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A Future for the Past

The Bührle Collection: Art, Context, War and Conflict

Edited by Kunsthaus Zurich

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- Highlights the much-debated displays of the famous Bührle Collection at the Kunsthaus Zürich
- Presents new findings and previously unpublished material related to the Bührle Collection
- The issues of Nazi art theft, persecution-related confiscation and forced sales, and restitution are highly topical

Since 2021, the Bührle Collection has been on display at Kunsthaus Zürich, in the galleries of the museum's new extension building designed by David Chipperfield. The high-profile collection is widely perceived as problematic. This is due to the personality of the collector, Emil Georg Bührle (1890–1956), who made his fortune as a weapons manufacturer and did extensive business with Nazi Germany, and the fact that the provenance of some of the artworks is controversial. The initial presentation at Kunsthaus Zürich sparked a heated debate. The second display, opened in 2023, provided more historical context and a broader insight into provenance research. It also included a range of public voices and gave a face to some of the Jewish former owners of artworks, many of whom were forced to sell.

A Future for the Past documents in words and images the Bührle Collection's history. At the core are the two recent exhibitions at Kunsthaus Zürich, in regard to culture policy arguably the most significant and most debated art shows in Switzerland in decades.

Kunsthaus Zürich is one of Europe's leading art museums and Switzerland's largest art institution. Its permanent collection comprises masterpieces ranging from medieval to contemporary art, with a focus on French Impressionism, Postimpressionism, and classical modernism.

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