

In the autumn auction at Ketterer Kunst in December, around 100 works from "Die Künstler der Brücke - Sammlung Hermann Gerlinger" will be called up. Proceeds will go to three charitable organizations: 'Deutsche Stiftung Denkmalschutz' (German Foundation for Monument Protection), BUND Naturschutz (Friends of the Earth Germany) and the Foundation Juliusspital in Würzburg.

"If collectors of the next generation can live with the works themselves, they will find their very own approach to the Brücke artists and the Brücke art," explains Hermann Gerlinger.

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Emil Nolde: „Philister“
Painting 1915
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Emil Nolde: Sailing boats at
Ruttebüller Tief, Watercolour
1909

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Karl Schmidt-Rottluff: Self-
portrait I, Watercolour 1968
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