

**COLLECTING THE MODERN**

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COLLECTING  
THE MODERN

ORDRUPGAARD AND THE  
COLLECTION MUSEUMS OF  
MODERNIST ART

PhD dissertation

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## Acknowledgments

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## Information for the reader

### Letter writers and correspondents

AB: Adrien Bovy, director of the Musée d'Art et d'Histoire (1913–1921), professor at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts (1911–1919), Genève

AG: Alfred Gold, art critic and art dealer

APW: A.P. Weis, board member of New Carlsberg Glyptotek and the New Carlsberg Foundation (1902–1935)

CGL: Carl G. Laurin, Swedish art historian

CS: Charles Simon, director of the Compagnie Suisse de Réassurances, Zürich

CsD: Unidentified deputy to Charles Simon, signature illegible

FP: Frederik Poulsen, assistant and keeper (1910-26), then director (1926-1943) of the New Carlsberg Glyptotek, member of the New Carlsberg Foundation board (1915-1926)

HH: Henny Hansen, wife of Wilhelm Hansen

HJ: Helge Jacobsen, director of the New Carlsberg Glyptotek (1915–1926), director of the New Carlsberg Foundation (1914–1946)

JR: Johan Rohde, artist and designer

KM: Karl Madsen, director of the Danish National Gallery (1911–1925) (Da: 'Statens Museum for Kunst')

LZ: Lauritz Zeuthen, member of the New Carlsberg Foundation board (1915–1923)

MG: Max Gafner, employee at the Schweizerisches Volkswirtschafts-Departement

OR: Oskar Reinhart, art collector

PE: Prince Eugen, artist and art collector

RB: Richard Bergh, director of the Swedish National Gallery (1915–1919) (Sw: 'Nationalmuseum')

RH: Ragnar Hoppe, curator at the Swedish National Gallery (1922–1950)

TD: Theodore Duret, critic, collector and promoter of impressionism

TM: Tyge Møller, art dealer

WH: Wilhelm Hansen, husband to Henny Hansen, insurance director, the driving force in the family's art collecting

### Archival material

ACG: Archives de la cité de la Genève, Genève

HSA: Hirschsprung Collection Archives, Copenhagen

KB: Det kongelige Bibliotek (the Royal Library), Copenhagen

LA: Louisiana Museum of Modern Art Archives, Humlebæk

NA: Nationalmuseum Archives, Stockholm

NCFA: New Carlsberg Foundation Archives, Copenhagen

NCGA: New Carlsberg Glyptotek Archives, Copenhagen

OA: Ordrupgaard Archives, Charlottenlund

SMKA: Statens Museum for Kunst (the National Gallery of Denmark) Archives, Copenhagen

SORA: Sammlung Oskar Reinhart "Am Römerholz" Archives, Winterthur

SSA: Stockholm Stadsarkiv (Stockholm municipal archives)

WA: Waldermarsudde Archives, Stockholm

### Newspapers, gallery and exhibition publications

Authors identified only by initials or pseudonyms are referenced thus and appear in the list of references by first letter. Anonymous pieces are referenced by the name of the newspaper/gallery/institution

### Translations

All translations from Danish, Swedish, German and French are those of the author, unless a published English version exists

### Visual sources, photos and copyright

All copyrights have been cleared for research purposes

### Ordrupgaard's collections

The original French art collection at Ordrupgaard as it was around 1922 is reconstructed in Asmusen (1993). The present museum collection has, for the French part, a catalogue raisonné in Fensmark (2011a). Both the Danish and French collections are searchable with Kunstindeks Danmark at <https://www.kulturarv.dk/kid/>

# Introduction

This dissertation revolves around Ordrupgaard in Copenhagen, an important collection and museum of French impressionist art which opened to the public as early as 1918. In a broader scope, it is also a study, by way of its primary case, of the beginnings of a group of still existing modernist art collections founded in the early twentieth century: The Museum Folkwang, the Barnes Foundation, the Phillips Collection, the Kröller-Müller Museum, Prince Eugen's Waldemarsudde, Thielska Galleriet, The Courtauld Collection and Sammlung Oskar Reinhart "Am Römerholz". All these were small, exclusive compilations of art, intimately connected to their founder.

Why should we care about Ordrupgaard, or for that matter any of these other museums? One part of my answer rests with the prestige we accord to modernist art from the 1860s onwards, another part with the importance of *how* this type of art is presented and received. A mostly unspoken premise of historical studies is that history matters, and that the past impacts both present and future. How modernist artworks were once collected and displayed in private museums is therefore relevant to us today. Even a cursory glance at the institutions I have just mentioned reveals how rich their collections are and how significant their type of presentation.

The initial research question was open: how can Ordrupgaard be explained? An early line of enquiry lay in the relevance of other private collections from the period to which Ordrupgaard might be compared. Soon, the research revealed that Ordrupgaard and siblings mirrored three intertwined developments of increasing impact on the art world after 1900: The acceptance of modernist art, the ongoing search for a different kind of art institution and the working out of new ways for art to engage and to effect change.

Thus, this is a study of Ordrupgaard, and of the international collection museum of modernist art as a category. How did these collections display and present their art, and in which ways did these practices compare and contrast? What were their relations to their intended audience, how could audiences use them, what did they hope to achieve, what was their 'ideology of art'? How did networks and connections guide and enable these collections with their impressive contents of modernist art in the style of French impressionism and post-impressionism? And in the end, what was the legacy of the private, modernist museums?

Ordrupgaard and the collections considered in this dissertation aimed openly for institutional status and influence. Today, most are public museums. In the world of modernist art collecting there is forever a looming threat of dissolution – as there are conflicts between preservation and change. Institutionalization was a way to resolve such crises, in part by making themselves more rigid, less flexible, than other public museums of art. Thus, these collections' intellectual and material past, which often coincides with that of their founders, matters to a high degree. In this study, Ordrupgaard and the other modernist collections are thus approached synchronically, at a point when they were still *provisional institutions*.

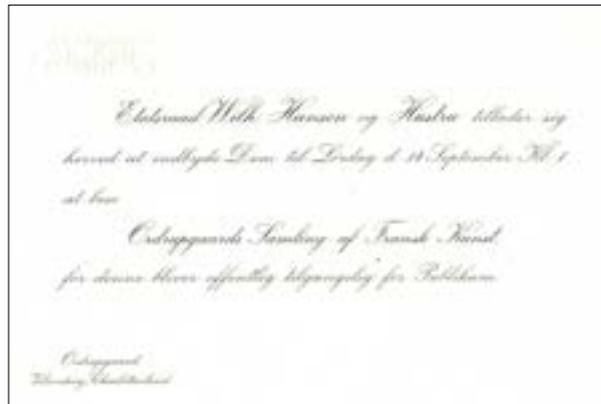
## 1. A little history of Ordrupgaard

Today, Ordrupgaard is a public museum in the Gentofte municipality north of Copenhagen.<sup>1</sup> It directly owes its existence to Henny Hansen, who, upon her death in 1951, donated her house, its contents and art collection to the Danish state.

Henny and her husband, Wilhelm, had built themselves a large home on the edge of the former royal game forest. The villa, which the couple moved into in the summer of 1918, is in a strictly symmetrical, classicist style and was filled with authentic and modern interpretations of eighteenth and nineteenth century furniture. Substantial grounds surround the elegant main building and within this area there were green houses and gardens which were filled with plants, flowers, shrubs and trees of many varieties, all lovingly tended to by Henny, and her professional gardeners. Taken together, the elegant house with its sizeable kitchen garden, tennis courts and private lake meant that Ordrupgaard promised – and delivered – a taste of 'the good life'. And this impression is very much still a feature of the tranquil place today.

In the early twentieth century, however, Ordrupgaard was not only a comfortable home for a wealthy family, it was also the site of a formidable collection of modernist art by French painters like Manet, Monet, Renoir, Pissarro, Sisley, Morisot, Guillaumin, Degas, Toulouse-Lautrec, Gauguin and Cézanne along with works by artists active earlier in the century such as David, Ingres, Corot, Courbet and Delacroix. At one point the collection amounted to around 150 pieces. It is this collection, which forms the focus of the present

<sup>1</sup> The history of the Hansen family is given in detail in Rostrup (1981). This dissertation uses information from the letter archive at Ordrupgaard and newspaper articles about the opening as supplemental references. The partial sale of the first version of the French collection is detailed in Asmussen (1993).



2. 'Councillor of State Wilhelm Hansen and wife hereby invites you on Saturday 14 September 1 o'clock to see Ordrupgaard's Collection of French Art before it opens to the public.'

dissertation, and also the basis for the museum where it is located, even though both buildings and artworks have changed over the years.

But once, Ordrupgaard was no permanent institution and rather a project – something still on its way.

In 1918, the insurance director Wilhelm Hansen and his wife Henny Hansen officially dedicate their newly built home and adjacent paintings gallery. Notabilities from near and far attend the opening, where they have the opportunity to admire what is by then, arguably, the best publicly available collection of French impressionism and modernist art anywhere outside France. A collection, which has been acquired within the span of just three very busy war years, from 1916 to 1918. At the large party, speeches are held, toasts proclaimed, and the controversial, all-powerful Minister of the Interior, Ove Rode, gets on his feet to say a few words and compliment the mistress of the house. In a final, emotional speech by the master of Ordrupgaard, public donation is mentioned, and *la Marseillaise* is sung. The event is covered in lengthy reports in all the daily newspapers, and from now on, the collection can be visited one or two days a week, except during winter.

The artworks on the walls in the gallery illustrate a loosely arranged history of French art from c. 1800 to c. 1900. Paintings by impressionists make up the majority of the collection, with rather rare canvases by Manet and Degas being of special note. In addition, there is also a good representation of a previous generation of artists known as 'the school of 1830' of dark and romantic landscape painting. About 11 paintings by Paul Gauguin and five by Paul Cézanne rounds off the story of French art from classicism to post-impressionism. Director of the National Gallery of Denmark, Karl Madsen, writes the catalogue of the French collection as it looks in 1918 – 138 pieces, mostly paintings on canvas – and he helps arrange the pictures on the walls.

But how did this collection happen? And what drama led to the museum of today?

The story of the lives of the couple that would open their home to art and to the public is easily outlined: Henny Nathalie Soelberg Jensen is born to middle class parents, leaves school early, and meets her future husband when she attends a language course in Volapük. That a young woman of the respectable Copenhagen bourgeoisie decides to take up an artificial language promoting world peace, is a rare challenge to convention. Overall, Henny seems an elusive figure; even though she once stars in a small newspaper feature (Gad 1918), and despite a few letters and diaries preserved till today, her love of gardening is the one thing universally remembered. As his career progresses, she follows her husband from home to bigger home and on travels and on vacations, and in 1908 they adopt their only child, Knud (b. 1905). Henny takes up no vocation, but instead manages their ever larger households until they settle in the village of Ordrup, by then on the outskirts of greater Copenhagen, where permanent staff to the family of three has risen to at least eight people. Henny's contributions, ideas and inputs can at times be

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inferred, but as so many a wife to prominent men, they are mostly obscure, her voice only faint.

Wilhelm Hansen, like his wife, is born into a bourgeois environment. He attends polytechnic university, and around 1888 he takes up a position as an



3. Henny Hansen (1870–1951) in the library of the French collection in 1931

assistant in an insurance company. He subsequently travels to England to study the insurance business, and by 1893, he is managing the office of Gresham Life Assurance in the Nordic countries. Three years later, he founds his own company which is the first to offer affordable life insurance to the general public. Several successes later, particularly his business venture in France, the

companies are sold and in 1905 he is brought in as board member and director of Hafnia. By now he controls more than a third of the Danish insurance capital.

Through the years, Wilhelm Hansen – whose character is sometimes described as brusque, sometimes as simply impatient – plays host to painters and authors, starts collecting Danish art and funds the launch of a major newspaper that was to be the Danish equivalent of *Le Figaro* or *The Times*. He is a productive letter writer and maintains a broad range of contacts in finance, industry and the art world. An early enthusiasm for alternative ideas made him a teacher and dictionary writer of *Volapük* and the same passion carries over into business ventures and a love of art, good food, wine and culture. By the beginning of World War I, the Hansens' collection of Danish art is already a conversation starter in Copenhagen polite society and Wilhelm is a member

of the newly established Art Museum Union (Da: 'Kunstmuseumsforeningen'), a support club of potential donors to the National Gallery. From time to time, Wilhelm Hansen's name appears in the newspapers in connection to birthdays, significant anniversaries and when he receives official recognitions, on which occasions he is always described as a 'self-made man' with good business acumen.

On one hand, the world war means general uncertainty, some deprivation and economic difficulties for most people in neutral Denmark which culminates in unusually agitated, political unrest around 1918. On the other hand, large monetary reserves mean an



4. Wilhelm Hansen (1868–1936) in the first hall of the French collection. Photo on the occasion of the gallery opening in 1918

unprecedented, but uneven economic boom carried by massively increasing speculation, especially in shipping and industrial manufacture. It is probably no coincidence that, on their way to become owners of a large, rural villa in the northern suburbs, the Hansen-family find themselves the owners of a large collection of French art by the middle of 1918: It is, in many ways, an unusual point in Danish history.

Around the beginning of 1918, the otherwise measured Wilhelm Hansen starts buying art in large quantities together with his friend, the social liberal politician, speculator and chemical manufacturer, Herman Heilbuth, and the art dealing firm V. Winkel & Magnussen. The spending is underwritten by Landmandsbanken, Scandinavia's largest bank, where the two luminaries hold formal positions. Despite wartime, the consortium succeeds in buying

hundreds of valuable paintings in Paris by Italian renaissance and Dutch and Flemish masters, along with El Greco and Goya, but with special emphasis on French modernists and their precursors of the nineteenth century. Some of the modernist gems end up at Ordrupgaard to supplement what the Hansen-family has already acquired elsewhere, other paintings go to Heilbuth and others end up in storage for later re-sale.

By early autumn of 1918, the future seems bright. Everybody knows the war to be ending, and the economy will likely normalise and prosper once trade becomes free again. In Ordrup, the newly built home for the Hansen family is everything one could dream of. But of course, seen in retrospect, nothing is really as it first seems.

By the second half of 1922, troubles in the economy of neighbouring Germany and an ongoing, world-wide recession are acutely felt on the streets of Copenhagen. In financial circles unrest is spreading; once monolithic Landmandsbanken is in danger of going down, fast. When the troubles start rising, debts are recalled, and Hansen, his friend Heilbuth and their partners feel the pressure. The leader of the nation's most respectable insurance company is in danger of bankruptcy and decides to liquidate his single largest asset – the collection of French painting. But given the depression, is it really possible to sell, and to what price? Should everything go, will this even be enough?

Years later, a rumour appears: When things are the bleakest, Wilhelm Hansen offers his entire collection of French painting to the Danish state, and this for just one million Danish kroner. Much less than its worth. The story goes that his offer is declined, or perhaps simply ignored, and so the nation loses out on preserving one of the most splendid art collections ever assembled on



5. The south-east facade of Ordrupgaard in early spring 1921. The glazed winter garden to the right the connects the main building to the French gallery (obscured)

its own soil. Instead, the market is to benefit. As with many rumours about past events that serve the needs of later times, this story cannot be verified.

Back in 1922, Wilhelm Hansen enrolls as many people he can in the sale, travels to Paris to find suitable buyers and agonises over the entire affair. In the end, about 70 paintings, half of the collection, go to the collectors Oskar Reinhart in Switzerland, Matsukata Kojiro in Japan, and the New Carlsberg Glyptotek, the large public museum founded and led by the brewing-family of Carlsberg. The personal debt of Hansen – Wilhelm + wife – is declared gone in the official report after the bank's restructure. The honour of a business man is preserved and the tranquillity of the family home secure.

Not too long after the sale, Wilhelm Hansen starts buying again. This time it is at a steadier pace, and only artworks that will complement those in his French gallery at Ordrupgaard. The lacunae in the collection are to be plugged

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as well as possible. Meanwhile, he continues to dedicate considerable effort to the French Art Association he helped initiate in 1918 (Da: 'Foreningen Fransk Kunst'), which brings large, prestigious shows to Copenhagen and the other capitals of the Nordic countries, perhaps doing more for spreading the gospel

of modernism than any other initiative. By 1925, the private gallery reopens, unceremoniously, to a visiting public. It remains quietly accessible throughout the meandering years in sleepy Ordrup, undisturbed by the death of Wilhelm following a car crash in 1936 and the passing of Knud only two years later. Only on the other side of World War II, following the death of Henny, does a new chapter begin.

The entirety of house and gardens and artworks become state property after 1951, and it is up to the coming museum director Leo Swane and helpers to go through everything in order to

decide the shape of the now permanent institution. To a casual reckoning, the about 127 paintings and sculptures by French artists and 178 artworks from Danish art history are what is important. But when the new museum opens in 1953, most ground floor interiors, the park and the ambiance of the villa on the brink of the forest are still preserved and an active and important part of any visit. Something of what could be experienced at the first dedication of Ordrupgaard in 1918 can still be felt by the 1950s as it still can today, well into the twenty-first century. Despite changing fortunes, the passage of time and transformations in the appreciation of art and the taste of publics, the Ordrupgaard experience is continuous.

In retrospect, it is easy to see that Ordrupgaard was never a trivial art collection. For a short while, from 1918 to 1922, Copenhagen was arguably the seat of the best public display of impressionist art beyond France. And this happened outside established museums and institutions. Much has changed since, but Ordrupgaard is still one of the great little art collections of the western world – due to its artworks, its ambiance and its history. Today, it is a place of distinction, where gardens, buildings and painting go hand in hand; evocative of times past yet also evolving.

But what *was* the idea with Ordrupgaard as a collection? How can Ordrupgaard be explained? Why did so many precious artworks end up in Copenhagen, how was that even possible? Why were they displayed to a public, and why were they shown in the way they were? How does Ordrupgaard compare to its time? How *does* Ordrupgaard compare?

The minimal storytelling above – as traditional as it is – merely scratches the surface of explanation, and very conventionally so. Little in the way of intention or inspiration has actually been recorded by either of the spouses. Previous studies of Ordrupgaard vaguely mention Wilhelm Hansen's love of art and his desire to share this love with others. They neglect to interpret Ordrupgaard as the self-assured statement it so obviously and pleurably was, and still is today.

This lack is what the present dissertation sets out to remedy.



6. Cover of the 1918 catalogue of the collection

## 2. Research and theory background

In this second section, I give a brief overview of the research I will draw on for the arguments in the dissertation, and I give hints of what I choose not to use, or, in some cases, what will be an object of critique further on. Naturally, I draw heavily on previous studies of Ordrupgaard and similar collections, which are supplemented by newer literature on museology (a more inclusive term, at least in its Northern European definition, than ‘museum studies, cf. Waidacher (1997)), and a varied number of writings of a philosophical and more speculative nature. Since, in this dissertation, I subscribe to explaining and situating the background to an approach as it unfolds, the following comes as the most general of outlines, not a detailed survey of theory in any way. In section 3, I delimit which primary collections are included in the study and the nature of the related empirical material I use, this is followed by section 4 where I define a few key concepts that will structure the dissertation. The final section 5 defines the research questions in clear terms and gives an overview of the dissertation structure.

To begin, existing research on Ordrupgaard has focused on the history of the founders, Wilhelm and Henny Hansen, and the contents of their collection at various stages through its development up until today (Swane 1954, Rostrup 1981, Asmussen 1993, Fonsmark 2011). This mirrors much of the international historical research on private collectors of fine and applied arts, which, for the most part, involves detailed, scholarly, descriptions in the shape of biographies and catalogues raisonnés too large to summarise. This kind of research – on Ordrupgaard and similar collections – quite naturally forms one indispensable background resource for the dissertation, and will appear where relevant, but it also warrants a continued critical engagement.

Traditionally, the broader field of collection studies can be understood as either talking *about* collections or looking *into* the contents of collections. Within the prestigious field of art, this is often limited to either a history of the people most closely associated with the collection or a search for object provenance. Coming from the position of the new museology – which I will define shortly – I see this as a problem which needs remedy: The little attention given to actual or intended audiences of collections and the practice of public display, signals a lack of explicit and reasoned attempts at explaining collections as they are embedded in wider culture. As a pertinent example, the history of the private collections that became museum institutions in Denmark around and after 1900 is documented in neatly separate studies, mostly biographies of little critical analysis, that contain limited comparison or engagement with history, society and ideas.

In an international context, critical and inclusive historical studies into collecting are now appearing more frequently and will be referenced throughout the dissertation. Some of the private collections turned public museums that are part of this study have especially benefitted from this development, as will become apparent. The new museology – fittingly the name of an anthology by Peter Vergo (1989) – which appears from the 1990s onwards has been a decisive factor in this turn, not least via the collection-centred writings of Susan M. Pearce (1994a, 1997, 2005) and researchers associated with The School of Museum Studies at University of Leicester and beyond (Hooper-Greenhill 1992, Hooper-Greenhill 1999, MacLeod 2005, Knell, MacLeod & Watson 2007). Equally decisive have been feminist, post-structuralist and deconstructive challenges to prevailing norms as found in now classic museum-critical works by Carol Duncan and Tony Bennett (Duncan 1995, Bennett 1995). By critiquing the then prevailing un-theoretical, almost antiquarian

approach to writing museum history, the new museology has also been a part of a long wave of cultural studies that have identified important issues of ideology, gender, discourse and inequality in cultural institutions (Williams 1977, Hall 1980).

Concepts from Freudian psychoanalysis have a history of being used to explain collecting (Muensterberger 1995) – a practice which has attracted rightful criticism (Pearce 1994b, Camille 2001) – while also leading to more inspired combinations with semiotic theories of signification and identity construction through collecting objects (Baudrillard 2005, Stewart 1993). Here, there are important overlaps with a well-established interest in the psychic investment in things and thing exchange found in classic studies carried out by sociologists such as Simmel (2004) and Marcel Mauss (1990) through the work of Arjun Appadurai (1986a), and others (e.g. Csikszentmihalyi, Rochberg-Halton 1981). For the last ten years or so a new interest in materiality and things has engaged with some of the same issues (Miller 2005, Tilley 2006). A focus on objects as the carriers of meaning and as participants in networks has increasingly become a part of museology in recent years (Dudley et al. 2012a, Dudley et al. 2012b).

The nature and history of impressionism and modernist art – whether French, Nordic, German or American – is emphatically *not* the concern of this study. Instead, I am interested in the entanglements of the markets, collections, museums and other institutions that came into contact with this art, especially from 1900 onwards, when it was canonised in public opinion (Gee 1981, Jensen 1994, Patry 2015). This is not a large field of research, some studies are rather old, and much valuable insight is scattered throughout studies devoted to artists and movements rather than their after-life.

From the ‘birth’ of the new museology, and as vital inspiration for the present study, the exhibition has gradually come centre stage as the place where collections are realized and begin to *do* and to *mean* something – for an audience and for society (Greenberg, Ferguson & Nairne 1996). Among other things, this has meant both a focus on the physical and architectural frame and on the stories told by the display of objects (Macleod, Hanks & Hale 2012, Whitehead 2012). In exploring how audience and institution meet in the exhibition, I also turn to more theoretical perspectives on the production of meaning (Barthes 2009, Bal 2009) and the place of the body in relation to identity (Butler 1993, Merleau-Ponty 2002), some of which reference art and museums (Bal 1994, Bal 1996, Jalving 2011, Leahy 2012). The sociology of art and the more general sociology of practice as formulated by the sociologist Pierre Bourdieu (1930–2002) (1993, 1999) have had considerable influence on the critical approach to museums and still inform many studies (Wistman 2008). While this approach is pertinent, its unquestioned application seems a little tired, especially in the face of new audience studies (Falk 2009) and the often too sweeping generalizations it fosters, which are often based on empirical data belonging to a particular time and place – France in the 1960s and 1970s – now long past.

Yet another pertinent critique of the ‘sociology of the social’ comes from the complex known as actor-network theory (ANT), which accounts for the overlooked but quite concrete *things* that allow and delimit both everyday practice and large projects (Callon 1986, Law, Callon 1992, Latour 2007). ANT offers a more holistic and balanced approach to collections by viewing them as somewhat like scientific or design projects – they are formed, they transform and they are ultimately preserved or dissolved in a plurality of interests and actors. In this approach, I am certainly not the first to see how a

strong conception of networks might benefit a study of collecting (Cheetham 2012, Ruud 2014).

Thus, overall, the research and theory guiding this study come from collection studies, new museology and the work of authors on meaning making and performative embodiment outside and inside institutions. While the engagement with actor-network theory in the latter part comes closest, it is not a study with just one overarching theoretical approach, and the methodology is far from strict. This has the benefit of not constricting the work to one line of argument, however I recognize that this also means that I lose the strength found in academic rigidity. Thus, the inner narrative structure and detail of the dissertation itself has to carry more weight than had I employed just one or two strong framings.

### 3. Object of study and empirical material

In establishing a context to understanding Ordrupgaard, two related groups of collections are pertinent: One comprises the Nordic, early modernist collections of Högberga Gård (the only one dissolved), Waldemarsudde and Thielska Galleriet, all in Stockholm and therefore close and well-known to Wilhelm and Henny Hansen. The other group contains international collections with certain key similarities to Ordrupgaard: Founded and given definite shape in the first three decades of the twentieth century, focused on impressionist and modernist French painting and at some point conceived by its founders as an independent, public institution in a specific building/environment. In this last group we find Museum Folkwang in Germany, Kröller-Müller Museum in the Netherlands, The Barnes Foundation and The Phillips Collection in the USA, Sammlung Oskar Reinhart “Am Römerholz” in Switzerland and the Courtauld Gallery and Collection in the UK. These are all, in their way, pioneer collections that played a part in the canonization and institutionalization of modernist art prior to WWII.

The type of art these collections focus on is today understood as the artistic idiom of early modernist art, spanning a period of the 1860s to the early twentieth century. Historically, this means art made in France or which references styles and subjects associated with the country. It is an art overwhelmingly associated with oil paint on canvas in a figurative language, which depicts reality and where colour and form is prioritized over narrative. In practice, it revolves around the production of the core group of French impressionists and post-impressionists. Depending on whether Paul Cézanne’s (1839–1906) painting is seen as the end or start of a chapter, the figurative art by Henri Matisse (1869–1954) and, to some extent, Pablo Picasso (1881–1973), is also acceptable.



7. Letters in the Ordrupgaard archive

My above delimitations mean that some modernist collections are more relevant than others. Oskar Reinhart's, for example, is pertinent even though it was open to relatively few visitors during his lifetime, while other Swiss collections of the time such as Museum Langmatt and Villa Flora do not meet the criteria, as they were not prepared for permanent institutionalization. Other collections as The Frick, The McNay, Musée Marmottan Monet or The Clark Art Institute are also outside of the central study for reasons of a much broader collection, of being established much later, or the fact that their institutionalization was more 'incidental'. Not coincidentally, no private French collection of modernist art was established as a museum during the period.

Moving on to the empirical material, the archives at Ordrupgaard contain the partial correspondence from Wilhelm Hansen to his wife Henny Hansen during his many business trips and at least some of the letters sent to the couple by other people. Chronological lacunae suggest that material is lacking, while references to now missing letters within the correspondence and access to other archives containing drafts for letters to Wilhelm and Henny now lost confirm the suspicion. As it is, the material paints a vivid picture of the persons of the family, but only little of import to their economy and business dealings or the art collection, the buildings and furnishing of Ordrupgaard. Luckily, a fair number of press clippings and old photographs kept at the collection

today document the complex itself and throw light on it in other ways, as do different articles in contemporary magazines and journals.

From the beginning, the present study was not designed as an archival dig – much of the work presented in the large catalogue raisonné of 2011 by Ernst Jonas Bencard has uncovered what there was to uncover – leaving time and room for an interpretative and analytical study instead. In some cases, I have identified the need to do supplementary searches for archival material, mostly letters, kept in various collections and libraries.

Archival material pertaining to the other collections chosen for inclusion in the dissertation has been mined and handily interpreted in recent, often quite exhaustive catalogues and studies. It is far outside the bounds of this study to re-asses the same material, even if it were possible. The breadth and scope of these published interpretations of course varies, and they are sometimes at odds, which warrants reflective application on my part. A common feature of most studies is a lack of surviving documentation relating to purchases, different display choices and the intentions of the collectors, similar to the case of Ordrupgaard.

This leaves the other type of empirical material which is still glaringly available yet often overlooked – the complexes of buildings, gardens, artworks and furnishings that still stand as a surprisingly well-preserved source material. It is my argument that on-site, thoughtful and imaginative explorations of, for example, places as diverse as Waldemarsudde in Stockholm, Sammlung Oskar Reinhart in Winterthur or The Phillips Collection in Washington D.C. provide invaluable insights, indispensable to analysis, that cannot be gleaned from old documents and flat representations. I am not alone in arguing this point about using active experience in analysis of art, architecture and institution (Higonnet 2009, p. xvii, Edwards, Hart 2010).

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## 4. Key concepts and initial departure

Two recent works on private collecting of elite material culture provide a departure for this study of Ordrupgaard and the international collectors' museum of modernist art. In 2009, art historian Anne Higonnet published *A museum of one's own: Private collecting, public gift* in which she defines and interprets the elite 'collection museum' found in Europe and the USA as a specific category of institution that first appeared at the end of the nineteenth century. Three years later, literary scholar Jeremy Braddock published *Collecting as modernist practice*, which deals with anthologies of modernist poetry and private museums in early twentieth century USA. Of special relevance to my work, the modernist collections of Duncan Phillips (1886–1966) and Albert C. Barnes (1872–1951) are here seen as 'provisional institutions' and deliberate *interventions* into culture and social life.

In a moment I will detail how the works of Higonnet and Braddock initially shape my research question of 'how to explain Ordrupgaard' by examining the concepts 'collection museum', 'provisional institution' and 'intervention'. Before that, clarification of a few key concepts is in order since institution, museum and collecting bespeak some of the basic assumptions underlying this study.

According to the sociologist Anthony Giddens, an institution is:

a complex of positions, roles, norms and values lodged in particular types of social structures and organising relatively stable patterns of human activity with respect to fundamental problems in producing life-sustaining resources, in reproducing individuals, and in sustaining viable societal structures within a given environment (Giddens cited after Miller 2014).

Institutions thus lie between the even more complex society, which contains many institutions and is at least nominally self-sufficient, and the less complex forms of conventions, rules, norms and rituals that are often themselves part of institutions. Frequently, institutions are also organizations such as is the case with schools, shops or police forces, or systems of organizations as in 'the educational sector', a retail chain or government. In other cases, institutions are not and do not require organizations, as is the case with language, the family, gift-giving and so forth (Miller 2014).

Museums are both organizations and institutions and at least two equally valid definitions can be imagined, one seemingly *descriptive* and one *prescriptive*. According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary: 'Museum: a building in which interesting and valuable things (such as paintings and sculptures or scientific or historical objects) are collected' (Merriam-Webster 2015). The International Council of Museums offers a little more detail:

A museum is a non-profit, permanent institution in the service of society and its development, open to the public, which acquires, conserves, researches, communicates and exhibits the tangible and intangible heritage of humanity and its environment for the purposes of education, study and enjoyment (ICOM 2007, p. 2).

The definition of a museum I will subscribe to in my historical study travels somewhere between the minimal and more idealistic version: A museum is a place of some permanence for the preservation and exhibition of significant things for the good of an audience. Even then, this open definition risks being vague and anachronistic without some critical, historical awareness – this is especially the case as regards the museum's *generative* role. As active institutions, museums are indeed more than their buildings and collections – they do not just passively serve society and its heritage, but are actively involved in creating *both* as they collect, preserve and exhibit. Similarly, museums are

enabled and restrained by more prosaic things than the goal of ultimate service to society. These ‘forces’ should not just be seen as inconvenient limits to ideal, institutional fulfilment, but must be taken into account when defining museums: Museums might serve society, but they do so within the limits set by society, not in spite of these.

Added to the two previous concepts of institution and museum should be the minimal definition of ‘collecting’: ‘that curious activity which we call collecting, and which [...] may be described as *the gathering together and setting aside of selected objects*’ (Pearce 2005, p. 3, italics mine). In an interpretative move, the museologist Susan M. Pearce further defines collecting:

as a set of things which people do, as an aspect of individual and social practice which is important in public and private life as means of constructing the way in which we relate to the material world and so build up our own lives (Pearce 2005, p. 5).

In my own view, this means that ‘the collection’ itself is not only important as a final product, but perhaps more so as a process (of collecting). And a minimal definition, if one is needed, might be limited to something which has a separate identity, contains a number of objects and seems to have been actively gathered rather than accumulated (cf. Belk 1994, Pearce 1994b).

With these three, perhaps still shaky, concepts of institution, museum and collecting under my belt, I want to move on to the idea of the ‘collection museum’. This is defined by Anne Higonnet as a historical category of art museums created by private collectors in which the collection itself remains central, and over time static in various important aspects whether in its contents or its display. The great collection museums were opened from c. 1890 to 1940 and housed in private and personal surroundings, often a present or former home, and they are all ‘personal’ in different ways (Higonnet 2009, pp. xii–xiii). The

aim of the collection museum was to be ‘different from other art museums’ (Higonnet 2009, p. 3). In her impressive study, which succeeds in finding the similarities and peculiarities among collection museums, Higonnet shows why institutions such as The Wallace Collection in London, The Musée Condé outside Paris, The Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum in Boston, The Frick Collection in New York, The Huntington in San Marino, California and Dumbarton Oaks in Washington D.C., along with many others, cluster around ideas of organic unity, harmony, sensuality, pleasure, intimacy and home – qualities that set them decisively apart from other public, so-called universal survey museums (Higonnet 2009, p. 22, cf. Duncan, Wallach 1980).



8. The Musée Condé at chateau de Chantilly in Oise

Many of the themes defined in Higonnet’s work resonate with Ordrupgaard – a formerly private collection, now a museum of French nineteenth century art, impressionism and early modernism housed in personal, intimate surroundings in a well-preserved environment. While the museum has seen some changes and transformations over the years, these do not challenge the fundamental characteristics of the institution and its history in private and personal collecting. For various reasons, Higonnet focuses on collection museums that are squarely focused on collecting the old and very old, which is often already canonised and thus incredibly expensive. For this reason, her exemplary cases have old European painting, unique products of applied and decorative arts, books

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and antiquarian objects from various world cultures at their centre instead of, say, modernist art. Reasonably, she delves into fewer, more exemplary cases in order to illustrate the central arguments, which also has the consequence that the best preserved, often American, institutions are those that receive the most attention. This leaves the field of modernist collections underexplored, even when there is obvious continuity in practices of collection, display and presentation.

Most scholarship acknowledges that the triumph of modernism is intimately allied to private collecting and private donation (Distel 1990, Jensen 1994). Even so, a long history of reception means that views on early modernist art of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century has long since taken on a rigid specificity and certain obviousness. But the road to superstardom for just a small set of canonized visual artists – from Auguste Rodin (1840–1917) through the impressionists to the post-impressionists, Cézanne and Gauguin along with other, more local, non-French modernists – was never a done deal, even after ‘high modernism’ had gained momentum in the early 1920s. As modernist art of the latter part of the preceding century was reaching broad acceptance, its relationship to society, its canon or its institutionalisation had still not been defined in public museums or public discourse; least of all in the new, universal survey museums standing proud in city centres all over the western world. Jeremy Braddock’s (2012) book length analysis of modernist visual art and literature at the beginning of its institutionalization uses this observation as its starting point in order to illustrate the importance of ‘the collection’ as an early and central concern. The collections of Duncan Phillips and Albert C. Barnes are seen as particularly representative of a ‘collection aesthetic’, a set of practices designed to explain and mediate modernist art to an audience.

As provisional institution, the modernist collection was a means of intervening in and reforming cultural practice, doing so on the basis of its form: the collection’s aesthetic arrangement, as well as its inclusions and exclusions, was a representation of ideological position (Braddock 2012, p. 6).

By showing modernist art in specific ways, the private museum is a *model* institution, one which points the way to a better relationship between artwork and audience (Braddock 2012, p. 3). Thus the collection is also a *provisional institution* in the sense that it is a role model for yet *other* institutions: for better art appreciation and – ideally – better society.

In my view, talking of the modernist collection as an actively ‘provisional institution’ requires an equally reasoned approach to ‘intervention’ – what the collection does through its interjection into a course of events – a concept which Braddock perhaps takes from political historian Quentin Skinner who has written profusely on authors and intent. Dealing primarily with texts, Skinner points out that if a work is to be understood then it needs to be considered from the viewpoint of an intervention in a specific historical situation (Skinner 2013). Together with Braddock, I would argue that the same goes for the collection: If the collection is like a text, what is its ‘context of utterance’, that is, what are the possible ways of ‘writing’ at the time, and where does the collection-text repeat, differ, distort, develop and deviate? Skinner sensibly proposes to see the text as an answer to a question and suggests that the related question may be found by investigating the text’s context (Skinner 2002, pp. 114–122). In the same way, the collection can be seen as actively doing something – it is introduced as an answer to felt problems with art, in museums and about life.

Despite different approaches, there are therefore obvious parallels between Higonnet’s work on collectors of elite culture and Braddock’s study of modernist champions and their interventionist collections. Both groups hope to model change, more or less radically, by establishing their collections as institutions:

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Isabella Stewart Gardner (1840–1924) builds a Venetian palace in Boston and fills it with an intimate presentation of old master painting for many reasons, but some of these have to do with changing the way people relate to art (and quite possibly to her!). In the same way, Duncan Phillips fills his patrician house with modernist art in intimate surroundings and gradually gives it over to the public, in order to influence how an audience should experience art. Many similarities in structure and function exist between the ‘provisional institutions’ Braddock analyses and the ‘collection museums’ of Higonnet. I would say they are both interventions.

The same goes with Ordrupgaard, which historically can be seen as a collection museum *and* a modernist collection serving as provisional institution. This double character is obvious in a small number of modernist collections in Europe and the USA – the closest ‘neighbours’ to Ordrupgaard. Thus, in explaining one Danish collection by way of a whole category, I propose the concept of the ‘collection museum of modernist art’.

9. The village of Ordrup in 1929. (1) Ordrupgaard; (2) tram no. 5 terminus; (3) Ordrup station; (4) The approximate position of Herman Heilbuth’s intended gallery (see chapter VIII)



## 5. Research question and dissertation structure

Ordrupgaard, then, is the crux of the investigation, and the task is ‘how to explain Ordrupgaard’ with a particular focus on the early years of the collection. In my attempt to situate, contrast and compare Ordrupgaard, I turn to the history of collectors and collections similar to my Danish case. These are defined as *collection museums of modernist art* – Waldemarsudde, Thielska Galleriet, The Courtauld Collection and Gallery, the Barnes Foundation, The Phillips Collection, Kröller-Müller Museum and Sammlung Oskar Reinhart “Am Römerholz” – and they were all begun in the early decades of the twentieth century with their focus foremost on modernist art.

Thus, my research goal is: (1) to explain Ordrupgaard, and, by extension, (2) to explain the collection museum of modernist art as a type.

The dissertation is divided into the present introduction, followed by part one comprising chapters I–V, and part two comprising chapters VI–VII. Chapter VIII serves as an epilogue, which includes a summary conclusion.

The first part – *Displays* – provides a thorough analysis and discussion of the collection museum of modernist art as an exhibition with an audience. *Chapter I* imagines an *in medias res* visit to Ordrupgaard as it might have been experienced around 1919. The chapter is structured like a walk through the gallery, which oscillates between descriptive analyses and reflections on these descriptions. In *chapter II*, I reflect on the methodological implications of reconstructing and imagining the past as experience. The method of a phenomenological ‘first-person perspective’ used in chapter I is discussed in light of theories of reception and spectators with special relevance to museums and private art galleries. Here, I deal with pertinent issues of framing, interpretation, narration and of staging which lead to an argument for applying a performative perspective on collecting and display practices. *Chapter III* ima-

gines a visit to three Stockholm art collections that have special relevance to Ordrupgaard – Högberga Gård, Waldemarsudde and Ernest Thiel's collection. Similarities and differences are found between the four collections as they were displayed and promoted and further topics of the collection museums of modernist art are explored. *Chapter IV* introduces the idea of collectors and collections as having 'a horizon'. Situated in neutral Denmark around WWI, what could be known about collecting, what other collections and collection museums were there and what were the relevant ideas in circulation? In discussing the home as a deliberately chosen 'horizon', the chapter analyses the early incarnations of the Courtauld Gallery and Krøller-Müller Museum and their expression of an ideology of public donation. *Chapter V* rounds off part one of the dissertation. In a lengthy analysis of the Barnes Foundation, Sammlung Oskar Reinhart and the Phillips Collection, I discuss the private gallery as an ideological display meant to educate visitors through formal and formalistic approaches to art in a deliberate contrast to regular museums and art history at the time. The chapter summarily defines eight points of concern that define the private collection museum of modernist art as it developed in the first part of the twentieth century. In a final discussion, the Hansen-family's Ordrupgaard is shown to rest within a group of private collections with institutional ambitions, which believed in the power of art and in specific ideologies of the good life.

The second part – *Networks* – looks to the *means and connections* that made possible art collecting and the collection museums of modernist art. *Chapter VI* introduces and discusses 'the agent' as an ambiguous intermediary in the modern networks of collecting and trading art, which developed in the nineteenth century. By looking to actor-network theory (ANT), the concept of networks is extended to include the non-human things and essential techniques

that allow collecting but are seldom accounted for. To exemplify, I trace the abundant knowledge that can be gleaned from the travels of a packing crate of precious paintings during the late stages of WWI as it gets variously lost and then stuck in transit through Switzerland. In a discussion of a spectacular exhibition of French, modernist art held in Copenhagen in 1914, I show how newly developed networks help create a whole field of collecting and temporary exhibitions in the Danish art world. Art collecting is thus shown to be an activity with a wide reach and involving many actors. The history of a business consortium for the purchase of artworks is the initial focus of *chapter VII*. Ordrupgaard is shown to be enmeshed in market thinking, and the sale of the painter Degas' collection in the middle of the bombardment of Paris illustrates the way rational calculation occurs in fine art collecting. Not just Wilhelm Hansen, but most collectors of modernist art are shown to use the same acquisitive logic, which followed the emergence of modernist art as investment. Calculation and market thinking is concluded to be an important part of the partial dismemberment of Ordrupgaard in 1923.

The epilogue contains the final *chapter VIII* and a summary conclusion. The discussion here revolves around the outcomes of the collection museum of modernist art and what defines failure and success. The Louisiana Museum of Modern Art is shown as one, very concrete legacy. A three stage development for the early collection museums of modernist art is drawn up – from dynamic yet provisional institution during the collector's involvement through static and permanent collection *after* the collector to a final development into the modern museum of temporary exhibitions. The results of the whole project and the previous seven chapters are summarized under the headings 'how to explain Ordrupgaard – and the collection museum of modernist art' followed by a brief consideration of topics for future research.

**Part one**

**Displays**

# Chapter I: A visit to Ordrupgaard, c. 1919

We are taking a trip up north, gradually leaving the noise and bustle of the capital behind as we ride tram no. 15.<sup>2</sup> Getting off near Bernstorff's Castle, about 10 kilometres from Copenhagen city centre, we are now in a quiet land of large villas [fig. 9]. Plots are still waiting to be developed and a large sign shows the sites for sale. From here on we might take a taxi or walk. Since people normally go north for picnics, plenty of carriages are available. Let us say it is a nice summer day circa 1919. We are getting closer as the treetops of the royal game park rise in an unbroken row on the horizon. The destination is a mansion right on the edge of the large forest of beeches and oaks.

As we pass through the gate and past the home of the head gardener and the large coach house, everything appears framed and enclosed by the tall trees. The residence itself is set far back, at first mostly obscured by trunks and foliage. To the sides we see sheds and green houses, glimpse fruit trees and a more formal garden of topiary and roses. Birds are calling, singing, signalling while a distinctly moist smell of grass and leaves fills the air. And now, straight ahead, the house itself bathed in light; a two story main building

.....  
<sup>2</sup> During the work on this dissertation, parts of chapter I and chapter II have been published in *Museum & Society*, vol. 12, no. 2, 2014, as 'Embodied discourse in the bourgeois museum: Performative spaces at the Ordrupgaard collection'. This and the following chapter present a reworking of the arguments and conclusions presented therein.



10. The facade of Ordrupgaard photographed in 1921. Parts of the gallery building can be seen on the left

with a tall roof and two short wings [figs. 5, 10, 12, 32]. The various vines and brambles have not yet filled much of the espaliers on the walls. All seems so very new with the grey-white walls contrasting the overwhelming green of the vegetation and the bright red of the mansard roof. There is a lean and restrained elegance to the whole place where surrounding forest and gardens evoke an air of grand retreat.

But the main doors are closed. Today is a day of welcome yet uninvited guests. So it is to the elongated, somewhat peculiar building to the left with its glazed and wooden lantern on top that our attention turns, and that gives welcome. Upon entering, we formally announce our visit by signing the ledger. From the small antechamber follows the first of three exhibition halls. Daylight streams in abundance from large windows, the floor is a lightly

coloured parquet, the wainscoting a deep reddish brown and the walls a dusty greenish violet.

And the paintings we have come to see?

The paintings shimmer bright and colourful as if a direct extension of the pleasures seen outside.<sup>3</sup>

By 1919 the Great War and a profitable period of neutrality is at its end but the inevitable economic decline is still in the future. Villas have been built, the arts have thrived and society has progressed. A curious optimism is still visible in newspapers and magazines. The same media have celebrated Ordrupgaard since the inauguration of its French gallery in September 1918, and wide publicity has made it a well-known fact that the collection is open for unannounced visitors on certain days each week. The roughly one-hour journey from Axeltorv in the centre of the city to its outskirts in still rural Ordrup is no longer just for picnics or sports events, it is now a passage to some of the best progressive French painting of the nineteenth century. But the experience offered seems to be about much more than just art history.

I am imagining a visit to the mansion, exhibition hall and art collection collectively known as Ordrupgaard on a summer day of c. 1919. Going back in this re-constructive way, I have to use historical descriptions and photographs in order to even imagine this past while suspending any academic scepticism and methodological qualms of time travel for later (see chapter II). What I want to do is to argue that embodied experience is central to history – and here I do this through a descriptive analysis of my experience of a place that still exists and then to project this experience back in time. At the same time,

.....  
 3 The imagined visit to Ordrupgaard is mainly based on photographic evidence, contemporary newspaper articles and archival material kept at Ordrupgaard. Kept in OA are photographs of interiors and exteriors from 1918 by Holger Damgaard (presumably), 1921 by 'Lindegaard' and 1931 by 'L. Christensen'. About tram-line no. 15 as the way to visit Ordrupgaard See W. (1918). Another possible route would involve going by train to Klampenborg Station and then by taxi. Ordrup Station opened in 1924.

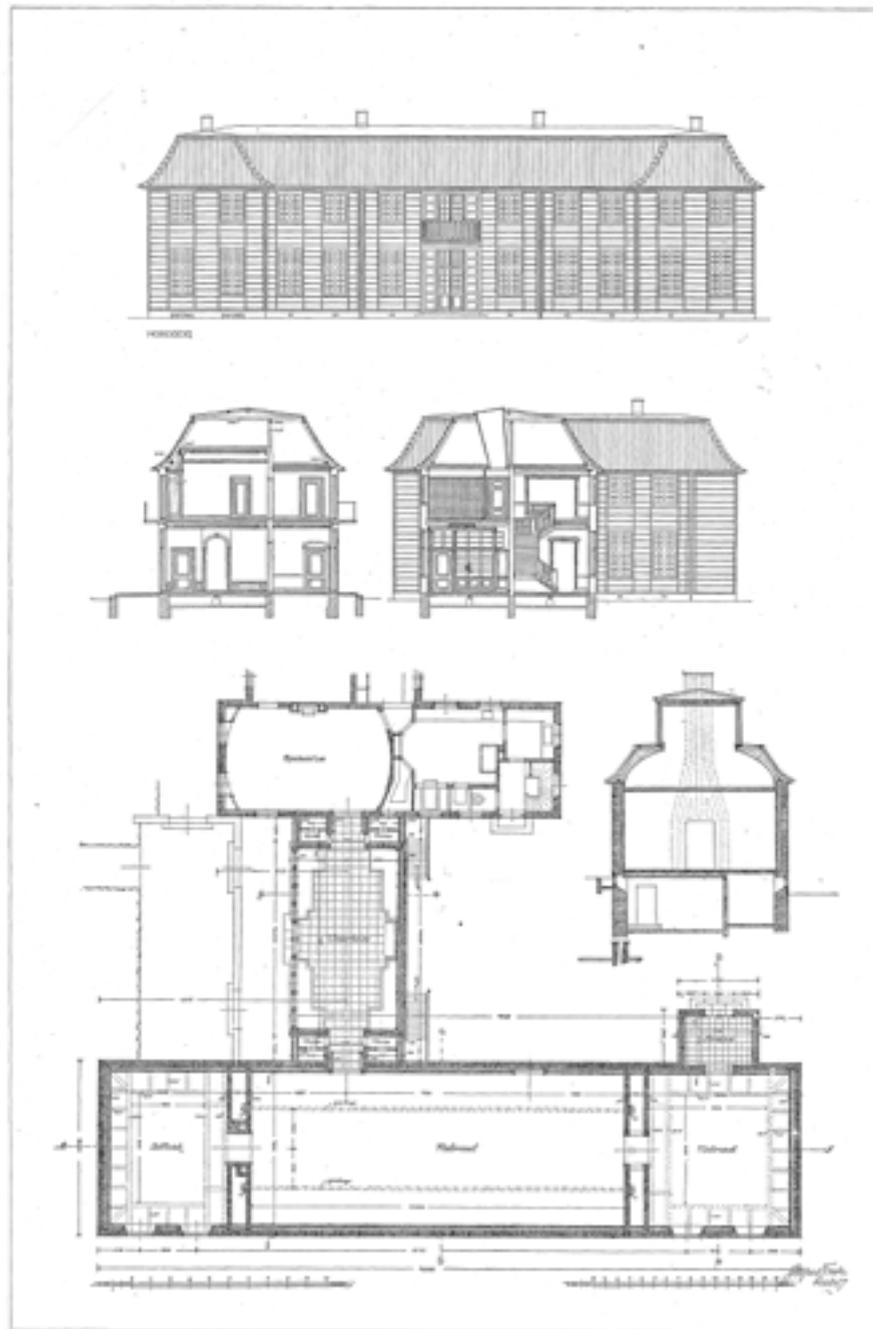
I will attempt to query and debate this imagined visit in 1919 through much more recent theory and academic literature. As interpreter I am therefore going to inhabit a curiously double existence as I am suspended between a 1919 'then' of ghostly, half-formed opinions, and a reflexive and interpretative 'now' which is so differently informed than my 1919-alter-ego. Is this a naïve exercise? – Possibly, but for now I want to see where it takes us.



11. The first hall of the French gallery at Odrupgaard in 1918. Paintings by romantics and realists

## 1. The first hall

So, we have now arrived in the private museum of the art collector Wilhelm Hansen. This is immediately different: Unlike the large public collections of art and cultural objects, we have not climbed any imposing stairs, we are on the ground floor, we are surrounded by sumptuous materials and furniture that signify private luxury rather than stately gravitas, and we are immediately able to orientate ourselves in the architecture which possesses a more intimate scale closer to a normal living space. As we survey this, the first of the three halls, with a size and feel of a large living room, we are greeted by the ensemble of a large, antique oak table with a few books ready for perusal, heavy chairs, Persian rug on the floor, low, carved cupboards, a few plants



12. Front elevation and section of Ordrupgaard main building. Section of French gallery. Ground plan of French gallery, winter garden and the main building's dining room with service area

and a chandelier hanging from the ceiling [fig. 11]. Light comes from the windows facing northeast through which the large green house can be seen next to orchard trees and vegetable garden. There is a lot of wood all round: in the elegant wainscoting and window niches, in the light parquet, in the furniture with its variously tinted veneers and, making a conceptual leap, also as motif in so many of the paintings.

With these pictures we are confronted with the very art that – still at this time – has little place in public Danish museums (Larsen 2002): French plein-air paintings, romanticism, realism.<sup>4</sup> A single, bright portrait of a gentleman by David (1748–1825) [fig. 13], an abundance of darkly glowing land- and seascapes by Corot (1796–1875), Courbet (1819–1877) and Daubigny (père, 1817–1878, et fils, 1846–1886), small dramatic scenes by Delacroix (1798–1863), almost monochromatic paintings of satirical subjects by Daumier (1808–1879), and a few select and prominent pieces by Ingres (1780–1867), Géricault (1791–1824), Couture (1815–1879) and others.<sup>5</sup> These are paintings by artists we read about in surveys of modern art and they are radiating in subdued palettes of finely attuned colours.

<sup>4</sup> Although impressionist and French modernist painting had occasionally been exhibited in Copenhagen since 1888 – Paul Gauguin (1848–1903) had even had his first solo presentation ever at the Copenhagen Art Union as early as 1885 – public collections were slow to acquire and display this kind of art. Not until after the death of the somewhat conservative founder Carl Jacobsen (1842–1914), did New Carlsberg Glyptotek and its 'parent' The New Carlsberg Foundation, gradually give its wholehearted attention to the subject through the efforts of his son, Helge Jacobsen (1882–1946), who became the museum's director and member of the foundation board (Munk 1993, Sondergaard 2006). Today, Ordrupgaard is the only other museum in Denmark with a collection of nineteenth century French painting and sculpture since, due to a number of peculiar decisions to divide responsibilities, the National Gallery of Denmark focuses on the avant-garde of the early twentieth century (Villadsen 1994, Sondergaard 2006).

<sup>5</sup> With the exception of maybe a couple of changes, the original hang of the Ordrupgaard collection stayed the same from 1918–1922. It is documented in the series of photographs taken in 1918 and 1921 kept in OA. Supplementary pictures of how the art was arranged may be found in three contemporary articles (Rapin 1918, Verden og Vi 1918, Vore Herrer 1918).

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As could be understood by the wide press coverage at the time of the gallery's public inauguration in September 1918, everything comes together to form a distinct ambiance:

One should not use the word museum about these three wonderful halls: Discrete rugs, a table in the middle with renaissance chairs covered in red upholstery, a renaissance cupboard, old oak benches here and there, and in the last room the low book cases of mahogany – any monotony is banished, there is no museum character, and the collection achieves an intimate, home-like feel that unites the pictures into a quiet whole (Berlingske Tidende 1918).

Another newspaper states that the gallery is, '[...] no dead museum, but a home where the pictures are displayed as in the halls of a patrician' (Haagen 1918). As well-informed visitors of the time, we might draw inferences to the Musée Jacquemart-André in Paris (opened 1913), Sir John Soane's Museum (opened 1837) and The Wallace Collection (opened 1900) in London, or even Fenway Court (Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum) in Boston (opened 1903): All places where paintings, craft objects, decoration and architecture form pleasant compositions. Closer to home, more intimate parts of the Thorvaldsen Museum (opened 1848) might serve as reference, with the Nivaagaard (opened 1908) and Hirschsprung (opened 1911) collections as the most obvious parallels in a small, select world of elite collecting and collections.

Stepping back and reflecting for a time on Ordrupgaard and the vivid picture of pleasant domesticity in 1919 allows our present selves a moment of re-evaluation. In the character of a home, as well as in other regards, the Ordrupgaard gallery shows itself as an example of the 'collection museum' (cf. Higonet 2009), some of which have already been mentioned, all of which aim for an ambiance removed from the public museum and closer to a personal retreat. In the intimate feel of Ordrupgaard's French gallery rests

the same ideal of the clearly demarcated, private dwelling – in its core a very much bourgeois ideal. As should be well-known, interconnected ideas of house, home and intimacy form one of the pillars of bourgeois society and self-image (cf. Frykman, Löfgren 1987, Perrot 1990, Habermas 1991), both a necessity for and a result of the partitioning of life into categories of private and public. At Ordrupgaard, for example, park and gardens, chairs and tables, human proportions and adequate lighting all contribute to a feeling of ease, retreat, rest and enjoyment; of comfort, simply; one of the great inventions of the bourgeoisie. As working life (for men) is both an ideal and something to be kept separate (from home, from women), 'real' comfort and leisure time gain in importance and are with time increasingly sought in and around the home (Moretti 2013). 'Comfort', 'intimacy', 'house' and 'home' elide. Just to mention one is to invoke the others, and Ordrupgaard certainly delivers. Hansen's large villa, grounds and exhibition hall are as the bourgeois ideal both aggrandized and made concrete. If the state gallery exists at one end of a continuum of museums – the most public of all – Ordrupgaard resides at the other end: still a museum, still public, but flouting its 'privateness' and pleasurable, homely atmosphere. As visitors we might not dwell much upon these characteristics, although we may still notice that the place feels grand yet intimate, impressive yet accommodating. And



13. Jacques-Louis David: Portrait of Comte de Turenne. 1816. Oil on wood. 112 x 81 cm. New Carlsberg Glyptotek. Part of the Ordrupgaard Collection until 1923

as these associations make clear, another topic makes itself paradoxically felt – that of aristocratic life.

Returning to the here-and-now of a visit in 1919 and going back a little to pause, for a moment, on the doorstep: In 1919 Ordrupgaard is brand new,



14. 'Some images from the park surrounding the beautiful property Ordrupgaard ...' Detail from Vore Damer, 28. July 1921

that much is clear before even entering the inside of the French gallery. Mansion and gallery wing have just been built – planned by Gotfred Tvede (1863–1947), an architect both productive and versatile, but with help from the assistant Terkel Hjejle (1884–1927) – in a composite style somewhere between restrained baroque, classicism, France and England. Those in the know might

even call it 'functional' and refer to recent British houses and the Arts and Crafts movement (Langkilde 1987). The house is located in an existing park that belonged to a former, now demolished villa, but it has a host of new additions in the form of a home for the head gardener at the entrance of the grounds, a rose garden on one side of the mansion, a green house on the other side, a coach house just out of sight and a new, overall layout of the surroundings. The façade is freshly mortared, the roofing bright, well-tended lanes newly laid and bordering lawns mowed and swept free of twigs, leaves and the general organic detritus of a living forest.<sup>6</sup> There is an overall feeling of something planned and executed with care then brought into existence

.....  
6 A neatness seen in the photographic material kept in OA from 1918, 1921 and 1931.

as a total ensemble – of a process of detailed, deliberate steps far removed from the random accumulations of just letting time pass. This is not simply a family castle – an expression of inherited wealth – but a house of a self-made man. This might easily be seen as a contemporary and proper bourgeois home.

On the other hand, the resulting mansion indeed looks a little imposing and rather grand. The park and gardens are on the scale of a true manor and the area of Ordrup itself is closely associated with both royals and the castles and summer villas of the peers of the realm. Many things point discretely back in time, to the kind of 'history' where only the privileged few were admitted the status of actors and the rest of us relegated to spectating. Surveying the grounds, possibly being allowed to wander around the rose garden and the great lawn at the back, makes it all seem so permanent, and our visit there just a fleeting presence. The architecture itself – with its stylistic borrowings from both the early nineteenth and early eighteenth centuries where antiquity proper makes an odd subdued appearance in a few ornamental details – speaks of the past as one large reservoir of tradition. Even the concept of keeping Open House could be seen as a nod to the habits of the British landed aristocracy (Haagen 1918). Something here certainly seems aristocratic.

Reading some almost contemporary life-style magazines: The park is 'as cosy as it is grand [...] a noble frame for an artful home' (Vore Damer 1921) [fig. 14], the mansion is 'beautiful and with style [...] equally noble and artistic' (Vore Herrer 1921) and: 'Ordrupgaard is that Danish home where wealth and good taste has created a harmonic and appealing whole; a lovely old park and a house that unites all the modern demands of a new age with the cosiness that comes from beautiful old furniture and delightful artworks' (Levy 1921). And then: On entering or re-entering the first of the exhibition halls of the French gallery, what was initially more a feeling than the object of conscious

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reflection becomes clearer. The interplay between old furniture of varied provenance – renaissance, baroque or just seemingly ancient – and the newness of both paintings and interior fittings mirrors the already established contrast of tradition and renewal. Initially then, Ordrupgaard exudes an air of something both past and present, of tradition as well as the modern, of bourgeoisie and aristocracy. This pairing and contrasting comes to define much of the initial encounter, forming frame-like around a visit to the French gallery.

But why and for what purpose is the new contrasted with the old, recent with the traditional? What does it mean, and what does it do?

Re-posing the question from a theoretical standpoint allows the polarity to be seen as a question of ideology. A hard structuralist analysis would be quick to point out that concepts of ‘new’ and ‘old’ gain their content directly from their polarity, their not-being-the-otherness. The total field of possible meanings of things at any one time in history might be limited, but there is any number of substitutions possible: new and old, tradition and renewal, modernity and past – and most importantly for this analysis – bourgeois and aristocrat. Still rather convinced that Ordrupgaard is a celebration of the bourgeois, comfortable home, there is an initial problem in reconciling this with all the basic signs of aristocracy and aristocrat lifestyle – normally the two would be seen as opposed, not coexisting. While the idea of aristocracy is largely based on tradition, family inheritance and blood lines – the bourgeoisie and the middle class is all about personal merits and the competency of the singular individual. Mobilizing ideas of eminence though having to deal with bourgeois suspicions of entitlement Ordrupgaard therefore strikes a curious balance between worlds.

Here it might be helpful to seek additional, theoretical input. In an influential text first published in 1957, the cultural theorist Roland Barthes

(1915–1980) (2009) pinpoints bourgeois values as a pervasive, self-effacing ideology, which have the ability to masquerade as so many different cultural expressions; a system of ‘myth’ which dominates the twentieth century. A myth distinguishes itself by the way that a potentially very wide number of things perceived are, again and again, channelled into the same, rather fixed and narrow number of associations. Drawing on Barthes (2009), it is possible to see how one set of codes – that of the upper class of old – is re-purposed for the use by a former enemy. This co-existence, or even reconciliation, actually seems to be a significant, subconscious aim of the bourgeois universe of ideas; an aspect of that which sociologist Immanuel Wallerstein (1988) in economic terms describes as the ‘rent-seeking behaviour’ of the bourgeois class, the felt need to consolidate fortune in equally material, judicial and ideological ways. Analytically, ‘fortune’ can therefore easily be extended to mean more than money and to encompass a wish to solidify and entrench any newly achieved societal entitlement through symbolic objects like a house or a collection. Aristocracy, tradition and ‘taste’ all seem to supply important authority. What initially looked like a clash of diametrically opposed associations – new versus old, bourgeois against aristocratic – turns out to be a deliberate strategy of persuasion firing on several registers. But even more than that, the contradictions reveal a longing for a permanent ‘aristocratic’ entitlement to uphold bourgeois privilege indefinitely.<sup>7</sup>

According to Barthes (2009), mythmaking has its goal in turning simple associations into unquestioned facts, and to convince us that this is the way

.....  
7 Had the family Hansen just been seeking optimal comfort (understood as a physical quality of life (Crowley 1999)), which ought to be seen as a reasonable bourgeois goal, instead of other, less tangible notions about prestige and consolidation, the move to Ordrupgaard presented a step back from their life in a very large flat in Hambrosgade in the centre of Copenhagen. The distance to Wilhelm’s workplace and to their supposed social network in the city increased tremendously, heating was never adequate, and the staff needed to keep the whole place efficient doubled several times and added to any worries about owning and running a large household of just three people.

things are; this is the way things have to be. Along with the shape of society and the way resources are distributed, this ‘naturalization’ means that specifically bourgeois ideas about life are rhetorically transformed into general truths. In total, therefore, so much more than painting is being shown at Ordrupgaard.



15. Edouard Manet: Portrait of Monsieur Brun. C. 1879. Oil on canvas. 194.3 x 126 cm. The National Museum of Western Art, Tokyo. Part of the Ordrupgaard Collection until 1923

Mansion, gardens and art collection play on an array of registers to tell a singular message about the joys in owning things, lots of things. On top of all the pleasantness experienced – the nature, the paintings, the beautiful gallery – the primacy of private property is transposed as a source of it all. In sharp contrast to the large Dyrehave forest next door or the National Gallery in the city, one understands the slice of peaceful and orderly forest demarcated by fences as private, and the nice art collection is similarly marked as exclusive property. The hybrid signs of old and new, bourgeois and aristocrat are meant to secure a place and to gain a position in the world: For the Hansen family, of course, but more generally for a vision of high bourgeois life.

## 2. The large hall

We leave the first of the exhibition halls, passing through a doorway with panelling in the same reddish brown stain as the luxurious wainscoting continuing into the next hall. The long room feels immediately more open, airier – strongly colourful [figs. 16, 17]. The overhead lantern which stretches for most of the ceiling’s length fills the room with a diffuse light, and on the walls paintings shimmer, predominantly in greens and blues with occasional yellows and reds flaring up. There is an easy rhythm to the first impression – some furniture there, open space here, a little more furniture, some more space. There is room around the paintings where the shapes of the expensive wallpaper quietly undulate, and the well-crafted flooring is intermediately covered and revealed by Persian rugs. While retaining a homelike feel, the still prevalent *horror vacui* of the *fin-de-siecle* dwelling is clearly abandoned along with its plethora of textured surfaces. Instead, there is a clear regularity in the way furniture is spaced; a rhythm, which is further taken up and fully expressed in the way the paintings are hung in regular sets on the wall. In an abstracted, geometrical sense, the frames of the paintings take on an ordering role: Set in two rows, their border structures a basic pattern in a kind of open, irregular checkerboard with the top of the frames aligned so as to pull attention along in a linear manner, which is occasionally broken by larger, spectacular pieces, as is the case with the obvious centrepiece – the full figure portrait of *Monsieur Brun* – in the middle of the northeast wall [figs. 15, 16].

The effect of the ordered rhythm of the artworks is no more striking than in the way that Edouard Manet’s (1832–1883) large portrait juts out from the flow of painted canvases on the wall. As shall become apparent, this is the closest we regular visitors will come to a portrait of the collection owner Wilhelm Hansen himself, but for now the linear, composition-like effect



16. Top: The gallery's large hall looking north. Photograph from 1918

17. Bottom: The large hall looking south. Photograph from 1921

of paintings harnessed to shape a quiet crescendo around it – waxing then waning – is already poignant. And with this notable example, it seems certain that all the pictures are arranged in order to say something, to express more than is possible simply through their motifs; though from a present viewpoint they are hung in a peculiar way. From a late modern perspective of more or less strict displays of self-negating white walls, even Hansen's rhythmically well-ordered ensemble feels a little overwhelming; both in the first hall, where the predominantly small artworks are hung close, and in this large, second hall where the double rows of paintings present a sight not normally seen in the twenty-first century. Hansen's Ordrupgaard of 1919 has yet to display the characteristics of 'the white cube' (O'Doherty 1999) or the 'white "neutral" container' (Klonk 2009, p. 138) that a century later has come to be associated with the 'proper' way to display art.

In the middle of this, then, a choreography appears, and perhaps this would be more immediately felt by a true contemporary of Wilhelm Hansen: First paintings are seen together in their sets, the grouping of which is signalled by correlations between subjects and proximity to other pictures. The eye is then drawn to individual pieces to be studied up close, and this requires looking up and then down as very few artworks are hung at a comfortable, 'average' eye level. Finally, the study of details is the accepted endpoint of picture viewing. Moving along, and there is indeed a marked pull provided by the extraordinary, abstract linearity that extends along the top of the picture frames and along the border of the wainscoting, the same procedure has to be observed: First, a distant taking in of the set, then up close to a painting, then even closer in order to study parts and shapes, then pulling out again to see the whole of either painting or set: a back-and-forth, a flow of different positions animating both the body and eyes of engaged visitors. Even the rugs

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18. Claude Monet:  
Waterloo Bridge,  
Overcast. 1903.  
Oil on canvas.  
65.5 x 100.5 cm.  
Ordrupgaard

on the floor and some of the strategically placed cupboards, chests and chairs along the walls carve out zones of traffic, far more discrete, and far more homelike, than any fence or velvet rope.

So, what do these paintings say; what is their meaning?

Around Monsieur Brun are some haystacks by Claude Monet (1840–1926) [fig. 19], a busy harbour seen from high above by Alfred Sisley (1839–1899), a scene of a throng of people in front of a steam boat by Manet, and finally, a large bridge filled with traffic – in its background tall chimneys and smoke – also by Monet [fig. 18]. Blues are dominant in these four canvases – from the grayish tones of the two lower paintings to the brighter hues of the top two. Mr Brun himself is clad in a jacket of the same colour; with his hands resting confidently on his sides, half-thrust into his pockets, his gaze is directed outwards and away from us. Though this man is clearly a member of the bourgeoisie with his top hat and elegant, relaxed clothing, the choice of a full-length format is decidedly aristocratic and empowering. Pensive, in control, he dominates the four attendant scenes like a painted Romanesque Christ would command his saints and angels through sheer size and centrality.



19. Claude Monet: Haystacks. 1885.  
Oil on canvas. 66 x 81.5 cm. Ohara  
Museum of Art, Kurashiki. Part of the  
Ordrupgaard Collection until 1923

In the same way yet less transcendent, the scenes surrounding Mr Brun are like manifestations of his person or areas of his control. Three of these associated with travel, movement and progress – with modernity – the fourth expressing a colourful Arcadia, a place of rest and intimate recuperation. All four express human industriousness, whether as solid heaps of organic matter in the countryside or as evanescent puffs of smoke in scenes of traffic and distribution of goods. ‘Who is this man?’ might be something to ask when confronted with the elegant, controlling, slightly evasive figure in the centre of the set. ‘This is the man,’ might then be answered by the smaller, attendant paintings, their physical place in the scheme dictating their subjugation to the larger piece, but with any interpretation of course somewhat dependant on the interests and idiosyncrasies of a particular viewer. It does not feel necessary to focus on the prominence of the colour blue, nor to see industry, movement and modernity as a defining theme of all the paintings in order for there to be meaning. Underneath the specifics of any personal interpretation appears a structure of appeal, a way the paintings seem ordered, a grammar of their presentation that prompts us to make meaningful connections and build a story.

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20. Detail of east wall in the large hall. Paintings by Sisley, Manet and Monet. Photograph from *Illustreret Tidende*, 22. September 1918

The same ‘back-and-forth’, from painting to painting, and from painting to the meaning of a set – is offered up repeatedly. To the right of the ensemble featuring Monsieur Brun we see the Manet portrait of *Isabelle Lemonnier au fichu blanc* [figs. 20, 23]. With two attendant water scenes – a canal with a lock by Sisley [fig. 21] and a stormy coastal scene with rough cliffs by Monet – the same grammar of associations applies. The alternately quiet and tempestuous water tells a yin-yang-like story of the central portrait as of a person who contains dual or opposed principles, ideas or moods; and as the eye scans the whole set, the smaller Manet portraits of a man and a woman underneath the seascapes serve to reinforce the sense of dualism until, possibly, the eye focuses on, and the viewer moves closer to, a sensuously painted basket of delicious and delectable pears by Manet [fig. 25]. Perhaps this is just a coincidence of spatial arrangements or perhaps this is a shrewd, gendered commentary on woman as spectacle or even on the whole of the display at Ordrupgaard as an extended visual menu finally ending in dessert.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>8</sup> The connotation comes from Swedish art historian Carl Laurin (1868–1940) who relates how Wilhelm Hansen showed the painting in 1917 as ‘an extra dessert after ice cream’ (Laurin 1929–32, vol. 4, p. 242, Rostrup 1981, pp. 23–24). The anecdote reappears in correspondence between Henny Hansen and Laurin (CL to HH 1936/2/6 SSA, CL to HH 1937/10/5 OA).



21. Alfred Sisley: *The Loing Canal at Moret*. C. 1892. Oil on canvas. 60.3 x 73 cm. Allen Memorial Art Museum, Oberlin, Ohio. Part of the Ordrupgaard Collection until 1923



22. Detail of east wall in the large hall. Paintings by Sisley, Manet, Guillaumin and Renoir. Photograph from 1918

There, on the other side of Monsieur Brun, is yet another portrait [figs. 22, 24]. Manet has painted himself, and, for those of us in the know, this medium-sized painting seems like a declaration of great painterly potency. Presented in full figure with hands on his sides and stepping forth from the darkness of an undifferentiated background, the artist is presented in a stark, dramatic, ‘studio lighting’ at odds with both the gently distributed ambient light of the exhibition halls and most of the other paintings on display. Echoing the posture and compositional devices of lighting and backdrop, while using an arguably even more ‘masculine’ palette of browns and blacks, Manet’s presence is as forceful as the other larger painting of a domineering gentleman. Exactly the same disposition of surrounding canvases as with *Isabelle Lemonnier* is repeated: Two horizontal landscapes by Sisley and Armand Guillaumin (1841–1927) of mostly water and skies to the sides of the portrait, and two vertically oriented portraits diagonally below with a final, much smaller painting directly underneath the central portrait. But of course Manet, painter-prince,

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23. Edouard Manet: Mademoiselle Isabelle Lemonnier. C. 1879–82. Oil on canvas. 86.5 x 63.5 cm. New Carlsberg Glyptotek, Copenhagen. Part of the Ordrupgaard Collection until 1923



24. Edouard Manet: Self-portrait. 1878–79. Oil on canvas. 94 x 63 cm. The Ishibashi Collection, Bridgestone Museum of Art, Tokyo, Part of the Ordrupgaard Collection until 1923

is not one to stand by, or to have any duality or discourse simply crossing over him. Instead, his portrait is one part of the polarities established: Each of the two landscapes that both formally and in subject seem much alike find their true counter in the portrait of the artist. Equally, the two female portraits by Pierre-Auguste Renoir (1841–1919) seem to find their counter in the male portrait, not each other, and the small female figure on the grass, also by Renoir, seems almost powerless in its exchange with the larger picture, miniscule, without significance – apart from taking up blank space and as a tool to balance the distribution of paintings.

So, there we are, walking the large hall of luminescent paintings, alternating between moving closer and pulling back from what we see on the walls,

while simultaneously moving between the examination of details and the piecing together of connections and larger narratives. What – to a visitor of the early twenty-first century – at first seemed confusing actually makes sense as so many sets of landscapes, seascapes, cityscapes and portraits immersed in mutual dialogue; or at least immersed in systems of correspondences and associations.

Rummaging through a ‘mental bag’ of assorted theoretical approaches it stands to reason that a lot of this has to do with narration and with visual rhetorics. In a short, well-known essay on the museum as discourse from 1996, the cultural theorist Mieke Bal insists on the importance of how artworks are arranged and juxtaposed (Bal 1996). With her, we might see the choice of distributing portraits throughout the large hall, instead of gathering them in one section for example, as a specific narrative choice. Bundles of narrative associations, rather than one continuous epic, are played out, each bundle with a perspective centred on a main character. Using a more narratological concept, this perspective could be identified as the function of *focalization* placed with variously this or that portrait in the sets we have encountered (Bal 2002, pp. 35–46, Bal 2009, pp. 145–165). This is a technical term for the way that, in stories, a central character – whether explicit or implicit, hidden narrator or visible protagonist – always colours the events narrated. His or her view *focalizes* a given world. Applying this analysis to Ordrupgaard of course demands that we engage the landscapes and smaller portraits as what they are ostensibly meant to be – subordinate attributes of the larger, central portraits.

While Brun, Lemonnier and Manet can all be said to focalize their respective sets and to serve as characters, the way this is achieved differs to some degree. The two male protagonists seem very much alike; both paintings are full-length portraits with the subject facing the picture plane, while Lemonnier is cut off at

the waist and is only shown in a three-quarters profile view of her body. There is a marked difference in the prominence and gesture of hands for the two men in comparison to the woman; all the while she looks at us half-smiling, head askew as the men adopt a determined, conquering look on the world. This difference of composition and the resultant difference of the amount of mastery given to the presented figures reflects a common imbalance in representation where the agency of represented male and female characters in popular visual culture often depends acutely on framing and bodily fragmentation (Mulvey 1975). A tendency towards singular fetishization of parts of female anatomy, in this case the bright, smiling face, contrasts with the way male bodies normally are shown as whole and ready to meet the world (Salomon 1996), as is the case with Brun and Manet. That the three portraits all by Manet exhibit what could be called the 'normal' difference in representation could be seen as largely incidental, but in the larger choreography of the 1919 display they become part of an arrangement which deliberately exploits this. The masculine portraits of Brun and Manet themselves are set up to engage in relations with their surrounding pictures with the correspondences mainly happening between central portrait and attending paintings. With the feminine portrait of Lemonnier, correspondences instead happen across the painting – from quiet seascape to angry seascape and from smaller male portrait to smaller female portrait. All three of the large portraits occupy the centre of their grouping, but while the two male portraits have connections going back and forth in a radiating pattern, the female portrait occupies a centre of polarities crossing over and through her. The representation of Lemonnier exists somewhere on the diameters of a ring of paintings and connected associations; Brun and Manet are at the controlling hub of several radii.

As discussed, the three characters focalize their respective sets in various ways, acting like main protagonists in a play or a novel. Yet a second order of focalization rests with the originator of the exhibition. Here we will have to make a further analytical detachment: It would probably be too simplistic to search for any one person at this origin, instead it is perhaps more fruitful to identify the position as second-tier-focalizer as belonging to middle class norms in a broader sense. From this perspective, the whole of the exhibition tells a story in the words of paintings and interiors; a story focalized in the cadence and rhythm of the bourgeois beliefs already framed on arrival at Ordrupgaard.

The visit to the first hall and the general experience of Ordrupgaard's surroundings celebrate the joys of private ownership. The large hall sees us deeply invested in character. But what does that entail exactly?

Perhaps overstretching the parallels to literature, Wilhelm Hansen could also be seen as the more or less direct first-person narrator of the exhibition; a stand-in, or a support, for that other focalizer, the master discourse of the bourgeoisie. But the analogy does not stop here. As several art historians have emphasized, the historical development of the modern novel as character study is important to the history of the visual arts of the nineteenth century with its associated valuation of both motives and artistic 'temperament' (Nochlin 1971, Green 1987, Clark 1989, Jensen 1994, p. 40). As the *romans* of Honoré de Balzac (1799–1850) and Gustave Flaubert (1821–1880) firmly focus on the individual, so the same obsession with individuality and character is found in the thematic sets on the walls of the French gallery at Ordrupgaard. This leads to a strange glide from the judgment of artistic temperament to the evaluation of portraits. Even when caught up in stereotypical gender roles, the idea of the primacy of personality persists. Ultimately, as the first mention of

Monsieur Brun made clear, both this painting and the totality of the exhibition are parading as something more – as a character study of the collector himself. The largest and most central canvas in the middle hall attracts the most attention, a point acknowledged by contemporary commentators (Gold 1920), and it is all too tempting to see the painting as a kind of avatar created by the hand and temperament of what was clearly the most important artist in the exhibition and its arrangement (cf. Fåhraeus 1918). In the linking of portrait and collection both intertwine and become hard to separate. The owner ‘is’ the stand-in portrait (cf. Higonnet 2009, pp. 126–127, cf. Baudrillard 2005, pp. 97, 114), as he ‘is’ the collection: ‘[...] a discourse whose signifiers he controls and whose referent *par excellence* is himself,’ (Baudrillard 2005, p. 114). In this, Wilhelm Hansen could be seen as both his own author and biographer, using objects to write a narrative ordered in space.

The 1919 experience of the approach to Ordrupgaard and the two first halls strongly accentuates the feel of a home, a residence for specific persons. No visitor would arrive without knowing about Wilhelm Hansen and possibly his wife and child. As there is no portrait of them on display, we have to look for other signs as to who they are. Walking the halls of the exhibition is like exploring the concept of individual and character on at least three levels: In the paintings that mostly show members of a French bourgeoisie of decades past; in gathering all the clues about the person of the collector and family; and in us visitors as we are tasked with making sense of it all. The two first instances of character study are here offered up as potential paths into the third study – finding *our own* identity. This last exploration of character might possibly happen in a number of ways: As plain identification with the portraits on display, for example, or perhaps in a more infantile ‘mirroring’ of the wealthy, potent and somewhat absent collector (cf. Lacan 2006). But

perhaps the most significant and effective is also the most physical. For in the continuous and pleasurable play back-and-forth of ‘myopic’, ‘proper’ and ‘overly distant’ positions in front of the paintings (Elkins 1999, pp. 16–17), and in all the walking and moving about, there is a strong underscoring of individual, mobile mastery. This relative isolation and compartmentalization of the viewer has clear affinities to a much later, ‘high modern’ exhibition arrangement typified by Brian O’Doherty as one privileging a free-flowing eye in continuous space (1999, pp. 15–16). Though with the one important distinction that Hansen’s gallery employs a deliberately strong emphasis on the architectural frame of the exhibition space itself (Whitehead 2012, pp. 91–92): In these cosy, intimate rooms, we are invited to let down our guard and to feel ‘at home’ while exploring ourselves as discerning individuals; consumers of a bourgeois modernism.



25. Edouard Manet: Basket of Pears. 1882. Oil on canvas. 35 x 41 cm. Ordrupgaard. This was possibly Wilhelm Hansen’s favourite artwork

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### 3. The library

The last room of the tour also feels the most compact [figs. 26, 27]. In place of wainscoting and panels, low book-cases with a dark, reddish glow line the walls, their shiny varnish reflecting the daylight from the northeast facing windows. A square, ornate and equally shiny table with four heavy chairs stand on a large oriental rug in the centre of the room. Pausing in the doorway, looking straight ahead and over the table-top, our eyes meet the painted eyes of a middle-aged man in a bowler hat [fig. 28]. He looks back at us, and, by implication, looks back at the impressionists we have just left, then further back all the way to the room of the early modern painters. This is Paul Cézanne (1839–1906), whose small self-portrait is hung just above a seating platform, a sort of sofa, which is integrated into the row of ornate book-cases. Actually resting there would be a little uncomfortable, as it could easily lead to a too close confrontation with the painter who seems to lay claim to this, the final part of the exhibition.

Instead we move around the room, which in shape seems almost identical to the first of the three, if just a little shorter. And the furniture by artist Johan Rohde (1856–1935) really feels massively there. The paintings, mainly by Paul Gauguin (1848–1903) and Cézanne are hung above the ledge created by the closed book cases, displaying a whirl of colour fields ranging from faint, earthen tones to intense, solid hues. At all times we are confronted with the bodily presence, not always seen, but easily felt, of the volumes of Hansen's library and their glazed, boxy containers. They float at the periphery of our vision as we take in the paintings, and they constrain the room, tightening the feel of the space. Only the central area of the southeast wall with the sofa platform bears a resemblance to the ordered sets of the two previous rooms. In a practical sense, it is also the only wall that it is possible to view at a dis-



26. Top: Young Knud Wilhelm Hansen admires Gauguin's *Tahitian Women Under the Palm Trees* from 1891 (private possession) in the gallery's library in 1918

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tance. On it, the portraits of a young woman by Gauguin and a young man by Cézanne frame the smaller self-portrait, creating a duality of male-female as seen several times in the other two rooms. Then, above the smallish, dispassionately observant portrait, a much larger Cézanne landscape hovers, as

if rising from the head and mind of the genius painter.

With this, the library with its more recent painting almost feels like a journey coming to an end. Going through the three rooms of different art and different interiors has meant an experience of subtle yet important shifts brought on by changes in lighting and spatial distribution – as well as in the actual artworks and their arrangement. And the theme of movement and travel can be seen to project itself backwards. At first, all the way back to the beginning of the journey up north: The heavily built-up city space giving way to the space of wider, more



28. Paul Cézanne: Self-Portrait with Bowler Hat. C. 1883–87. Oil on canvas. 44.5 x 35.5 cm. New Carlsberg Glyptotek. Part of the Ordrupgaard Collection until 1923

open roads bordered by fewer and smaller buildings, and from there the gradual beginning of the open forest. The sudden entanglement of the peculiar sounds and smells of the park-like forest of large trees leading up to the mansion, follows. Finally, the gallery affords movement through yet another kind of space – private and intimate – which on a smaller scale duplicates the play of intensities first felt during the journey from city to suburb. Not to be understood as a simple going from closed to open environments and then

back to closed, but as a feeling of successive stations – of meaningful onward movement. This is a kind of experiencing which is mostly devoid of textual information, though not in the least of meaning. It is something, which happens on the level of the phenomenal, in the way that visual and other senses are met and engaged in space upon space.

In addition, and now wearing the guise of a person well-versed in the art criticism of the day (of c. 1919), the hanging of the exhibition rooms also underscores a theme of progression: The first room is dedicated to French painting from the first part of the nineteenth century, especially romantic and Barbizon-painters; the central hall is next, and is dedicated to the largest sub-set of art by Manet and the impressionists of the second half of the century; while works by Cézanne and Gauguin, which are already now seen as the heirs to impressionism, conclude the third room. As an idea, the theme of progression through the exhibition halls was certainly not lost on contemporary critics who referred to it as something more or less self-evident (cf. Oppermann 1918a, 1918b, J.P. 1918, Millech 1919, Hedemann-Gade 1921, Dumonthier 1922), thereby echoing an evolutionary view that was always present in the discipline of art history as it developed in close connection with the museum institution (Whitehead 2012, p. 75).

As the last room doubles as library with dark, solid furniture in a contemporary, art nouveau/modernist style this movement through space-upon-space could also be seen, metaphorically, as a movement in hypostases ultimately culminating in the most densely filled, most private part of the museum where thoughts and furniture seem equally substantial: a ‘site for recollection’ (Ge: ‘Erinnerungsstätte’) as one contemporary German critic writes (Gold 1920), though the recollection could equally come from us, the visitors, or from Cézanne, who looks back on the rest of the small museum – and tradition by

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implication. Perhaps even, obliquely, in reference to the hugely influential teleology of aesthetics by the German philosopher Hegel, where art gradually becomes more and more reflective of and on itself (Podro 1982, Wyss 1999): The private museum echoing the progress of art and World Spirit.

So, in addition to previously established themes of property and character we have the concept of space. Or rather, we have several spatialities both physical and mental that converge in meaningful ways for the attentive, average visitor to Ordrupgaard and its gallery around 1919 (as well as today). That much is abundantly clear. With this observation, as we are now leaving the somewhat naïve exercise of ‘what could reasonably be thought’ by a person contemporary to 1919, it is fair to ask: What is the wider significance of moving between all of these spaces?

An approach to an answer might be gleaned from a range of central studies on the history of museums of art published in the decades around the year 2000. In all of these, crucial connections are identified between the space of the museum and the formulation of a bourgeois subject, identity politics and modernity (e.g. Hooper-Greenhill 1992, Bennett 1995, Maleuvre 1999, Preziosi 2003). Spatiality itself is seen as both the site for the regulation and transformation of individuals and for the fostering of certain ideas of community. In her book, *Civilizing Rituals: Inside Public Art Museums* from 1995, Carol Duncan proposes to look at the western art museum as a ritual space for the inculcation of citizenship. By focusing on liminality – a concept borrowed from the anthropologist Victor Turner that describes the intermediate zone of religious experience – Duncan categorizes art museums as giving templates or scripts for a kind of behaviour that lies outside everyday life (1995, pp. 11–12). And following this, one could argue that Wilhelm Hansen’s Ordrupgaard and collection, while seemingly supplying a critique of the public art museum by

showing more radical art and by substituting a more intimate, more personal experience, in the end reinforces the very idea of the museum: We go there on a pilgrimage of stations. From the entry hall, where we prepare and declare ourselves by signing in, to the first room of past art, through the middle hall of present art, and ending in the third room of future art. A future which is laid out through paintings by Cézanne and Gauguin; and possibly Vincent van Gogh (1853–1890) and Henri Matisse (1869–1954).<sup>9</sup> Hansen’s gallery appears like a rather accurate spatial prediction of later canonical art history surveys of French/international painting in the nineteenth century. Just like the much larger, official museums with their imposing façades, grand entrance halls, monumental stairs, oversize corridors, central halls and smaller, chapel-like niches, we move through art history as a progression of zones created to set the right mood while simultaneously moulding us as people. From this angle, the viewing of the paintings by Manet, Monet, Sisley, Gauguin and Cézanne more or less seems like the way one gives reverence to icons. It is a kind of reverence that, in its participatory quality, produces the very thing it names and celebrates (Austin 1975).

A succession of physical spaces at Ordrupgaard experienced by moving from the outside to the inside of the gallery and around the gallery engages a conceptual or ritual space of participation as defined by Duncan. This liminal and participatory spatiality overlaps with the idea of art appreciation and art history itself, but at least two further spatial registers can be identified as complementary to the participants’ concrete and ritualized movements: On one side there are (1) the spaces evoked by the art on display, on the other side (2) the collection as a whole caught between spheres of public and private.

<sup>9</sup> A painting by van Gogh, *Portrait of Julien Tanguy*, 1887, was bought by Hansen in early 1919 (WH to AG 1919/4/20 NA). A work by Matisse, *Flowers and Fruits*, 1909, was bought in 1922 at the latest, but we do not know where, or whether, they were displayed. Today the van Gogh painting is in the New Carlsberg Glyptotek.

First, regarding the art on display, the art historian Griselda Pollock's (2003) seminal study of 'Modernity and the spaces of femininity' supplies a useful approach. Especially to the paintings of the large hall, but by further implication also to the whole of the collection. In this text, she places emphasis on how the physical and social spaces demarcated for members of the middle class closely adhere to the motivic spaces in French impressionist paintings. To a large degree, these motifs are intimations of the haunts of their original public, a city-dwelling bourgeoisie, in both a sociological and concrete sense. That is – pictures free of anecdote and starved of epic qualities, which at the same time eschew the social polemics of realism and the typical 'unreality' of history painting, and instead deal with the matter-of-fact spheres of private or public life of a class in society. In celebrating this conflict free, no-nonsense, often comfortable universe, they coincide remarkably well with the ideals projected through architecture, interiors and gardens at Ordrupgaard c. 1919. The central hall of the exhibition which contains the largest, most brilliant selection of artworks from the collection naturally takes the lead and colours the meaning of the display in the two smaller rooms. An essential component of the ritual space of the Hansens' gallery (cf. Duncan 1995) is therefore supplied by the various real and conceptual spatialities expressed in paintings of nature and gardens, tourist spots, modern cityscapes and suburban vistas. These formulate and perpetuate both the detached gaze of the city-walker in public, the flâneur (Pollock 2003, p. 94), and the more intimate space of the private citizen's family life through choice of motifs, cropping of scenes and placement of viewpoints.

Extrapolating from Pollock, it is apparent that the motivic world of impressionism – idealized, gendered and ideological as it is – supplies ready identities for its viewers to consume and emulate. It is no particular stretch of

the imagination to see the same thing happening at Ordrupgaard, where as previously established, it is implicitly understood that the pleasures of participating are based on a social order of those middle class ideals of ownership and individual character.

Second, the very distinction between public and private – as with the concepts of bourgeois and aristocratic previously explored – similarly plays a defining function. Understood as spatial concepts, public and private have great signifying power even though often deployed ambiguously: The collection is private, yet open to the public. While the gallery wing is open to the public, the rest of the house is private. The home and the largely absent Hansen family seem definitely private, yet the public is invited inside both the villa and its daily life through their imagination aided by several features in the press. And when walking the gallery, the tension inherent in the feel of private home made public contributes decisively to this experience. The philosopher Jürgen Habermas (1991) has shown how separations into public and private are an important part of bourgeois ideology, and modernity as a whole by extension (pp. 27ff). Seen as spatialities, public and private demarcate areas of different activities in modern society at large, even entering the home where zones are demarcated as more or less open to outsiders (see chapter III). As the historical promise of a free public sphere of open debate was betrayed through complex developments in the nineteenth century (Habermas 1991, p. 140ff), the basic distinction of public-private remained in force. Taking a darker turn from here, modernity itself might be characterized as a '[...] sharpening polarization of social life between an increasingly impersonal "public" realm (of the market, the modern state, and bureaucratic organization) and a "private" realm of increasingly intense intimacy and emotionality (the modern family, romantic love, and so forth)' (Weintraub 1997, cf. Perrot 1990). In

this regard, Ordrupgaard could also be seen as recognition of this division between public and private and therefore as an attempt at bridging the gap.

The intensely private setting of villa and gallery could therefore be characterized as an alternative way of engaging with the public sphere than through the rational discourse initially held out as promise but latterly lost. The homely setting of Hansen's gallery, associated as it is with deeply felt emotions, functions as *a claim to sincerity*. Its stories of pleasures in property and character are underpinned by an intensely personal appeal that is built upon the skilfully exploited distinction between public life and private existence. This intimacy and appeal, though, is not quite the same as Habermas' ideals of a culture of debate between equals since neither Hansen nor family appear as real partners in discussion. Instead of a primarily verbal or textual exchange it supplies a sensual, embodied, spatial discourse, which differs substantially from the gentlemanly 'debating club', although it is not monologic either, since it clearly demands participation. Ordrupgaard is a place nominally open to all, free of charge, and is indeed democratic in this sense, but in its spectacular character it transcends the true reciprocity of private middle class sociality and approaches the role of an institution like so many other institutions in the modern state.



29. The gate opening up to Vilvordevej outside Ordrupgaard. The house of the head gardener is on the right

#### 4. Leaving Ordrupgaard

At some point we must leave again – going from stuffy library through airy great hall and back to the first room, the sound of our brisk footsteps alternatingly louder and softer as we walk on rugs or bare flooring. From the surprisingly dark entrance where we signed the ledger we are led back into the yard in front of the mansion. Gravel crunching as we walk, the sound of birdsong surrounds us and the wind might have risen as leaves rustle. Going towards the gate and passing underneath the canopy of the large trees there is a pronounced sensation of being in another kind of room than inside the gallery. Perhaps due to sharpened senses, the park seems less statically visual and more animated by sounds and smells. Possibly we are now headed for one of several inns nearby for a late lunch, but before leaving we take a few

last glimpses back to where we have spent an enjoyable hour or two. Fading away through the foliage, the whitish mansion disappears back into a sort of dreamland.

As the mansion melts back into its cloak of trees, our imagined visit to an Ordrupgaard of 1919 has come to an end with the resurgence of a final, poignant theme – that of the place of nature.

Since the middle of the nineteenth century, the trees and surroundings of the Dyrehave, the former royal game park that provides the backdrop to Ordrupgaard has become increasingly synonymous with the idea of a Danish national landscape. Through the efforts of a number of painters and other visual artists, a specific iconography has been developed around beech and oak with the paradoxical result that one of the most artificial kinds of forests has become associated with nature itself through nationalist invention (Oelsner 2010). The royal game forest, heavily manipulated, controlled and tended, and now the place for picnics and Sunday outings, has therefore gone through the same co-optation as so many other features once belonging to the aristocracy. Ordrupgaard is in some regards the epitome of the definition of culture, and as it exists on the edge of the open forest – the most ‘natural’ nature – it expresses a variation on an old distinction between nature/culture.

From city centre to the northern suburbs, we experienced a gradual change in urban density and an increase in a number of conventional signifiers of nature until we came to the edge of the Dyrehave forest itself. The park-like atmosphere of the approach to Ordrupgaard with its tall trees continued and intensified this operation: The façade of the main building and the gallery appear in glimpses between the trees, and the same shimmering effect continues in the unusual wooden trellis covering the buildings as support for climbing vines and rose bushes. The outer walls themselves seem to serve as

a membrane, a conduit between nature and culture, and as we walk through the exhibition this interplay is echoed in the paintings themselves with their subjects of nature. Retrospectively, the entirety of the journey, *to* and *visit in* the gallery appear strongly framed by the deployment of various signifiers of nature and culture in dialectic mediation. Upon leaving the gallery again, it becomes clear how the collection of French painting, heavily skewed towards subjects of nature, has rearranged our way of looking at Ordrupgaard as a place.

Although both an ancient and contested dichotomy (Lévi-Strauss 1969), the nature/culture concept takes on a particular romantic significance in a bourgeois world-view. Looking more closely at the whole Ordrupgaard visit, it is obvious to see the analytical pertinence of ideas like this, just as with the aristocrat/bourgeois opposition, but also to adopt a more fluid approach than in a classical anthropological sense. Subsumed in a bourgeois ideology, it quickly becomes evident how Nature (as one of several pressing metaphors) and also nature (as so many real objects) are just floating signifiers with continuous shifts in status and function (Derrida 2001). Both romantic wooded park *and* formal rose gardens surround the mansion, for example, and in the halls pictures of dramatic seascapes mingle with cosy river views, as do ordered garden scenes with wild, mystical forests. Man’s shifting and contingent attitudes to the concept and its role as signifier becomes clear as nature is shown as opposed to, expressive of or even embodying the pinnacle of culture. Nature does not mean *anything* in itself, but it can be used to add seductive poignancy to *any* thing.

Nowhere else is the importance of nature clearer than in the approach to wood as material, and in its changes along a metonymical axis of substitution: At Ordrupgaard, wood can be found as massive tree trunks in the park, in the rough planks of sheds, as geometric espaliers on the façades of gallery and

mansion, as highly finished carpentry in the exhibition halls, and finally as a recurring motif in paintings. Jumping from state to state, wood is explicitly transfigured away from the just tangible and into a realm of shifting, contingent ideas of nature and culture. Wood serves as a framing device to direct and guide attention to other things (Entman 1993): Framing happens via the screen of trees in the park as well as in the gilded picture frames, lacquered floors and stained wainscoting. This fluid way in which wood serves as both conceptual and physical frame is one significant aspect of how the composite idea of nature functions in many different ways at Ordrupgaard. Nature works as an added emphasis to culture, or as material and vessel through which it manifests itself, rather than as a diametrically opposed value inside a fixed system.

Walking away, down a forest path while thinking about nature as a recurring reference in much of western art history it is time to reflect upon the experience of Ordrupgaard one last time.

In 1919 Ordrupgaard is a place caught firmly between private and public. It is a reimagining of an aristocratic life and a place of private leisure and measured public spectacle. It is an exponent of crucial twentieth century ideas: The essence of private ownership and the importance of individual character, both a part of a larger bourgeois myth. Taking the form not of a pamphlet or a manifest, it is instead a spatial concretisation of a set of values, and its effect hinges on experience and participation rather than words. In the sometimes almost ritual and procession-like qualities of a visit is a seductive and affective quality. It is a strongly theatrical place that demands the participation of embodied visitors.

In other, and more pointed words, one could see the Ordrupgaard experience as hard discourse wrapped in sensuous experience: a row of spaces

and a programme of ideology with a focus on private property and individual character through the deliberate staging of nature, sensuous materials and art on an intimate scale; all in order to create pleasant spaces for the enactment of a middle class identity. Imagining mansion, park and gardens along with the French gallery through the lens of a visit also has the obvious advantage of shifting analytical emphasis away from a singular and very often inscrutable authorial intention and toward the visitors's comprehension and experience (cf. Barthes 1977); positions that are arguably more directly related to the meaning generated and therefore much more open for debate, even when these visitors are only tentative constructions.

A founders' life and struggles can be fascinating stuff. How these connect to an art collection which survives in institutional form is harder to prove. Sometimes such attempts translate into cascades of facts that bear little relation to how a major collection might live and breathe in the eyes and minds of others. I refuse to believe that the most important history of a place such as Ordrupgaard happened *before* the doors opened. In the previous, my contribution to a dramatically different discussion has been to *experience* the place, buildings and collection of a collection irregardless of biographical details. By implication, this approach can enliven the study of museums founded on private collecting overall. Not just in order to make a change, but in order to reach a deeper reflection on art collections that turn into museums and how they *work*. For something to work, to provoke a reaction is – after all – the indisputable intention behind any institution.

## Chapter II: Why study Ordrupgaard? Aims and methods

Why write a long study interpreting the early shape and history of one small museum? Why study Ordrupgaard? And given a satisfying answer, how *do* we study Ordrupgaard? How should I?<sup>10</sup>

In the introduction, I reasoned that Ordrupgaard was an early, important and rich collection of modernist art, and that its unique presentation should matter to us today. In the following chapter I, the Ordrupgaard of the past was interpreted as a total experience. As we are going to find, the characteristics that defined this experience – nature, culture, class, individuality, the importance of home, art as expressive of values, the search for a new type of institution – also come into play when looking at contemporary private museums of modernist art: The Museum Folkwang, the Barnes Foundation, the Phillips Collection, the Kröller-Müller Museum, Waldemarsudde, Thielska Galleriet, The Courtauld Gallery and Sammlung Oskar Reinhart “Am Römerholz”. Studying Ordrupgaard also helps to develop understanding of these contemporaneous collections.

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<sup>10</sup> During the work on this dissertation, parts of chapter I and chapter II have been published in *Museum & Society*, vol. 12, no. 2, 2014, as ‘Embodied discourse in the bourgeois museum: Performative spaces at the Ordrupgaard collection’. This and the previous chapter present a reworking of the arguments and conclusions presented therein.

As Jeremy Braddock (2012) writes of the situation in the USA, and as Charlotte Klonk (2009) shows in her book on the western history of art gallery interiors and exhibitions, the early twentieth century history of museums and their approach to modernist art is far from straightforward. The canon of early, mostly French modernism and the consensus on how to present this – conceptually and in exhibition – was only gradually worked out. The Museum of Modern Art in New York, which played such a significant role, was only founded in 1929 and its international influence arguably came after WWII (Staniszewski 1998), its dominance even later. Before the ‘MoMA idiom’ took shape and before European public museums committed wholeheartedly to impressionism, post-impressionism and various national modernisms, a number of private collectors were making museum-grade collections. A handful of these collectors went on to make their own institutions as a challenge to established museums. Not only the art, but also its display and presentation were in opposition to the hulking museum temples of the nineteenth century.

There is considerably more variation and uncertainty to the early musealization of modernist art than ‘mainstream’, monotonous museum culture of today might indicate. Investigating the early, private museums of modernist art such as Ordrupgaard is indeed valuable in order to broaden the picture and challenge received wisdom. Acquaintance with a heterogeneous past also makes it possible to conceive of different futures. An anecdotal observation says that these developments have been underway for some time as more institutions seem to employ practices similar and related to those of private collection museums of modernist art of the early twentieth century. In other cases, inspiration has been there all along though it has been mostly obscured. The Louisiana Museum of Modern Art – the object of further exploration in chapter VIII – is a prominent example of one modernist museum taking

direct inspiration from another, earlier example: The integration of nature, art, intimacy and a domestic scale found with Ordrupgaard are prominent features of the younger institution founded in 1958.

My appeal is therefore not just to look back past the often spectacular museum of today, but to look even further back to before ‘the white cube’ of minimal museum interiors. We need to go back to a time before the canonization of early modernism as a small set of names and ‘isms’, before the intellectualization of art contemplation, before art discourse developed a general disdain for sensuous and embodied gallery space. Here is a place and a time where the singular narrative of early French and French-derived modernist art – and thus the belief in a specific beginning for all modern art – is still in development. The neutral museum halls with a minimum of ‘interference’ – from architectural context and interior, from other objects, from class and politics – is still far off. Here, at our almost mythic beginning we find approaches both similar and alien to how we today conceive of art, its publics and the things it can do. With Ordrupgaard and a handful of comparable private collections, that in various way engage a larger public, we find an alternative configuration of early modernist art and its presentation.

These are some of the reasons why it is pertinent to study Ordrupgaard as an exemplary case around which discussions of other private collections, sometimes in short measure, sometimes at length can develop. More reasons will follow throughout the chapters, and they point to why such a study has to be undertaken rather broadly, drawing upon various levels of empirical material and theoretical approaches.

The previous chapter discussed Ordrupgaard as it might reasonably be thought to have been experienced around the end of WWI. The present chapter asks further about how we and I can and should study Ordrupgaard, and it

takes on a more theorizing attitude and seeks to discuss what can be learned from such an analysis: what amounts to lessons of a more general character? And where are the challenges in such an undertaking? This, therefore, is also a section of both self-criticism and the development of theory in the face of that criticism; not that there was too little of that before, but because the business of informed analysis demands continued reflection in order to extract the more general from the more specific.

As such, the following falls into two parts: the first part develops the previous chapter's findings by discussing challenges of methodology and theory; the second part introduces performativity as a way to look at the way exhibitions work.

Right now, it is time for a discussion of interpretation.

## 1. Interpretation and the tensions of interpreting

So, what do we do; where do we start? First, a quote:

It has been argued that “museums were the archetypal institutional form of the modern period.” One gets the impression that these were extremely powerful instruments for the shaping of society, individual consciousness, and knowledge (Hill 2005, p. 1, quotes Hooper-Greenhill 2000).

This rather ironic statement comes at the beginning of a condensed and critical overview of the theoretical and methodological state of (predominantly Anglo-Saxon) historical museum studies from Kate Hill's *Culture and class in English public museums, 1850–1914* from 2005. Hill goes on to discuss the possibility that newer museum studies might lack the close reading of specific cases to secure their more universal and far reaching claims. Citing and referring to several prominent writers, she points to a perceived lack of close empirical studies to back up the theoretically advanced concerns that have occupied studies of museums for some time. From there, she identifies a perceived ‘tension’ between empirical and theoretical approaches to museum history, but expresses doubts whether this impression is really as well-founded when judging actual research. Almost all studies will have both empirical and theoretical components, and instead, ‘it may be the case that there are few studies which try to integrate a close, detailed study of a particular museum or set of museums with a sophisticated set of conceptual and theoretical tools, but that is not the same thing’ (Hill 2005, p. 3). A second, important tension is between materialist and discursive interpretations, where museums are seen as either products of pre-existing economic and social formations, or instead as producers involved in forging the same distinctions and formations that make up modern society. Again, Hill advocates for the validity of both

approaches, material and symbolic, and to let them ‘feed into each other’ in study (Hill 2005, p. 1).

These two overall tensions identified by Hill – between investigations oriented to one of two poles of empirical/discourse and material/symbolic – are directly relevant to the subject of Ordrupgaard, as they arguably are to all historical museum studies: are some of the claims about Wilhelm Hansen’s private museum too general; perhaps too ‘theoretical’? What is the role of empirical evidence in relation to interpretation; and what is indeed the relevance of close and detailed examination of single museums? Is there a point where the gathering of empirical data becomes meaningless or obstructive? And further, should Ordrupgaard be seen as product or producer? Does the collection mirror capitalist society as a product of its context, or is it indeed a manufacturer of specific social reality/realities itself? Is the gallery an expression of individual will, rooted in personal biography, or is it the random expression of societal forces? How do we tackle these rather fundamental questions of approach in a sound and responsible manner?

As questions meant to spotlight fundamental assumptions and to apply transparency to a process of enquiry, these are of course rhetorically posed and rather programmatic. Most of this study is itself an attempt at posing and answering questions in a balanced way, but the case itself delimits some of the possible approaches. I generally agree with Hill’s view of how a study should strive to reveal contingencies and complexity in its subjects (Hill 2005, p. 15). As different cases require different measures, one of the concrete challenges of studying private museums lies with a lack of historical transparency. Decision processes have not been open and have seldom been documented, contemporary public debate has been limited, if happening at all, while minutes have not been taken, separate budgets or plans have not been drawn up, and rele-

vant material has not been archived; or it has even been wilfully destroyed.<sup>11</sup> Ordrupgaard as a private institution from its inauguration in 1918, through its Sleeping Beauty-phase from 1923 up to its public donation in 1951 and transformation into a state gallery in 1953 is one such case where tensions and contingencies are hard to find in the sparse and quite possibly edited archival material. Instead, empirical data in the shape of letters and ledgers has to be supplemented by various interpretative approaches to a broad range of materials and impressions. This prompts an even closer consideration of theory since the basis for an expanded interpretation itself now has to be thoroughly considered.

Before we get to the status of interpretation, it will be necessary to look at previous approaches which are based almost solely on traditional approaches to archival material. There are basically three essays that interpret the story of Ordrupgaard in detail – Swane (1954), Rostrup (1981) and Asmussen (1993) – and they are all remarkably similar in content. The previously mentioned fourth text on Ordrupgaard by Knud W. Jensen (1996) draws heavily from these, while a fifth text, Fonsmark (2011b), comes at the beginning of the collection’s catalogue raisonné and therefore serves mainly as a contextual introduction. In the chronology of reception, it is Leo Swane’s (1887–1968) essay which provides the blueprint for the narrative of the museum which is later found in many quite similar variants (cf. Wivel 1993, Fonsmark 2002, Hvidt 2005). Haavard Rostrup’s (1907–1986) longer essay fleshes out the narrative as a tale centred on the person and personality of the male collector. It is obvious that the limited amount of traditional historical material, most of which is family letters, combined with a personal knowledge of Wilhelm

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11 It seems that parts of the correspondence between Wilhelm and Henny Hansen has been edited out of the archive at Ordrupgaard; quite possibly by Henny herself. Most business documents and correspondence about art probably went through Wilhelm’s office at Hafnia. Today we must presume it has been lost.

Hansen and experience of writing artist's monographs led first Swane then Rostrup to conceive a primarily straightforward chronicle and biography of Wilhelm Hansen. Especially Rostrup's text establishes dates and facts, and it searches for and guesses at the intentions of the museum founder. Asmussen's essay traces the fate of Wilhelm Hansen's lost artworks and their path to the collections of New Carlsberg Glyptotek, Oskar Reinhart (1885–1965), Matsukata Kojiru (1865–1950) and Albert C. Barnes while essentially restating the biographical perspective defined by the previous authors. Ordrupgaard as a part of history, society or any kind of larger context is only suggested in these essays, and no analysis of the actual functions and uses of the gallery and the art collection is posed, by, for example, looking at photographs or contemporary descriptions. Regret at what was lost when more than half the French paintings were sold has a prominent place in these descriptions, and is consequently met in most other variants of the story of the museum.

Now, as should be rather clear by reading the previous chapter, Ordrupgaard can easily be set in relation to society and societal issues. And this exercise should achieve at least three programmatically important things: it explains and situates Ordrupgaard better and on many more registers than previous biographical and narrowly archival efforts; it highlights the importance of the case in relation to a wider context of both museums, discourse and society; and it develops a range of pertinent analytical tools for the study of collection museums and exhibitions in general.

## 2. Framing and the spectators

At least two groups of 'facts' – two 'archives' if one will – have been little used in previous interpretations of the historical Ordrupgaard: contemporary press mentions, articles and photographs on one side, and on the other side the actual buildings and their surroundings as they can still be experienced. Starting to use these archives means changing the traditional perspective 180 degrees to focus on the act of reception; what in classical media theory would mean to privilege the receiver instead of the sender. To prevent 'the receiver' from becoming simply a new type of reverse author, it is necessary to acknowledge the contributions of the third part of classical communication theories – the medium. The medium is itself a contributor; it is material and it is sensual (Williams 1977, pp. 158–164). In the present circumstances, it also means to look holistically at Ordrupgaard as a total medium, a unit where 'content' and 'form' are indissoluble; which is an approach to museums strongly argued for by cultural historian Michelle Henning (2006, pp. 71–74). But is it really this simple? Is it this unproblematic to connect present experiences with old press clippings and then – voila – you have insight into past realities?

Now, I want to elaborate a bit on the methodological issue of imaginative recreation which is central throughout this text. When evoking a visit to Ordrupgaard in 1919, I construct and inhabit a sort of spectator-character, 'the viewer'. This position can be broken down into three distinct approaches that, nevertheless, are irrevocably entangled in analysis: what can be called issues of the *empirical* and the *ideal spectator* (Bal, Bryson 1991, p. 185), which inform my own, phenomenological *first-person perspective* (Gallagher, Zahavi 2008, pp. 21–28).

There are several opportunities and challenges inherent in using these approaches. In looking for empirical, historical spectatorship, close reading



30. 'From Ordrupgaard's paintings collection which opened yesterday': Front page of *Politiken* on 15 September 1918. Other news items follow the offensives on the Western Front

of accounts from historical newspapers and magazines can reveal what was deemed important and significant in the past, sometimes as a contrasting perspective on today. Some scepticism is in order, since these accounts do come from journalists who are not neutral agents but biased towards particular journalistic idioms. It is, for example, relatively safe to assume that they write their articles within specific styles recognizable to the intended audience of their newspapers. When a journalist from conservative newspaper *Berlingske Tidende* emphasizes the rich and famous visitors in his descriptive walkthrough of the gallery on opening day (*Berlingske Tidende* 1918), he/she applies a style associated with tales from 'high society'. When a journalist from the social-democrat *Social-Demokraten* situates the collection in a class perspective before going straight into an evaluative appreciation of the art (J.P. 1918), this is also both a stylistic choice and an indication of an appeal to a different kind of reader; one who might want to fashion her/himself as a politically inflected connoisseur. Either way, the journalists are framing their experiences within a medium bound by rules and tradition, and this happens retrospectively. Having access to articles from several newspapers of different political leanings and to features from both scholarly journals and life style magazines greatly

nuances the impression and puts a check on the overly tendentious, but we will never get an image in 1:1 magnification of how actual people experienced Ordrupgaard. There are too many 'silences', too many groups and individuals whose experiences are not to be found in any textual record. These missing voices are important to acknowledge when dealing with historical spectatorship (cf. Bal, Bryson 1991, pp. 186–187), and for tracing 'what might' have been experienced. Especially since their silencing itself is part of a greater tendency of museum institutions to speak a language of relative power and exclusion (Hooper-Greenhill 1992, Bennett 1995)

Alongside empirical study, a focus on reception will most often carve out some sort of 'ideal' spectator. This spectator is a kind of abstract that provides a virtual embodiment of a claim that there are ways to see, smell, hear, feel and think about for example Ordrupgaard. The sensorial experiences of this idealized spectator reveal a kind of logic, coherence and necessity: a pattern of how meaning is made when visiting Ordrupgaard that was – and in some details still is – to some extent shared by a larger group. The ideal spectator is no stranger to art history, where paintings and other artworks are often described as doing things to their audience and demanding certain relations or positions before them on the basis of a compositional and structural analysis (Kemp 1998). I have for example argued that Ordrupgaard evokes a tension between bourgeois and aristocratic values, and I have 'produced' this reaction by placing my ideal spectator in a historical context. Degrees of ideal spectatorship are more or less indispensable to any kind of reception study, and in art history it is an absolutely central position in everything from iconology to performative analysis. Since I cannot possibly unlearn or disregard my personal competences or insights as an art historian and professional museologist, and it is equally impossible for me to become aware of all of my idiosyncrasies,

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the function of ideal spectatorship duplicates some of the challenges inherent in dealing with empirical spectatorship.

The third approach to imaginative, re-creation in analysis – the interpreter’s own first-person perspective – has always to some degree been an underlying premise in art and museum studies. Fully employed as an interpretive strategy, it is a relative newcomer, perhaps first emerging in sculpture study (Baxandall 1982), but promises to mitigate some of the problems in imaginative recreation precisely because it acknowledges that *all* interpretation is already mediated (Edwards, Hart 2010, p. 17). Open and reflexive use of the interpreter’s experience and perspective as a mediating strategy *in the text* is valuable, I think, since it allows for insights otherwise not reached and results in a more holistic analysis. Focus on the strongly sensuous effects of Ordrupgaard’s extended and immediate environment is one example of the benefits of a first-person perspective. My interest in embodied evaluation of the forms and aesthetics of interiors and environments springs directly from this use. There is an all too familiar absence of any primary documents on specific thoughts and general beliefs behind Ordrupgaard. Even if these had been abundantly available, they would be limited by what was deemed relevant to put to paper. In this light, the materiality of objects and physical space as unfolded *experience* opens our attention to a broader field of effects that go beyond conscious intentions on the part of collectors (and artists) (Edwards, Hart 2010, pp. 8–9).

This is not to say that identifying empirical and ideal spectator positions, and then combining these with a bit of first-person perspective solves all challenges. It is rather meant to point out that we can never fully presume to have discovered any complete truth about the past, but at the same time an aware synthesis of many approaches can still have value. Turning to semiotics,

this is also a question of how to approach framing. Cultural theorist Mieke Bal and art historian Norman Bryson sensibly suggest that we highlight how framing is active in analysis (Bal, Bryson 1991, p. 175). This line of argument needs a little development, since framing in this instance can be said to happen on at least two levels, which I here want to consider as first and second order frames: framing of the first order happens at the instant when I am writing about Ordrupgaard from my own first-person experience in combination with ideas of empirical and ideal spectatorship. This is where I propose to see museum and collection as a site for the manufacture and maintenance of discourse and as a product of material circumstances and contexts. As an analyst, I here choose one way to talk about Ordrupgaard instead of another, something for which can be argued more or less convincingly, and I do this by directing the search and ‘framing’ it.

The other framing is the one happening on a historical level, the rhetorics of which were the subject of much of chapter I. As argued here, Ordrupgaard is heavily invested in the propagation of bourgeois values, something which is framed through signifiers of pleasure, intimacy, comfort and wealth. As I write the present analysis, this second frame only becomes visible through the medium of the first. But the first frame is itself delimited by the second order framing in the past because, as a historical cut, this prior activity has defined what we have to work with today. Stated differently, one can only frame a modern, critical history of the Gallic Wars on the basis of the second order framing already put partially in place by Julius Caesar (and then supplemented by archaeology, for example). In the same way, my framing of Ordrupgaard is already to some extent delimited by the choice of framing set in progress 100 years ago; whether that was decided by Wilhelm Hansen himself or came from impersonal discourse. These conceptual frames extend

forever backwards, since others had already framed the material in Wilhelm Hansen's collection.

### 3. Interpretive communities; some hidden

With some difficulty, we can – and should – imagine the existence of alternative voices and different framings than those touched upon in chapter I. Since there is a rather uniform description of the pleasures of Ordrupgaard, its gallery and art collection seen in a broad spectrum of written sources – bourgeois conservative *Berlingske Tidende*, social progressive *Politiken*, social-democrat *Social-Demokraten*, national conservative *Nationaltidende* and local arts and culture weekly *København* are the most prominent – any dissenting views can only be described as oppositional, perhaps buried. At least being able to imagine that there were different historical opinions on Ordrupgaard affords the possibility of a check on what would otherwise appear as straightforward, incontestable interpretations.

One group of spectators that might approach Ordrupgaard differently would be the live-in domestic staff whose individual identities are erased today; the only traces left are their still remaining quarters in the attic and the north-east wing of the villa. Alternatively, we could ask about the significant lack of female writers and critics dealing with Ordrupgaard; here two short photo features in *Vore Damer* from 1921 hint at an equally idealized, yet different perspective on Ordrupgaard, where the mistress of the house is the true focal point in a narrative of nature, good taste and decoration [fig. 35] (*Vore Damer* 1921, Levy 1921); similar features on high society homes appeared frequently throughout the existence of the journal.

Someone from another class background might again experience Ordrupgaard in yet another fashion. This last group, which, on the basis of other studies (Bennett 1995, Hill 2005), could loosely be defined as 'working class', has always presented something of a quandary to the museum institution. At various times they have been seen as either the real target audience

31. Census from 1921 taken while Wilhelm and Henny were out of the country, one of the few traces of the other inhabitants of Ordrupgaard. From the top: Knud Wilhelm Hansen and Esther Broch, presumably a nanny. The domestic servants Aase Mikkelsen, Kirsten Birgitte Hauberg and Marie Charlotte Elise Holen. The chauffeur Johannes Smith. The gardener Jens Henning Andersen, his wife Ane Cecilie Andersen, their son Ib Henning Andersen and gardener trainee Knud Christen Hansen

of edifying museal instruction or a potential disturbance. The inherent bias in the archival mode means that we mostly know about these ‘others’ through the eyes of middle and upper class writers, who again and again focus on them primarily as a disruptive bodily presence (Leahy 2012, pp. 153ff).

Posed differently, I might say that various ‘interpretive communities’ of different voices and different framings exist in relation to Ordrupgaard, but that most are silent. Originally defined by Stanley Fish (1980) in relation to the reading and decoding of literature, the concept of an ‘interpretive community’ is equally useful when dealing with an institution and a collection of artworks, which are all closely bound to and defined by texts. While interpretive communities are composed of individuals, each with their personal and idiosyncratic approach, Fish has demonstrated how these individuals share a number of strategies of making sense of the world and its different ‘texts’, while continually aligning their viewpoints in relation to membership of the group. Far from imagining different views on Ordrupgaard as isolated and personal, we should be aware that ‘readers’ tend to congeal in groups, and that these groups are mostly oblivious to the fact that their own strategies of

making sense are not universally shared but represent a distinct perspective on the world (Fish 1980).

‘Here are pictures that *modern* people have to call the best ever painted. One surrenders at their mercy without reservation’, one reviewer enthuses when commenting on the artworks at Ordrupgaard (W. 1918b, emphasis mine). But who is it that surrenders? He continues: ‘Wilhelm Hansen and his wife are of the opinion that their mansion is too close to racing tracks and amusement park to ensure an adequately knowledgable public on Sundays’ (W. 1918b). Ordrupgaard was subsequently open on Sundays,<sup>12</sup> and the journalist might just have misunderstood a casual remark, but the reservations about a ‘certain public’ speak of a particular view towards who had the proper tools for interpreting art – and who definitely had not. The rowdy, possibly not so modern and not so middle-class crowds attending the nearby amusements were unimaginable at Ordrupgaard (cf. Bennett 1995, pp. 99–102). The reviewer from the socially progressive *Politiken* newspaper could probably rely on an interpretive community, who would tacitly connect ‘modern’ with ‘knowledgable’ and with the kind of competence in aesthetic appreciation needed to distinguish oneself from the masses and their entertainments.

.....  
12 Ordrupgaard was actually open on more Sundays and Mondays than any other days according to visitor ledgers.

#### 4. Stagings at Ordrupgaard

In summary, visiting the gallery at Ordrupgaard in 1919, as I have done, is an act of reconstruction starting with my own experiences in the present, and further based on both empirical accounts of real encounters in the past and on what can be deduced as the ideal reception staged and presupposed by the exhibition. If one sees the historical exhibition at Ordrupgaard as ‘a script’, it asks to be read in a certain way by its intended audience, an appeal which can still be traced and reconstructed today. There is a crucial, underlying phenomenological assumption in this analytical approach: namely that a present first-person perspective is comparable and relatable to experiences in the past. As mentioned, the suggested reception of Ordrupgaard is also in some ways an ideal reception. It mostly follows the obvious master voice of the exhibition itself; one that could be broadly labelled as the promotion of bourgeois values for those who are inclined to interpret this as such. Other, imaginable voices in opposition to this could be thought of, and should be considered for their analytical and political import. The unjust class system that allows one family to amass such wealth and distinction is ethically challenged, but has a tendency to get overlooked in most studies of collecting; as does the equally important relations of power to define and narrate the world.

In order to avoid according too much power to exhibitions, the fundamental precariousness of all kinds of museum narrative and display is worth stressing. Recent studies have shown that people of today have a tendency to form some of their conclusions beforehand (Falk 2009), something which can also be imagined for the public of the past: For a visiting member of the middle class, the French gallery might truly confirm notions of individualism, aesthetics and value through the appreciation of art; but for other interpretive communities, like a member of the staff, it could simply mean more cleaning, or be felt as

an oppressive display of a basic inequality of means and possibilities; while seen from the angle of a women’s life style magazine, ideas of how to gain agency by managing a large household might trump the connoisseur gaze.

Having discussed interpretation in the light of various possible visitors to Ordrupgaard, I now want to turn to the *second* part of this chapter and to the *basis* of experience; here follows a discussion which intends to *ground* the imagined spectator-character of chapter I in issues of learning and identity. A close consideration of meaning generated through experience seems overall to be lacking in several quarters of museum studies involved in historical analysis, even when great attention is otherwise devoted to museum discourse. Without this focus, the assessment of places such as Ordrupgaard risks looking like a passive reading of a text; the transfer of just a number of signs, symbols and narratives. But the private museum of the Hansen-family is also a place of active production, and this, I will argue, happens *exactly* through bodily enactment. In the following sections, I therefore explore a possible answer to the ‘how’ of Wilhelm Hansen’s Ordrupgaard by engaging with theories of first performativity, then collective memory. Naturally, this discussion is equally relevant to other collections of modernist art discussed throughout the text.

At first, it seems profitable to return to the idea of the museum as a ‘script’; today a rather uncontroversial way of looking at the way exhibitions frame and direct visitor’s engagement (cf. Duncan 1995, Noordegraaf 2013, Rung 2013). By following dramaturgical analysis, visitors to Ordrupgaard could be said to assume simultaneous roles of actor and audience, at the same time involved in and the target of a particular staging. The ethnologist Erving Goffman (1990) is responsible for introducing the idea of theatricality into the study of social life. By designating various areas of life as front stage and backstage, and by noting that face-to-face encounters are about producing optimal impressions,

he put focus on having and controlling settings that are suitable for dramatic performances and their preparation. Likening the act of identity building and maintenance to assuming masks in the theatre, Goffman emphasised the work with establishing ‘a face’, both for individuals and groups. From this

perspective, the whole of Ordrupgaard itself could be seen as a highly invested staging ground for the elaboration of ‘front’ – for its owners, its staff, the many invitees and for gallery visitors.

Following Goffman’s idea of regions that relate to different purposes and different sorts of staging, we might expand the scope of analysis a little and find significance in the layout of both home and gallery as a continuous setting. From a rhetori-

cal viewpoint, the flow of rooms displays an active compartmentalization in successive degrees of privacy: the front part of the property and the French gallery are the most public, while central rooms on the ground floor are

obviously meant as a reception area for larger groups of invited guests – in a straight line we see the hallway opening up onto the large garden room through double doors which further open up onto the broad terrace and the gardens through glazed doors. In contrast, the private quarters of bedrooms and dressing rooms on the first floor are guarded by several barriers the deeper one gets, and all these various divisions into servants’ quarters, the master and mistress’s quarters, the son’s quarters and the guest quarters can be seen as areas used at various times for performances or for ‘backstage’ preparation.

Looking at the small collection of contemporary photographs while reading about Ordrupgaard in the press – for example in reports of visits from Scandinavian royals [fig. 33] (Vore Damer 1922), and by just examining the interiors and the architectural layout, it is apparent

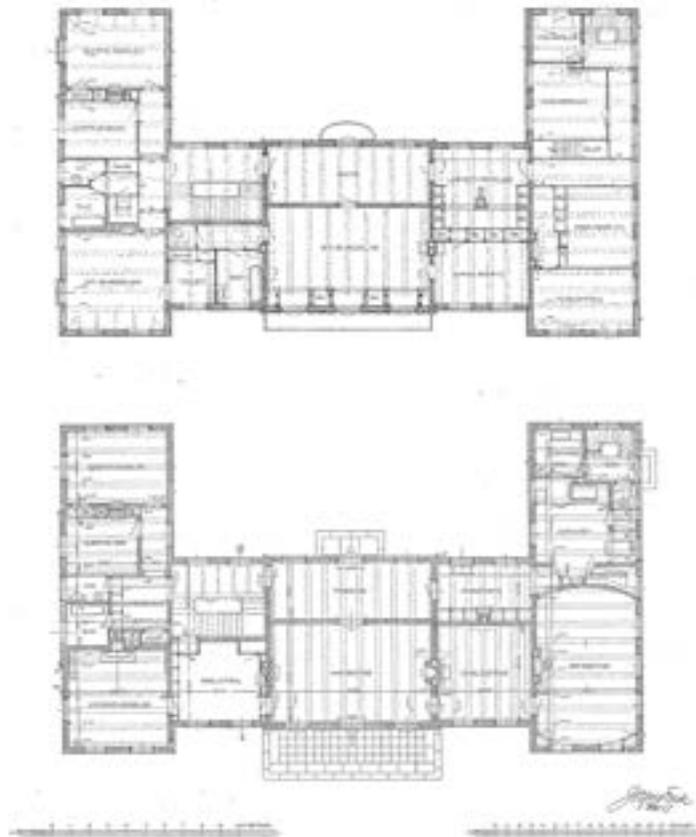
that gallery and mansion were created and used as tools for social performances. They were not just an incidental backdrop. In these documents, Ordrupgaard is highly mediated – it is the perfect scenery. And acknowledging the museum as a stage – or a frame – represents an important insight. Via Goffman’s ideas of how we use our surroundings for the presentation of selves – as both visitors to the French gallery and the Hansen-family and their guests would have



33. ‘A noble gathering at Ordrupgaard’, Vore Damer, 13 July 1922

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32. Plan of ground floor and first floor at Ordrupgaard

done – it is apparent that Ordrupgaard is more than a carrier of messages to be decoded. Rather, it is at one and the same time both a conglomeration of signs and a place for enactment of identity. And of course this goes for the other collections of modernist art discussed in the text.

Goffman's nascent theory of performativity has been used and developed in different ways since it was first published in 1959. Here, it serves as a way to approach the idea of the active production of identity and reality, but I want to avoid a too categorical understanding of any split between front- and backstage, since it has an unfortunate tendency to make it look like there is another reality behind the one being performed (Mol 2003, p. 33). It is the insight of newer performative or 'enacted' analysis that performances are not limited to just 'ordinary work situations' and 'the period in which the individual is in the immediate presence of the others' (Goffman 1990, p. 9). Performativity takes place continuously and is a crucial way in which reality itself is constituted (cf. Butler 1993, Mol 2003). From this perspective, museums and exhibitions – or perhaps the different areas of a mansion which serve equally as a home, a workplace, a showpiece and a retreat – are just some of a vast multitude of sites for the production of identities and realities.

## 5. Performative rituals in the museum

A range of engaging and influential studies agree that museums and exhibitions function to make societal discourse manifest. To this end, the movement of individuals is staged and object encounters are arranged in physical settings. As previously mentioned, Duncan (1995) sees this practice as specifically ritualized and aimed at personal transformation, while the museologist Eilean Hooper-Greenhill (1992, pp. 167–190) famously interprets the museum institution as an instrument of a modern disciplinary regime (cf. Foucault 1991). As a provisional, public institution, Ordrupgaard in 1919 can easily be seen as a space of both ritual and discipline aimed at a specific narrative of bourgeois life. But the introduced ideas of performance and enactment prompts a closer look at the *how* of exhibition discourse than is seen in the now classical histories – for in what way does an exhibition go from passive possibility to active expression? And what kind of role does the visitor actually play in its realization?

In the article 'Exhibition rhetorics: Material speech and utter sense' from 1992, Bruce W. Ferguson is one of the first to propose an analysis that focuses on the exhibition as a performative act in the tradition of the language theorist J.L. Austin (1996). From this, one can argue that any exhibition experience involves the active production of 'a reality': an assemblage of paintings in a few rooms is not a simple reflection of some prior 'truth' – whether this is the Ordrupgaard version of the history of French art or an idyllic imagining of Paris and environs – it is a world only realized through its own enactment. But a visit to any kind of museum does not just passively follow a script or mirror a discourse; the visitor is *there* and actively engages in a performative event that gives latent ideology the fullness of actual experience. Note, how the enthusiastic visitor reports written by critics going to Ordrupgaard in

the years 1918–1922 try to convey how the place ‘feels’; one journalist, for example, writes of the impressions received by experiencing park, mansion and art collection, but concludes: ‘This hasty attempt at a walkthrough cannot possibly convey the beauty which awaits visitors out there’ (l.w. 1918, cf. Dumonthier 1922, p. 343). When going to see Wilhelm Hansen’s gallery something occurs, a number of feelings and ideas are produced; the exhibition does more than reflect bourgeois modernity, which is then passively received. Through a real and concrete situating moment in time and space – an often pleasurable and sensuous experience – something takes place and becomes ‘true’ to the participants. By focusing on the active element of the museum visit, I am arguing for a focus on the way that audience and museum together produce meaning out of discourse. And a crucial point here is how this discourse is something that exists beyond and prior to subjectivity.

In Judith Butler’s work on gender she builds on a crucial insight – initially formulated by the French philosopher Jacques Derrida (Derrida 1988) – that the ground upon which identity is made possible lies with the iteration of norms, rules, codes (Butler 1993, pp. 12–13, 226–227). In Butler’s view, gendered identity is an on-going accomplishment, something continuously performed and achieved by the repetition of a set of acts. The shape of these acts is not something singularly willed by the individual, but should rather be seen as a kind of quotation of already existing possibilities. In order for someone to be inscribed with a gendered and sexual identity, their person has to be recognizable within parameters that are known to others and to themselves. ‘A fine man’ or ‘a genuine lady’ are performed, whether consciously or not, through gestures, dress, speech and social complexes that are recognizable as markers belonging or not belonging to this or that category. There are real and sometimes unpredictable dangers in being or not being recognizable as

‘someone’, since a successful performance requires competence and ability to assign meaning not only at the level of the individual, but equally so for the collective, thus introducing an element of instability. Signing the ledger at the entrance to Ordrupgaard – and thereby announcing/performing your heritage, gendered identity and other, subtle markers accorded to names – is just one of the more obvious of the performative acts available to and expected by visitors to the collection. Somehow not participating in this and other exhibition appropriate activities carries its own dangers of non-recognition.

Shifting the focus from sex and gender to identity overall, the same workings clearly apply in belonging to a certain class, having a position and distinguishing yourself; the battle for which has been defined and widely analysed through the sociology of power and culture of Pierre Bourdieu (Bourdieu 1993, Bourdieu 1999, cf. Lovell 2000). In achieving a modern middle class identity – incidentally a formation whose members are also anxious about the assignation of ‘appropriate’ gender – I propose that memory takes on a defining role. Comprehension in all its forms is predicated on the ability to recall, and in order for someone or something to be comprehensible, he/she/it has to fall within a scope of relations knowable and known. This of course leads to a social world defined by the relative persistence of norms and non-norms in repetition; change happens, but happens sporadically. Individuals have miniscule if any direct mastery over processes of identity and comprehension, as they are suspended within meaning-making structures that are defined in the collective. They can only try to ‘play along’. As recognition and the achievement of identity take place in sociality and within discourse, then memory itself is not just personal bits and pieces in an idiosyncratic matrix, but structured collectively. Or put in another way: The ability for identity defining acts to constitute a reality lies with the existence of a collective memory.

In *How Societies Remember* Paul Connerton makes a sociological analysis based on the theoretical concept of collective memory, which is highly relevant to the ongoing discussion. By drawing on the work of the sociologist Maurice Halbwachs (1877–1945), he argues that collective and individual memory is entwined, and that collective memory is both the prerequisite for and the result of performative acts. As he likens performativity to habit, Connerton shows how bodily acts preserve and perpetuate memory itself via repetition and rituals. In dialogue with Halbwachs, Connerton argues for the necessity of objects and physical space to complement and anchor memory since they lend a perceived permanence and stability (Connerton 1989, p. 37, cf. Pearce 2005, pp. 18–19). Embodiment is in Connerton's view linked to a kind of unconscious learning, and the movement of bodies through anchoring space therefore becomes one of society's most effective ways to build inter-subjective and collective knowledge. Some things cannot be transferred by the listening to myths alone, but has to happen as participatory ritual (Connerton 1989, pp. 54, 57). In this view, any exhibition might become a mnemonic instrument or a parade-ground, and so Ordrupgaard may be considered a place where artworks, furniture and concrete space lends credibility to ideas.

Reading Butler's definition of identity, performativity and repetition together with Connerton's ideas of performativity as connected to a bodily, collective memory allows a conceptualization of how a site like the Hansens' French gallery works. The exhibition visit is the kind of powerful secular ritual (cf. Duncan 1995) suitable to a modern world still familiar with the conduct of rituality but increasingly removed from traditional, participatory religion. Employing this rituality, the exhibition of French art enforces certain habits and memories through the repeated bodily investment of the visitors. To mention some of the most obvious: the scanning of wall-hung paintings through

certain movement patterns of back-and-forth, and the adoption of a casual, flâneur-like approach to the world as something to behold and consume; or relating to artworks as expressions of character and in need of quick (aesthetic) judgment: the self-portrait of Cézanne at Ordrupgaard 'grave' and 'serious', another of Courbet 'grandiose' and reminiscent of Tizian, while the landscapes by Sisley possess the painter's 'delightful subtlety' (W. 1918b, Berlingske Tidende 1918), remarks symptomatic of criticism of the day. And further: how to display the right ways of dress and comportment, as well as deploying correct and specific ways and subjects of conversation (Rogoff 1998, Leahy 2012, pp. 117–123). Underneath this we find an insistent appeal to a modern, middle class individuality of discrete, sensuous aesthetics carried forth by a perambulating gaze.

Let me re-state all this programmatically: As exhibition rhetoric (cf. Ferguson 1996), the total Ordrupgaard experience engages with a bourgeois mythology (cf. Barthes 2009), which is elaborated through narrative (cf. Bal 1996); the shape of which is closely allied to the idea of character. The successful performance happens when visitors assimilate themselves into this mythology by producing themselves as bourgeois individuals through physical, embodied investment.

Here, a multitude of conscious and unconscious acts depend on operative knowledge: from visiting within the opening hours, having the money to do so and knowing how to present yourself as a guest both in dress, manners and comportment to spending the right amount of time and talking in the right tone about suitable topics; not asking about the price of the paintings, for example, but duly appraising their individual merits. The quote-like and iterative nature of this achievement and its foundation on things already known – not just from the odd article in the newspaper but from being immersed in

society – is important in all spheres of life; but in a modern art gallery like Ordrupgaard it carries a special appeal: any relative ignorance of recent French art history is mitigated by the staging of middle class values well-known to the core audience. Alternatively, any individual's perceived deficiency in the manner of a middle class position would ideally be performatively remedied by a successful art-appreciating performance – merit-based admittance to its ranks still being one of the credos of the bourgeoisie. In this way, the Ordrupgaard experience, while pleasurable on many levels, is foremost a machine for the simultaneous acquisition of an expertise in art and a middle class identity.

Additionally, of course, it is a field for the promotion of the (official) collection owner, his views on art, his admirable individuality. Judging from the press reception, Wilhelm Hansen as dramatized person should always be seen as a prominent and sanctioning feature of the collection.

Summing up, using aspects of Butler's and Connerton's views on performativity provides a theoretically founded explanation that highlights how museum discourse is simultaneously *expressed* and *incorporated* by visitors through bodily participation in the exhibition ritual. Working with the visitors' embodiment, a vision of bourgeois modernity is acted out by integrating already known and valued elements. Highly desirable connoters of wealth, distinction and respectability serve as background for an intimate framing of the story of modernist art. Exhibition experience in this case also allows the repeated expression of feelings and tropes already known through a wider participation in polite society. And as visitors adhere to this ritual in the private museum, it unfolds on the level of the constitutive acts of identity itself – with habitual memory and with iteration.

## 6. Why do people visit Ordrupgaard? A summary of exhibition rhetorics

In this final section, I summarize and attempt to consolidate the perspectives on what happens when visiting Ordrupgaard by stating an otherwise implicit question: Why would anyone want to visit the collection?

This brief discussion also serves as preparation for the following chapters III, IV and V which broaden the discussion of display by looking more closely at other private collections of mostly modernist art comparable to Ordrupgaard. What are the particulars of their exhibition arrangements? Do they work and perform in the same way as Ordrupgaard? Are they also caught up in narratives of integrating the domestic, nature and middle class values with modernity? Are there other narratives present that contrast or differ from Ordrupgaard? Do they present some of the same challenges to analysis? These rather open questions allow me to identify a larger group of issues related to early art collections of modernist art with a self-defined institutional role – and to ask about the status of the early, private museum of modernist art overall.

But before getting ahead of myself, let us begin by acknowledging the scepticism of Kate Hill: The power of exhibitions is a contested thing, it is hard to prove – especially in a historical perspective – and very few people have been *forced* to view the world differently by visiting an art exhibition. In contemporary visitor studies, John Falk (2009) has intensively analysed the outcomes of museum visits based on large amounts of empirical data. One important insight of his studies, which I think can be safely applied to Ordrupgaard c. 1919 and to other publicly accessible art collections in the early decades of the twentieth century, is that visitors experience within a horizon of expectations that are already formed before their visit. Actually, the choice of where and what to visit is itself dictated by the visitor's sense of identity – their

interpretive community (Fish 1980) – and the same identity is used as a tool for making sense of exhibitions themselves (Falk 2009, p. 81). Afterwards, visitors best remember what conformed to their already formed notions of what the museum was going to be about (Falk 2009, p. 91–113). All these anticipations and expectations are shaped by many factors which can be difficult to untangle. Whereas Falk has a somewhat psychologizing approach with emphasis on the actions of individuals and their feeling of self, I have instead been arguing for exhibition visits as expressive of a wanting to be placed – and interpellated – within discourse.

So, why *should* someone want to visit Ordrupgaard? First of all, but also rather naïvely, it really is a very nice place. Secondly, I have posed that going to see Wilhelm and Henny Hansen's collection and experience their property in Ordrup is also a way to maintain an attractive identity, one here labelled as 'bourgeois'. A crucial idea of theories of performativity is that identity and place in the world are not acquired once and for all but are part of an ongoing process. Building identity is predicated on memory and embodiment so that immaterial discourse is given a physical foundation and a bodily reality. These benefits run the risk of being misunderstood as an entirely individual achievement, as they routinely are within day-to-day life. Any kind of performative achievement of identity actually happens in discourse, and this is a discourse which necessarily has to have been defined outside of the subject. If sociality itself is seen as a field of struggle for distinction, one always belongs to a position which lies in opposition to others (cf. Bourdieu 1999).

There are indispensable benefits to do with entering or remaining within a certain collective – an interpretive community – where the world seems mutually intelligible to its members. And above and beyond community, the identity as a cultured bourgeois carries additional and obvious advantag-

es: occupational, economic, social and political. At least to the readers of the major newspapers, whose critics all have remarkably similar takes on Ordrupgaard, deciding to visit would mean that one belongs to an interpretive community in which there is a pre-existing belief that seeing art exhibitions in your spare time carries particular value. This is not a foregone conclusion as the work week at the time amounts to maybe 57 hours spread over six days (Schmidt-Sørensen, Christiansen 2009).

An interesting paradox has to be broached here. From the perspective of a widespread way of thinking about the actions of subjects – what reductively might be named 'Kantian morals' (Kant 2011 [1785]) – the actual intention to visit a modern art show would be the most important part of the bid for membership in a bourgeois community. This is a view, which, in a strange way, seems empirically supported by Falk's studies where the outcome of museum visits appears directed by the underlying reasons *for the choice to visit in the first place*. From this perspective with its focus on intention, Ordrupgaard would be more significant as a somewhat abstract institution than as an actual and realized exhibition where something happens during a visit. The attention here paid to the real exhibition would not be nearly as important as a study of discourses on art, its institutions and values, for example.

From a performative viewpoint this is of course not an adequate analysis, since it only accounts for one half of the way museums, exhibitions and other institutions work. In the light of how I have discussed identity and memory as bound up with iteration, it is rather the primacy of conscious intention – though not 'intention' in a phenomenological sense – which melts away. Here, the actual carrying out of a visit is central, since its benefits have to do with open repetition – repetition of gestures, ways of comportment, presenting yourself, moving in space, conversing and the whole ritual of art appreci-

ation. The resulting group membership has been identified as the overlapping but not identical positions of the bourgeoisie and the interpretive community; what, with reference to Hill's tensions, might be termed an either materialist or symbolic approach. Either way, these positions need to be performed and to take hold in experience; they cannot be immaterially announced. Intention is not the deciding factor.

Historically, the period around WWI is one of social upheaval in Denmark as well as the rest of Europe. It is in no way a certainty that bourgeois values are set to triumph in the twentieth century via the gradual expansion of the middle class to larger and larger tracts of society. The industrial age arrives late in Denmark, compared to many of its European neighbours, but like its neighbours when the population begins to shift from the countryside to the cities, concerns arise regarding the assimilation of these members of the new working and middle classes into the existing social stratifications (Christiansen 2004, Sørensen 2014, pp. 288–319). The newcomers need to be taught to live 'correctly', and to support this process social commentators such as writer and journalist Emma Gad (1852–1921) come to their aid. Gad produces her immensely popular books on acquiring proper manners and the proper home where she codifies and teaches the unspoken rules of the urban bourgeoisie in a forthright and approachable manner – entry into polite society now becomes more a matter of the simple acquisition of competences (Gad 1903, Gad 1918b).

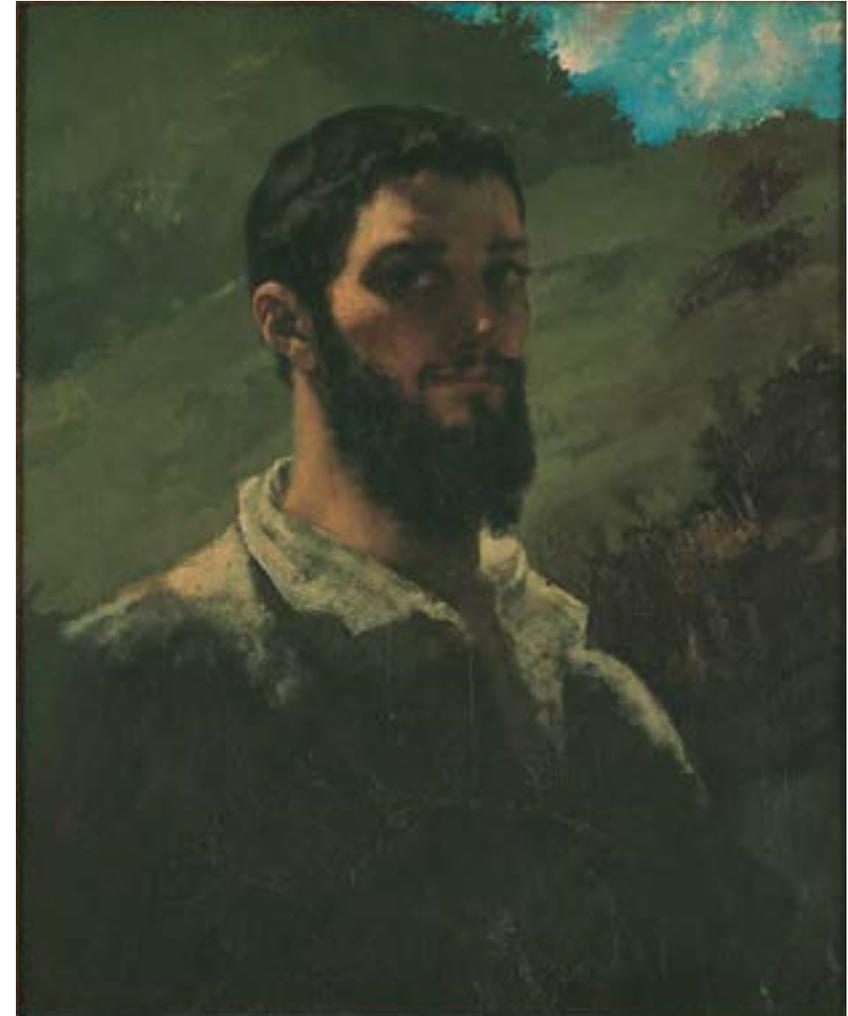
In the light of the historical situation, the group membership offered up at Ordrupgaard can be seen as a part of a gradual re-formulation of what it means to be bourgeois. The provisional institution is at one and the same time entrenching a set of values and making the same values teachable, and in the process contributing to the transformation of these values. If Hansen's

home and exhibition present both the active framing of art through ideology and ideology through art, then it also seems like a cautious encompassing of other frames of reference. Where we see an explicit appropriation of aristocratic positions, we also see an opening up to an – admittedly restrained – programme of egalitarianism and mass democracy. A timely promise, as the new constitution of 1915 has just extended the popular vote to women and servants, thereby dramatically altering the composition of voters and eligible representatives (Laneth 2015).

Over time, the framing practices that belong to interpretive communities need to be gradually reformed and updated. In technical terms, as an example of a process of so called 'frame alignment', Ordrupgaard could be said to participate in transforming an existing frame of reference to suit new realities and include new ideas. A traditionally *bourgeois* frame is aligned to modern aesthetic values and, at the same time, extended to people who might not have been welcomed before (Snow et al. 1986).

Based on my extended analysis it is my argument that Ordrupgaard offers something desirable – something which feels perhaps more modern, more relevant – in the form of experience and identity performance. In the coming chapters, it will be my task to show how similar projects can be observed with other private galleries of the early twentieth century. In these, I turn my attention to what can broadly be called 'the horizon' of Ordrupgaard, which covers both those collections in more or less direct contact to the Hansen-family, as well as those that are 'just' similar in aims and scope. All are trying to make institutions out of private collecting in settings different than traditional museums, and all are engaged in giving their audience new competences: these can be the tools to appreciate art or, more ambitiously, to navigate modern life – or both. Who that audience is and whether it is

conceived more or less exclusively varies, as do ideas about their specific needs. But, as I will argue, the private collection museum of modernist art is indeed meant to make a difference.



34. Gustave Courbet: Self-Portrait. C. 1850–1853. Oil on canvas. 71.5 x 59 cm. New Carlsberg Glyptotek. Part of the Ordrupgaard Collection until 1923

## Chapter III: Looking to Sweden

3.10.1917

Dear Mr Carl G. Laurin

First of all a heartfelt thank you to you and your kind wife for the hospitality shown to architect Tvede and me and because you gave me the opportunity to get to know such fine people; Milles not least,<sup>13</sup> made a strong impression. And thank you for all the trouble you went to in order for us to get the most out of our regrettably short visit. Not the least thanks to you, we brought home lovely memories [Da: 'Minder'], but also experiences that will hopefully be of value in the arrangement [Da: 'indretning'] of my gallery. Once again thank you. And you and your wife are very welcome in Copenhagen.

Your devoted Wilhelm Hansen (WH to CGL, 1917/10/3 SSA)

We can only make educated guesses as to the precise collections visited by Wilhelm Hansen in Stockholm in 1917, and the experiences that would help him furnish his own gallery. In Denmark, the Hansen-family has decided to add a gallery wing in the middle of building what was initially conceived of as a summer house, but has metamorphosed into an all-year dwelling (Tvede 1921). The collection of French art, which was started just the year before, is growing fast and needs a home. It is in the light of creating a new residence

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<sup>13</sup> Carl Milles (1875–1955), Swedish sculptor. Incidentally, the home and collection of Olga and Carl Milles is today a house museum/collection museum (founded 1936).

and art gallery that Wilhelm Hansen's excursion to Stockholm should be seen – an excursion which I am going to critically recreate in just a few pages.

Looking to Sweden first is a methodological choice. By 1900, collecting fine and applied arts is a massive pursuit in the Western world. Finding a way to structure a coherent and transparent narrative about this activity without losing sight of essentials is a major challenge. In this third and the following chapter IV, I therefore ask what art collecting as a practice looks like from the situated viewpoint of just *one* art collection at a specific time and a specific place: Ordrupgaard around WWI. Thus, one Danish art collection, albeit a *very* ambitious one, works as a metaphorical lens through which to spotlight the phenomenon of private collecting. Focusing like this, rather than taking a wider view of collecting in the Nordic countries, Europe and the USA, has the specific advantage of allowing more in-depth analysis. The analyses of collecting in this chapter and the following chapters IV and V will not produce a synecdoche of *all* collecting. But my hope is that – with this openly declared single point perspective – a few things will come more clearly into sight.

Previously, I have been speaking of frames. Choosing Ordrupgaard as a focus is also a way of framing this investigation. Another quite important frame, already discussed, is that of the private home. In the second half of the nineteenth century, the domestic has become a strong figure; by the early 1900s, positive ideas of domesticity and of home are entirely mediatized and appear as a legitimizing force in areas as diverse as advertising, morals, politics and law (Perrot 1990). Not just Ordrupgaard, but to my eyes a whole group of private collections open to the public are deliberately 'homely'. Those few that are explicitly divorced from the domestic frame are so by design, not coincidence. A.E. Gallatin's (1881–1952) *Museum of Living Art* at New York University (1927–1943) and Katherine Dreier's (1877–1952)

collection and the Société Anonyme spring to mind as examples of private collecting and intervention divorced from the home (Stavitsky 1994, Gross 2006), and several others exist. These collections are more contemporary and cutting-edge in their content, perhaps aligning with an anti-domestic current in the avant-garde (Reed 1996b). Meanwhile, the idea of the domestic is still *the* major theme of the provisional institution of modernist art of the first three decades of the twentieth century until overtaken by the avant-garde and MoMA idiom. The rest of this introduction, in preparation of our visit to some Swedish art collections, is therefore dedicated to the domestic frame.

Introducing an important anthology on the subject, anthropologist of the home Irene Cieraad (2006) voices a widespread opinion when she notes that the split between the public and private is fundamental to western culture and society, and the home seems firmly entrenched at one pole of this duality. The architectural historian Charles Rice (2007, p. 2–4) cautions that the complex equation between the private, the domestic and the interior is eminently historical; this compound only emerged in the nineteenth century as both an ideal and imperfect practice. It is at this point, the bourgeois definition of 'what a home means' becomes dominant (cf. Frykman, Löfgren 1987). As mentioned before, Roland Barthes describes myth as the denial of historical circumstance and the promotion of accidental values as eternal (Barthes 2009). The ideal of the home seems quintessentially mythic.

Again, in this broad, bourgeois tradition, the home is tied to values of domesticity, privacy and interiority. Regarding the last and more elusive of the concepts, we see the physical interior proliferate in the nineteenth century – ever more things of our 'own' choosing to put on the walls and the floor, more readily available ways to mould every surface. Simultaneously, a new appreciation for a *mental* interiority also occurs. This can be understood

as a new valuation of an inner life of personal striving and ambition (Lukacs 1970) associated with the intimacy and belief in moral character and mastery of own fate, we experienced at Ordrupgaard. Eminent cultural theorist Walter Benjamin (1892–1940), who wrote extensively about nineteenth century social culture, is more critical and sees the same interior as a kind of soft container, casing or protective wrapping around its occupants with associations of suffocation and disinterest in the outside world (Benjamin 1983, pp. 167–169).

Following and updating Benjamin, the use *of* and insistence *on* interiority can thus also be seen as a way of subjectification – the controlled production of a particular type of subject (Heller 1996). The new field of psychology, which can indeed be seen as complicit in the formation and subjugation of subjects, would indeed be caught up in ideas of the mind as a reflection of the home and its many compartments and thresholds (Rice 2007, pp. 37–40). All in all, this relates to my understanding of performativity: Both daily inhabitants

and visitors to a given home have to perform a certain kind of personhood inside the confines of the bourgeois, domestic interior. By extension this has implications for how to understand private art collections that are framed by domestic interiority.

As my first example of a private collection, the combined villa and art gallery of Ordrupgaard seems exemplary in its well-choreographed interiority [fig. 35]. Looking closer, this interiority does not mean that private versus public is a simple and constant divide. The division is fluid, adaptable to practical life and open to creative manipulation. In a continuous theatrical display of an ideal domestic situation – remember Goffman (1990) – both gallery and the array of living quarters present a row of defined spaces of defined functions, but in practice they are constantly opened or closed off to smaller or larger groups of visitors, to occupants and to live-in staff. Amounts of privacy and other desirable things are administered back-and-forth. Keeping a public

art gallery separate from the home, yet integrated with it and its gardens, plays with and



35. 'More interiors from councillor of state Wilhelm Hansen's Ordrupgaard' from Vore Damer, 11. August 1921. The photo feature about the living quarters of Ordrupgaard shows various spatialities from the almost public to the deeply private. Extreme left: servant's dining area, stairway to the private upper floor, dining room. Second from left: salon, Henny in the doorway of the garden tea house, the upstairs master bedroom. Left: the garden room and reception area in the Gustavian style, upstairs breakfast room

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theatricalizes exactly the notion of public and private. Keeping the *domestics* and their workspaces separate from the gallery and family while letting them cross the thresholds at designated times, helps to show how privacy is both a *relational* privacy from others and the *absolute* ability to close the door in order to live privately (Rice 2007, p. 68).

Interestingly, the reverse ability to ‘open up’ – relationally and absolutely – is also a defining character of the highly performative Ordrupgaard: From the outside gate to the villa doors, to the gallery threshold, to the many openings, doors and windows.

The all-encompassing, suffocating nineteenth century domesticity is not gone but is indeed under transformation by the early years of the new century – towards a lighter, more comfortable interior. An influential writer such as Hermann Muthesius (1861–1927) denounces the superficial and promotes soberness (Ge: ‘Sachlichkeit’) in house and villa-design around the turn of the century. Predating the functional modernism to come, the German architectural critic admires the English villa and English applied arts, especially William Morris (1834–1896) and the Arts and Crafts movement, for having a spirit and a style, which follows function (Anderson 1994). Others, like Ellen Key (1849–1926) in Sweden and Edith Wharton (1862–1937) in the USA, publish part manifests with moral overtones, part guide books to planning a well-designed, less cluttered, more comfortable home (Key 2008 [1899], Wharton, Codman Jr. 1898). At Ordrupgaard, this new ethos of the home is evident in gallery and living quarters: the use of materials, mouldings, woodwork and panels, room partitions and windows are part of an integrated whole, expressive yet restrained. The slender building masses allow plenty of manipulation of voluminous daylight from the many openings to the outside. Taken together, the design shows a defined interior, which allows flexibility

while retaining the possibility of privacy. It seems the idea of comfort is taken to new heights, practically and ideologically.

I will argue that the coupling of ideas of *comfort* and the domestic here is historically decisive. Comfort is ‘what takes normality as its starting point and pursues well-being as an end in itself’ (Moretti 2013, p.46), and when understood as ‘rest’, comfort has to do with that bourgeois idea of privacy of the home, so that it comes to stand as opposite to the public world of work (Moretti 2013, pp. 48–49). The historian John E. Crowley (1999) further historicises the concept when he points out that it is only by 1800 that comfort is clearly understood not just in spiritual, but also bodily terms. The language of comfort, where both understandings are intertwined, is thus a recent invention. Through the nineteenth century and beyond, this takes form as a quest for improving standards of living, for the individual and in society, especially through new types of consumption; all the way down to better seats, dress and the adoption of umbrellas. From this perspective, it seems obvious that comfort has important and complicated relations to the previously mentioned concepts of domesticity, privacy and interiority. Body and soul are in play in the home, and it is through the home that both can best be developed.

This, understandably, connects to various ways of *reaching* comfort – as expressed in Key’s, Wharton’s and Muthesius’ writings – what we otherwise might call practical ‘philosophies’ of the home and of privacy and interiority. In chapter I, I have tried to evoke how this took place at Ordrupgaard, and how it was connected to an image of art. Now, together with Wilhelm Hansen, we look to Sweden. As a marker of the more spiritual side of comfort, how is art reconfigured in the private galleries of Klas Fåhraeus (1863–1944), Prince Eugen (1865–1947) and Ernest Thiel (1859–1947)? In what ways are the configurations of art and the comfortable home used? What are the

differences and similarities – among these collections and in comparison to Ordrupgaard?



36. Högberga Gård with the gallery in front. Later, a gallery building in 'Chinese' style was added on the left. Photograph from *Ord och Bild*, 1913

## 1. Klas Fåhraeus' villa and gallery

At the time of our visit in 1917, several wealthy families in Sweden collect art on a grand scale. In Gothenburg, the second largest city, the prominent Fürstenberg collection of Swedish nineteenth century art has moved *en bloc* to the art museum by 1903, while younger collectors are concentrating on even newer art (Wadell 1988). Just outside Stockholm, Carl Robert Lamm (1856–1938) gathers fine and applied arts from centuries past – especially rococo – and he commissions artworks from modern Swedish artists (Frick 1988); likewise, the publishers Thorsten Laurin (1875-1954) and the Bonniers fill their homes with art, as does the businessman John Josephson (1866-1940) (Faerber 1942–1944).

But it is in just three large villas in the Stockholm archipelago that we find the most prominent collections of newer painting. In 1917, the homes of Klas Fåhraeus, Ernest Thiel and Prince Eugen are, in limited fashion, open

to the public and the ‘respectable’ parts of society with an interest in newer strands of especially Swedish but also French painting. Thiel’s villa even figures in the popular Baedeker travel guide (1914, pp. 137–38). In a 1921 article, Gotfred Tvede directly acknowledges the inspiration coming from



37. The south face of Högberga Gård in 1913

Fåhraeus’ villa Högberga Gård on the island of Lidingö (Tvede 1921), but further inspiration for both the architect and Hansen would presumably have come from the two villas on Djurgården island: Thiel’s grand home on the cape of Blockhusudden and Prince Eugen’s villa and paintings collection named after the cape of Waldermarsudde. Of the three

Swedish collectors, all part of art historian Carl G. Laurin’s extensive network (cf. Laurin 1929–32), Fåhraeus and Prince Eugen became friends with Hansen, presumably through their mutual acquaintance with Laurin.<sup>14</sup>

After a journey of perhaps a little more than an hour, for example from the residential area of Södermalm where Laurin lived, and at some point requiring a ferry, the villa of Klas Fåhraeus on a promontory towering dramatically over the water, is reached [figs. 36–39]. The western gable of the paintings gallery rises from an incline surrounded by pine trees. Visitors to the complex are led through the gates, through an archway and along the north side of the tall, slender gallery to the portal-like entrance, which nestles in a nook between

<sup>14</sup> The friendship of the Hansens and the three men is attested by letters in OA, WA and the Laurin letter archive at SSA. Prince Eugen, Klas Fåhraeus and Carl G. Laurin all knew each other well – the latter two were often guests at Eugen’s villa (Wistman 2008, p. 286).

house and exhibition building. The main body of the villa and its outcroppings are in red tile, the architecture referencing Nordic brickwork mansions and castles of the Gothic and Renaissance. For a fleeting moment, a little uncertainty might play out – is this a genuinely old manor newly restored or ‘just’ a very large private house?

The critic Nils Hammarstrand (1878–1949) visits Högberga Gård in 1913. His lengthy report reads as an attempt at committing to paper the oscillating interplay discussed in chapter II between a first-person, phenomenological, embodied *experience* and a more critical *reading* of numerous allusions and signs. To this end, he tellingly deploys the well-known stylistic trope of contrasts and opposites: the building seems old and brings strong reminiscences of the medieval and eras bygone, but at the same time we never doubt the newness of the home. Historical epochs and a modern feel are deliberately fused, straight lines and hard angles are met with plastic softness, dark halls give way to lighted rooms, spaces feeling either closed or open as they change rhythmically, and the gallery is ‘abstract’ while the large, dominant stairwell instead feels ‘baroque’. Again and again, architectural details and effects of furnishings evoke references to days past, to knights and castles, but are mediated, softened, framed by and kept within the overall scheme of a modern, grand bourgeois home; a direct answer to Hermann Muthesius’ call for a spirited, functional and *national* style (Anderson 1994).

In a passage about the complex entrance hall where ground floor living quarters, gallery, stairs, garden terrace and front entrance meet, Hammarstrand talks of his experience of the whole:

Everything feels new, made today, yesterday or the day before, but even then we have these old, ornamented pieces of furniture – the Norman bench, the Italian chest, the magnificent baroque cupboard – and they seem ‘tout à son aise’, wholly at ease, with each other and with the surroundings. And that which satisfies them

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is the same which satisfies the visitor – the health and strength of this art which is never wayward though often surprising, always straight without pedantry, subtle in all its substantial honesty (Hammarstrand 1913, p. 38).

To him, the modernity in this architecture is obvious, as are for example the parallels to the praxis of Henry van de Velde (1863–1957) and an architecture of form expressing function (Hammarstrand 1913, p. 36). And this idea of modernity is characterized by a striving for balance (Hammarstrand 1913, p. 39), with the emphasis being on ‘striving’: this is an architecture of honesty and honest effort in sharp contrast to the previously popular historicism. It is a robust architecture, cultured, firm, fully developed, free yet controlled and restrained. Reading Hammarstrand’s flowing prose as ideology, it seems guided by a thoroughly bourgeois concept of modernity – subtly moral, attentive to tradition and based on clear distinctions and their harmonious mediation.

Following Hammarstrand through Fåhraeus’ villa gives us insight into both the language and priorities of an attentive – and extremely cultured – visitor of 1913, as Europe teetered on the brink of WWI. In this respect Hammarstrand is no ‘average’ visitor, no median, but he also represents the bourgeois, ideal spectator, whatever his politics might be, as he turns a visit into a tale; part aesthetic experience, part critical judgment. Without risking too much, I believe it is possible to see a strong congruence between on the one hand the voice of this specific critic, his preoccupations and his rhetorics and on the other hand the more general aspirations of the upper bourgeoisie. Klas Fåhraeus himself might very well be an ideal candidate for this bourgeois identification with a cultured, connoisseurial attitude – at the time he was well known as an art critic in his own right on diverse topics of modern art (Fåhraeus 1904, Fåhraeus 1924)

The building and its architect, Karl Westman (1866–1936), are deliberately confused throughout Hammarstrand’s essay in the rhetorical trope called metonymy so typical of art criticism. Judgments about the building’s character are transposed as to be traits of the prominent architect’s character. On top of this, Fåhraeus himself is a constant presence, thereby completing this interesting transposition of character: what the architect is, that is what the building is, which is who the owner is.

The critic looks to the gallery from the hall [fig. 38]:

You look past a dense room with subdued lighting – though with a rather rich chiaroscuro – into a lighter, but soft, even aerial perspective, which gives a complete calm [...] all that which is condensed under the concept of spatial arts, the lighting of the rooms, their architectural shape, perspectival and optical concerts and contrasts has made an interior, a perspective, not belonging to the everyday (Hammarstrand 1913, p. 43).

From here, he goes on to note that even though the materials are sparse, the room connotes sacrality like an early medieval basilica, and in such a way that the subdued, even cool building leaves room for the other arts to shine in their warmth. The gallery:

[...] is a room exceptionally well suited for its task; filled with calm, solemn and precious feeling – a true temple of the arts. And the first glimpse appeals immediately to the feelings, inducing devotion and gives the mind ‘Weihe’ [Ge: consecra-



38. The hallway leading to the gallery at Högberga Gård in 1913. On the left wall are presumably paintings by Jacob Jordaens and Jusepe de Ribera

tion/sacrality]. And how the artworks appear from its walls and pedestals is hardly in need of further commentary (Hammarstrand 1913, p. 44).

The artworks in the gallery are arranged as a select presentation of recent Swedish art [fig. 39]. Most notable are pieces by the ‘Opponents’ in Konsthänsförbundet, the most important secession-group in Sweden, who are broadly influenced by French impressionist and postimpressionist painting (cf. Strömbom 1945–1965). A large canvas of nude, male sunbathers by Eugène Jansson (1862–1915), in his later years a painter of vitalist subjects and one of the premier figures in Swedish contemporary arts, dominates the end wall and is flanked by two of his deep, nocturnal cityscapes with exaggerated perspectives typical of his previous period. On the other end wall, where the main door is, are more carnivalesque paintings of circus scenes and dancers by Gösta von Hennigs (1866–1941). Immediately to the left and right of Hennigs’ pictures are canvases by the art world icons Edvard Munch (1863–1944) and Anders Zorn (1860–1920) which, as one critic remarks, frame the younger painter by showing his two ‘origins’ (Roosval 1913). Significantly, Jansson and Hennigs, as well as Ernst Josephson (1851–1906) and several other artists who are represented by works in this collection, are analysed in writings by Fåhræus, so that the gallery takes on the feel of being an extension of both the man and the critic. Josephson’s dark reddish-brown *Falskspelaren* (‘the sharper’, 1886–1905, now Waldemarsudde), widely regarded as a final artistic statement (Brummer 2001, pp. 246–247), takes up the prominent position on the left wall. Its significant symbolism is ostensibly centred on a critique of a bourgeois high society life of insincerity and feigned appearances. A selection of French, modernist painting by among others Monet, Cézanne, Renoir, van Gogh and Courbet is included, so as to point to the origins and inspiration for the Swedish artists. In all, the hanging suggests looseness and variation,



39. The gallery at Högberga Gård. On the left wall is Josephson’s *Falskspelaren*, at the end is Jansson’s *Badtavla*. Historical photograph c. 1913

seemingly more defined by the way various frames fit and align themselves than as thematic unities. But looking closer, as with Hansen’s gallery, a few large vertical portraits seem to function as anchors – a large self-portrait by Jansson, a portrait of Olga Björkegren-Fåhræus by Richard Bergh (1858–1919) and Renoir’s early *Mère Anthony* (1866, now Nationalmuseum) – around which smaller canvasses orient themselves.

The gallery of the Fåhræus family is situated in its own, separate wing yet in close correspondence to the private sphere of the family home. As at Ordrupgaard, Högberga’s living quarters and gallery are not kept separate, but form part of a succession of clearly defined spaces that can be opened or closed – to visitors and guests, to residents, to staff – as need be. Again, in regards to the gallery, this promise of intimate access and the back-and-forth of private and public is important.

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40. Eugène Jansson: *Badtavla*. 1908. Oil on canvas. 250 x 349 cm. Örebro kommun

When Jansson's large, somewhat scandalous canvas *Badtavla* ('bath canvas/painting', 1908, now Örebro municipality) [fig. 40] is the first thing to see through the door opening, this suggests it as a programmatic key to understanding the role of art to life – and thus for this gallery to private existence: in the place of an altarpiece we have corporeal beauty as a sublime and sublimating force. Despite potted plants and comfortable furniture, the light-filled, whitewashed gallery partly feels like a separate sphere, a religiously tinged and *liminoid* room (Turner 1977). This idea of a transitional place between church and parlour was not lost on contemporaries (Roosval 1913, Hammarstrand 1913, pp. 42–43). Of particular note is the theme of movement going from the physical world to imagination: We are pulled from the dark of the hallway into the light of the gallery, then down the basilica-like room, then conceptually further on by gazing 'through' the perspective constructed in the

painting until, mentally, taking the plunge from the depicted springboard up above and into the circle of naked onlookers. Jansson's painting re-inscribes a repressed erotic desire within a healthy, athletic environment of looking and being looked-at (Steorn 2012). In Fåhraeus' gallery this now healthy desire is further sublimated and comes to stand for a desire for life in art or art in life. In the slightly austere gallery, art is re-interpreted as a liminoid sphere of vital impulses beyond stuffy morals. Here there is room for both Jansson's desiring glances and the intense spiritual visions of the opponent-leader, Ernst Josephson, painted during his final, mental illness (Anderberg 2000, Brummer 2001). The central importance of both artists along with other paintings by Munch, another artist seen by the conservative critique as amoral, trumpets an obvious affront to traditional, moralizing art appreciation.

In the gallery at Högberga Gård, modernist Swedish art is set up as reaching for a higher, aesthetic plane. But art's vitality is made eminently accessible exactly through the comfortable and intimate frame of the surrounding home. In the place of religion is offered a room of modern art, attached to but still separable from daily life. In this way, and with these themes, the home – as the essence of bourgeois existence – is complementary to the gallery, like art is complementary to life. Life and art are supplementing forces that cannot be collapsed.

As a final aside, but quite tellingly, Fåhraeus develops a strong interest in Chinese and southeast Asian art by 1913, and has a darkly dramatic Oriental retreat added to his light filled gallery of modern European art in 1916 (Westman 1996, Decker 1996). Thus two opposing places – one light, one dark – come to signify art as complement to daily life.

## 2. The man who would be bourgeois

Traditionally seen as the opposite of a castle or a palace, the villa connotes the idea of a class distinct from the aristocracy (Ackerman 1990, pp. 10, 63), a class for whom the dwelling is foremost a home of intimacy, privacy and interiority. From the examples of Le Petit Trianon (1768) near the French court in Versailles, Gustav III's Pavilion at Haga near Stockholm (1787) and Neue Pavillon (1825) at Charlottenburg and its Prussian court, there is a history of royals seeking a release from protocol through playing more or less seriously at a version of bourgeois life.

In the case of Prince Eugen (1865–1947), the youngest son of the Swedish king Oscar II (1829–1907) and Queen Sofia of Nassau, (1836–1913) this escape attempt manifests itself earnestly in his purchase of a large area along with several buildings on the Djurgården Island in 1899. Here, for the rest of his life, he paints and tends to his extensive gardens and has his villa (1905, by Ferdinand Boberg, 1860–1946) and then a separate paintings gallery (1913, enlarged 1945) erected [fig. 41]. It is similarly possible to interpret his vocation as a successful artist and art collector as a way to transcend the limitations and obligations put upon a royal prince. Apart from the obvious symbolism of quite literally *building* your own home as opposed to living in an inherited castle, Prince Eugen's Waldemarsudde also marks a deliberate turn to a 'liberal' or liberated life of self-determination. Throughout, gardens, villa and gallery translate as a very public and prolonged dialogue with the mores and values of the self-made class, but from the position of a man, who, for reasons of both class and sexuality, can never fit easily into bourgeois existence. At Waldemar's cape, a *comfortable* existence demands a lot of work.

As with Ordrupgaard and Högberga Gård, reaching Waldemarsudde takes visitors on a symbolic, mood setting journey into nature and through forested



41. Waldemarsudde main villa with gallery building to the right in an aerial photo from 1923

parkland before reaching the more tended gardens of the villa overlooking the approach to Stockholm. In places, the gardens have a rather grand character, in other places the more intimate feel of a middle class backyard, in others yet the sense of a practical kitchen garden (cf. Rydberg 2014). Paths invite leisurely strolls between the varied sections and along the well-preserved eighteenth and nineteenth century wooden buildings dotting the estate that all bring reminiscences of a small village. This feel of variation, lived life and pleasant nature are arranged so as to extend into the representative ground floor of the villa itself.

Dominated by large, unbarred windows overlooking the grounds, the water and Stockholm, the gardens are insistently brought into the house and its rooms [fig. 42]. The home is constantly filled with flowers in pots and vases supplied by the estate's nurseries and the walls are hung with a selection of

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modern Swedish art, including many landscapes. The rather large spaces and their furnishings strike up a balance between the grand and the more leisurely and relaxed. In keeping with bourgeois demands of comfort, the amount of furniture is both high and diverse and each room conforms to a certain atmosphere. Throughout, the feel of the home is dominated by contrasting changes in colour, surface and texture. Variations in light, both artificial and natural, are plentifully supplied by the many windows, and play an important role in revealing or obscuring the identity of objects and the character of rooms. Everywhere, regardless of his real presence, the Prince is constantly there – in conventional portraits, in his own painting on display, and on monograms on chairs and door handles. A contemporary critic directly likens the house to its owner, and states: ‘The outside has character, the inside is healthy as the mind of a man’ (Wahlman 1905, p. 126).

In a letter to the Swedish artist Carl Larsson (1853–1919), Eugen reflects upon the former’s move to the country:

I would certainly like to do the same, but [I would end up] completely alone! No ... and ‘artificial’ company will not work. No, I will settle on my Djurgård’s headland; it certainly isn’t *the countryside* but it is something like it – glimmering sun and hillocks and oaks, and always Stockholm within view in all the world’s most wonderful lightings (letter 1901/3/23 cited in Wistman 2008, p. 212).

Art historian Christina G. Wistman, who has done her doctoral dissertation on the Prince’s art collecting, sees this as his admission of the impossibility of himself ever truly becoming a member of a community (2008, p. 212). In order to keep company, hold parties and receive visits, the bachelor prince stays within sight of the city – yet at a remove – while fashioning himself an artist by discussing painterly motifs and lightings. It is possible to elaborate on how Eugen balances positions – at one and the same time a dynastic



42. The so-called flower room at Waldemarsudde in a photograph from between 1905–1916

Prince and bachelor bohemian who is symbolically living on the border of city and countryside – and one could argue that the prince actively spent his life tempering his inherited position by reaching for something else in a self-made identity. This last point is indeed taken up and developed into a deft Bourdieu-inspired analysis by Wistman herself in which she goes through Eugen’s lifelong and successful bid for a position in the field of art. His practice as an artist, his strong patronage of modern Swedish painting and his large and diverse collection could all be seen as ways to gain symbolic capital in a play for position as Wistman argues (2008, pp. 243ff, cf. Bourdieu 1993, Bourdieu 1999). In this regard, Waldemarsudde is interpreted foremost in relation to its owner’s more-or-less conscious ambitions.

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43. The more formal flower garden in front of the gallery building. Photograph from before 1947

But Eugen's strategy for entering the art field and obtaining status – while significant and relevant – is not the only way to understand the impact and importance of Waldemarsudde to Eugen (or of collections to their collectors in general). Wistman and others who have written on Eugen sidestep central questions of his identity – a common problem with house museums (Adair 2010b) – by not confronting the undeniably queer aspects of a royal who publicly flouts convention. Eugen remains unmarried and companionless, he devotes much of his life to flower gardening and beautifying the interior of his large home, he actively pursues a career as an artist and he keeps a very rich social life where he often entertains on a grand scale. Previous books and studies are either too invested in the official biography of Eugen (Lindgren 1948, Widman 1995), or they lean, as in Wistman's case, too much

on a structuralist approach to really see the performative side to Eugen's use of Waldemarsudde – how the Prince actively works to create: (1) *an image* and (2) *a space* for himself which allow the pursuit of non-normative, gender atypical activities.

As I use it here, 'queer' is not a passive attribute but describes actions that slightly disturb or redefine: '[...] rather than functioning as a noun, queer can be used as a verb, that is, to describe a process, a movement between viewer, text, and world, that reinscribes (or queers) each and the relations between them' (Sullivan 2003, p. 192, cf. Adair 2010a). The Prince's possible sexual essence is in this regard less relevant, but the traces of his atypical practice – what he does differently and what it can mean – is important since Waldemarsudde is arguably the cornerstone of the whole person, the whole performance, of Prince Eugen himself. Practice – and queer practice at that – still exists and has real repercussions even when unacknowledged (Adair 2010a, Adair 2010b).

Throughout its existence, Waldemarsudde and gardens are open to a very many visitors as a part of social functions or guided tours, and among others the brothers Carl and Thorsten Laurin have permission to show the premises to outside guests when the prince is away (Wistman 2008, p. 190). In its very public function, Waldemarsudde is similar to other well-known examples of wealthy queer men fashioning an image through their work with assembling and re-assembling a home and a collection (McNeil 2007).

In a study of the mid-twentieth century British interior decorator John Fowler (1906–1977) and lifestyle writer Beverley Nichols (1898–1983), Joshua Adair shows how, in their practice, the idea of 'home' is queered into becoming a highly public space where, in the absence of a traditional nuclear family, feminine and masculine roles are *hybridized* (2010a). Just as happens

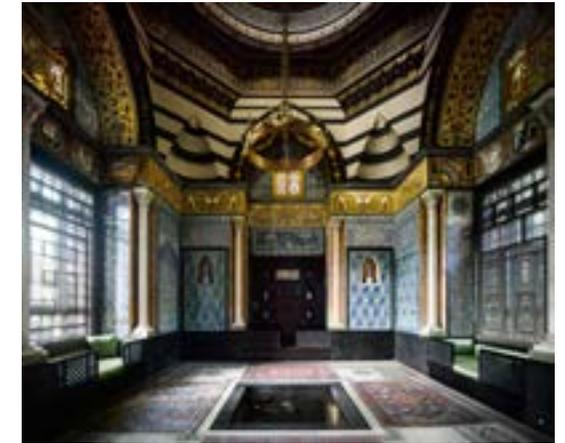
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with the homes of Fowler and Nichols, Waldemarsudde – on the basis of this successful, hybrid gender performance – reaches out to the public in order to influence its taste and opinions, and to generate acceptance for its owner. For those ‘in the know’, seeing the Prince and his home as a performance can be both fascinating and liberating (Adair 2010a, p. 17), but it is – fundamentally – also a creative way of negotiating a place for self-expression in society and in public; a queer space (Reed 1996a). To an extent, the Prince’s image is protected under the aegis of royal pedigree, but the desire for the good life in beautiful surroundings is the – quintessentially bourgeois – defining rhetoric of his performance. And inside of this respectable bourgeois frame and its aristocratic gilding, the extended home and collection of Prince Eugen is shot through with other kinds of desire.

While the ‘official’ gallery from 1913 is housed in its own building adjoined by a short underground passage [fig. 43], it is actually the representative ground floor, in Swedish the ‘social floor’ (Sw: ‘sällskabsvåningen’) [figs. 42, 45, 46] which appears the most invested gallery space. As Wistman observes, the Prince’s few French paintings are kept in his private study, the only ground floor room to be habitually closed off, since they do not conform to the very deliberate programme of showing Swedish, figurative, modernist art on the rest of the floor and in the gallery (Wistman 2008, p. 222). As the ‘hub’ around which all other activity on the estate revolves (Wistman 2005, p. 100), the ground floor/society floor is a strongly staged experiential programme. It plays on all senses and is full of visual, tactile and even olfactory nuances expressed in varying materials, fabrics, colours, furniture styles, lighting situations and the densities of things amassed along with a very large number of potted plants and cut flowers.

This sensuous proliferation stands in sharp contrast to a place like Högberga Gård where visual and tactile variation is minimized under the strict design of the architect. Waldemarsudde instead is reminiscent of another prominent and partly public artist’s house and collection: that of Frederic Leighton with its queerly eroticized and fetishized surfaces and interiors [fig. 44]. Worlds apart in terms of style, the most telling difference between the two homes lies in the way Eros and sensuousness are managed: With Leighton House (by George Aitchison (1825–1910), built 1866–1895), everything is about secrets and furtive glances, half-hidden chambers and secluded nooks (Edwards 2010). At Waldemarsudde, desire is brought out into the light filled home: it is the anti-Victorian, ‘modern’, healthy desire of plein-air painting directed towards life and living things. Its ‘queer’ position – on the outskirts of the city, on the border of acceptable masculine occupations – is framed and made acceptable by the aristocratic birth and bourgeois aspiration of its owner, Prince Eugen, and his ever-increasing cultural capital.



44. The Arab Hall at Leighton House

At Waldemarsudde the salon is a natural centre [figs. 45, 46]: Entering from the artificially lit hallway panelled in dark wood, and comparable to the passage from hall to gallery at Högberga Gård, the room presents a dramatic shift in atmosphere. Natural light abundantly streaming in from the glazed, south-facing terrace doors and the gold, white and grey colours work together to cre-

ate a striking ambiance together with walls clad in golden silk, white stucco, shining lacquer, carpeted floor, and fragrant plants. The room layout with the angled corners, the central table with chairs circling it and the dominant chandelier evokes a light centripetal force which focuses attention and energy



45. Waldemarsudde's salon seen toward east in 1916

to its centre as if pulling the whole ground floor inwards. Four large over-door paintings by Georg Pauli (1855–1935) tell the story of the prince and the arts, thereby once more instating him as an over-determined referent, while it is the two most prominent paintings, placed on opposite walls that acquire an iconic significance. Artistically and in their relation to the owner of the house, Anders Zorn's portrait of *Queen Sophia* [fig. 47], the mother of Prince Eugen, and Ernst Josephson's painting of *Strömkarlen* (The Neck) [fig. 48] are absolutely central for performing the story of Waldemarsudde and its owner.

Zorn's painting of the, easily recognizable, queen represents both a familial and dynastic origin and at the same time a more emotional and personal identification. The queen is shown as relaxed, attentive, informal, at one and the same time formidable and approachable. While the scale of the painting is closer to an official portrait, its tone is intimate and nearing an ideal of the meeting of equals – a scene of exchange and communication is set for the subject of the painting and the subject in front of the painting. Partly appear-

ing as guardian angel, partly as confidante, the queen's presence sets a tone of intimacy and sincerity, and is, as such, programmatic for Waldemarsudde and, by implication, for Prince Eugen himself. The identification with the mother and with feminine interiority stands in contrast to the peripheral placing of a much smaller painting of the father Oscar II (1896, Oscar Björck, 1860–1929) whose mind and body, shrouded in ermine, appear distant, gazing far away.

Ernst Josephson's large and challenging canvas was acquired by a young Prince Eugen in 1893 but rejected as a gift to Nationalmuseum, instead finding a permanent home with the Prince (Brummer 2001, pp. 212–239). The painting – and Josephson by association – went on to become closely linked to the image of Prince Eugen and Waldemarsudde in the public imagination (Asplund 1940). Seemingly almost fused with the house, *Strömkarlen* is embedded in the wall panelling of the salon and has a palette of predominantly grey and white which complements the tone of the room and the golden violin echoing the many golden panels and frames in the salon. Just as the other also highly charged rooms of the ground floor could be seen as so many indirect portraits of its occupant (cf. Higonnet 2009, pp. 126–127, Baudrillard 2005, pp. 97, 114), the painting in the salon similarly doubles as a mirror of Prince Eugen: The naked and enraptured Neck seems both a symbol of nature and of the free-spirited play of art – his playing of the violin perhaps mimicking the



46. Waldemarsudde's salon seen toward west between 1905–1916

rush of water just as painters paint in order to mimic and depict the world – thereby bestowing some of the same qualities on house and owner: a joyful place and a joyful man on the threshold of art and nature. At the same time, the central placement of the painting shows is as the presentation of different



47. Anders Zorn: Queen Sophia. 1909.  
Oil on canvas. 130 x 94.5 cm. Prins Eugens  
Waldemarsudde

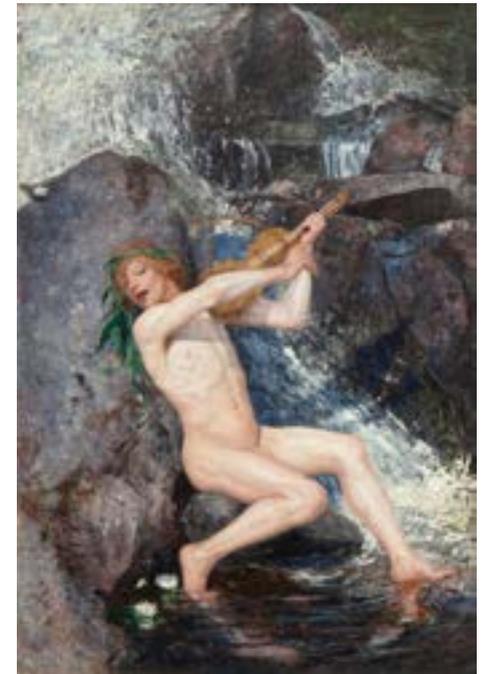
desires – the object of a scopic and sexually possessive desiring gaze, and of a perhaps more sublimated wish to *paint* and to *do* art; and to do this as seamlessly and expressively as the stream flows. In one further displacement, the popularly well-known story of the painting's author – the visionary, suffering, misunderstood avant-garde artist ahead of his time (Anderberg 2000) – rubs off on its present owner, another artist.

Held between the formal and familial in an almost dream-like atmosphere, the salon works as an intimate, emotional room to be experienced rather than critically 'read'. Tactile sensuousness and visual erotics are supplemented by the idea of character and presence emanating from both the mother's portrait and the conventional, bourgeois comforts of the room. The Neck appears as a *queer* take on art and nature and Eugen's permanent incorporation of the painting in the wall a deliberate *queering* of the space of the salon. The theatrical refusal to ever let Josephson's canvas go or lend it out for exhibitions, as he willingly did many times with most artworks (Wistman 2008, pp. 183–184), just makes it more apparent how the painting helps Eugen *perform* his own identity as an artist and *proclaim* his desires. And thus,

when the collector's 'secret' is communicated through the coded language of objects (Camille 2001, p. 2) – it is perhaps not so secret after all.

If the ground floor of the villa is a highly charged, performative, even theatrical space, then the gallery building is perhaps to be seen as a deliberate attempt at professionalization in preparation for a planned musealization of the whole of Waldemarsudde (Wistman 2008, pp. 230–234). The classicist, strictly symmetrical and more Spartan architecture, outside as well as inside, appears like a cautious dialling down of the sensuousness and strong personality of the villa [fig. 49].

Entering by the small vestibule, the relatively simple layout presents a central room almost square, lit by a large lantern in the ceiling, and two symmetrical side rooms also with ceiling lights. The lack of windows means there is an unbroken wall surface for displaying paintings, while clearly separating art and interior from the outside. At the time, the lantern is seen as a very modern lighting arrangement also found at Hamburger Kunsthalle, whose director Alfred Lichtwark (1852–1914) was in close contact with Eugen (Linde 1966, Lengefeld 1998). The artworks themselves are modernist, figurative and mostly Swedish contemporary painting by younger painters, but with a significant portion by just a handful of artists prominently associated with Konstnärnförbundet (Wistman 2008, pp. 277–279). Fähræus also collected



48. Ernst Josephson: Strömkarlen. 1884. Oil on canvas.  
216 x 150 cm. Prins Eugens Waldemarsudde

works by these artists, and Eugen aligned himself with their group, although he could never become an official member due to his royal status (Linde 1979, p. 47). Over the years the paintings are rearranged as the collection grows, but the Prince's own production always has a prominent place on the walls.

Looking at photographs of the different hangings, a driving ambition of the different schemes seems symmetry in size and shape on the one hand and association and motivic correspondence on the other – just as seen with the hangings of Hansen and Fåhraeus – rather than divisions into schools, oeuvres or particular topics. Also here, the halls are furnished with rugs, tables, chairs and chests in a recognisable idiom of the gallery as home. Nowhere, though, does the gallery feel as private, intimate or comfortable as the rooms on the ground floor of the villa proper. In the succession of spaces at Waldemarsudde – some intimate, some more formal – the gallery building is less personalised, less intimate and therefore accords well with Eugen's aim, as identified by Wistman (2008), of using the painting collection in a play for status in the field of art.

Looking at the whole of Waldemarsudde, contemporary commenters note that it is a special retreat for the arts and a place of tranquil beauty, and the idea of harmony is constantly evoked in descriptions. The totality of villa, grounds, gardens and art is integrated into one programme, a recurrent motif in almost all writings about Waldemarsudde during more than a century which all, more or less implicitly, see the person of the Prince as a uniting factor. Underneath this reception, whether critically interpretative or just reflective of its time, lies an entrenched idea that home and individual are comparable and at times indistinguishable. Eugen is repeatedly performed via Waldemarsudde and its visitors.

The function of the 'private' given over to public access, whether in the living rooms, salon or library, or in a weakened form in the gallery, appears very deliberate simply by being so pronounced. Eugen's house, his gardens and his collection ask directly to be read through and alongside a well-known, public *persona*. But by mobilizing a bourgeois, intimate atmosphere, and by queering normal expectations of a Prince and a man, one could say that, at times, Waldemarsudde presents *a person* as a complement to the *persona*. Waldemarsudde shows Prince Eugen's extreme effort at fashioning an identity on several registers – as a patron of arts and a serious artist in himself with a rightful place in Sweden's art history, but also as an accomplished entry into the class of the bourgeoisie, and finally, as a person with longings and desires: of a sexual or aesthetic nature, or simply for belonging.

49. The large gallery at Waldemarsudde, historical photo from before 1947



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A performative view to the queer frame that is also Waldemarsudde helps us see more than ‘just’ a jockeying for art-world position, and to envision an art collection and a home as a place where things *happen*. Where Högberga Gård in its association of home and gallery presented modern (Swedish) art as concerned with life in the more abstract, Waldemarsudde and its close connection to Eugen shows art in *one specific life* – that of the Prince himself – and how it can be used to define and fulfil this particular life and its desires.



50. Prins Eugen next to Strömkarlen in the 1940s

### 3. The bourgeois who would be superman

Around 1917, the most openly radical of Swedish art galleries to visit was not Klas Fåhraeus’ newly built, grand, national romantic dwelling, nor was it Prince Eugen’s conglomerate of palace-like villa and splendid gardens. Instead, on the part of Djurgården in the Stockholm archipelago furthest to the east, the collector Ernest Thiel had used his paintings and sculpture as the framework around which to build a home meant for himself and his second wife, Signe (1869–1915) – a home which would aspire to the ideal of a *Gesamtkunstwerk*, the unification of art and life [fig. 51] (cf. Munch 2012).

In trying to explain the house, early commentators relate different experiences of Otherness – the building is ‘oriental’ (Hedberg 1906), ‘a white clad Oriental’ (Bonnier 1917), and ‘Assyrian’ in appearance – just as its Jewish owner (Laurin 1917). But the place, drawn by the architect Ferdinand Boberg who at the same time planned Waldemarsudde, is also ‘a small masterpiece of original and harmonious fantasy’ in a ‘gleaming harmony of white and green’ (Hedberg 1906). Either way, the house rises impressively as a white, square mass among tall trees on the outer reaches of the island, and its first floor galleries are open to friends and acquaintances of the Thiel’s and to others by previous request by telephone, as made explicit in newspapers (Ambrosius 1908) and the most authoritative guide book on Sweden at the time (Baedeker 1914, p. 138) (the marriage in dissolution, Signe moves out by 1910–11). The Thiels’ home and integrated gallery has a monolithic character as it hovers over the grey cliffs at the tallest point of the headland.

The feel of a rising elevation is further accentuated when approaching the house. Here, the encircling wall appears as a miniature version of the enceinte of a late medieval keep giving both mass and verticality to the building by its proximity, an effect comparable, for example, to the seemingly dispropor-



51. The easternmost part of Djurgården with Thiel's villa, Eolskulle, now Thielska Galleriet, in 1936

tionate relation between wall and donjon at architecturally distinct Château de Vincennes in Paris. The body of the house grows taller and more massive still by the added superstructure placed as an afterthought during building and resting almost parasitically on top of the building's original roof. The feel of keep and castle continues through the granting of passage through the gate and after climbing the outside stairs in order to enter through the heavy side door, as one newspaper critic reports (Ambrosius 1908).

There is a fundamental feel of being enveloped and contained while walking the two tall, largely windowless gallery rooms of the second floor, which present themselves as the heart and hearth of the massive villa [fig. 52]. As true spaces for unfolding a domestic life on a grander scale, one hall is reserved as the family's dining room, the other as the salon for entertaining, and both run along the length and breadth of the villa's main body (cf. H.-N.E. 1906). On the walls of the galleries are modern Swedish paintings rising high in rows upon the walls, many of them nature scenes, some of them dream-like, all contributing to the experience of being simultaneously kept inside a cavern

and being thrown outside through so many vistas. While the rooms are kept light by the overhead skylights there is a dense atmosphere created by the preponderance of different surfaces and objects. This does not resemble the feel of any other gallery at the time, neither Hansen's place, soon to be opened in September of 1918, nor the contemporary Swedish collectors' homes and galleries. The ideal of living with art has become radical.

In a much later interview, Ernest Thiel tells that he

had visited Carl Robert Lamm to see how he had gone about it and I would not have it like that myself. He had a large hall, and he had hung all his paintings there, but he did not live in that room, it was instead closed off for him to come and look at the paintings from time to time (Strömbom 1942, p. 2).

This echoes a criticism of a practice and a way of using (or not using) art, which could be extended to most large-scale collectors at the time. Instead, the central gallery floor of Thiel's house with its oversize rooms is clearly the nucleus around which the rest of the building has taken shape. Far from being an additional limb to an existing building, the need to *live* with art has been the point itself for building a home.

The third hall, the addition to the two galleries planned first, looks like a potent distillate of the whole idea behind the house [fig. 53]. Perpendicular to the grand salon, visitors descend from an open platform to reach the floor. Directly in front and pushed up to the back wall rises a heavy, expansive sofa-construct (1907–08) by Gustaf Fjæstad (1868–1948) like a throne in patinated wood. Above and to the sides of this are the paintings by Edvard Munch. The enormous furniture-cum-symbolist-artwork with its canopy seems to want to encircle its potential occupants, to offer rest and the possibility of becoming one with the art all around while sitting under the giant portrait of the philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche (1844–1900). The dramatic

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German – stern, benevolent – anchors the wall composition of often very large, always very dramatic paintings by the Norwegian artist. These canvases seem to speak of danger, passion, Life and Death – or of lives lived in danger and deathly passion. And yet, a paradoxical even somewhat comical contrast creeps in. The serious bombast of the gallery’s contents clashes with the frank living-room feel of potted plants, abundant upholstery and a coffee table with complementing chairs. The Teutonic will to unite art and life does not preclude the need for a cuppa and a comfy seat.

Living in an art gallery seems to reveal its contradictions in the need to make yourself into a part of the collection, perhaps to become a work of art, while still upholding middle class needs and expectations of comforts in daily life. Speaking from a future, which also grapples with inherited mores, though from a much different viewpoint, the French philosopher Jean Baudrillard (1929–2007) writes of the collector who appears and reappears as both the beginning and end of a collection (Baudrillard 2005, pp. 91–114). With quite obvious parallels to Eugen’s practice, Thiel stages this constant reference to himself – and partly his wife – on a quite dramatic stage. The themes throughout the three halls of nature and drama, light and dark, regeneration and struggle find their culmination in the Munch-wall and its surroundings. The whole gallery of the three halls, and by implication also the home, is made into an aesthetic programme. As we are asked to relate all this to its occupant(s), we are asked to see a way of living aware of the fundamentals of life. We are asked to see that here is no neat Victorianism but instead a healthy, vitalist confrontation with the strong and sometimes dark, sometimes light forces of nature: Apollonian and Dionysian coexisting.

According to Brita Linde (1969), Thiel’s and the gallery’s most astute interpreter, this serves as a response to the writings of Friedrich Nietzsche whose



52. Thiel's gallery as presented in the weekly magazine *Idun*, 3. May 1906. Top: Salon, bottom: Dining room

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53. The Munch hall with sofa group by Gustaf Fjæstad, photo taken before 1925

portrait Thiel commissions from Munch, twice, and whose sister Elisabeth Förster-Nietzsche (1846–1935) he strongly supports in her efforts to build up the Nietzsche archive in Weimar. Especially the Nietzschean call to a moral philosophy of individualism and spiritual aristocracy leaves a profound impact on Thiel who builds a home and an art collection to express these ideals (Linde 1969, pp. 137–196). But also the aesthetic ideas of Nietzsche – art seen as beautiful Schein and the prerequisite of life – might ‘have been at the back of his mind as Thiel successively shaped his plans for an art gallery which was at one and the same time a monument and a home, museum and everyday environment’ (Linde 1969, p. 185). Linde finds parallels in the practical programme employed by Thiel and the – as yet to him unknown – ideas of art into life of the so-called Weimar-group of Nietzscheans formed around Henry van de Velde who are interested in the design of everyday interiors as

laying the groundwork of a total overhaul of Man’s existence (Linde 1969, pp. 137–196).

A recent find of a letter to Förster-Nietzsche confirms the Nietzsche-reception. Here, Thiel writes of wanting to make a ‘museum’ for the greatest Swedish artists, the geniuses of a contemporary golden age, to be studied together (Rognerud 2013, p. 26). The idea of aristocratic genius in art should probably be understood as a mirror to the extremely successful businessman own self-image. A few oft-quoted lines by the collector himself, ‘In my opinion, the man has always meant more than the work, I have always sought the man behind the work’ (Thiel 1979, p. 22), could be related to this – Thiel is interested in genius, and he is interested in studying genius and living with genius, and in transcending norms and given circumstances. An interpretation which gets its ironic support when he later dubs himself ‘a failed genius’ (Thiel 1969, p. 161).

For the sake of illustration, one can look at Nietzsche’s (1997 [1874]) early essay ‘On the uses and disadvantages of history for life’, which contains themes that are, perhaps contentiously, echoed in Thiel’s gallery and house. Here, Nietzsche leaves the more communal ideas expressed in *The birth of tragedy* in favour of his aristocratic elitism of genius and the goal of living life unfettered by history or future. Later, in the novel *Thus spoke Zarathustra*, the concept of the superman is fully developed, and the vertically oriented, ‘mountainous’ placing of Thiel’s villa on a cliff above the water recalls the many images of isolated peaks in the German book, as do the soaring eagles, also in the text, painted by Bruno Liljefors (1860–1939) in the ceiling above the central stairway. In Darmstadt at the time, Peter Behrens (1868–1940) would build his own dwelling as synthesis of art and life and decorate it with a Nietzschean iconography of stylised eagles and crystals (Buddensieg 1980).

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These practical attempts at a synthesis were just one expression of a movement prevalent in Germany around 1900, which was dedicated to reforming life towards healthier living (Buchholz 2001). But the extent of any connection to Thiel's house lies more in their parallel nature than in any direct influence.



54. Bruno Liljefors: *Fox and duck*. 1905. Oil on canvas. 153 x 201 cm. Thielska Galleriet

Supplementing Nietzsche by looking toward 'Lebensreform' points to the *corporeal* as another, perhaps more problematic concern, something which goes beyond bourgeois questions of simply finding the best comfort. Even more so than with Eugen's or Fähræus' homes and galleries, the place of the body – metaphorically as well as spatial – is in play at Thiel's. Save two miniscule openings, the three main halls present no view of the outside. Instead, the overlarge, seemingly too tall rooms project a strong sense of a paradoxically grand and suffocating interiority. The comfortable furniture with its plentiful upholstery is scaled to normal bodies and directly in conflict with the giant scale of the rooms that seem to present no exit save for the colourful myriad of different spaces depicted. In this psychologised interior, bourgeois battles superman.

The many large paintings mostly take either nature or the human figure [figs. 54–56] – portrait or model – as their subject thus again playing on two differ-

ent spatialities: the intimate room that appears when meeting another body and the impersonal, limitless outdoors. One result of this spatial confusion of normal size and oversize, bounded and unbounded is a particular eroticization, a heightened sensuousness where visitors – in an almost perfect demonstration of phenomenological thought – are repeatedly thrust back on to their *own* senses and body (cf. Merleau-Ponty 2002). The fair number of naked sexually charged figures in paintings and sculptures, particularly by Anders Zorn and in the statues by Gustav Vigeland (1869–1943) in the garden, certainly contribute. Having to actually live in this partly eroticised, sensuous and perceptual cacophony, rather than keep it in a separate gallery, seemingly precludes any sublimation in the direction of 'art for art's sake'. The heightened and charged atmosphere is to be lived and felt. Tellingly, the first popular, illustrated article on the villa (H.-N. E. 1906) and the official opening party (1907) come around the same time (1905–06) as Ernest Thiel translates Nietzsche's *On the Genealogy of Morality* and *Twilight of the Idols* into Swedish. Both are late works that explicitly attack conventional morality and claims that the only free Man is one who acknowledges his drives and desires – and they might be seen as Thiel's own overt, rhetorical framing of the liberated, healthy life now to be lived in his home.

But perhaps this somewhat conflicted attempt at 'rewriting' and re-enlivening life is really just meant for the two adult Thiels. Linde suggests that the



55. Anders Zorn: *On the loft*. 1904. Oil on canvas. 100 x 81 cm. Thielska Galleriet

scandal following Ernest's love affair with Signe, then a young widow, and the subsequent divorce from the mother of his five children and marriage to 'the other woman' led to his wish to shed his respectable past like a snake sheds its skin (Linde 1969, pp. 177). 'Lets face it. Where did we bourgeois people find happiness? Did we ever find ourselves? Did we not lose our loved ones too?' Thiel wrote in his posthumously published memoirs (Thiel 1969, p. 19). Seen from this approach, the performative transformation sought by making a new home and a new life – away from the bourgeois and toward the superman – was helped by his personal Nietzsche-reception. All of which prompts the question of whether the gallery is anything other than a mirror, perhaps even a body; a sublimated body-double of Ernest Thiel? Yet, as presented to visitors, this vitalist conception of Man inside the interior of his/her high castle, surrounded by beautiful nature, water and open space, is framed as definite statement and a programme.

Art is part of a project of aristocratic liberation – as imagined by a bourgeois who reads Nietzsche.

The uncompromising intertwining of gallery and living room at Thiel's villa is the more radical – and several years earlier – attempt at fusing art and life also seen at Fåhraeus' Högberga Gård. Authoring your interior surroundings as a way to perform a non-normative self – this was Prince Eugen's project with Waldemarsudde. Thiel's home and gallery contains some of both. In a more stylised version, his house ties together several of the most pertinent topics observable in collector's galleries, which appear again and again. Besides a clear commitment to defining a national art, these relate to bourgeois references, a search for modernity, interior and interiority as an overriding frame, a dialogue with nature and the character and performance of the collector as a central element. The full-blown elitism of Thiel's gallery and Fåhraeus' more

implicit superiority leaves only Prince Eugen with something which resembles a programme of education and thought for his public. These would most probably have been at an embryonic stage when Hansen visited Stockholm in 1917, but they did become more pronounced over the years (Wistman 2008, pp. 177ff.). Whether Hansen visited all three Swedish galleries in 1917 is not at present certain. What is known is that the three collections discussed showed three different, yet related ways of collecting and displaying modernist art; they make up something of what could possibly be *recognised as* collecting.



56. Edvard Munch: Portrait of Ernest Thiel. 1907.  
Oil on canvas. 191 x 101 cm. Thielska Galleriet

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#### 4. Collecting in Stockholm and Ordrup

Two very concrete traces of a Swedish context occur at Ordrupgaard: Hallway, garden room and dining room – making up the most official spaces of the private home – are furnished in an integrated version of the white, creams and pastels of the Gustavian style, a distinct Swedish version of Louis Seize, which could also be found at the villas of Eugen and Fåhraeus [fig. 57]. Second, the architecturally advanced choice of a lantern for providing indirect toplight in the French gallery's large hall was also a choice made by Fåhraeus and Eugen in their galleries [fig. 58]. Both instances of manifest Swedish inspiration further connect Ordrupgaard to international trends in collecting.

Other traces are fainter and more ambiguous, but rather plausible. I have spoken at length about the three Swedish, modernist collections of Fåhraeus, Eugen and Thiel for several reasons: A number of friendships and acquaintances form a net of connections between Ordrup and Stockholm, and the collections seem geographically, temporally and culturally very close. Furthermore, the Stockholm collections are especially early examples of private, large scale, modernist art collecting open to a public, and analysis helps us recognize some of the important characteristics of later, modernist collecting – in display and exhibition rhetorics as well as in the collector's presence in the collection.

It is impossible to find evidence of all the inspiration that Wilhelm and Henny Hansen took from their acquaintance with Swedish cultural life and their friendship with the collectors Thorsten and Carl Laurin, Prince Eugen and Klas Fåhraeus and with museum people like Richard Bergh and Axel Gauffin. This is not in itself that essential. My perhaps fanciful re-imagining of a visit to Stockholm shows something of how private, large-scale collecting took shape, was presented and used at the time of WWI. Given the Hansen-family's strong connections to the Swedish capital, it is not unreasonable to



57. A corner of the large garden room at Ordrupgaard today. The furniture and furnishings are in Swedish Gustavian, a style from the late eighteenth century. Paintings by Vilhelm Hammershøi (1864–1916)

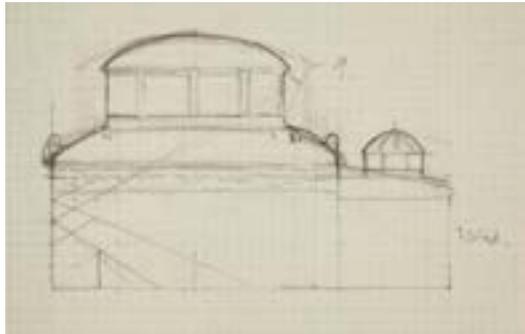
imagine a fair amount of transfer. More important still, I have shown what some of the limits were to modernist collecting, what could plausibly be imagined as collecting, and where there was considerable variation in specific narratives – from art as religion with Fåhraeus over Eugen's programme of self-expression to Thiel's celebration of the genius of free will.

Important and central themes and techniques are shared among the collections in Stockholm and Ordrup. Foremost are mythic narratives of nature as a place of retreat and regeneration, and of the home as the quintessentially private space, which reflects *and* generates its inhabitants. These are myths that belong to a bourgeois world-view, and they are as such also *modern*, as is the prevalence of comfort, rest and the pleasant – equally modern inventions. The opposition between private and public and its occasional circumvention is used for maximum effect. Other important themes are also there – of

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tradition and renewal, of character and of the pleasures of private possession. The strong, experiential appeal of nature and domestic comforts decisively frame any understanding of the modernist art collections and the strongly integrated presentations homogenize the various motifs and different styles



58. Study by Prince Eugen for the lantern in the large gallery building at Waldemarsudde made before 1913. The cross section shows how it closely resembles a type found with Christie's smaller auction room in London (1820s) and Hamburger Kunsthalle (1917), see Linde (1966). The principle can be found, again, at Ordrupgaard and Sammlung Oskar Reinhart "Am Römerholz"

on display. Modernist art – or perhaps the discourse around it, as we shall see in chapter V – seems to be tailor made for this type of intimate consumption.

As the study progresses, all of these themes will be met again in various private collection museums and will, intentionally, set them apart from the public art museums of the first half of the twentieth century.

A further look at the exchange between collector and collection has

been an important lesson of this imagined visit to Stockholm in the footsteps of Wilhelm Hansen. Looking for the collector in the collection makes the most sense when this connection has relevance for an audience and is part of something communicated. It is when collectors use their collection to perform a version of themselves – and performativity always implies an audience – that it becomes important to study the collector and the collection *together*. Ultimately, the collection can become the afterlife of the collector.

To exemplify: Prince Eugen was buried in the garden of his villa following his death in 1947. The gesture brought the different personas of artist, gardener, collector, royal prince and patron of the arts together with the actual,

physical Waldemarsudde, in a way creating a living memorial. Other collectors seeking institutionalization of their collection – and their own posterity – would plan the same close connection: from Mildred (1879–1969) and Robert (1875–1962) Bliss placing their grave in the Dumbarton Oaks garden to Peggy Guggenheim's (1898–1979) burial in the courtyard of her Venetian palazzo, some collectors ended up becoming a very real part of their own collection.

These gestures have the obvious benefit of forever linking person to institution, and perhaps further controlling the particular narrative of the coming museum. Cyclic ideas of nature, of life blossoming from death and so forth connect obviously to issues of both aesthetics and religion and can perhaps lend a further gravitas to the future collection museum. In the new museum's first official publication from 1948, for example, the director Gustaf Lindgren gathers all the motifs associated with the cape of Waldemarsudde – that Prince Eugen is everywhere, and that everywhere points to Eugen, that the home and the garden are on equal footing with the art, and that the seasonal process of life is the one guiding theme to understanding the new museum (Lindgren 1948). The unification of the many faces of the prince with his home and his art collection was already a complete performance.

Interestingly, in his later years when institutionalization became an aim, Eugen had explicitly wanted a 'living museum'. This was not in the sense of plans for future expansion or growth, for he considered the collection complete and akin to a historical document, but 'living' understood as in being well-tended and engaged with nature, the seasons and visitors (Wistman 2008, pp. 230–238). On a general level, he therefore expressed some of the basic concerns of collectors seeking to build institutions out of their collections in the first half of the twentieth century. Enshrining himself in the museum was just a more radical move. As a snapshot of the themes of art and life involved

in modernist art collecting – and of their happy institutionalization in the body of the deceased collector – the example of this Swedish royal is enlightening.

The collector's unique voice and presence can survive in different shapes. Ernest Thiel's collection, villa and garden were sold after an economic crisis in the 1920s – a recurring theme in Scandinavian collecting – and opened as a public museum in 1926 (Linde 1979, p. 18). By removing the still living collector from the equation, the explicitly Nietzschean identity project was softened but far from negated. Officially, the new museum was about Swedish modernist art, and as such a victory for the artists of the opposition group *Konstnärsförbundet*, but the currents of desire and ideas of free will and genius, of art in life and life as art were paradoxically enshrined because the gallery's character was to a large degree retained and so the presence of the founder lingered on.

Both *Waldemarsudde* and *Thielska galleriet* are examples of the private collection as a project of and related to the collector's person. Though perhaps less overtly so, *Högberga Gård* was likewise a project of a collector-scholar's self-proclamation intertwined with his personal take on the value of art. In contrast to the other collections, it never became an institution as *Klas Fåhraeus* was similarly hard hit by the recession of the 1920s and went on to sell everything (Decker 1996). But taken together, all three collections demonstrate early and powerful examples of how related, though also distinct narratives did play out in private collections of modernist art in an early twentieth century Scandinavian context. They function as portraits of their founders, but they actively form and perform what they purport to represent; they need an audience to spin their tales.

The visit to three Stockholm collections around 1917 has allowed me to identify some central issues in collecting that are not just locally relevant. As

we have seen, they also occur in the Danish art collection founded in *Ordrup* and opened to a public in 1918, and they will reoccur – with variation – as the study progresses. These issues of home, nature, identity and art appear again and again as a part of the horizon of modernist art collecting – in Scandinavia, but also in Europe and the USA.

## Chapter IV: A collector's horizon

At a given time, what does and what can a collector know about collecting? What inspires, and how does the collection itself become a solution?

In the previous chapter, I imagined a visit to some modernist art collections in Sweden that were 'close' to Ordrupgaard and exemplified what was, at the time, recognizable as art collecting. A number of different ideas and practices have now been broached, and I have given different explanations of how collections of modernist art have been used. This chapter starts by exploring what wider knowledge was available to someone like Wilhelm and Henny Hansen. In a more general sense, and with reference to the philosopher Hans-Georg Gadamer (1900–2002) (2004), I want to consider what makes up 'the horizon' of a collector and his or her world of knowledges and interpretation. This takes up the rest of the introduction and the first two sections. The final two sections of the chapter looks at the examples of Samuel Courtauld (1876–1947) and Helene Kröller-Müller (1869–1939) to explore the idea of donation and how private collecting came to be seen as a duty or an obligation to society (cf. Gee 2009).

The Hansen-family itself had been buying Danish painting since 1892 when Wilhelm made a relatively conservative purchase of a first work, one small

canvas by Golden Age painter J.Th. Lundbye (1818–1848) [fig. 59]. Soon, the focus would be more contemporary and daring (Anderberg, Lederballe 1999). Trying to pinpoint the exact moment when ‘a collection’ is formed most often feels like a futile manoeuvre, but I will argue that the first public mention is as good as any: In a short newspaper article from 1912, Wilhelm Hansen is mentioned as a self-made man *and* an art collector (Den Ensomme 1912).

A few years later, when Ordrupgaard opened to the public as a gallery and tentative institution with a focus on French painting in September 1918, art collecting on a grand scale was an established pursuit throughout Europe, the four Nordic countries and the USA. Ways of doing things, certain rules and practices had been developing among bourgeois collectors for perhaps a century, and this had happened in dialogue with both the new museum institutions and an increasingly sophisticated market. The ever more popular genres of Italian renaissance and Dutch seventeenth century painting, along with French applied arts of the eighteenth century led the boom in large-scale collecting, which occurred alongside the internationalization and increased marketization of collecting. As the twentieth century got underway, more and more collections were established around luxury art objects, and their collectors’ horizons of attention began to extend far beyond national borders to include ever new groups and sub-groups of things to amass (Pearce 2005, Wadell 1988).

In the autumn of 1917 at the latest, it was public knowledge that the Hansen-family’s French collection would be open to the public in Ordrup (Petersen 1917b). The Ordrupgaard soon-to-be found itself within an already established field of collecting and collectors – both on a Danish and European scale – which was publicised and made public like never before. Newspapers like *Le Figaro* or *The Times*, popular magazines and dedicated art journals such

as the notable *Kunst und Künstler* or *The Studio* reported on private collections while specialized series such as *Bibliothek für Kunst- und Antiquitätensammler* gave guidance on entering the field, though mostly to the applied arts. There was also a steady growth in monographs on painters and sculptors of the European tradition, many of them dependent on access to private collections, and new catalogues helped systematize the canon of art history to the benefit of connoisseurs (and owners). Travel guides such as Murray’s, Baedeker, Joanne or Cook’s described notable private collections as ‘sights’, and many collectors published and distributed catalogues to friends (and rivals), associates, prominent people they wanted to impress and public libraries. Chains of information through correspondence and recommendation became firmly established within the increasingly international circles of the collecting bourgeoisie, and the auction business played a role in increasing both knowledge and interest in collecting and collectors. At this point, public donation was becoming more and more widespread in Europe and the USA, in turn cementing grand collecting as something to admire, talk about and perhaps emulate.

Collecting has probably always been bound up with deeply personal, inward-looking and partly obscure reasons, but at the same time the large scale collecting of fine and applied arts in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries often emulates the princely example in its extrovert outlook: it needs



59. Johan Thomas Lundbye: Cow, study. 1843. Oil on canvas. 22 x 24.5 cm. Ordrupgaard. The first painting in the Hansen-collection

an audience. During the second half of the nineteenth century, art collecting became increasingly divorced from previous duties of familial commemoration, dynastic aggrandisement or decorative embellishment. Gradually, the collection attained a strictly defined and singular status and became an entity in itself that could *do* something and *effect* something. A major change was its entry into a *public* arena via, for example, publication and rules of visiting. This extended the reach far beyond the previous visitor cohort of immediate peers and the representative function of palace or manor. The art collection now had its own important, independent messages to tell.

Here, I view the privately founded, publicly accessible collections of the early twentieth century as a distinct practice of telling stories and signifying new things. In order to reach their narrative potential, these private collections used an ability – shared with public art museums – to ‘transform’ objects by pulling them out of prior systems of circulation and fixing them within new contexts (cf. Appadurai 1986a, Stewart 1993, Pearce 2005). The Tuscan altar piece hung among other specimens as proof of the development of painting or the Louis Seize furniture which argues the development of superior refinement are simple examples. Stabilizing and controlling these new object-meanings takes a lot of effort since it can be argued that most things in human orbit never possess any strong and unambiguous meaning for any extended period of time. Some objects are more privileged than others – paintings often come before furniture for example – but all are defined in relation to a master narrative of the collection (and its possible side-stories). Locking down just a narrow spectrum of possible object-meanings is the basis for the further production and reproduction of narratives, ideally not just as discourse but as enacted and retained by visitors.

Here it seems there is a subtle disagreement between writers on the primacy of either circulation or arrestment of objects. The focus of sociologist Arjun Appadurai (1986a) – to be further explored in chapter VII – is on how things gain value from commodity circulation; museologists have instead argued that meaning arises when objects are taken *out* of circulation, then caught and held fast – like a fly in amber – in collection and display. I do not think this tension between value arising from exchange or arrestment needs to be resolved – it is probably a case of dialectics. The private collection as a hybrid of personal and public actually performs both. Circulation brings objects that can then, for a limited time, be held fast before they are let loose again. And in this, the collection and the home share an important characteristic; both are defined in opposition to an outside but possess a permeable barrier that can be opened or closed.

The private collection with its galleries, furnishing, catalogues and attendant discourses is an example of trying to control and stabilize a specific number of meanings for objects defined as art. In public museums some of the same objects would traditionally be employed to tell art’s histories, but as museum advocates of the nineteenth century also believed, an even more desirable product would be visitor’s enactment of nation and citizenship (Bennett 1995, Hooper-Greenhill 1992, Duncan 1995, Hill 2005). As argued in chapter I, the product of a visit to the private yet public Ordrupgaard collection, while based in the same retention of circulating objects and functions, would no longer have been such an enactment. Instead the aim could have been the transformation of ways to enjoy art, a change in its established hierarchies and the promotion of a bourgeois vision of the good life on the back of art’s prestige.

But, returning to the topic at hand, what can be known about art collecting from the vantage point of a Danish businessman and his wife, who are

interested in building both an art collection and a new home? What are the practices, concrete precedents and obvious inspirations, they can draw upon? What is, with reference to Gadamer (2004), their 'horizon' of collecting? The following two sections seek to find out.



60. *The New Carlsberg Glyptotek in the centre of Copenhagen in 1911*

## 1. Danish collectors in the Ordrup looking glass

At the time Wilhelm Hansen visits Stockholm in 1917, collecting fine and applied arts is more than an established pursuit for the wealthy, bourgeois circles in Denmark – several museums based on private collecting have already been founded. The National Gallery of fine arts and the National Museum which spans Nordic prehistory, ethnography and classical antiquity are of course based on the formerly royal collections. Thorvaldsen's Museum encompasses the sculptor's private collections and opens in 1848 as the world's first single artist museum; arguably also the first contemporary arts museum. But the period from the late 1800s to WWI forms a distinct transition in the relation between private, Danish collecting and the public museum: A number of collection museums are established, and from 1914 international, primarily French, modernist art suddenly and dramatically becomes an object for Danish collectors. In several ways, Ordrupgaard, which is opened to the public in September 1918, marks the culmination of this short period and the tentative beginning of a new era. Seen from the viewpoint of a villa in Ordrup, the

following presents an outline of the most relevant Danish art collectors and collection museums around WWI.

In 1897, the Carlsberg owner, Carl Jacobsen, completes the transformation of his extensive collections into a new public museum institution by opening a new museum complex near the Copenhagen town hall [fig. 60]. The New Carlsberg Glyptotek is dedicated to Greek and Roman antique statuary along with French and Nordic sculpture of the nineteenth century. The scale of the institution rivals not just the National Gallery, but places it in a European league. Its grand, historicist architecture – the building was further enlarged in 1906 – and the ever expanding size of the collections removes any trace of the private and intimate, which it had still possessed when housed in a separate wing next to the founder’s villa in Valby, Copenhagen. In its now permanent iteration, the Glyptotek is the final great museum institution established in the nineteenth century tradition (Glamann 1996, Friberg, Nielsen 2006). Jacobsen’s museum also, once and for all, defines public institutionalization as an ultimate goal of private collections.

Following the trail blazed by the Glyptotek come three important private donations of a different scale and character. All are much more directly aimed at challenging the National Gallery – the representative of publicly sanctioned taste – in the form of correctives and critical alternatives: The Nivaagaard Collection, the Hirschsprung Collection and Faaborg Museum. The most traditional and in line with well-established tendencies in European art collecting is that of Johannes Hage (1842–1923), a large landowner and manufacturer of tiles, situated about 30 kilometres north of Copenhagen. The Nivaagaard collection finds its home in a small, classicist ‘art temple’ erected in the large park some distance from the villa [figs. 61–64]. Hage, who is not a local and remains unmarried, fashions himself a patriarchal role as supporter of the



61. Top: Aerial view of Nivaagaard, historical photo  
 62. Middle left: The free-standing gallery building from 1903, photo from early 1900s  
 63. Middle right: The historicist mansion, built in 1881 in the style of Dutch renaissance, photo from early 1900s  
 64. Bottom: The central hall of the gallery, looking north-east toward the entrance, with Italian painting to the left, Dutch painting to the right, photo from early 1900s

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65. *The Hirschsprung Collection early in the twentieth century*

small community in Nivaa where he lives and is the main employer, building a church and a hospital and instituting a health insurance collective; the art collection itself seems an ersatz to that amassed through the centuries by traditional, landed gentry.

The building boom and industrialization of the nation from about 1870 paradoxically provides the modern possibility to invent a storied past for one-self: park, renaissance mansion (recently built) and a collection of old masters (recently bought). In keeping with a conservative, nationalist outlook, the collection is framed as a contribution to the spiritual and cultural rebuilding of the nation after the loss of the German duchies following the war with Prussia in 1864 (Larsen 2006) – a major, nation-defining trauma (Jahnke, Møller 2011). But instead of mimicking a noble man's inheritance, it follows the more recent model of connoisseurial collecting as is especially well-developed in Germany. Hereby it is planned according to the current

convention of European art history based on division, at first into two major schools – northern and southern painting – then subdivided by chronology, topography and the individual genius of painters. Everything, of course, is governed by theories of progress and the threat of decline.

As such, the idea of the masterpiece is crucial to Nivaagaard, and Hage works long and hard with completist fervour to acquire a painting by Rembrandt van Rijn (1606–1669) and will then, in the absence of a spectacular Italian high renaissance master piece, substitute a Leonardo-like painting by Bernardino Luini (c. 1480–c. 1532) for the 'real deal' [fig. 108]. In keeping with this overall more traditional museum frame, the gallery is kept separate from mansion and the furnishings are sparse and impersonal while opening hours, interestingly, tend not to match up with the train timetable (Larsen 2006, p. 256); the bourgeois notion of comfort is apparently not a great issue. After the collection is made public in 1904 and donated in 1908, the quiet rivalry with the National Gallery is obvious: Hage writes publicly and with self-assurance about the tranquillity and better atmosphere of the countryside compared with the city for the enjoyment of art and emphasizes how a small exquisite collection is a finer experience than the overwhelming and tiring museums (Hage 1908).

The second donation – that of Heinrich (1836–1908) and Pauline (1845–1912) Hirschsprung – has an arguably even greater institutional impact. By 1900, the family of tobacco manufacturers has gathered a very large number of Danish paintings and drawings of the preceding century and made a habit of actively supporting artists with stipends and purchases (Saabye 2002). Through the backing of the painter P.S. Krøyer (1851–1909) and the Skagen artists' colony, they intervene in national art history by promoting a new style, subject matter and framing of national identity. As the collection is

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transformed into a museum [fig. 65], which opens in 1911 in the park next to the National Gallery, the much smaller, classicist, villa-like building is a deliberate challenge to the larger institution. The first director, Emil Hannover (1864–1923), who is in close dialogue with the founders, aims to create an intimate interior of small salons and exquisite furniture, believing this is the right context for experiencing the painting of the Danish Golden Age and onwards (Hannover 1911). He corresponds with the Hamburger Kunsthalle director, Alfred Lichtwark, whose work with modernizing museum architecture and display is an important inspiration. Lichtwark himself sees the Hirschsprung collections, their contents and the realization as an institution as an ideal role model to be imitated in Germany (Howoldt, Saabye 2013).

While both Nivaagaard and the Hirschsprung collection are framed by ideas of nation and community, the differences are telling: The gallery in the centre of Copenhagen springs from a cosmopolitan, high bourgeois, industrialist family and is symbolically built on old city ramparts reclaimed for civilian purposes. As Jewish second-generation immigrants from Germany, the public institution is also a culmination of a successful, personal project of assimilation (Frick 1988, Saabye 2002, p. 11), which in turn comes to shape Danish art history and self-image. In contrast to Nivaagaard, the museum narrates a history of the specifically Danish in art with certain painters presented as the culmination of the nation's cultural and artistic progress during a century. In a wider sense, a range of motifs and an aestheticized way of looking, which interprets the Danish people and landscapes from a bourgeois, non-utilitarian, cosmopolitan viewpoint, is promoted as quintessentially national. The entire, bourgeois framing of this national art history – a museum as a comfortable home! – unites several important tendencies as Hirschsprung's collection transforms into a permanent institution.



66. Faaborg Museum around 1921

The third donation has perhaps the most peculiar impact on Ordrupgaard. In the provincial town of Faaborg on Funen Island, Mads Rasmussen (1856–1916) joins forces with the progressive, popular and embattled artist's group 'Fynboerne', or the 'Fynbo painters' ('The Funen Painters' as opposed to the Skagen colony in the north of Jutland) in 1910 to create a local art museum with local roots. As a collaborative project, Rasmussen, a producer of canned goods, hands over his large flat and art collection to the artists to manage. He then goes on to fund the building of a new museum. By 1915, when the new building opens [fig. 66], it presents an exquisite total work of art where architecture, furnishings, collection and presentation are the result of a collaborative process between artists and the various arts (Hedin, Hvidberg-Hansen 2015). Though locally anchored, the museum and its collection cement the

still vital artist's group nationally as the future interpreters of the Danish countryside and nature; the more authentic, non-bourgeois competitors to the older painters of the Skagen colony who already had their museum tentatively founded in 1908 (but only realized in 1928). In its architectural style, the Faaborg museum is also at the beginning of a modernist, Nordic classicism freed of historicist leanings and removed from a nineteenth century, psychologised interiority, which its architect, Carl Petersen (1874–1923), expresses in his own, idiosyncratic way (Sheridan 2015). It is very likely that Wilhelm Hansen, himself a friend of the prominent group member Peter Hansen (1868–1928), stops promoting his family's large collection of Fynbo painters as a direct consequence of the opening of the Faaborg Museum.<sup>15</sup> Presumably the completion of the museum precludes any other way of framing the artist group for some time to come.

From the grand museum tradition of New Carlsberg Glyptotek down to the intimate interiority of the Hirschsprung collection, Wilhelm Hansen and other Danish collectors at the beginning of the twentieth century have different institutional models for collecting and displaying art. Nivaagaard and the Faaborg Museum, for instance, are notable for their very distinct ways of imagining the relation between art, collection and museum to community and to nation overall – one more patriarchal, the other more progressive.

It seems fair to assume that in the rather small art circles of Denmark where professionals and amateurs mingle, the Hansens' follow the activities of other collectors, their specialties and priorities, and the possible status of future donations. The collective will signed by Wilhelm and Henny Hansen in 1913 shows how they – probably after consultation with its director Karl Madsen (1855–1938) – imagine their art collection finding a permanent home

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 15 I owe this insight to Anne Birgitte Fonsmark, director of Ordrupgaard (cf. Truelsen, Fonsmark 2011).

in a separate hall in the National Gallery under the name of *The Collection of Wilhelm Hansen and Spouse* (OA). The stipulations betray their belief in its high quality, desirable enough for the gallery to make the collections its first donor hall, something which certainly is not (and, incidentally, never will be) standard practice (Monrad 1999b, p. 178). At this point, just before the great war, the Hansens' collection is a solid presentation of the generation of Danish, figurative painters that had emerged just at the close of the Hirschsprung collection – the vitalist Fynbo group, the painter of mysterious interior atmospheres, Vilhelm Hammershøi and social realist-cum-symbolist, L.A. Ring (1854–1933). In the on-going conflict about the responsibilities of the encyclopaedic museum – should it restrict its purchases to national art, how recent could this be and how modernist, or should 'foreign' art be actively pursued? (Villadsen 1998) – the Hansen bequest politically plays directly into perceived deficiencies in the National Gallery's collection policies.

With the outbreak of the war, the Danish capital becomes a short-lived Nordic centre of modernism and avant-garde in the visual arts (Aagesen et al. 2002, Aagesen 2012, Jelsbak, Aagesen forthcoming). Important in this regard is the fact that a few Danish collectors start purchasing international, primarily French, modernism on a larger scale. The property investor and Social Democrat politician, Johannes Rump (1861–1932), who has been collecting old master drawings since his youth (Kold 1994), starts orienting himself by 1912 toward modernist, then contemporary Parisian avant-garde painting. His collection of Matisse, André Derain (1880–1954) and others in their 'tradition' will, by 1928, become a part of the National Gallery by donation on the condition that they will be exhibited together (Monrad 1999b). Meanwhile, Helge Jacobsen, son of the brewery owner, inherits the leadership of New Carlsberg Glyptotek after the father's death, and now out of his shadow, the

younger Jacobsen steps up his own collecting of impressionism and post-impressionism and that of the 'parent' foundation behind the Glyptotek (Munk 1993, p. 7, Søndergaard 2006). Both Rump and Jacobsen buy modernist paintings from the stranded French Exhibition of 1914 (Monrad 1999c, p.



67. Pablo Picasso: Woman with a crow. 1904. Charcoal, pastel and watercolour on paper. 64.8 x 49.5 cm. Toledo Museum for Art. Formerly in the collection of Tetzen-Lund in Copenhagen

165), as would Hansen at some point. But it is the wholesale grocer, Christian Tetzen-Lund (1852–1936), who becomes a kind of reverse mirror image to Hansen's own collecting, or more speculatively yet, his 'bête noire'.

Probably a few years before his retirement in 1915, Tetzen-Lund starts collecting contemporary Nordic art, then turns suddenly toward more challenging – and more expensive – French painting in 1916, a moment conspicuously close to when Wilhelm Hansen starts his own spending spree. Who inspires whom, if the general idea is 'in the air' or a result of the French exhibition of 1914 (see chapter VI) is impossible to say. But from the outset, Tetzen-Lund's acquisitions are of

a slightly different, more daring nature. Paintings by Matisse and Picasso (1881–1973) are conceptually at the centre – though commanding far from the highest prices – and with art by Derain – once seen as a leader in French modernist painting – as a possible 'contender' to their dominance. Most of Tetzen-Lund's other purchases can be seen as creating an interpretive 'web' and background to the works of Matisse and Picasso (Goldschmidt 1917), who are at the time already conceptualised – at least by some – as the leaders

of future French art, and thus art as such. Paintings by Manet, Renoir, van Gogh, Toulouse-Lautrec (1864–1901) and Cézanne, along with a few select paintings by other impressionists, are the precursors, and paintings by for example Georges Braque (1882–1963), Othon Friesz (1879–1849), Jean Metzinger (1883–1956) and the painters loosely grouped under the name of the *école de Paris* are the product of followers and pupils.

Tetzen-Lund quietly opens his large, centrally located Copenhagen flat, where he displays his paintings, to visitors mostly on Mondays from January 1917 to November 1924, though excluding the months of summer. It is quickly seen as yet another challenge to the policies of the National Gallery (Petersen 1917a), but given the visitor's ledger (Gottlieb 1984), not to mention the weekday opening hours, it is a collection meant for a limited audience, not a general public. These are primarily the young Scandinavian artists gathered in Copenhagen during the war (Brunius 1988), and the general cultural establishment. From the few known details on the hang, the domestic setting in Tetzen-Lund's home seems the most significant framing of the collection which, significantly, only gains a catalogue *after* its voluntary dissolution by Tetzen-Lund (Thomsen 1934). The collector nurtures various relations to Nordic artists, both of his own and later generations, and this outlook along with other known factors suggest that Tetzen-Lund's interest is less in leaving a legacy or a permanent institution, and more in the processual aspect of collecting and in the relationship between collector and the contemporary art scene, for which the collection is an important inspiration (Aagesen 2012). While a deliberate challenge to 'the establishment', the framing of the collection as a rather private reflection of its collector ensures a peaceful reception. A real alternative museum institution it is not; and it seems unlikely that Tetzen-Lund ever intended to make a public donation (Gottlieb 1984, Monrad 1999a). As

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a buyer of contemporary artists, he seems more a patron, interested in the ‘game’ of discovery and financial risk-taking and the cultural assertion of self, but without the aspects of ‘duty’ to society (cf. Gee 2010).

Seen from the vantage point of an Ordrupgaard under construction 1916–18, both as a set of buildings, a collection of artworks and as a strategy, Danish collecting offers various kinds of inspiration – to what large scale collecting is and consists of, how a collection with institutional aspiration can be presented physically and conceptually, and what omissions and opportunities are there. When critics and commentators again and again relate to the National Gallery and how a newly established collection museum or a private collection betters it, or reveals its deficiencies, this reflects a battle over what art history is, and who gets to decide its contents. It is telling that even when art collector Johan Hansen (1861–1943) opens a newly built gallery building with about 800 paintings of Danish art in October 1917, which is generally received as being of comparatively low quality, he frames it as ‘a supplement’ to the National Gallery (Berlingske Tidende Morgen 1917, Helge 1917). In his words, it represents a valuable alternative, a more complete art history, a testament to forgotten painters and a different kind of ‘art for the home’ (W. 1917).

As such, the private collection understood in the terms of intervention and Jeremy Braddock’s ‘provisional institution’ is already well-established by the time Wilhelm Hansen plans for Ordrupgaard. Various positions are already being filled, both as regards Danish art, old masters and the newest modernism. In this respect, the new that Ordrupgaard brings is the amount of dedication required to build an international collection and the intensity with which the public is engaged, both in the presentation and with the press and media. But the situation in Denmark – and in Sweden – is only the immediate background to establishing an international collection such as Ordrupgaard.

## 2. The international horizon of a collector

The circulation of goods, knowledge and people grows exponentially throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Large quantities of things and experiences from afar can be read about, sought out and bought. An offshoot of this is the rise in formalized collecting (Pearce 2005). Internationally oriented businessmen like Hansen – who trains as an insurance agent in England and who would later travel extensively, both with Henny and alone – have many opportunities to come in touch with the late nineteenth and early twentieth century cultures of high art collecting in the major European cities. In places such as London, Manchester, Berlin, Munich and especially Paris, which Hansen often visits, the private collecting of art is now a publicly acknowledged pursuit of the increasingly self-conscious bourgeoisie (Gee 1981, Pophanken, Billeter 2001, Fletcher, Helmreich 2013).

Concurrently, the ‘collector’s villa’ – as opposed to the inherited manor – develops as a specific type where integrated collections of paintings, furniture and applied arts become a fashionable way to complete the home in historically informed styles, most notably rococo/Louis Seize and renaissance (Joachimides 2001, pp. 70–72, Gloor 2009, p. 14). From France, this idiom spreads to the rest of Europe, with the Wallace Collection opening to the public in 1900 as an especially sumptuous example [fig. 68], followed by the Musée Jacquemart-André in Paris [fig. 70],

68. *The Wallace Collection in 1904, an early example of a collector’s villa becoming a permanent museum*



which opens publicly in 1913. The particular atmosphere of the integrated, private collection is similarly an inspiration to museum directors such as Wilhelm von Bode (1845–1929) who rearranges the Altes Museum and furnishes the rooms and galleries of the Kaiser-Friedrich Museum in Berlin with



69. An arrangement by Wilhelm von Bode of Tuscan, early renaissance artworks at the Kaiser-Friedrich-Museum (Room 40), photograph from c. 1904

renaissance chairs, tables and cupboards in 'style room' arrangements that have a strong element of imaginative, aesthetic composition (Baker 1996, Vergoossen 2006) [fig. 69].

Across the Atlantic, Isabella Stewart Gardner opens Fenway Court as a grand and deeply personal museum of European and Asian painting, sculpture, applied arts and furniture in 1903. News of this and other private collections turning public – not least as foundations for The Metropolitan Museum

(1872), the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston (1876) and Philadelphia Museum of Arts (1877) – reaches Europe and stokes the fear of an 'American threat' of collectors pushing 'American prices'. Chief among these are caricatured impressions of the 'billionaire' Pierpont Morgans, the Havemeyers and the Fricks (Donath 1920, pp. 165ff.). But at the same time, they also stimulate ideas of making private collections the foundation of new museum initiatives in response to the perceived inadequacies and failures of an older generation of public institutions.

The development of a diverse and complex system of temporary exhibitions and commercial gallery shows of modernist art, foremost in Paris, is yet another important and highly visible factor. By 1900, the curated and the single artist exhibition is an established practice; as is the primacy of the art-

ist's singular *character* to appreciation and demand; as is the use of temporary, alternative venues. A rise in the number of professional art galleries selling diverse kinds of art is a parallel development. From the 1870s onwards, art dealers such as Paul Durand-Ruel (1831–1922) and the modernist painters themselves set about creating a new appreciation for contemporary art through the adoption of new types of exhibition practices and gradually defining modernist and contemporary art as marketable (Green 1987, Zarobell 2015). The young impressionist movement collectively exhibits in the domestic surroundings of for example private flats, and their prime dealers further develop the practice of strictly curated group or single artist shows in intimate settings. These associations of domesticity, sophistication and intimacy become entwined with the commercial rise of impressionism, the linkage forming a significant legacy, one that is important for the present study. Incidentally, the following Parisian avant-gardes, from neo-impressionism onwards, would either have to adopt or explicitly *deny* the domestic as a frame for selling their art (Ward 1991, Troy 1996).

Perhaps the domestic frame for impressionism is indeed born in the private home – one in particular. Lamenting the money and effort devoted to exhibitions, Paul Durand-Ruel writes to Monet in 1884: 'I believe the best exhibitions are those held in the collector's flat. Since I have been bringing many people to rue de Rome [the flat of Durand-Ruel], it has been a revelation for most of them, who have never seen your pictures look so good' (quoted after Patry 2015a, p. 118). In 1892, the critic George Lecomte (1867–1958)



70. Musée Jacquemart-André in Paris, another example of a collector's villa, from an old postcard



71. The grand salon of Paul Durand-Ruel's flat on rue de Rome

pens the text of the luxuriously illustrated book *L'art impressionnisme* with the important subtitle '*d'après la collection privée de M. Durand-Ruel*'. The dealer's grand, bourgeois flat frames an imaginary walk through a French art history curated to culminate in impressionism [fig. 71] and by 1900, the same home comes to figure in Baedeker's guide to Paris as an important attraction (Jensen 1994, p. 60). Lecomte's book is also the first text to define impressionism as a movement since Theodore Duret's (1838–1927) *Les peintres impressionnistes* from 1878, and together with Gustave Geffroy's (1855–1926) similarly historiographic 'Histoire de l'impressionnisme' its significance in this regard is hard to overestimate (Jensen 1994, pp. 67, 98).

Wilhelm and Henny probably owned Lecomte's work, which was also a promotional text and a check list for building a similar collection, but we cannot be sure if they actually visited Paul Durand-Ruel's private flat, as many, many other collectors did. The artists that would later form the core of Ordrupgaard (minus Cassatt) are praised on the first page of the book – Manet, Edgar Degas (1834–1917), Monet, Pissarro (1830–1903), Renoir, Sisley, Mary Cassatt (1844–1926) and Berthe Morisot (1841–1895) – likewise two pages later their 'immediate predecessors', and these are also at Ordrupgaard: Corot, Millet (1814–1875), Díaz (1807–1876), Rousseau (1812–1867), Daubigny and Jongkind (1819–1891) (Lecomte 1892, pp. 11, 13). By the late nineteenth century, a number of other prominent collectors of modernist art were opening their homes and their collections to visits from outsiders (cf. Hoppe 1944, Distel 1990), and as WWI loomed, at least Wilhelm seems rather familiar with seeing private collections as he complains to Henny about lacking the time to visit the collections of Duret and George Vau (1855–1939) (WH to HH, 1919/02/14 OA) [fig. 72]. The combination of a precisely curated selection of modernist works in a bourgeois, domestic milieu as found in Lecomte's book and in Durand-Ruel's flat, in dealer's galleries and in the homes of other Parisian collectors seems, by the early decades of the twentieth century, a well-established frame for understanding impressionism and its precursors. Considering the slow road to official acceptance and representation in state museums, this bourgeois domestic setting seems the most obvious and natural environment for the display of modernist art.

From the viewpoint of a Danish businessman and his spouse, the collecting of art seems an attractive pursuit – it definitely is respectable. Collecting is also a practice which offers both introvert and extrovert elements: It affords socialising with a larger milieu of like-minded people while allowing the

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recreational pursuit of quiet study and personal growth in knowledge and competences. Perhaps even more persuasively, this type of collecting presents a fair number of easily recognisable *templates* to pick up – several of which conspicuously appear around Ordrupgaard and its French gallery.

One such template is, of course, the recognisable ‘collector’s canon’ of progressive French painting. Another is found in the ‘collector’s villa’ type of furnishing in complementary styles of renaissance and Louis Seize as found in gallery and ground floor rooms respectively (at Ordrupgaard the style of Louis Seize is actually in the sub-type of Swedish Gustavian, a more ‘Nordic’ alternative). A third inspiration is seen in the arrangement of artworks to form pleasing and evocative groups guided by symmetry and formal likeness, perhaps an effect of museum director Karl Madsen’s involvement, and closely comparable to the practices developed by Wilhelm von Bode and his circle of wealthy Berlin collectors. A fourth recognisable template is found in the indirect lighting from a roof lantern – perhaps first developed in British galleries – which gained extra currency through the influence Alfred Lichtwark had on several large scale collectors and their galleries and whose Scandinavian connections directly gave shape to the galleries of Waldemarsudde and Högberga Gård (Linde 1966, Lengefeld 1998), and indirectly also at Ordrupgaard.

The Ordrupgaard of around 1918 mediates between the sumptuous collector’s villa and the early modernist art of a cosmopolitan, Parisian bourgeoisie. It takes that cosmopolitanism and introduces it – knowingly – to a Danish art and museum context where it stakes out its own unique position as a mediator between national and international art.

With these examples, I have gone from broad context to more concrete examples. It is time to return to the question asked of Henny and Wilhelm

Hansen: what, then, *can* be known about the precedents and inspiration for their collecting?

The point, though, lies not in proving theories – comparison reveals parallels and possible connections, and the construction of ‘a horizon’ makes it possible to speak of *probable* transfer of ideas. In dealing with historical actors, personal motivations are often murky, and original intentions get lost in time. To a wide extent the same goes with inspiration. If we accept an approach which sees collecting as guided by templates and exemplars, it is just as important to ask how some practices are recognisable *as* collecting by others and in a wider context. The exact and conscious thoughts and ideas of a collector is not the only explanation of his own collecting practices. Instead, I will re-state my point that collecting is iterative and performative and therefore demands an audience. Collecting gives shape, fullness and life to already current ideas by repeating them in slight variation. On this background, it seems obvious that wealthy, internationally oriented people like Henny and Wilhelm Hansen inscribe themselves within already recognisable ways of collecting. Even if we cannot prove direct inspiration, their artworks, home, gardens and gallery in Ordrup were *recognisable to their time* as a certain type of collection and expressive of specific values.



72. From the collector’s flat: Sidney Brown, seated, visits George Viau in c. 1910 on the boulevard Malesherbes 109. Corot’s Young Italian woman seated near a lake was sold to the consortium in 1918 and found its way to Ordrupgaard in the mid-1920s. See page 372 for more on Viau and the Browns

### 3. The idea of donation, duty and the domestic gallery

What I dream of is an art of balance, of purity and serenity, devoid of troubling or depressing subject matter, an art which could be for every mental worker, for the business man as well as the man of letters, for example, a soothing, calming influence on the mind, something like a good armchair which provides relaxation from physical fatigue [...]

–The painter Henri Matisse in an article in 1908 ([1908] 1978, p. 38)

[...] by the air of comfort, ease and domesticity, by frequent changes of exhibitions in small rooms, the aim is clearly to popularize what is best in art without making concessions to the public taste. If visitors can be made to feel at home in the midst of beautiful things, subconsciously stimulated while physically rested and mentally refreshed, they will eventually absorb the point of view of the artist and remain thereafter on the same aesthetic levels.

–The art collector Duncan Phillips on the merits of his collection (1926, p. 6).

Let me pursue the notion that collecting occurs within templates – that it has to be an iteration of norms to be recognizable *as* collecting. As we have already seen, a number of modernist collections came to be conceived as involving not just artworks, but also their precise arrangement and framing inside atmospheres of domesticity and privacy. How does this, then, relate to the prevalent idea/template of donation *for the public good*?

In answering this question, I want to consider the case of Samuel Courtauld as exemplary. When donating his home and parts of his art collection to the newly established Courtauld Institute of Art in 1932, the beautiful integration of modernist artworks, interior architecture and tasteful furnishing would soon be transformed. The whole had perhaps lost its personal appeal, the ensemble a too powerful remembrance, after the death of his wife, Elizabeth,

in late 1931 (Murdoch 1994). But before their transformation, the living quarters of the stately Home House (by Robert Adam, c. 1770) in Portman Square, Westminster, were documented in a series of photographs published in the respectable weekly *Country Life* (Hussey 1932). In two articles, through word and image, a carefully curated image of a now unreachable past is preserved for posterity. [figs. 73, 74]. The tasteful, balanced arrangements of modernist, French art appear as wholly natural in this melancholy vision of domesticity. The ultimate comfort of Matisse's businessman and mental worker among the modern painting of Cézanne and Manet was about to become institutionalized.

A few years earlier, the plan had been to let the future Courtauld Institute of Art reside at London University in Bloomsbury (The Times 1930). Adopting the Courtauld's highly prestigious town house was a radical change in plans; seemingly an afterthought which actually amounted to a programmatic intervention in art history. The Adam style town house and the exquisite modernist collection now came to structure the daily life of the new research and educational institute. Paradoxically, this institutionalization meant the successful translation and popularization of a domestic frame for the understanding and appreciation of art. A previously exclusive experience became the basis of the first art historical university department in the UK where research and teaching were to be confined within an atmosphere of private comfort. On a weekly basis, the general public was also allowed access to both art and interiors. The appeal of the domesticized galleries was thus broadened to include both professional and popular audiences.

Samuel Courtauld came to influence the belated acceptance of modernist art – Cézanne in particular – in Britain in several ways, most significantly by setting up, directing and funding an initiative to acquire artworks for the Tate and National galleries that were meant to supplement Hugh Lane's

(1875–1915) previous and controversial bequest (House 1994, p. 14), and by founding and funding a research and teaching institution with its own, public art collection. His ideals as he intervened in the British art world have later been critically analysed as aiming to ‘maintain historically proven standards



73. The front parlour of Courtauld's Home House, photograph from c. 1931 not long before the house was given over to the Institute

of aesthetic judgement [i.e. connoisseurship and ‘amateurism’] whilst at the same time promoting a belief in art education as a “civilising” force, able to instil humanist values of responsible citizenship’ (Stephenson 1994, p. 35).

If we, for a moment, step back in order to examine the idea of public utility at face value, it does not follow logically that

the public's interest is best served by the collector's *personal* insight or his or her *private* collection. In fact, Mads Rasmussen deliberately chose otherwise when founding the Faaborg Museum in Denmark (see above, p. 187). It is actually a considerable conceptual leap to believe that something so valuable resides in the private world of the collector that it becomes imperative that it be shared with the public *forever*.

That private art collecting – in some ways a selfish pastime – is magically reconfigured *as for the public benefit* is an important part of the general horizon of collecting around 1900 (cf. Gee 2009). The connection between Samuel Courtauld's ideas and his practices are in this regard exemplary in throwing light on the way private collecting at the time was reframed as public patronage.

Late in life, in a radio speech made during WWII, the British industrialist expressed an aestheticist belief in art as a type of religious substitute, a universal language to unite people across all boundaries. Influenced by the Bloomsbury group and the writings of Roger Fry (1866–1934) and Clive Bell (1881–1964), Courtauld would, in his own person, unite an elitist and connoisseurial attitude toward art with the prevalent idea of how men of distinction should contribute to public service (Stephenson 1994). It seems precisely in this coupling – of intimate, ‘amateur’ art appreciation with public education – that both the home and the private collector become not incidental,



74. The back parlour of Courtauld's Home House, c. 1931

but *central* to public donation. The Swiss collector Oskar Reinhart, another industrialist and businessman who was contemporary with Courtauld and whom we will meet soon, held exactly the same idea of connoisseurial art collecting, donation and the public good (Reinhard-Felice 2003, p. 67).

The sincerity and intimacy of the private home became an ideal for that aesthetic experience of art that Courtauld and connoisseurs alike celebrated. By placing the art historical research and educational institution bearing his name in his own home and collection it was conceptually and quite concretely *framed*: The same intimate atmosphere he wished art to evoke was already a given at what would soon become the most prestigious art historical institution in the world (cf. Stephenson 1994, p. 37). The exchange between art,



75. Inside C.L. David's collection in central Copenhagen, c. 1928. Room design by Kaare Klint (1888–1954), painting by Vilhelm Hammershoi

interiors, the domestic and intimacy was therefore a central part of his donation: it was what the private collector as private amateur could uniquely give, and therefore had an obligation to, if he wished to be of service to the public.

There is much to suggest that this idea – that public donation should be both artworks *and* their right and proper frame – was an entrenched part of the horizon of collecting in the first half of the twentieth century: The intimacy and privacy of the collector's gallery, and even of his person, was itself something of value to the public since it could show a way to experience art. That the collector's home – or home-like intimation – was indispensable to the idea of public donation therefore found its justification in various ideas about intimate, even religiously tinged, communion with artworks.

Sometime after WWII, the very close connection between public donation, art, the domestic and connoisseurial tradition seems to have waned. A contemporary Danish example with relevance to Ordrupgaard is the C.L. David Foundation and Collection [fig. 75]. This collection museum of applied arts, but encompassing early modernist, Danish paintings similar to that of the Hansen-family, was formally established just after WWII in the centre

of Copenhagen next to the grand public park of The King's Gardens, but its origin goes back to the early twentieth century. As a donation, it points both backward and forward in time.

Its founder, C.L. David (1878–1960), was a lawyer and business-man whose paths crossed with those of Wilhelm and the Hansen-family and in many ways David shared his contemporary's collecting horizon. David was, by personal acquaintances and preference, therefore strongly interwoven in the same international cultures of collecting (Hvidt 2008).

At the founding in 1945, David expressed his wish that this still developing, but economically now very well-endowed institution more or less situated in his own home would also be a 'supplement' to another museum (this time to the Museum of Applied Arts, Da: 'Kunstindustrimuseet'); that it would be a place where 'home-like and intimate arrangements' would give particular enjoyment to visitors. He wished not for a museum of universal and systematic surveys, but one which presumably would educate visitors in how to appreciate art in a connoisseurial, joyful way (David 1948, p. 9). With this, David would, on one hand, strongly circumscribe the frame set for his future institution in the manner of many previous donations: forever it was to be *framed* through an intimate, connoisseurial appreciation of art in a fixed domestic setting. But then, on the other hand, he specifically refrained from circumscribing *the contents* of the collection or ending its growth at his own death.

David's Collection shared similarities with Ordrupgaard, as it did with the earlier Hirschsprung Collection, and it embraced the same ideas of private collecting and public obligation. But by stressing the collection frame while opening up to future change and development of its contents (von Folsach

1995, p. 37), the David Collection would, paradoxically for such an exclusive collection, point toward future museum practices.

In the end, the civilizing and uplifting role of both mental and physical comfort seems a central factor in making a public gift out of private collecting. The tired feet and tired eyes of so-called ‘museum fatigue’ had been an acknowledged problem for the large museums for quite some time (Leahy 2012). The donation of a collection strictly curated as restful, intimate and interesting was a way to *help* a broader part of society to the ultimately spiritual benefits resting with art. This marked perhaps a logical development in the ideas of the educational benefit of meeting art. The secular museum ritual (see above, p. 114) was now to be based on *intimacy* rather than the awe demanded from universal survey museums.

#### 4. Spiritual donation

Renowned museum director Alfred Lichtwark described the role of the art collector in a double-feature on the nature and importance of collecting in 1912: ‘He is the Lake Moeris [in lower Egypt], which conserves the life giving element in bad times, he is the great reservoir for the future’ (Lichtwark 1912a, p. 233). Art is itself a resource which springs from the people and helps shape them in turn; collecting art is itself the highest imaginable ‘Bildung’ (education/ennoblement). Where there had recently been too much loss of great art for Germany, it was now time for collectors to go forward and actively shape the future of museums and of their nation (Lichtwark 1912a, Lichtwark 1912b).

Very few collectors are mentioned directly in the text, but the many image captions complete with ownership status make it clear who were the heroes of modern and contemporary collecting. Back in the Netherlands, ambitious art collector Helene Kröller-Müller complained that *she* was not mentioned in Lichtwark’s articles. After all, she had set herself the task to gather artworks which would ‘stand the test of time ... because I collect to give the future generations that which I consider the best in life’ (Helene Kröller-Müller cited after Jonge 2004, p. 23). In several ways, Helene Kröller-Müller represented the epitome of the collecting practice Lichtwark hoped to stimulate through his glowing prose; except, of course, the lack of a masculine article – throughout his feature, the collector (Ge: ‘*der* Sammler’) is presumed male.

From when she began collecting in 1908 till her death in 1939, Helene Kröller-Müller built a large collection of French and Dutch modernist and especially post-impressionist art, which encompassed about 97 paintings and 185 works on paper by van Gogh. From 1913, the collection was exhibited in a house on posh Lange Voorhout in Den Haag and open to visitors by

prior appointment; enough of an attraction to be mentioned in guide books (Baedeker 1927). As a collection, it was not in any way an attempt at completeness, rather it followed a specific programme.

Helene Kröller-Müller had an uneasy place in conservative, Dutch society



76. The first iteration of the Kröller-Müller Museum in Den Haag (1913–1937). Photo from c. 1930

which did not necessarily welcome a strong-willed woman of bourgeois, German background with incredible wealth. Her collecting has convincingly been interpreted as a search for meaning and self-expression in a personal project of her own choosing, but also as a way to find a place in her adoptive country and in turn to shape the nation itself (Jonge 2004, Rovers 2009): art collecting as interven-

tion in other words. Her position thus mirrors that of a number of strong women collectors of applied arts, old master paintings and modernist art of the era who used their collections to perform non-normative positions and to overcome traditional limits (Macleod 2008, Higonnet 2009, pp. 151-157). Treating the promise of public donation as something obvious and self-evident was to perform yourself as equal – to men, to the rest of the nation, to the closed ranks of the Dutch upper class.

Allied with H.P. Bremmer, her sometimes employee and confidante, who also organised the hang of her art, and who was an influential art critic, promoter and educator in his own right, Kröller-Müller displayed no qualms in dictating the direction of individual artists and architects; she would put

them under various contracts or withheld purchases if their production was not deemed adequate (Troy 2004, Balk 2006). Her collecting practices were therefore an intervention in the Dutch art world on several levels: impacting the prices and hierarchies of modernist art, guiding its reception by engaging with a broader audience while seeking to shape the future of the nation's visual arts. All of this, to some degree, under the mantle of *for the public good*: 'assembled for the benefit and enjoyment of the community, this collection is intended to illustrate the development of both the individual, modern artist and the art of our times in general' (Helene Kröller-Müller cited after Kooten 1993, p. 7).



77. An arrangement of artworks around a centre table in the first Kröller-Müller Museum – possibly for study and civil discussion? Photo from c. 1930

But there is a constant tension within this horizon of what constitutes collecting and apparently activist and idealist goals: performatively, collecting must be recognisable *as collecting* in order to 'work', a circumstance which introduces an element of the conservative. Meanwhile, the wish to use the collection as the basis of intervention – to make a change – constitutes a direct challenge to established norms. Interventionist collecting finds itself in a bind. The pleasantly domestic and comfortable framing of much of the provisional institutions of modernist art was a solution; indeed, the home-like became the major way to integrate the otherwise radical or challenging. As seen, the frame itself was also a central part of the message carried since it would, ideally, foster a close and possibly spiritual connection to art. Helene

Kröller-Müller's first museum in Den Haag was eminently bourgeois with its furniture, wallpapers, rugs and skirting boards as in a proper home.

Even then, things can be even more complex. In the case of Samuel Courtauld, the idea of collecting and public donation as a duty was, as I have argued, cover-



78. The Titian Room at Fenway Court in 1926, an example of Isabella Stewart Gardner's highly personal orchestration of objects and artworks

ing a wish to memorialise the past while keeping it at arm's length. The intimate enjoyment of art in a home-like, private setting which perhaps came to be associated with happier times, was enshrined as the frame and product of the future Courtauld Institute. An even more obvious example of memorialisation through intimate experience is Elizabeth Stewart Gardener's Fenway Court (later Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum). Her large Boston house was purpose-built for her collection as it was gradually built up over the years. Already during Gardner's life time, the provisional institution came to represent an attempt at arresting time, to

fossilize and preserve forever (Gamboni 2007). Medieval, renaissance and baroque fittings, furniture and paintings from Europe were arranged in dense assemblages whose meanings were often intensely private and impenetrable (Higonnet 2009, pp. 157-169). The collection itself became like a theatre of memory, the centuries old idea that arranging things meaningfully in total environments can give specific insights and epiphanies (Pearce 2005, p. 113).

Here, intimacy went hand in hand with a backward-looking memorialisation of the collector herself, her life and experiences.

Thus we have several ideas of the good, public *or* private, coming from the donation of an art collection: memorialisation and self-performance, the promotion of spirituality, educating people in the intimate enjoyment of art. Helene Kröller-Müller and Elizabeth Stewart Gardner were independent, women collectors who used their collecting activities to define themselves, and who founded museums for the public benefit where art was intimately and even spiritually framed. Yet, their practices were also *very* different.

At the Kröller-Müller museum in Den Haag, the bourgeois interiors seem to have kept the artworks on display inside a reassuringly intimate frame, conducive to a positive and relaxed appreciation. It was exactly, or at least on the surface of it, the type of connoisseurial and perhaps leisurely atmosphere other public donations of collection museums sought to foster. The practices of Helene Kröller-Müller were very much on the side of a privileged and intimate communion with artworks – the connoisseur's or amateur's private 'moment' (Kooten 1993, Balk 2006). But in her museum and in her published ideas of art, the works themselves were *central* when decoding their meaning, while her own person was not. Kröller-Müller's modernist art collection was a document of progress, and as such it was partly open toward the future. Intimacy was foremost a way to further the reception and dissemination of art's *spiritual* side.

The good to come from experiencing paintings by van Gogh, Dutch and of French modernist art was to Helene Kröller-Müller a question of learning to see art as 'objectified emotion'. This was an idea stemming from Bremmer's 'practical aesthetic' which consisted of close and involved readings of artworks, often through civil discussion, where the consideration of formal character-



79. van Gogh drawings of peasants and farm workers and Dutch ceramics at the new Kröller-Müller Museum in Hoge Veluwe around the time of the opening in 1938

istics was a central method. Artworks and their forms and colours reveal the genius of the artist, his personality and emotions, and the study of artworks could therefore mean a type of communion *with* the artist. Kröller-Müller's collection of modernist art was structured as a highly select survey of the gradual breakthrough of artistic emotion, and of the genius' outsider-status, leading up to and beyond van Gogh (Kooten 1993, Jonge 2004, pp. 19-20). The best of art presented a struggle between reality and the ideal, the physical and spiritual, nature and abstraction (Troy 2004, p. 37). In the place of organised religion was now the viewing of art, as Samuel Courtauld would also proclaim.

The insights that a place like Isabella Stewart Gardner's Fenway Court promised were almost occult in nature since the dense atmosphere and pres-



80. From the new Kröller-Müller Museum in around the time of the opening in 1938

entation seemed to demand the use of hidden knowledge. It was, in this respect, a psychologized, *Victorian* interior. In Den Haag, the value of art was also understood to be connected to deep emotions, but these could ideally be experienced openly by simply *looking* at the art; and perhaps discussing it.

Finally, after decades in the making, the new, now permanent and publicly owned Kröller-Müller Museum opened in 1938 in an ostensibly temporary building by Henry van de Velde in the middle of very extensive lands donated by the Kröller-Müller-family. The rustic surroundings of dunes and forest ensured a framing in terms of a retreat from the everyday world, a harmonious synthesis of nature and culture as at Ordrupgaard. With an architecture and layout much pared-down in comparison to earlier plans by modernist architects Peter Behrens, Ludwig Mies van der Rohe (1886–1969) and Hendrik

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Petrus Berlage (1856–1934) (Mulazzani 1993), the new institution could seem sparse and impersonal. Collector, museum founder and first director Helene Kröller-Müller made sure that domesticity was retained – rooms were fitted with rugs, furniture and different types of applied arts, and artworks were incorporated in ensembles. The building was dominated by a northeast-southwest axis which permitted the establishment of a story of progression and forward momentum which followed Kröller-Müller's idea that art was the concrete manifestation of a struggle between the ideal and the real, the physical world and spirit. This story began with non-western art and artefacts which was followed by old master paintings before introducing the tension between 'realism' and 'idealism' in modernist art. The large collection of works by van Gogh was enshrined in the building's centre (Jonge 2004, p. 21).

The Kröller-Müller collection was planned as a public donation ever since 1912 (Jonge 2004, p. 25), and with it, Helene Kröller-Müller sought to frame and to perpetuate her own, perhaps controversial vision of modernist art. This belonged in its particulars to herself and H.P. Bremmer, but in other ways, as we shall see, it can be seen as a response to a new formalism developing in art criticism around 1900. Not by chance, Kröller-Müller herself admired the efforts of another collector, Karl Ernst Osthaus in Hagen, who was deeply concerned with modernist art and progress. The building, the art and the arrangement of it all was therefore a gift to the public of Helene Kröller-Müller's own, personal insights, but these were arranged in an ostensibly clear and evocative display. As a programmatic display, it therefore points forward to a discussion of display practices and educational tasks in the next chapter.

Inherent in the public gift lies the idea of utility. For Helene Kröller-Müller, as for Samuel Courtauld, the value of their modernist collection was not just in its artworks as individual pieces; it was in the way these were curated, and

in their framing which would further specific ways of seeing, understanding and learning from art. As with the Hansen-family's Ordrupgaard, public donation was complete package. Only in this way could the stifling, boring and tiring museum culture be turned around toward the vital world of intimate art appreciation. Donation is not just about the receiving public; it is just as much about the giver and their horizon.



81. Helene Kröller-Müller around 1910

## Chapter V: Collecting, display, ideology

The collections thus far considered – whether modernist or more traditional in content – can all be seen as maps; they are surveying and charting worlds. This concept of mapping (Whitehead 2012) and that of framing previously discussed (see chapter I and II), help explain the production and dissemination of knowledge these provisional museums undertake. While framing orients us toward essentials and leaves irrelevancies on the outside, the act of mapping draws links between different groups of facts and ideas. The function of modernist art history mapping will be a topic for investigation further on.

On the other side of the equation – conventionally seen – are the recipients of the knowledge being mapped and framed: The visitors to the collections, other museums, other collectors and the whole ‘field of art’ – as sociologist of elite and popular culture Pierre Bourdieu (1993, 1999) would have it defined – and ultimately society in whatever totality this can be said to exist. A sizable part of this chapter therefore continues the exploration of the private modernist gallery by investigating it as an *agent of change*, and with this focus, I take Braddock’s (2012) concept of intervention further. This touches upon issues of education and the transformation of an audience and how some of

the more ‘invested’ collections sought this explicitly through architecture and display, temporary exhibitions, talks and events.

This investigation merits an initial, ideal-type distinction between different collections. In a perhaps reductive definition, the older type of eighteenth and nineteenth century fine arts collectors who allowed regular access to their treasures mainly had a limited and select audience in mind – either visitors who came to their home on other business, or perhaps a limited audience of social peers and respectable people (Duncan 1995, p. 22). Their collections were mostly additive – the purchase of new objects was not seen as to fundamentally alter the rest of the collection. If we put questions of the more personal pleasures of collecting aside, the outward goal of showing their amassment would mostly be limited to questions of social prestige through accumulation, the beautification of their homes, or, more magnanimously still, the antiquarian preservation of cultural treasures for the future.

I think it safe to argue that the modernist collection marks a change in direction; a change that was signposted by the earlier interest in eclectic collections of old masters and applied arts (cf. Higonnet 2009). For many modernist collectors and collections, and for every one investigated in this study, there is a strong mission – it is an *intervention* in society – and as agents of change they strive for institutionalization. But significant differences persist among collections striving for permanence, and to ease understanding these can at least be plotted as two variables: One has to do with how open the collection is to its own inner impermanence, change and eventual transformation, the other has to do with how explicit an outwards programme of transforming people or society it follows [Table 1, facing page].

Looking closer at the three explicitly outwards transformative collections – The Barnes, The Phillips and Museum Folkwang – helps explain the distinct

	Static museum	Museum open to change
Implicitly transformative	Ordrupgaard, Sammlung Oskar Reinhart, Courtauld Collection, Kröller-Müller Museum, Waldemarsudde, Thielska Galleriet	?
Explicitly transformative	Barnes Foundation	Museum Folkwang, Phillips Collection

Table 1. Two variables of the provisional collection museums of modernist art in their original shape: Is the *still* provisional museum explicitly or implicitly transformative? Is it conceived as static in itself or open to change?

character of collections where the transformation of audiences and society is more implicit, and here the quiet, perhaps reserved collection of Oskar Reinhart “Am Römerholz” serves as a most illustrative example.

But my reductive plotting leaves an important gap in the scheme – that of the collection open to change but with only an implicitly transformative mission. This open space will come to have an important role for the future museums of modernist/late-modernist art and temporary exhibitions as I will argue in the final chapter VIII.

Any intervention needs a theory of how things ought to be in the light of how they are. Along with a conception of aesthetics come ideas of how art relates to society and to life. What came first for any given modernist collector – the dedication to societal intervention or the dedication to art – is often debatable; it is the framing of art as intervention that is highly revealing. The

chapter therefore seeks to connect the private, publicly accessible modernist gallery to relevant issues in contemporary aesthetics and art criticism.

Contrary to popular belief, but well described in recent art history (Jensen 1994, Patry 2015), the shape of French modernism as an idea and canon of artists was largely decided outside the country's borders – in the two countries that Paul Durand-Ruel, perhaps the greatest promoter of impressionism a few decades before, found most of his costumers: Germany and the USA (Patry 2015). This reception history along with the peculiarities of the French art world also spotlights how France itself never saw a modernist collection achieving its own institutional status. Instead, the powerful formalist reception of impressionism and post-impressionism initiated by Julius Meier-Graefe (1867–1935) influenced the English-language formalism of Roger Fry (Falkenheim 1980, pp. 19–20), and in turn Clive Bell, and both 'traditions' would further entrench the (not-French) collectors of modernist art; and formalism would later again influence the emerging museums of modern art (Hayden 2006). The willingness of early American collectors to buy French, modernist painting, and German language, intellectual reception were the peculiar promoters.

In the intellectual horizon of the modernist collectors, the values of connecting art and life can be traced back to a very broad, often very diffused reception of Nietzsche's philosophy and the ideas of the *Gesamtkunstwerk*. In a context of interventionist art collecting, this powerful idea has obvious connections to German reform movements that experiment with new ways of living, new types of education and new kinds of museums. Even in small countries such as Denmark or Switzerland, a network of museum officials, artists and various cultural agents with ties to Germany ensures that this influence is present and well-known. Curiously, the positive reception of Nietzsche's

works gets a headstart in the Nordic countries already around 1888 through the advocacy of influential literary theorist Georg Brandes (1842–1927) (Wivel 2009), years before something similar happens in Germany.

Having drawn hopefully plausible connections between an aesthetics of life and art and the intellectual context and practice of a small group of modernist collections, this chapter enters its last stretch by summarizing the goals and means of some of the more aspirational, modernist collections in the decades after 1900. As argued in the previous chapters III and IV, much of this has to do with the domestic performative, and, as argued in this chapter, with a belief in the powers of art. A final discussion of Ordrupgaard as an early example of modernist collecting aims at explaining and positioning this singular case within a continuum of modernist collections, thus concluding part one of the dissertation.

## 1. Outliers: Reinhart, Barnes and aesthetic formalism

Oskar Reinhart does not collect schools, not periods, peoples, styles or lines of development; he only collects beautiful works of art wherever he finds them. The programme consists of having no programme. With its ageless Spirit and only governed by the pure sense of art (*Kunstgefühl*), the collection is truly enlightening.

– Karl Scheffler (1927) in *Kunst und Künstler* on Oskar Reinhart's collection

In 1924, the Swiss businessman Oskar Reinhart moved to a newly built villa at the end of Haldenstrasse on a forested slope overlooking the town of Winterthur [fig. 82]. Soon, he contracted the villa's architect, Maurice Turrettini (1878–1932), to build a separate extension in the form of a picture gallery [fig. 85]. It is less than two years after its completion that Karl Scheffler (1869–1951), the influential critic and editor of *Kunst und Künstler* (cf. Zeising 2006), visits the private collection on display in both gallery and private quarters, marvels at its composition and remarks that, while French modern paintings are really the heart of it, the experience of these are supplemented and enriched by both old master paintings from the preceding centuries and newer German and Swiss art. Scheffler further states how no other European collection can compare: '[...] nowhere is old and new art as impartially collected at the same time, nowhere is the quality of the artwork as decisive, and nowhere does the historic appear as simply overcome' (Scheffler 1927, p. 4).

In Scheffler's analysis, which must have pleased Reinhart who would have guided the critic and impressionist champion through the display while explaining its basis, the collection transcends historical circumstance in order to show how 'masters stand on the shoulders of their forebears' (1927, p. 6). For Scheffler, and by extension also for Reinhart, this means that artistic



82. The Villa "Am Römerholz", built 1915 on a hill overlooking Winterthur, and the home of Oskar Reinhart from 1924. Historical photo from c. 1950

independence and originality grows from tradition, not in opposition to this, and the transhistorical view is the only true way to see the *actually* historically significant in art: Landscape paintings from the middle and end of the nineteenth century by Cézanne and Corot point back to works by Nicolas Poussin (1594–1665) from the seventeenth century. The close proximity of portraits by Frans Hals (1582–1666) and Goya (1746–1828), the first active in The Netherlands in the early seventeenth century, the other working in late eighteenth century Spain, invites enlightening, transhistorical comparison. All the while a line stretches from the nineteenth century French draughtsman Daumier to similar draughtsman-painters such as Goya, through to the eighteenth century Englishmen Thomas Rowlandson (1756–1827) and William Hogarth (1697–1764) all the way to Rembrandt (Scheffler 1927, p. 4–8).

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Schools, nationalities and periods mean nothing, traditional art historical systems are irrelevant; all the artworks are kindred masterpieces. ‘This is art appreciation [Ge: ‘Kunstlehre’] you can see with your own eyes, that you can tangibly feel,’ Scheffler concludes about Reinhart’s collection (1927, p. 6).



83. The Salon at “Am Römerholz” in the style of Louis Seize, c. 1925–30

Reinhart’s displays changed throughout the years as he acquired and sold artworks. Details are not well documented, though some plans exist, but in essence they remained guided by the same idiom of non-chronological arrangements of painting from the sixteenth to the nineteenth century with an emphasis on French modernism. Instead of a rigid programme for hanging the artworks which could be based on some well-defined, mostly external facts such as period, nationality, subject or size or simply keeping one artist’s oeuvre separated from the next – systematics which could be encountered in museums – Reinhart hung his

collection based on perceived internal qualities. In his practical aesthetics this meant that hangings were based on formal and chromatic likenesses



84. The living room at “Am Römerholz” in renaissance style, after 1930



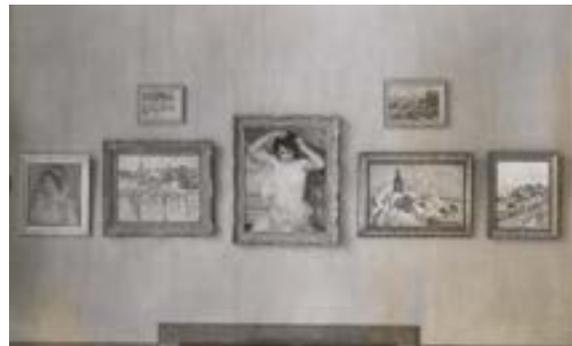
85. The large picture gallery at “Am Römerholz”, historical photo c. 1950. Note the similarity to the main gallery at Waldemarsudde [fig. 49]

among paintings, not historical or art historical aspects (Reinhart-Felice 2003, pp. 84–85, 88).

The walls of the two halls of the gallery building were neutral in colour and the paintings were grouped closely. Islands of contemporary, historicist furniture placed on rugs offered an uncluttered comfort, and ample natural light came from a lantern in the great hall and a smaller skylight in the little hall. In the villa proper, the large living room was furnished in a restrained renaissance style while a salon close by was given over to the style of Louis Seize [figs. 83, 84]. The arrangement suggested the style rooms first made popular with the collector’s villas of the nineteenth century, then developed further at the Kaiser-Friedrich-Museum (Baker 1996) to become a regular feature of art collections worldwide, private as well as public (Gloor 2009, Joachimides 2001). While the rooms at “Am Römerholz” would, to most

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86.87.88. Three different hangs at the Barnes Foundation where Renoir's *Before the Bath*, c. 1875, is the centre piece. From the top: 1927, 1928 and 1952. The last ensemble presents Albert C. Barnes' mature style of composition. Manet's *Tarring the Boat*, 1873, in the second ensemble was part of the collection of George Vau acquired by the consortium of Wilhelm Hansen, Herman Heilbuth and V. Winkel & Magnussen in 1918 (see chapter VII)



contemporaries, have suggested a consistently historical display in a museum-like idiom, the divergent atmospheres were mainly that – atmospheres (cf. Baudrillard 2005, pp. 30–66). Things not strictly related were lumped together in order to bring out formal and associative qualities of the artworks.

In the subjectively hung, densely arranged and meticulous ensembles of painting, Reinhart's private and mostly non-public collection had (and still has) a surprising correlate across the Atlantic. In Philadelphia, the businessman and medical doctor Albert C. Barnes had collected in earnest since perhaps 1911, and in 1925 he opened his newly built gallery just outside the city as an educational institution [fig. 89].

As with the Römerholz collection, the walls of the Barnes Foundation were continuously hung and rehung by its owner, the largely undocumented process only ending with his death in 1951 [figs. 86–88]. In the contemporary words of the architect Paul Philippe Cret (1876–1945), who was channelling the strongwilled Barnes, the walls of the central hall and the adjoining rooms were expressly conceived for the display of paintings in tight assemblages: 'It is desirable, also, that each group of canvases be made of works not conflicting with one another, and therefore to have each wall in a room of limited area to facilitate hanging on a panel only those paintings that harmonize' (Cret 1923). As realized, these walls displayed close arrangements of paintings where colours, shape and formal issues were compared and contrasted. Unlike the approach to display suggested for Reinhart, Barnes often took great effort to 'match' and double motifs and subjects, so that unrelated portraits, landscapes or still lifes would formally complement each other as parts in a greater scheme of balances and symmetry.

Like in the Swiss collection, the practice of display at the Foundation was squarely against the usual art historical concerns such as chronology, individual oeuvres, national schools or overt content. The subject of painting was

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similarly seen as incidental, and the history of artistic contexts deemed largely a hindrance to the true understanding of art (Barnes 1925, Dolkart 2012). Barnes' writings on compositional analysis and his practice of structured and symmetrical groupings in order to draw out lines and masses in artworks gives insight into an aggressively formalist and ahistorical art appreciation which Barnes shared with Reinhart. Both collections were hung and rehung with a focus on the qualities of the artworks they had at their disposal in order to draw out contrasts and similarities, and therefore, more or less implicitly, to emphasize a specific way of seeing.

Still, there are also differences between these a-historical formalist approaches to display. The lighting situation at the Barnes aimed at reproducing the more direct lighting of a painter's studio or the outdoors by having side windows placed high on the wall instead of the usual ceiling lights (Cret 1923). In contrast, the lantern and ceiling light in Reinhart's extension took direct inspiration from recently built galleries such as Richard Kisling's in Zürich, Eduard Arnhold's in Berlin, Hansen's in Copenhagen (Reinhard-Felice 2014, p. 143) and the Hamburger and Mannheim Kunsthalle (Linde 1966, Reinhard-Felice 2003, p. 25). This was a conflict in how to present painting – either through an 'older' idea of sidelight seen as closer to the original moment of production, or through a more 'modern', museum-like quality of light from above as glare-free as possible, which offered the viewer a more de-situated and ideal experience of the artworks.

With the notable exception of Matisse, whom Reinhart did not collect, both he and Barnes treasured the same narrow group of French moderns with Cézanne and Renoir as the most important. But the scope and size of their collections were different. The collection in Römerholz displayed a restrained and carefully chosen number of paintings, whereas Barnes and his Foundation quickly amassed and hung an astonishing amount of art with a particular

focus on Renoir, Cézanne and Matisse. Both collections found a particular mission in the display of national artists integrated with the revered French moderns and European old masters. Barnes' interests, though, were mainly in his own American contemporaries working in a French modernist figurative vein, whereas the Swiss collection attempted a more inclusive 'Deutsch' group of artists all the way back to eighteenth century rococo (Wegmann 1993).

The collections in the USA and Switzerland were in dialogue with the kind of domestic atmosphere identified in this text as a major trait of private collections of modern art, and which seemingly enabled modernist collections to bypass and overcome the alienation associated with a traditional museum setting. The scale of the architectural frame would directly invite a relaxed participation from visitors who could 'feel at home' in easily surveyed surroundings. Ideally, this would result in a more direct seeing and contemplation of the artworks themselves without distraction.

The walls in Reinhart's dedicated gallery were kept relatively clear of anything but painting – no signs, windows or anything else interfering – whereas furniture and other objects increasingly became part of integrated 'wall ensembles' at the Barnes Foundation. Starting to collect iron fittings and vernacular furniture around 1930, Barnes would develop more and more elaborate versions of these compositions where objects, chests, chairs and fittings would be displayed together with fine art canvases and sculpture. These integrated



89. The Barnes Foundation gallery in 1925. The private villa lies immediately to the right (outside the frame)

ensembles in his collection were quite unlike the minimal hang known from later museum displays of modernist art and clearly betray an alternative line of inspiration coming from the kind of balanced, symmetrical compositional units culminating in Wilhelm von Bode's suggestive display of medieval, renaissance and later styles at the Kaiser-Friedrich-Museum (Joachimides 2001, p. 83–85).<sup>16</sup> In this way, the Barnes Foundation shows, at least in the approach to imaginative arrangement, an interesting continuity from the nineteenth century cultures of private and museum collecting.

Just as Barnes and Reinhart assimilated various artworks commonly seen as belonging to very different spheres into their complex and gradually changing displays, they themselves could also be seen as mimicking or continually rehearsing an artistic project (Dolkart 2012, p. 23). The creative work with the collections offered the organizers the opportunity to take on the role of author or artist, rather than just the 'middle-men' and promoters of modernism. This meant taking the art-works at their disposal not simply as closed or delimited entities, or as ends in themselves, but as material for further creation: 'I would create a Collection of pictures – laying every block in its place with a vision of the whole exactly as the artist builds his monument or his decoration,' the Washington collector Duncan Phillips would write (Phillips 1926, p. 3). The promotion of a formalist, aesthetic display in the right surroundings while suppressing any historical contexts or too literary subject-matter of the art-works could thus free the collector and his collection to perform new tasks. It is this aesthetic and its propagation through art collecting and display which occupies the next two sections.

.....  
 16 Barnes actually trained in Berlin as a medical doctor and chemist in 1896–1897 (Greenfeld 1989, pp. 111–112) and could easily have been influenced by the young nation state's museum culture in general and Bode's practices in particular.

## 2. Formalism, 'new criticism' and collectors

Identifying what unites and separates the very distinct display practices in the collections of Barnes and Reinhart helps to throw light on what happens in other collections of modern art at the time. The shared formalist comparison of older and newer painting in a largely – and sometimes aggressively so – a-historical setting at Römerholz and Barnes' Foundation is no accident, but relates to the ideas of a new form of art criticism appearing shortly before 1900. Finding a leading voice in the art historian and critic Julius Meier-Graefe (1867–1935), whose influential work on modern art *Entwicklungsgeschichte der modernen Kunst* first appears in 1904 to cement the movement, these proponents of a 'new criticism' are occupied with how to approach the modern artwork itself. Taking their cue from the painting of impressionism, they aim at reaching an unprejudiced *seeing* of the work which also leads to a renewed appreciation of old master painting on the same often lyrically descriptive and formal grounds. Lengthy comparison is here the key method, often invoking associations to different artists and other works (Marchal 2014, p. 51).

The new critics, among them Emil Heilbut (1861–1921), Karl Scheffler and Emil Waldmann (1880–1945), were quick to ally themselves with collectors, the two groups influencing each others' writings and practical experiments with collecting and display (Marchal 2014, p. 53). In order to understand modern painting – one could polemically substitute with the word 'domesticate' – critics like Meier-Graefe 'absorbed the avant-garde into tradition and founded art criticism as a project of negotiating between past and present' (Berman 1996, p. 92). A crucial manoeuvre was the use of a Nietzschean genealogy of returns and reoccurrences that placed truly great artists outside normal day-to-day art history in a transhistorical realm. Here, a genius such as Manet could be the inheritor of Tintoretto (1518–1594), Cézanne that of El Greco

(1541–1614) (Berman 1996, p. 91–92). Actual reception of artist by artist was not necessary to demonstrate since this was a question of what could be *seen* in the artwork. Therefore it was a task for a new type of collector – under the occasional guidance of the new critics – to practically arrange and illustrate the transhistorical nature of recurring genius on their walls and in their collections. And the call was followed by prominent German collectors such as Alfred Cassirer (1875–1932), Otto Gerstenberg (1848–1935), Bernhard Koehler (1849–1927), Max Linde (1862–1940), Adolf Rothermundt (1846–1930), Oscar Schmitz (1861–1932) and Julius (1859–1914) and Malgonie (?–?) Stern (Marchal 2014, p. 53), thereby making Germany a centre of the appreciation of early French modernist art (Jensen 1994).

While being dependent on the concept of an evolutionary art history with its periods, schools and influences, this formalist and often lyrically subjective view of art deployed knowledge of the same art historical classifications in order to show how history was transcended by the artists whose work was in the first place used to define it: As Michelangelo gains a renewed status as a romantically tortured genius, he also transcends his ‘own’ high renaissance. The same mobilization of known categories in order to subvert them was employed for instance by Meier-Graefe when dealing with the question of national art. ‘French’ here became a question of liberal freedom in painting, not a national school in opposition to that of Germany (or other nations), and Paris was the intersection where ideas and art could freely meet. The particular system of dealers, galleries and the art market which had developed here was the ideal for autonomous, artistic production (Berman 1996, p. 95).

One of the earliest collections where modern French art and old master painting met in dialogue belonged to the dealer and collector Marzell von Nemes (1866–1930) and became famous after succesful exhibitions in

Budapest, Munich and Düsseldorf in 1911–1912 (Hipp 2012, Németh 2012). Hugo von Tschudi (1851–1911), the former director of the National Gallery in Berlin was head of the museums in Munich at the time of the exhibition and wrote a foreword to the catalogue in which he argued that the experience of older art was fundamentally renewed by the confrontation with modern art. A new kind of museum director was needed, one who could show the bonds between older art and modernism, and who would do so through temporary arrangements of the collection that could variously show the development of for example ‘formal ideas, a technical procedure, a coloristic intent’ from past to present. Old art would win relevance [Ge: ‘Aktualität’] by being connected to aesthetic values relevant to our time. And in Tschudi’s view, this new director would be followed by a new type of collector: One who who could boldly build new collections, was a passionate friend of art – not a fuzzy completist – and who struck quickly when his ‘artistic sense was brought into strong resonance’ (von Tschudi 1911).

Tellingly, Reinhart probably saw Nemes’ and von Tschudi’s exhibition in Munich in July 1911 at about the same time he started his collection of paintings (Reinhard-Felice 2003, p. 29), and Barnes knew about it and saw the collection for sale at auction in Paris in 1913, a few years after he started collecting in earnest, even contemplating to purchase from it (Distel 1993, p. 33). More importantly than personal acquaintance, both were heavily influ-



90. Edvard Munch: Portrait of Julius Meier-Graefe. Probably 1894. Oil on canvas. 100 x 75 cm. Nasjonalmuseet, Oslo



91. The south wall of room 22 at the Barnes Foundation. African sculpture believed by Barnes to be ancient integrated with a Renaissance triptych, paintings by Henri Matisse, Pablo Picasso and Amedeo Modigliani (1884–1920) and various objects

enced by the general path toward figuring a new way of ‘unprejudiced’ seeing and displaying art, exemplified by the Nemes collection. In his introduction, which is widely seen as a sort of legacy drafted before his impending death (Hipp 2012), von Tschudi gave a significant description of a new curatorial strategy: ‘Through the grouping of painters [Ge: ‘Meister’], the rhythm of display will make the most vital forces come alive’ (von Tschudi 1911). In this light, the collections of Reinhart and Barnes can be seen as exactly that ongoing exploration of vital rhythm where an always ongoing grouping and re-grouping of paintings in an artistic, subjective manner effectively conflates von Tschudi’s new museum director with the new collector.

As a programme for collecting and a method for understanding and evaluating art, the ideas from new criticism might, on first look, have no trouble including very divergent artistic expressions, as indeed happened to some degree with Barnes’ collection of African art, artistic iron-work and vernacular furniture which, during the years after 1930, was gradually integrated with his French and American modernism and European masters [fig. 91]. In reality, however, the romantic idea of singular artistic genius pervaded these

transhistorical aesthetics (Berman 1996, p. 96). Only artworks that could be ascribed to an identifiable, singular artist, and one who would preferably be either tortured or an outsider to the mainstream while easily fitted inside an established narrative scheme of an artist’s life (cf. Soussloff 1997) tended to find a home in these collections. While the new criticism coming from the German speaking countries enlarged the canon of art to include modernism it retained the idea of tradition in art which, instead of being an outside force, was now part of the experimental artist’s repertoire

The idea of intense, unprejudiced seeing associated with *plein air* painting and impressionism – and which in other instances might be related to a contemporary philosophy of phenomenology – also favoured figuration and some degree of naturalism. When converted into a programme of acquisition – it must be remembered that modern art was always the beginning and end of the new criticism – the open concepts of tradition, genius and observation demarcated a more limited canon of artists active in France and painting in a still figurative language. From a present-day perspective, the art historian Robert Jensen (2014) has convincingly defined this canon as ‘classic French modern’, a deliberately anachronistic, post-fact definition of what came to form the core of the collections of Barnes and Reinhart, as well as the Swiss E.G. Bührle (1890–1956), whose collection today is only quasi-public, and collectors later becoming donors such the British Samuel Courtauld and the Americans Duncan Phillips, Carroll S. Tyson (1878–1956), Chester Dale (1883–1962) and Robert Sterling (1877–1956) and Francine (1876–1960) Clark. Regardless of whether these collectors read Meier-Graefe, his compatriots or the British Roger Fry who took his central inspiration from the Germans (Falkenheim 1980), their practical aesthetics were aligned with the canon of new criticism. The constructed, indeed arbitrary nature of this group

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of artists has since become naturalized and thus obvious, partly through the efforts of the same collectors (Jensen 2014, p. 117).

‘Classic French modern’ denotes here the work of Manet, the core impressionists and the post-impressionists Cézanne, Gauguin, Toulouse-Lautrec and van Gogh, possibly also Seurat, but with an uneasy role ascribed to Monet, whose position in the canon was far from secure. Additionally, work by a select group of artists active earlier in the century, mostly Delacroix, Corot, Daumier and Courbet would often be collected. Works by the Academie Français or Salon-type painting were instead almost totally absent, but a little David or Ingres could find its way into some of the collectors’ displays. All the way down to Monet’s status, this selection mirrored the writings of Meier-Graefe who, among the impressionists, gave prominence to those who were seen as emotionally and personally invested rather than ‘theoretical’ as Monet was sometimes described (Jensen 2014, p. 120).

Extrapolating from Jensen, a simple scheme for collecting French modern art can be sketched [Table 2, p. 236]. This includes a belated, ‘optional’ group of caretakers of figurative, modernist tradition, ‘placeholders’ for the avant-garde at a time – around and after WWI – which was widely seen as in

optional prelude	Core collecting	Core collecting	optional postscript
Eminent portraiture, romanticism, plein air, realism	‘orthodox’ impressionists + Manet	post-impressionists	école de Paris
Important names: David, Ingres, Delacroix, Corot, Courbet, Daumier	Important names: Manet, Renoir, Degas, Pissarro	Important names: Cézanne and Gauguin	Derain, Modigliani, Soutine, Pascin, the nabis: Bonnard and Vuillard
Status of Rousseau and Millet uncertain	Status of Monet is uncertain	Status of pointillism is uncertain	Status is overall uncertain
Seen as: precursors			Seen as: inheritors and keepers, ‘placeholders’ for contemporary art

**Table 2. Collecting ‘classic French modern’ (cf. Jensen 2014) in table form. Each column represents a group of artists to collect, their most important ‘names’ and any uncertainties in collecting**

need of a return to tradition (Golan 1995). Important for my interpretation is how the new criticism understands modern art as primarily about the moment of visual experience; both the artist’s and the viewer’s. This in turn leads to a focus on the situation artworks are presented in. In this comparative and formal aesthetics freed of historical considerations, practical display therefore becomes paramount, and the quality of the singular artwork and the connections it can make to other great artworks the goal. This is another way to reach the compilation or ‘anthology’ suggested in Braddock’s (2012) concept of the provisional institution. Actively working with collecting and display are simply the best tools when you have a very specific attitude to art based on colour, composition and form. While the collectors overall followed the canon set out by Meier-Graefe, some adjustments and developments were possible. Especially in the question of national art, where Meier-Graefe himself had shown how German art could resonate with French. Collectors such as Reinhart, Krölller-Müller, Barnes and Phillips and before them, Karl Ernst Osthaus (1874–1921), would more or less directly put artworks by artists of their own nation in dialogue with French modernism.

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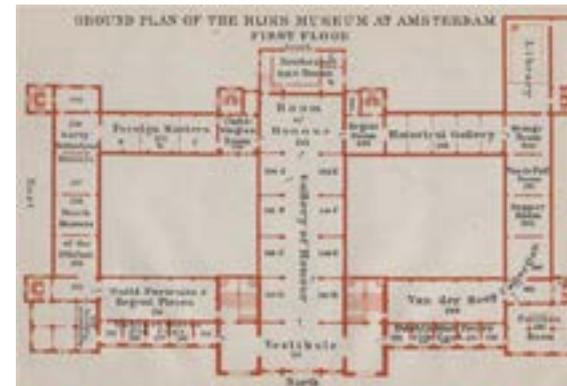
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### 3. Performing the museum map

In his 2012 book on institutions and art interpretation, Christopher Whitehead employs the concept of cartography to describe the practice and consequence of display and presentation in museums. Rather than simply reflect an aspect of the world or present plain truth in some form, museums ‘structure specific kinds of articulations between objects and between knowledges’ (Whitehead 2012, p. 23). Museums articulate these relations, and they do it through methods of differentiation, narration and evaluation. ‘[...] the map is not simply a metaphor, for the museum itself can be understood as a map (it is not ‘like’ a map)’, he explains (Whitehead 2012, p. 24).

I will argue that the work of mapping is similarly undertaken by all private collections with institutional ambitions; in the past as well as now. Critiquing the content or practices of existing museums by presenting their own alternative, private collections fundamentally partake in the same techniques of mapping the world (of art or other things). Essentially, museums and proto-museums all promote some ‘interpretive agencies’ while denying others, and their practices lay out how the world is divided into categories, how these relate and the relative worth of things, people and concepts that are mapped (Whitehead 2012, pp. 24–35). In museums and collections this approach means different things at different times, but the basic mechanisms have been built into the fabric of publicly accessible galleries since the birth of the public museum in the late eighteenth century (cf. Whitehead 2009).

The museum map, in turn, supplies a framework for understanding things about art and, in a wider sense, about the world. By showing privileged artifacts and supplying ways to understand these, I argue that connected ideas and ideologies of art, existence and society are invested with a physical presence and a more palpable ‘reality’. As the analysis of Hansen’s gallery in chapter I



92. A museum map: Partial plan of the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam from Baedeker's travel guide to Belgium and Holland in 1910

showed, this process can also be understood as ‘framing’, a concept Whitehead explicitly connects to his understanding of the museum as a map (Whitehead 2012, pp. 53ff).

Continuing my line of argument on performativity from chapter II, the museum map succeeds when it is read and enacted – and not just within the confines of the museum itself. As already explored, the attainment of identity and memory can, theoretically at least, be seen as a never-ending number of performative acts. The museum map – as with ideology – consequently seeks to be repeated, cited and enacted by visitors both during and after a visit until it attains the status of habitus.

With my overlapping use of the concepts of museum map, frame and performative enactment we arrive at a theoretical understanding of why museum reformers – and especially those with explicit ideological agendas – again and again have worried over and critiqued the lack of visitors or signs of their fatigue, bewilderment or disinterest (Sheehan 2000, Joachimides 2001, Leahy 2012). While they might not have needed the theoretical approach used here, it helps explain why the same reformers have drawn up so many variations of so many maps; all in the service of enticing the ‘right’ enactment from museum visitors.

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Dialing back a bit and returning to Whitehead's cartography, it is indeed a helpful approach to understand the private museums of Barnes and Reinhart as maps that, at first, demarcate a world of art into new territories and regimes. On the basis of formal comparison of similarities and differences, a deliberate and select canon of modern artworks are related to each other – and to older artworks whose historical outline is deliberately left vague. As a consequence, the map that the galleries present shows a particular, non-linear and novel view of artistic tradition, one in which established art history with its concern for meticulous chronology and lines of influence from master to pupil is denied. Instead, the history of art is displayed as the history of recurring challenges of form and colour undertaken by the greatest of artists. A search for linearity where singular works are reduced to stages in a progression is discouraged – the narrative has no definite beginning, middle or end. The map of modernist art thus presented invites to a circular or flaneurial walk with no final itinerary.

Referring back to the arguments of chapter III, the domestic and down-scaled atmosphere works as an important frame for this mapping of modern art: It blocks too sceptic or discerning attitudes by presenting the art inside the event of a visit with someone and by drawing upon the authority of the bourgeois home with its comforts and its role as a retreat from a stressful public life of calculation and critical discrimination. Anxiety over the 'foreignness' of modernist art is thus managed, while the stress on formal and aesthetic issues in the artworks reinforces ideas of art as vital decoration in the service of life – the kind of life to be lived in the partly imagined home of the exhibition halls.

Thus is encouraged a less critical and more connoisseurial attitude that also promotes intimate and close study. Meanwhile, the densely orchestrated

ensemble character of the rooms and their walls maintains that these autonomous artworks should also read as parts of the larger, unfolding map of art. Consequently, both a more distant, synthesizing viewing position and one that is quite up-close link the artworks together in a comparative, formal search for likenesses and differences across time and oeuvre. The history of art ceases to be a tightly woven chronology, but any ruptures or breaks in art are denied in favour of basic continuity of artistic challenges and explorations.

It would be a mistake to see this kind of mapping of modern art as simply dictated by readings of Meier-Graefe and his contemporaries when these can only be suggested. Barnes and Reinhart certainly read him and Hansen owned several of his books, while other modernist collectors with institutional ambitions consulted similar critics such as Roger Fry, Clive Bell and Henri Focillon (1881–1943), who took up Meier-Graefe's romantic-formalist position and expanded upon it (Smith, pp. 55–58). As an obvious case, the Phillips Collection, which will soon be discussed in more detail, also employed the comparative mapping of modern art from its opening in late 1921:

My arrangements are for the purpose of contrast and analogy. I bring together congenial spirits among the artists from different parts of the world and from different periods of time and I trace their common descent from old masters who anticipated modern ideas (Phillips 1926, p. 6).

The halls of the private gallery would, in Phillips' words, display 'modern art and its sources' (Scott 1999, p. 17) by eschewing chronology and integrating old masters with newer products of modernism, American with European. In changing exhibitions which Phillips named 'experiment stations', recent additions to the collection could be tested against slightly older works (Phillips 1926, p. 9, Scott 1999, p. 17), which might be described as the classic French modern defined above. In this way, contemporary American art – his other

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interest – could be integrated into an artistic canon and given a frame loaded with precursors through which to understand it. Generally conceiving of the displays in so-called ‘exhibition units’ (Phillips 1926, p. 9, Hamilton 1999, p. 28), small groups of artworks analogous to the practice of Barnes and Reinhart, the collector and his gallery built up a canon of American artists while elaborating on another canon, that of classic French modern and its precursors.

This contrast and confrontation of national artists finds its roots in the early historiography of art history and its distinction between Italy and the Netherlands (Podro 1982). By the 1900s it was French art that was considered the inevitable standard of comparison to any national school, i.e. Klas Fåhraeus would contrast his collection of Swedish modernist painting with that of France, Hansen would similarly collect Danish and French painting, Kröller-Müller collected French and Dutch while Barnes and Phillips would directly confront French with American as would Reinhart and Karl Ernst Osthaus put French alongside German. The earliest, possibly proto-typical example of this confrontation-as-reconciliation might be the Berlin collector Eduard Arnhold’s Regentenhof, where modernist German and French painting was exhibited together (Dorrmann 2002), thereby illustrating the clash between the two national schools that many, and among them Meier-Graefe, would attempt to resolve (Berman 1996).

But identifying the more or less explicit ideas of contrast and compare that make up the formalist museum map is far from the final word on what happens inside the galleries belonging to Reinhart, Barnes, Phillips or Hansen. For every attempt at establishing an overall survey there is also a landscape of actual experience where multiple, contradictory and potentially endless meanings unfold. Visual semiotics and narratology demonstrate that any arrangement of art objects will – in itself – always elicit more associations and possible

narratives than can be either encompassed or suppressed within a given structure (e.g. Bal, Bryson 1991). To every narrative of painters struggling with a particular compositional element or use of a colour can be found one or more shadow-narratives.

As argued in chapter I, Hansen’s Ordrupgaard maps an overall story of modernist art, but it is also a space for any number of more ‘local’ narratives made up of relations between paintings and other objects set close together. Some of the more obvious stories that played out between artworks have to do with gender, class, erotics, individualism and ownership. But many others could surely be found. In the case of the Phillips Collection and the Barnes Foundation, Jeremy Braddock has demonstrated how narrative – while deliberately shunned on the surface – actually functions as an integral part of the arrangement of the collections: in various configurations with modern and contemporary art, an Egyptian stone head works as stand-in for both the civilizational birth of modern art and the genius of the gallery’s author himself in the Phillips Collection [fig. 94] (Braddock 2012, pp. 96ff). In the Barnes Foundation a decorated chest of late eighteenth century manufacture emblazoned with the first owner’s name ‘Suesæna’ beneath Courbet’s provocative nude, *Woman with white stockings*, plays with voyeurism and the biblical story of Susannah and the Elders, while the preponderance of large, finely wrought keys further intimates how Barnes wants us to ‘open up’ the suggested narratives [fig. 93] (Braddock 2012, p. 144, n. 121 p. 264).

Even the strictest of the formalist collections of modern art – authored as they often are by one person alone – seem to acknowledge and work with narration through the close association of artworks. As these examples show, local narrative readings are not just inevitable occurrences. Decoding narrative and hidden meanings can give great pleasure and modern hermeneutics goes



93. The east wall of room 7 at the Barnes Foundation. Jeremy Braddock (2012) points out how a visual narrative is created between Gustave Courbet's *Woman with White Stockings*, c. 1861, and the chest inscribed with 'Suesæna Ackerman', alluding to the (non-protestant) biblical story of *Susanna and the Elders* and its theme of voyeurism

as far as to claim that the drive to interpret is a basic human trait (Gadamer 2004). In this vein, I will argue that local, heterogeneous narratives, often pointing in several different directions, are inevitable parts of the larger exhibitionary vehicle. But if multiple narratives represent the pistons and gears that run this motor across the land of art, what then, is the destination? What are the further goals of creating a romantic-formalist and comparative map of contemporary art? What kind of teaching did the interventionist, modernist gallery hope to achieve?

#### 4. Transformation through art: The Phillips gallery

Even though all the modernist art collectors here discussed saw their collection as having an important public role to play, especially for the acceptance of modern art, there are differences of degree. The collections of people like Oskar Reinhart, Helene Kröller-Müller and Samuel Courtauld are examples of a first group that, at some point, sooner or later, became destined for public use, yet had no strongly voiced conception of this public or a clear conception of the transformative benefit it might receive from modernist art. Going back to Table 1, their collections can be categorized as 'just' *implicitly transformative*.

In a second group we find the few modernist collectors whose collection work developed in tandem with rather outspoken programmes for the transformation of both its audience and wider society. These programmes built on defined understandings of what art was, how its qualities were experienced and what transformative potential it had in a society undergoing, and possibly in need of, change. In other words – they had an educational mission which was more or less codified. The 'rival' collections of Duncan Phillips in Washington D.C. and Albert C. Barnes in Philadelphia present such programmes, and the reasoning behind them can help bring to light some of the latent or implicit ideas behind a range of modernist collections.

*The artist sees differently* is the telling title of a collection of essays by the collector Duncan Phillips (1931) declaring the value and plurality of artistic visions. Writing on art from the early 1900s onwards, he gradually reaches a more inclusive view of modern art which will play out in the contents of his collection and on the walls of his gallery which opens in his home in a wealthy Washington D.C. neighborhood in 1921/22 [fig. 95]. To Phillips, the artistic product is principally a pleasurable experience, offering both the thrill of detached recognition and fanciful 'escape' through imagination (Phillips

1926, pp. 3–4). The individuality and person of different artists is of prime importance, especially in a world where individualism is repressed, while art is quintessentially a personal expression (Phillips 1931, p. 10). In the paradigmatic introduction to the catalogue of his collection published in 1926, he states



94. Main Gallery at the Phillips Collection in the late 1920s. The Egyptian stone head came to signify the beginning of modern art. Augustus Vincent Tack's (1870–1949) abstract painting seen behind it could fittingly show its 'end'. Phillips deliberately publicized the fact that a large sum was spent on Renoir's Luncheon of the boating party, 1880–1881, in 1923

that he had built the collection as a balm following tragedies in his life (the death of his father and beloved brother within a short time period), and that by opening the doors of the collection he wants to extend these positive experiences to all who want to participate (Phillips 1926, pp. 3–4). To Phillips, artists have 'the power to see beautifully' in all their varied ways, and to bring order and fitness and rightness onto their canvasses out of the chaotic everyday. For the viewer of the artists' works, this brings fun-

damental pleasure as it reveals universal values that are not normally seen, even though they are all around us. Admitting his debt to Roger Fry's idea that we are normally too hurried to appreciate the beauty of the world, Phillips defines the real resource of art: 'To have won the artist's point of view is to have acquired a resource within ourselves for resting our minds and souls with a complete change from our own affairs' (Phillips 1926, p. 5).

Essentially, for Phillips, the pedagogic task of his gallery is to allow people to find this rich resource in the changing forms of art. Opening the gallery

to the public is one step in advocating the plurality and quality of modern art, the attendant stream of publications another, and the practical courses in its production and appreciation is yet a third (Lane 2002, p. 95ff), but from early on, Phillips also envisions the development of a professional class of art mediators. These will become teachers, college professors, critics, dealers and museum professionals, but most distinctly, they will assist artists through valid criticism and encouragement (Phillips 1926, p. 10). His gallery is to be a model for the further popularization of art as he hopes for the opening of similar exhibition spaces elsewhere in the USA (Phillips 1926, p. 11), meanwhile his gallery will provide a place for advanced education up to college and university level (Lane 2002, pp. 84–85, 106).



95. The villa which houses the Phillips collection at 21st street, in central Washington D.C. around 1900

Phillips's vision for the role of his collection, while tremendously ambitious, reveals a pragmatic bent. The meaning of popularizing modern art is limited to a personal increase in being. The change in art appreciation is to be gradual; he does not think his gallery alone can change how modern art is viewed – other institutions have to be influenced to rally to the cause, and professional agents have to be developed so that they, in turn, can influence and develop the field of art. Not surprisingly, his educational beliefs seem rounded by the generally progressive ideals current in North America at the time, as expressed for example by John Dewey (1859–1952) (Lane 2002, pp. 29–30).

Phillips' practice of collecting and display might, therefore, be seen as a laboratory where experiments can lead to new knowledge about artworks and their formal values by using techniques of contrast and compare. It is also somewhere to discover what kinds of art are the best at a given time – these are



96. *The Lower Gallery at the Phillips Collection in the late 1920s*

the works that will move from the category of the temporary, often loan-based exhibitions, into the permanent collection (Hamilton 1999, Scott 1999). The experiments with a continued series of exhibitions which seriously takes off from 1925 is important in this regard: Phillips hereby defines an audience that, like himself, has a continuous need for ever new

presentations, not a static collection display. As a practice, this attitude tellingly sets his gallery ahead of its time and on a course towards the future museum of temporary exhibitions where the collection is treated as liquid capital – for the loan of other works and for repeated reconfigurations of display.

The numerical majority of Phillip's purchases for the collection are from American artists in the Stieglitz circle, who for the most part keep to a figurative language broadly in dialogue with French modernism (Hamilton 1999, p. 30). Just like the other, modernist collectors described, he shuns art that is felt to be too cubist, too conceptual, too disturbing or too cold. It has been argued that Phillips instantiates a 'taming' of the artistic avant-garde by excluding some and including others (Braddock 2012). The homelike and intimate character of his exhibitions can indeed be seen as a way to domes-

ticate his version of a patriotic American modernism which, by inclusion, was given an illustrious and carefully selected (French) range of forebears. In 1927, Phillips directly expresses his wish that American art would soon overtake the leadership still belonging to the French (Rathbone 1986, p. 10), a task his gallery would understoodly help along by shaping this art through exhibitions, public advocacy and advice to artists.

But underneath all these tasks of his gallery, at times another, naïvely idealistic social vision emerges, one which hinges exactly on the comparative method in art and on the unique quality of art to demonstrate unity through difference. From his progressive standpoint and his cherishing of the individual, Phillips has been a longtime supporter of peace initiatives and internationalism (Lane 2002, pp. 199ff), and in his vision art can, in this regard, have a further role:

If, in an exhibition of opposites, the spectators will but open their minds to each work and to each human being back of it, they will come in time to the point of admitting that there can be unity wrought out of a bewildering variety and a fusion of apparently insoluble elements and a harmony coming at last out of discords and an order out of chaos simply through faith in the interlocking possibilities of the fragments. Then the puzzle will turn out to be a picture, the symbol of a world and of a social problem which must deal with individuals in precisely the same way [...] (Phillips 1931, p. 10).

## 5. Transformation through art: The Barnes Foundation

Though possessing many parallels to the vision of Phillips, it would be the more isolated Philadelphia collector Albert C. Barnes who would present the most radical of programmes. ‘To see as the artist sees’, he proclaims the value of art and the transformative, educational goal of his Foundation (Dolkart 2012), for artists can distill experiences by cutting away the incidental and exposing the essential: ‘The artist gives us satisfaction by seeing for us more clearly than we could see for ourselves, and showing us what an experience more sensitive and profound than our own has shown him’ (Barnes 1925, p. 27). Painting is consequently a purely visual medium where form is all important and it should therefore not be judged on its narrative or literary values, Barnes claims (1925, pp. 28, 72–73), thereby channeling formalist critics such as Meier-Graefe and Roger Fry while not quite anticipating a future, aggressively modernist criticism which calls for a strict segregation of media (cf. Greenberg 1940).

To Barnes, who takes his cue from the philosopher George Santayana’s (1863–1952) aesthetics, beauty in art ties with ‘decorative quality’ and results in ‘organic welfare’ (Barnes 1925, pp. 61–62, Santayana 1896). And with truly great art, the reduction to essential expression and beauty will lead us to take part in ‘mystical’ moments of ‘harmony between the self and the world’ (Barnes 1925, p. 70) which means that ‘[...] the painful contraction of the borders of the self is at least in part abolished’ (Barnes 1925, p. 69). But this Nietzschean, momentary communion with things and brief sense of belonging has more than the kind of private significance for the individual that Phillips would claim. In Barnes’ vision, it leads to a teachable outcome with societal repercussions.

Deeply influenced by the educational psychology of William James (1842–1910) (1899) and the pragmatist philosophy of John Dewey (Barnes 1923, Wattenmaker 2010, p. 35, Braddock 2012, p. 112), his lifelong friend, Barnes subscribes to the idea that we can only comprehend the world through accumulated prior experience, what contemporary psychology dubs ‘apperception’ (cf. James 1899). To Barnes, just as the world itself is essentially divided into forms, prior experience also takes its shape as a repertory of forms in the mind of every person; the richer and more subtle the archive, the better the mind and personality will function (Barnes 1925, pp. 37–39). And from this viewpoint, given the skills of the artist in distilling the visual to its essence in what Barnes calls ‘plastic form’, a deep acquaintance with the best of visual art is a logical next step in personal betterment. Art simply gives an understanding of the world and the self – something which is not necessarily obtainable elsewhere, especially not for the black and working class people with little formal education who are the direct audience for Barnes’ vision.

While Phillips’ conception of art is that it supplies needed pleasure and solace to the individual, Barnes’ programme, while acknowledging these positive values, also aims at a direct betterment of people’s cognitive, social and professional skills. A little earlier, in 1923, he writes a somewhat boastful article in *New Republic* announcing the official recognition of his collection as an educational institution. Here he stresses the practical outcomes of a collective and laboratory-like education he has been experimenting with at his medical company (Barnes 1923). As such, the article documents a decisive moment where the art collection now becomes the main focus of a social project. Barnes’ continued attempts at developing a systematic and objective way of analysing art through his writings, the continued re-arrangement of the collection, and from 1925 and onwards the build-up of a school around

his efforts, present the merging of two separate interests – the collector’s interest in art and the reformer’s in societal progress through transformative education. For Barnes, as for Duncan Phillips, collecting and displaying art evolves into a project of intervention in society where an audience and its need for modern artworks will become explicitly defined.

This background leads me to an important point about the use of the Barnes’ Foundation and its gallery. It becomes habitual for Barnes himself to decline requests to visit his famous art collection and the idiosyncracies of his temper and often insulting manner is anecdotally famous (Greenfeld 1989). But an underlying reason for disliking casual guests can be found in the *manner* of education effected at the Foundation where the gallery has an integrated role as class-room and laboratory. In both academic and popular writings on the Barnes Foundation, the actual and performative *situation* of a visit to the gallery has been little discussed even though this was, ideally, much differently orchestrated than most other visits to modernist galleries.

With the densely organized rooms of the building perceived as the frame around prolonged courses and workshops in art appreciation, the ideal users of the gallery would be students and participants in a learning situation. Here, they sit on chairs in front of the wall ensembles and participate in prolonged discussions of both singular artworks – these would occasionally be put on an easel for easier viewing – and the properties of the larger compositions that Barnes authors (de Mazia 1991).

A central formalist concern of Barnes and something that has repercussions for his conception of its (student) audience – and by extension for his ideal society – is the idea of ‘unity in multiplicity’. The best artworks through history possess powerful decorative variation where, through pictorial organization, diverse elements are brought together in harmony (Barnes 1925, p.



97. The west wall of room 1 at the Barnes Foundation. Prominent are Georges Seurat's (1859–1891) *The Models*, 1886–88, and *The Card Players*, c. 1890–92, by Paul Cézanne

63). The writings of Barnes from 1925 onwards will focus on finding the harmony and balance in art through the analysis of singular artworks and their disposition of colour, line, light and form. The focus on unity through diversity echoes Phillips’ concerns, yet also here, the point will be taken in a further, progressive direction.

While Barnes himself is mostly quiet on the topic of his wall ensembles, his long-time protégé, collaborator and romantic partner, Violette de Mazia (1899–1988), precisely identifies them as exercises in variation and unity. And she goes further:

Because of characteristics that belong both to the selected paintings and objects and to their organization, the viewer, in his “informed” perception, is readily led to transfer qualities appearing in one item into the makeup of the others [...] (de Mazia 1991, p. 6).

Here, de Mazia echoes the pragmatist conception of how mind and experience work processually by adding information to information and transforming the whole through synthesis (cf. James 1899). In a parallel to this, the idea of individual elements adding to a greater whole is clearly expressed in Barnes’

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admiration for black spirituals (Wattenmaker 2010, p. 12): '[...] every Negro, as he sings, improvises his own rhythm, one which is different from that of the rest of the chorus. However individual and varied those rhythms are, they merge into the common unity which we term harmony [...]' (Barnes 1937

cited after Braddock 2012). Thus, the role of the black community in future, educational reform and the issue of the practical application of aesthetics are fused.

Therefore, in the Barnes Foundation, the display of its collection is meant to go beyond illustration by instilling active participation by its students. Each step in a movement going from the singular artwork, through how it is displayed in wall ebsembles to the student's own work with comprehension are to be seen as contrasting expressions of similar active and creative projects. Collaborative dialogue

around the larger arrangements leads to a better comprehension than could be enjoyed alone, and in comparing artworks students are taught about unity and variation. The actively attained understanding of art and the participation in a harmonious collective are both pleasurable in themselves since they combat estrangement from the world and from society. Finally, this aesthetic experience is not just something momentary but has a transformative outcome for the participants who increase their repertoire of known forms and perceptual matrices.



98. Albert C. Barnes with Fidèle, c. 1946

## 6. Transformation through art: Museum Folkwang as Gesamtkunstwerk

In its ideological and didactic way, the Barnes Foundation is a concrete answer to the passive, individualized and divisive museum experience so criticised by the museum reformers of the day in both the USA and elsewhere (Joachimides 2001, Leahy 2012). Both Phillips and Barnes seek a new way to display art and they do this on the basis of fundamental beliefs in art's transformative power and a strong curatorial presence on their own part. While Phillips mostly plays with staging pieces of a narrowly defined high art inside the domestic interior of his parents' villa, Barnes integrates modestly sized, aesthetic objects from diverse cultures and ages with wallmounted iron works and pieces of New England folk furniture inside purposebuilt gallery rooms. And this – Barnes' more uncompromising practices in both display and social aims – points to how his collection museum, and that of Phillips to a degree, mirrors that of another, earlier modernist collection in Germany. Here, the discussion (again) turns to what I will argue are the modernist gallery's somewhat forgotten roots in a nineteenth century idea of integrating art with life in the *Gesamtkunstwerk*.

It is in the small industrial centre of Hagen in the Ruhrgebiet that the spiritual forerunner of the programmatically ambitious Phillips' and Barnes' collections can be found. Here, Karl Ernst Osthaus opens his private collection in 1902 as a locally anchored museum of natural history, modern art and global crafts. Since his youth, the wealthy industrialist heir has been looking for a personal project to further his pan-germanic vision and to bring about what he, in concurrence with a number of reform movements at the time (Stamm 2001), sees as a necessary change through cultural growth. Osthaus' politics are both regionalist and nationalist, and he seems initially perhaps to be driven by a vitalist interest in nature current at the time (Kockerbeck

2001), but his newfound aesthetics, which comes from reading the internationalist Meier-Graefe on visual and applied arts, make him decide to change the direction of his museum. Either way, the goal is to equally educate and ‘ennoble’ the local populace through aesthetics and to stimulate a cultural transformation through the production of new kinds of art, crafts and culture (Hesse-Frielinghaus 1971).

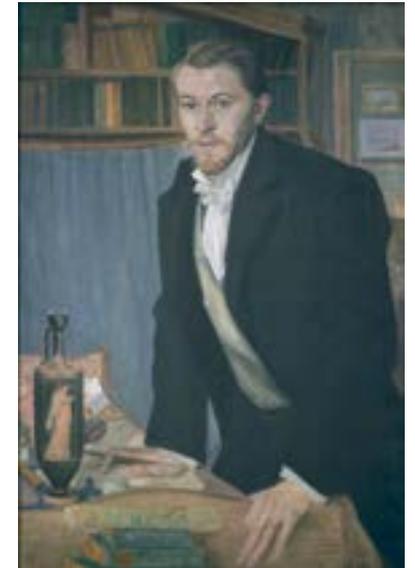
While the Folkwang and its programme of changing exhibitions and popular talks remains the most successful expression of his ideological interventions, his ambitions span wide. As a townplanner, Osthaus lays out a new suburb containing his own villa and houses for an artist’s colony he supports, he builds prototype terrace houses for industrial workers, is involved in the erection and decoration of public buildings, plans various artistic and professional schools, envisions institutes for modern dance and body culture and supports a number of local and national confederations – most notably the Werkbund which he cofounds in 1907. All projects are driven by a belief in the ‘reintroduction of art into life’ (Osthaus 2002, p. 24, cf. Buchholz 2001).

Osthaus publishes a number of shorter texts on art and culture and habilitates in art history in 1918, while maintaining connections to a large, vibrant network of artists, cultural critics, politicians and members of the intelligentsia. For longer or shorter stretches of time he functions as the financier of architects such as Henry van de Velde, J.L.M. Lauweriks (1864–1932), Peter Behrens, Richard Riemerschmied (1868–1957) and Bruno Taut (1880–1938) along with artists such as Jan Thorn Prikker (1868–1932), Emil Nolde (1867–1956) and Ernst Ludwig Kirchner (1880–1938). Despite many setbacks and foundered projects along with a tendency for not following through, Osthaus’ activities are all connected by the same ideological premises and a strong interest in societal intervention on the basis of aesthetic and collectivist thoughts.

Late in life, Osthaus would characterize this search: ‘One word says it all: Culture. Culture in all areas. Body culture, clothing culture, housing culture, garden culture, city culture, work culture, celebratory culture. We sought nobility, beauty and awe [...]’ (Osthaus cited after Stamm 2010).

Primary and secondary sources on Osthaus are numerous and substantial, but only in 2013 did the art historian Katherine Kuenzli thoroughly analyse his Museum Folkwang as a rather obvious exponent of the *Gesamtkunstwerk*. To her and other recent analyses, Osthaus’ private museum shows the most radical attempt at a new type of institution which had been debated by German reformers since the 1890s (cf. Joachimides 2001). A perceived crisis in the aim and role of museums is to be resolved by turning to the writings of Nietzsche and his dictum of (re)integrating art with life for the betterment of existence (cf. Sheehan 2000, p. 140ff, Dorsz 2012, p. 13). Thus, Nietzsche’s philosophy in connection with the Wagnerian idea of the total work of art, the *Gesamtkunstwerk*, is found in the integration of the Museum Folkwang’s collection, architecture, furnishing and display practices.

While the museum building in downtown Hagen is planned by Carl Gérard (1845–1912), and the outside completed in a more traditional renaissance-gothic-historicist idiom by 1900, the interior is subsequently turned over to the modernist Belgian artist Henry van de Velde who will also come to influence and facilitate Osthaus’ collecting of French, modernist painting.



99. *Ida Gerhardi*: Karl Ernst Osthaus. 1903.  
Oil on canvas. Osthaus Museum, Hagen

Further influenced by the taste and personal friendship of Julius Meier-Graefe, the already Nietzschean Osthaus re-orientates his collection in favour of the total work of art.

The three-floor museum building presents an attempt at thoroughly integrating various arts from different ages and continents within a complete interior design,

thereby presenting one continuous experience to visitors. Already upon entry, the interior signals a unified, stark contrast to the outside surroundings with its open, light-filled and spacious plan inspired by the Courtyard of the Lions at Al-Hambra in Granada [fig. 100]. Van de Velde's choice of the recurring motif of undulating arabesques seen on floor mosaics, columns, stairway, doors, furniture, purpose-built vitrines and display cases serves to create a sense of unity through repetition. The feel of a connected whole is further enhanced by the close integration of wall colour with corresponding artworks, in the use of stained glass windows, and in the manipulation of various surfaces and tactilities

(Kuenzli 2013, p. 505). The design of a number of permanent display cases set into walls or corners and platforms for statuary integrated in the stairwell banisters ties the applied arts and ethnographic objects into the scheme which culminates in the second floor art gallery [figs. 101, 102].



100. Looking toward the entrance inside Museum Folkwang's ground floor hall, c. 1919. Fountain in the centre by Georg Minne

Vertical accents abound in the centralized building with its basement and first floor forests of narrow columns, dominating stairwell, and a large circular opening between first and second floor which is echoed in a circular glass window above. While van de Velde's plantlike columns and ornamental lines tentatively conceptualizes the vertical as metamorphosis and evolution, the 1906 introduction of Georg Minne's (1866–1941) Jugend-style fountain *La fontaine aux agenouillés* (1905–06) underneath the circular opening explicitly spells out an idea of a collective, creative force rising from below and to the heavens – the natural history collection, originally the motivation for the museum, was kept in the basement until 1912 (Dorsz 2012, p. 13–14).

The art on display in the main gallery on the first floor gradually changes through the years, but initially Osthaus collects almost exclusively from the French modernist painters favoured by Meier-Graefe and van de Velde while populating the rest of the museum with diverse specimens of applied arts from Europe, Asia and Africa, medieval and renaissance art, objects from Muslim North Africa and the Middle East along with Greek, Roman and Egyptian antiques. Thus, the eclectic collection embodies the comparative, transhistorical and psychologizing idea of style and its free development across time and place advocated by Meier-Graefe in the magazine *Dekorative Kunst* from the 1890's and in his *Entwicklungsgeschichte* from 1904. Meier-Graefe's and van de Velde's advocacy



101. The stairwell in Museum Folkwang, c. 1919



102. The main gallery on the first floor of Museum Folkwang, c. 1910

of French modernism and post-impressionism is motivated by an inclusive internationalism, but for Osthaus, the museum and its collection is always meant for the advancement of specifically German arts and culture. From about 1910, expressionists such as Emil Nolde and Ernst Ludwig Kirchner are supported by Osthaus and seen as a renewing force on par with anything coming from Paris (Kuenzli 2013, p. 521).

Of vital importance to the museum as effective is the personal authority of Karl Ernst Osthaus. Folkwang's reputation rests with the man who in turn is defined by the reception of the museum and its activities. With his large network, writings on art and culture, local public projects and his support for numerous national and nationalist associations, it can hardly be experienced without the collector's presence acutely felt. The domestic character of the interior is noted at the time (Osborn 1904) – the Osthaus family actually

living inside the building for a number of years – with the personal and the intimate conceivably interwoven into any visitors' experience. Just as is the case to varying degree with other collectors' galleries of the age, Osthaus' museum finds perhaps its strongest signification in this particular framing: as a character study of the collector and – to some degree – his family.

In Kuenzli's (2013) analysis, which in this respect is at odds with another, recent analysis by Christoph Dorsz (2012), the Museum Folkwang is fraught with unresolved tensions – between the exterior and interior styles, between the original, colourful Jugend style and a severe, classicist lecture hall by Peter Behrens added in 1906, between the internationalism of Meier-Graefe and van de Velde and Osthaus' continued German chauvinism, and between the stasis of a *Gesamtkunstwerk* and the needs for an open, evolving museum institution characterized by flux. Elaborating on Kuenzli, one can add that in the attempts at a totalised synthesis of art and life through one organic collection as an artwork, the cracks and discontinuities are magnified to a point where Museum Folkwang can only fail.

The museum did, however, inspire the practice of numerous German museums, their popular involvement, display and collecting practices and presaged the reception of modernist art's history entrenched after WWII, with reverberations as far as New York's Museum of Modern Art under the leadership of Alfred H. Barr Jr. (1902–1981) (Staniszewski 1998, pp. 64–65). If it had not been for the relocation of the museum to Essen after Osthaus' death in 1921, or for the emergence of the National Socialist regime, the many productive outcomes and connections would have been more evident.

In his history of the concept, the art and design historian Anders V. Munch points out how the *Gesamtkunstwerk* is an unabashedly utopic idea, and how it is necessary to see it as both an attempt at creating a unified artwork and a

momentary, unified *experience* (Munch 2012, p. 24). Even for Richard Wagner, (1813–1883) who defined the concept more than any, the total work of art could only really exist in the meeting between the performance and the spectators' experience (Munch 2012, p. 76). Solely judging a place such as

Museum Folkwang as a an isolated artwork misses its performance character as a place for many types of ritualized participation by its intended audience.

Osthaus himself is vitally interested in many types of temporal performance – the music room is once described as the heart of the museum [fig. 103] (Osthaus [1905] 2002) – and he supports theatre and modern dance throughout the years while making Behrens' auditorium the centre of talks on a wide range of topics from the world arts to reform education, all meant to educate and to stimulate transformative progress (Wick

2002). The museum programme of changing exhibitions can be seen as a partner to the slower evolving permanent exhibition, and visitors, who would ideally consist of both workers, the middle class and industrialists, are asked to make repeated visits to the museum and to participate in its changing activities as involved spectators. The visitor ideally supplements and completes the museum as *Gesamtkunstwerk* – she performs the museum – while at the same time performing herself and her identity as a cultured German of the cultured town of Hagen.



103. Museum Folkwang's music room, before 1921

Distinct from the very real and intended stasis of the public museums of the day, the Folkwang is a dynamic institution which is only complete when in use by the people whose promised change is also its reason for existing. The precarious totality of the ensemble where objects, architecture, light and colour is organically integrated is also a way to offer the spectator an easier way *into* the museum. Any loose threads or fissures in the museum as *Gesamtkunstwerk* will certainly be held together by the knots and glues of participation.

Thus, the Museum Folkwang is indeed a *Gesamtkunstwerk*, but not because it fuses more than one medium, but because it is *conceived* as a total artwork – and because this imperfect and changing object aims at coming together *in experience* in order to effect change.



104. Display case showing a mixed selection of ancient art objects at Museum Folkwang, c. 1910

## 7. The modernist collection as museum

With Osthaus' idealist Gesamtkunstwerk, we have covered the breadth of modernist art collecting with institutional aspirations in the early twentieth century – from the rarefied galleries of the likes of Reinhart or Thiel to the reformist displays of Barnes, Osthaus and the transformative institutions they sought to create.

While the Danish collection of Ordrupgaard was the starting point for this interrogation, the search to explain the 'why' of an almost silent, Danish collector has helped define a small, but significant group of provisional and preliminary institutions of modernist art based in private collections.

In my introduction, I asked how all these collections displayed and presented their art, what relation they had to an intended audience and what they hoped to achieve, and I asked about their 'ideology of art' and how they compared to each other. The task was delimited by using Anne Higonnet's concept of the *collection museum* while the concept of *intervention*, as taken from the writings of Quentin Skinner and Jeremy Braddock, was used to ask what question or what need these institutions might be seen to answer. At this point, it seems pertinent to include a short summary discussion on what we have found and on the collection museum of modernist art as type.

The distinct type of private collections defined and interrogated in this study functioned as proto-institutions from their founding in the first decades of the twentieth century – as *provisional collection museums of modernist art* – until a more permanent institutionalization at a later date. They all grappled with ways to approach the primarily French art of impressionism and post-impressionism and how to make sense of it, its possible artistic inheritors and its role vis-à-vis a national school of painting. To this end, they worked with ways of displaying, presenting and narrating art – what I have identified as

framing – that were alternative to that found in the public museums of their day, and they did so in order to produce new maps of art and its relation to the world, to society and to life. Significantly, they were all caught up in this 'new' kind of art (some of it chronologically perhaps 30–50 years old at the time) before it became gridlocked on the whitewashed, neutral walls of the public museum institutions as a select group of works by a specific and rather small number of (mostly male) artists. In seeing their role as answering various needs of a public, of society and of art history, these collections expressed views on how to teach and disseminate the lessons of art, and what possibly transformative potential it had. This potential was seen as different to that offered by the existing public museums, and it was sometimes implicitly stated, while at other times uttered in much more explicit ways.

The most important points of similarity between the handful of private, modernist proto-museums I have considered can be summarized under perhaps eight headings, as summarized in Table 3, p. 266. These issues have to do with a status as intervention, a belief in the meeting of art and life, bourgeois references, a domestic frame, the strong presence of the collector, the primacy of 'classic French modern', a formalist aesthetics, and a sometimes creative use of visual narrative. Two important points of both similarities and contention – here briefly mentioned but to be further explored in the following chapters – relate to network strategies (chapters VI and VII) and the important questions of, 'how open is the proto-institution?', and 'how transformative is its mission?' (chapter VIII).

But for now, my discussion relates to the eight headings and the common ground found between the private collections of modernist art, their practices and 'ideology of art'.

As interventions, all these provisional museum institutions are narrowly concerned with the corrective inclusion of early modernist French or French-

**Table 3. The modernist art collection as provisional museum****1. is corrective and interventionist**

The collection is either implicitly or explicitly a corrective to the display and collection practices of national museums. As a proto-museum it can be seen as an *intervention* in an institutional or larger societal arena

**2. seeks to connect art with life**

It has direct or indirect connections to a philosophy of the reconciliation of art with life and thoughts of the Gesamtkunstwerk, the total work of art

**3. has middle class, bourgeois references**

The proto-museum refers to a world of middle class values; by its surroundings and by the visual motifs in the art on display

**4. is bound by an intimate, domestic frame**

A multitude of references to the homelike through furnishings, architecture and scale are present

**5. gives a strong personal presence of the collector**

The collector's person is always present as a reference-point

**6. declares the primacy of French modernism**

Paintings of 'classic French modern' form the core of the collection, most often in connection to a national school

**7. displays a formalist-comparative aesthetics**

Artworks and sometimes applied arts are framed in formalist, aesthetic and a-historical terms while subject material is often downplayed

**8. acknowledges/plays with visual narrative**

The juxtaposition of artworks, furnishings and interiors creates visual narratives which is often acknowledged and deliberately played with to reveal desires or performing identities

**Important and unresolved points:**

**9. Collections are ambivalently embedded in networks (chapter VI-VII)**

**10. Collections are divided on matters of their future: transformative potential and institutional openness to change (chapter VIII)**

derived, *figurative* art into a national canon. This is actively framed – conceptually and in display – via a formalist-aestheticist approach, which sees pictorial art as the translation and interpretation of direct sense perception, tempered by the peculiarities of an artist's mind. Additionally, most of these private proto-museums have a secondary agenda to change museum practices, audiences and even society. For this, most are strongly reliant on a middle class world-view of nature and pleasant, intimate domesticity which, ideally, will foster a sense of more immediate participation and experiential dialogue with art. Art-into-life is sought through a scale of private intimacy, comfort and cognitive immediacy. Variations exist in the details, but even inspiration from Nietzsche can be made to co-exist with philosophical pragmatism. Depending on viewpoint, this approach can be seen as thoroughly humanist, plainly classist or just realistic.

In their framing, the provisional collection museums are thus easily distinguishable from other contemporary attempts at participatory involvement and intervention such as the ephemeral, conceptual dada-movement's engagements, of which exhibitions were only one aspect (Kuenzli 2006), or the metaphysical and/or constructivist abstraction promoted at a more focused institutional level in both pre- and post-revolutionary Russia, and which later found institutional support in Germany at, for instance, Landesmuseum Hannover (Germundson 2005). There is a line to be drawn between the private, provisional museum on the one side, which is basically both progressive and preservationist, and, on the other, a more radical, revolutionary politics; and the line unsurprisingly follows the distinction between early modernism and the later, though now historical avant-garde (Bürger 1984).

The choice of modernist French *visual* art – with a preference for easel painting – and its active framing as an art made *by* individuals *for* individuals

has deep repercussions. As such, both the provisional institutions of Reinhart and Barnes, even though underpinned by different and perhaps even opposed political aspirations, in practice are rounded by and expressive of similar basic values, and for both provisional institutions it is the individual, rather



105. Hill-Stead in Farmington, CT, in 1906. The home of the Pope-family was planned and built around 1901 by Theodate Pope Riddle to look like an organically and gradually expanded eighteenth century farm. The interior was luxuriously furnished according to contemporary standards and with French impressionist painting prominent throughout the house

than, say, society, which is the first level of intervention; in turn individuality becomes the product.

In comparison to dada and constructivism, to later developments around the art school of Bauhaus, or to surrealism and various artistic utopias for that matter, the provisional collection museums of modernist art seek neither social upheaval nor to

develop a wholly different subjectivity, and their engagement with ideas of the collective are always rather tempered. In all the private, modernist collections, even when most touched by notions of the Gesamtkunstwerk, the auratic integrity of the artwork and the belief in art's and artist's autonomy are preserved. Ideas of individual temperament, even of genius, play a significant part. The central position of the collector's person – to his/her private ownership and personal self-fashioning – is an important reflection of this focus on promoting and performing individuality. The outreach to a public is almost always on the level of individuals, only at the Barnes Foundation,

and to some degree Museum Folkwang, is there ever a question of collective reception; and even then these situations are more an expression of the collector's privileged position as of any true collectivism.

But the goal of intervention and transformation, if not exactly the most radical at the time, does sharply differentiate the collections that I have considered with aspirations toward institutional permanence from the public museums of the time and the other private collections of modern art that have survived. Sammlung Oskar Reinhart is contemporary with collectors of modern-



106. Hill-Stead's drawing room in 1902. Paintings by Monet and Manet are prominently displayed. The home was not planned with the public in mind, and today the well-preserved interiors can only be visited on guided tours

ist artworks such as Hedy (1873–1952) and Arthur (1870–1936) Hahnloser whose collection was housed at Villa Flora in Winterthur and also the collection of Sidney (1865–1941) and Jenny (1871–1968) Brown whose artworks are preserved in their villa Langmatt in nearby Baden.<sup>17</sup> The Browns did not open their collection to the public, and while the Hahnlosers identified strongly with the artists they collected, their artworks were also not meant or destined for public display (Hahnloser-Ingold, Sauterel 2011, Preiswerk-Lösel 2005). Likewise with, for example, the idyllic Hill-Stead impressionist collection in

<sup>17</sup> Villa Flora closed as an independent museum in 2014 and its future is uncertain (Tages-Anzeiger 2013).

Connecticut developed by the architect Theodate Pope Riddle (1867–1946) into a private, total work of art, but inaccessible and closed to the public [figs. 105, 106] (O’Gorman 2010). Even more avant-garde collections like that of John Quinn (1870–1924) and Katherine Dreier, or of Tetzen-Lund in Copenhagen, were accessible in their time but never meant to be preserved as lasting institutions in themselves and were later dispersed (Zilczer 1979, Gross 2006, Gottlieb 1984).

While the idea of uniting art with life did not necessarily start out as a bourgeois project – Wagner was first a revolutionary, Nietzsche fought conventions and Morris had socialist leanings (Munch 2012) – it became such a project under the influence of the nineteenth century dissemination of middle class values. Since the private home was ever increasingly synonymous with life, arts and crafts had to meet Wagner over the dining table and in the smoking parlour, not in the public forum now considered *life-less*. Art itself has something important to give to life – and the villa and its attendant mythologies seems a new, better and more logical way to frame it and bring out its true qualities than the impersonal spaces of museum halls or city squares. In such intimate and personal surroundings, often explicitly overlaid with the person of the collector, is found a presentation of art and a release of its intended effects with strong potential.

To the provisional collection museums, modernist painting seen through formalist aesthetics serves as a bid to resolve the challenges of modernity and to realize life. Modernist art has a transformative value and while the roads to release were projected with slight variation, all collections had this specific temporal stake: By presenting the art with most present relevance – the art of ‘now’ – they intended to offer the future to its audience. At the Museum Folkwang and the Barnes, this future is prepared through instruction and

cognitive growth whereas at the Phillips Collection and Sammlung Oskar Reinhart, realizing existence has more to do with easing the mind. Both Samuel Courtauld and Helene Kröller-Müller directly suggest art as modernity’s religion – an ideal which is practically perhaps best realized in Klas Fåhraeus’ chapel-like gallery in Stockholm (though this particular collection never found lasting institutional status).

As seen at Waldemarsudde, with Thiel’s collection, and as demonstrated by Jeremy Braddock (2012) in his analysis of Phillips’ and Barnes’ practices, visual narrative never really disappears, even under the influence of formalist aesthetics. In some cases, such as with the collections of Prince Eugen and Barnes, the juxtaposition of pictures and furnishing in different ensembles communicates playfully to those ‘in the know’ about identities and hidden desires. In other cases, the visual narrative which occurs when more than one picture is presented in a series, gives content to a range of popular fantasies. But in all cases, the discursive and physical framing in so many home-like galleries has impact, and this seems to be both acknowledged and deliberately sought in those of the very calculated, deliberately hung presentations of which we still have documentation. Narratives of ownership, individualism and character – strongly gendered, based on desire and ideas of culture and nature – are perhaps the most frequent. These narratives are generally in line with the world of motifs conjured forth by classic French modern as discussed already in the visit to Ordrupgaard in chapter I. But, more heterogeneous and local stories are also told, often with direct and personal meaning to just the collector and their immediate circle.

Considering the similar workings of the provisional collection museums of modernist art, we find here a new type of museum for the middle class – for *performing* a middle class identity. These are concrete proposals for a new kind

of institution which is less about the passive instilment of art history, nation or citizenship, and more about meeting the individual and his or her needs and desires, and to let him or her enact themselves as cultured participators in modernity. Looking at just a handful of pioneering, provisional museum institutions has given relevant insights into a time when neither the canon of nineteenth century painterly modernism nor its institutionalization were decided, and these insights help us better understand the many roads that have led to the all-pervasive concept of modernist art that we are dealing with today. The institutional presentation of art and its histories is a powerful map to follow and to internalize – as it can be equally powerful to perform – and the same presentation is also a powerful symptom of the beliefs that many have in art and its ability to *do* something; to effect change. This belief in art's power as intervention applies to the collection museums that still bear traces of being founded in the early twentieth century as it does to the increasingly post-modernist art museums all over the world, although in recent times it has perhaps become less of a burning issue and more implicit.

The future – and with it secure institutionalization – will come in different ways for the collections that I have discussed. In all cases, final permanence hinges directly on the nature of the institution itself and how well this conforms to the role afforded museums in the second half of the twentieth century: More open to own impermanence and change, less explicit about any mission to transform the world.

How easy and how well the provisional art museums of Kröller-Müller, Courtauld, Barnes and the others become institutionalized depends on their initial nature. But this is a topic for chapter VIII about futures and failures. For now, I return to our Danish case.

## 8. Coda: The Hansens' gallery in comparison

What does all this mean for an understanding of Ordrupgaard at the time of Wilhelm and Henny Hansen? What kind of provisional institution were the Hansens' gallery, home and gardens? How can Ordrupgaard be compared to other provisional collection museums of modernist art? How *does* Ordrupgaard compare?

In the Introduction – under the heading *A little history of Ordrupgaard* – I asked 'what *was* the idea with Ordrupgaard as a collection?' I asked why so many expensive paintings were displayed to a public, and why they were shown the way they were. Chapters I and II gave some of the answers in an analysis focussed on experiencing Ordrupgaard in totality as an ensemble of artworks, interiors and surroundings. Here I imagined a visit while also dissecting and analysing the premises of same visit. I also argued how this experience might be seen as the true 'content' of Ordrupgaard. My answers thus focussed on the performative and generative role of Ordrupgaard – seeing this institution as an open statement and a range of possible utterances for different people to help perform, to experience and to internalize. From this approach, I broadened the field in chapters III, IV and V to an exploration of related and similar private art collections in Europe and the USA that I felt shared a basic framework: collection museums and provisional institutions founded in the same period and collecting the same type of French and French-derived modernist art. In the section immediately preceding this, I summarized a number of positions they share in common: correction and intervention, seeking to connect art with life, middle class and bourgeois references, an intimate, domestic frame, a strong, personal presence of the collector, a framing of the collection through a formalist-comparative aesthetics, with a view to visual narrative.

Now the search has come full (hermeneutic) circle, and I return to my original questions regarding Ordrupgaard, only this time I hope to be able to provide slightly more informed answers.

Identifying the most similar concerns of a handful of provisional collection museums of early modernist art strengthens and deepens the understanding of Ordrupgaard presented in chapters I and II: Historically, the Danish collection is part of a range of collector-led initiatives in the western world of the early twentieth century meant to integrate specific types of art and understandings of art into the mainstream. These initiatives are borne by certain cultural and political beliefs, and they seek to effect change – on visitors, on society and discourse, on art history and on the status and identity of the collector. All are specific answers to specific problems or needs. As a provisional institution, Ordrupgaard belongs squarely to this group. On the basis of this identity, and on all the previous discussion, it should also be clear that reflecting on the *experience* of Ordrupgaard really is the most productive approach to the *significance* of Ordrupgaard.

In comparison to other private collections, provisional institutions and future collection museums, Ordrupgaard around 1918–1922 and later is not the richest collection, neither is it the most extreme attempt at making a transformative institution, nor the most fully-formed intervention. Rather, it treads its ground somewhere between the exclusivity of Reinhart's gallery and the open institution of Phillips. In this light, Ordrupgaard is significant because it is an especially early, focused and forceful attempt at making an alternative museum and institution around a French modernist idiom in art, and also because it presages a number of audience-oriented museum strategies of a much later, post-WWII period where visitor identity and pleasurable experience come to the fore (see chapter VIII).

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This allows me to end the first part of the dissertation with a comparative, summary discussion of Ordrupgaard and the Hansens' gallery.

Looking to the immediate, cultural context in Scandinavia, Prince Eugen's Waldemarsudde and Ernest Thiel's gallery in Stockholm were formed more than decade before Ordrupgaard, but at the time of the Danish gallery's opening were still not safely set on the road to institutionalization. Revolving around strong ties to their respective founders, any progressive relation to a larger public or to the collection's future was rudimentary; Thielska Galleriet's swift institutionalization happened as a result of the founder's financial troubles. Fåhraeus' gallery seems an even more direct inspiration and close comparison to Ordrupgaard – architecturally and probably as well in furnishing and display – but was dissolved before any plans for an engagement with a larger public or for institutionalization had materialized. None of the three prominent Swedish collections were directly focused on an overview of French modernist art, but rather on a local assimilation of the same idiom. In ambition, Ordrupgaard trumped the Stockholm collections – and similar, less public collections in Gothenburg and Oslo and Bergen (cf. Wadell 1988) – emerging as a rich and fully formed collection and provisional institution from the day of its triumphant, well-orchestrated opening.

The successfully and permanently institutionalized Hirschsprung Collection in Copenhagen was to some extent a creation posthumous to its collector and owes many of its features to its first director, Emil Hannover (Hannover 1911, Saabye 2002), but is in several ways the most closely comparable to Ordrupgaard. The Hirschsprung Collection has the same intimate scale in architecture and furnishing and the same middle class and bourgeois ideology as frame and product as Ordrupgaard, and the same time period is the interest

of both collections. Through superficially similar framings and mappings, a sort of division of labour exists between the two collections as they seek to intervene in a Danish situation, one defining continuity and development in the national art, the other seeking to do the same for international (read: French) art. Both collections invite their visitors to perform a specific subjectivity within a narrative of art shaped in a more relaxed and intimate atmosphere. The same complementary national/international division was also found with Ordrupgaard's two collections – Danish art vis-à-vis French painting – though with the former kept in the living quarters and therefore never fully realized as complementary to the other. Letters between Hannover and Wilhelm Hansen reveal an amicable relationship and show that Hannover was briefed on the erection and furnishing of the French gallery, and hints that he also advised on its furnishing and even bought some of the furniture (OA, HA).

The apotheosis of French nineteenth century art and its position as reciprocal to a national school was a feature of several large private collections around 1900 (Pophanken, Billeter 2001), not all of them intended for later institutionalization. At the beginning of the twentieth century, the best of the previous century's art was quickly narrowed down to specific French movements in an alliance between critics, collectors and dealers. Ordrupgaard's particular and loose retelling of the story of the development of French art from the early nineteenth century to the beginning of the twentieth century is not an especially surprising tale since it had already been canonized by 1918 in survey books by for example Theodore Duret and Julius Meier-Graefe. Rather, it is the whole investment in reaching for a very particular, permanent institution which is something truly significant and which puts Ordrupgaard in a distinct category with similar international collections that sought to become private museums.

French modernist art as complementary to different schools of national art is expressed in various ways in the provisional institutions of Helene Krøller-Müller, Karl Ernst Osthaus, the Barnes Foundation and Oskar Reinhart (who later spun off a separate museum of Germanic art). But it was most programmatically found in Duncan Phillips' institutionalized collection, which had the explicit mission first to teach the value of French artistic idioms to Americans and then, second, to help develop the national art till it, in turn, would triumph. The same dual, artistic instruction and art scene intervention was important but more implicit at Ordrupgaard, which only had one rival to its pre-eminence, the collection of paintings by Picasso, Matisse, Derain and others of the more recent avant-garde amassed by Christian Tetzgen-Lund in his flat in central Copenhagen.

An intimate scale and personal appeal is central to Ordrupgaard as it was and is to the other, international collections of modernist art. The feeling of stepping into a home, often with the experience of parks and garden fresh in the memory, helps define the whole experience. The easy orientation, the pronounced use of furniture and a location in a residential area or even further away from the city centre gave – and still give – a wholly particular experience. Visits to the Stockholm collections, to Nivaagaard north of Copenhagen or perhaps even to the art collections of English manor houses might have confirmed to the Hansens that the suburban villa – still within easy reach of the city – was really the best way to present the art of the future. The fact that several art collectors at the same time sought the same frame and the same effect with their public galleries cannot just be written off as incidental. This was a particular approach, which asked for the art on display to be experienced in quite particular ways.

The villa and the bourgeois 'way-of-life', whether actual or imagined, seems the perfect complement to a formalist-aestheticist take on early modernist art: History, conflicts, special interests – all are presumably suspended in the appeal to look and sense directly. At Ordrupgaard, as at the other pleasant and intimate collections, visitors are asked to lay aside their reservations and suspend particular knowledges in order to reach pleasurable experience. It is not difficult to see a relation to, though not necessarily a direct reception of, ideas of the Gesamtkunstwerk and of art as religion and feeling. Instruction, if we can call it that, happens by osmosis and the message to be absorbed is the possibility for a quiet realm of pure aesthetic pleasures to reside alongside the normal day-to-day. A critical approach might say that this romanticism of art is an ideological extension of the bourgeois bifurcation of public and private: in order to deliver on its potential, art retreats into *private* life (of the privileged) instead of entering into *all kinds* of life. The bourgeois, who gives up on the public sphere and social engagement, now puts art and its power in the service of personal sensation and the building of individual character.

Either way, the quiet idealism expressed by collectors from Denmark to the USA shows a belief in the power of art. Its potential in exhibition is set out in the writings of the founders of the Barnes Foundation, The Phillips Collection and the Museum Folkwang, and comparison suggests that the less communicative collection founders like insurance director Wilhelm Hansen envisaged similar outcomes. In line with *his* youthful engagement with Volapük – the world language to promote peace – art and insurance appear like other ways to service the common good; one commercial, one spiritual. Both are practical ways to alleviate the difficulties of (modern) existence. When following in the vein of formalist aesthetics, it is really not that improbable to suggest the visual arts as a true world language and modernist art as its truest discourse.

For a few years after its spectacular opening in 1918, Ordrupgaard is set to become an important part of the Danish art scene. All major newspapers write about the opening and subsequently devote considerable space to introduce not just the collection, but also the concept of French modernist art to a general audience. Together with the French exhibition in 1914, it counts as the largest offensive in the name of impressionism and post-impressionism seen in a country where museums have yet to embrace international modernist art (the Rodin sculptures at the Glyptotek is a notable exception). In Ordrupgaard's case – specific and high-stakes intervention that it is – it is notable how Wilhelm



107. A Volapük club membership certificate of Henny Hansen, co-signed by Wilhelm Hansen

Hansen, the media and the cultural establishment work spectacularly in concert. Ordrupgaard is clearly and deliberately a public intervention sanctioned by many, not just one citizen's private pastime, and as with the comparable efforts in Sweden, Germany, the Netherlands, Switzerland, the UK and the USA, the Ordrupgaard project has to do with bringing national and international modernist art onto the scene and into the popular imagination while also framing and mapping it in specific ways. It is a wholly different place than the overwhelming and oppressive public museums of the nineteenth century. Instead it allows visitors the luxury of self-performance in a realm of pleasurable experience. Ordrupgaard speaks the language of art to the betterment of its visitors.

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We are reaching a first stop in my study of Ordrupgaard and the international collection museums of modernist art. From discussing the experience of a Danish collection, and by qualitatively comparing this to other provisional collection museums, it has become possible to deduce what *question(s)* Ordrupgaard and comparable collections sought to answer: of life, of art – and of the relation of art to life.

The search could easily be suspended here. I have given what I believe is a multifaceted and reasoned explanation of *why Ordrupgaard?* But the question of *how* still lingers. Or at least it should, for in reality, most studies of collecting are happy to simply report a timeline of art purchases, building projects, auctions and deaths without that much reflection on what allows art collecting to happen. The following chapters VI and VII therefore look at ‘*how Ordrupgaard?*’ and they do so by examining collecting as an activity afforded by a whole network – a network which sometimes allows and sometimes hinders that same collecting, but also a network which is always implicated.

As told in the little history of Ordrupgaard (see p. 17ff), fate does indeed take its twisted turns before *permanence*. If we are to learn anything more about the spectacular appearance, almost ruin and wistful preservation of Ordrupgaard, I believe it is time for a different approach; one where networks take centre stage.

**Part two**

**Networks**

## Chapter VI: Collecting as network

In the preceding five chapters, I have looked at collecting as a communicative and performative activity embedded in different registers of meaning, and with audience and public in focus. This I have done in opposition to more traditional studies on collecting which privilege either the collector – through conventional narrative – or singular *objects*, as happens in the annotated *catalogues raisonnés* of an institution where art objects are divorced from their recent history and any meaning derived from neighbouring objects in the collection. In cases like Asmussen's work on Ordrupgaard, or for example the standard catalogue on the Havemeyers, splendid collectors and donators of impressionist painting to the Metropolitan Museum in New York, we find one type following the other (Asmussen 1993, Frelinghuysen et al. 1993). These schemas isolate one instance above all others – the collector or the object – and downplay the shifting and simultaneous webs of connections and meanings that objects and collectors embody. Many of the invisible cuts necessary to effect this isolation seem wholly arbitrary when you start examining them more closely.

Consequently, more inclusive studies of collecting practices either synchronous or over time – or even of dynastic cultural politics (Heiberg 1988,

Ficiková et al. 1997) – do not fit these schemas and must seek different approaches. These range from Penny and Haskell's (1982) classic study of antique sculpture collecting in the modern era which amounts to a 'history of taste', through Wistman's (2008) use of the sociology of art to study Prince Eugen's art world positioning, to Higonnet's (2009) work on the personal and affective projects of the collectors and the collection museums they founded in the early twentieth century. I have taken inspiration from more of these synthesizing collection studies than I have the opportunity to acknowledge or reference.

But even the best of studies will be lacking in one or several respects (including the present). Little discussed though often taken for granted, for example, are the *networks of distant connections* that both result *from* and *enable* the kind of specialized collecting that I and other historians interpret: the market and commodity exchange, forms of organization, knowledge distribution – just to mention some. Even when these networks leave irrefutable marks on the type of objects collected or the collector positions available, they are mostly left under-theorized. Doing an about-face by using the concept of 'network' to define the resources involved *in*, prerequisite *for* and mobilized *by* collecting promises to open up new insights, to pinpoint similarities and differences among collectors and to explain behaviours that were previously seen as idiosyncratic or expressions of eccentric, personal choice.

I owe the idea of a networked modernity to the cultural historian Jerrold Seigel (2012), who explains western society from 1750 onwards as changing rapidly toward a loosening of the traditional ties of close community and the forging of networks of interest that often stretch very far (in space, in time). The new networks fight against any rules and restrictions coming from outside them – such as the monopolies instituted by guilds, the church

or the Academy – in order to be truly autonomous and generate their own, *inherent* rules. In contrast to previous, 'teleocratic' connections where ends were defined from without, these are new 'networks of means'; that is, more powerful ways to reach the 'ends' defined in the network itself: capitalists buy distant raw materials for local manufacture and re-export finished goods for profit to buy more; governments use their authority to institute laws that impact far-off locations and lead to more authority; and writers employ new competences in order to publish faster and further in order to reach even more communicative competence. In theory, if not in practice, these new networks are democratic since they allow anyone with the ability and inclination to marshal their means. The emergence of these autonomous, stronger, more complex, farther reaching networks decidedly frame the emergence of bourgeois society – emphatically *not* the name of a unified, political class but a denominator of a dominant way of life (Seigel 2012, pp. 1–37).

From the middle of the nineteenth century, the western world's trade and collecting of expensive art objects seems a quintessentially networked, and thus modern and bourgeois, activity: Here extensive systems of communication by print, letter and telegraph, different specialized marketplaces in the form of dealers and auctions along with new possibilities of safe, reliable and relatively quick transport of goods and people, come together. For high art, ever more specialized and mobile systems emerge, at first for the circulation of primarily older artworks, but then for more recent art, until the so-called dealer-critic system (or network) develops along with impressionism (White, White 1965). While it takes a long time to become profitable, and the timeline and identity of prime movers are contentious (Galenson, Jensen 2002), this modern system is firmly rooted by 1900 (Jensen 1994, pp. 50–52). Its establishment runs parallel to a development where contemporary, and thus

modernist, art for the first time becomes the focus of dedicated collecting and investment, and where the ‘temperament’ of the artist is more important than the moral and subject matter of an artwork (Green 1987).

Pioneered by dealers, new financial techniques borrowed from other spheres are introduced to the art market. These include sophisticated promotion through press manipulation, strategic alliances in consortiums with competitors, the obtainment of outside financing, speculation on future prices, the linking of international partnerships and, quite tellingly, the outright monopolization of an artists’ output (Zarobell 2015, cf. Gee 1981). This networked, autonomous and expanding iteration of the art market finds a most advanced form in Paris by c. 1900, but is strongly connected to comparable neighbours in London, New York and Berlin and a number of smaller centres, especially around Germany, in Switzerland and on the east coast of the USA. The logic to this birth of impressionism and modernist art within market transformation makes it impossible to ever talk of collectors and connoisseurs having just pure concerns over pure art. The further impact of market logic on collecting – and especially on Ordrupgaard – will be the topic of chapter VII.

It has been proposed to see the dealer-critic system as it develops further into the fully networked, modern art market of the early twentieth century as relatively delimited and consisting of just three agents: dealer, critic and collector (Gee 1981, pp. 7–11), though I would caution to treat them as paper constructs rather like the sociologist Max Weber’s (1949, p. 90) ‘Idealtypen’. I will further argue that a fourth, potentially disruptive position – often associated with a previous form of much less networked art trade – should be added: the agent. Whether somebody is simply a dedicated employee or an agent of limited loyalties makes for an, often enlightening, discussion. As historical studies have highlighted, this ‘broker’ figure, often an artist in his

own right, is difficult to pin down: He/she sometimes works as a critic, is hired by a collector or is given commission by a dealer, and in reality often occupies several positions at once – the definition of a *double-agent* (cf. Keblusek 2006, Keblusek 2011). Later in this chapter, two important agents – Carl Montag (1880–1956) and Tyge Møller (1871–1917) – will make their appearance.

All the collectors touched upon in this study found themselves interacting with a complex network of other collectors, dealers and critics and enlisting the use of agents. With Ordrupgaard, as with all the other collections, many details cannot be explicitly documented – even in the case of better documentation it is naturally hard to prove social interaction and informal knowledge transfer – but there are still plenty of direct traces; many others can reasonably be inferred by inductive comparison. For matters of scope, and because I want to develop a detailed argument, most of this and the following chapter is given over to Ordrupgaard, to the Danish art scene and to the period just before, during and immediately after WWI. The insights and the road travelled to reach them, though, will be relevant for a much broader field of modernist collectors, their collections and provisional institutions.

I will argue that the work I have cited on the dealer-critic system and the modern art market emerging in Paris shows how the critical fortunes and the conception of modernist art are invariably bound up with networks of means. A connoisseur’s appreciation of a painting by Renoir and a collector’s display of the same painting in a publicly available gallery is deeply connected to the network which defined the painting as significant – and therefore valuable since scarce – and then helped the painting arrive in front of the same connoisseur in the gallery of the collector. The valuation of modernist art is closely connected to finances: The network explains the value and desirability of the painting, and it supplies the means with which it is allowed to fall into

the orbit of the collector. As we shall see in chapter VII, the same network might very often yet again take away the artwork.

So, the first five chapters of this text looked at modernist art and its communicative and performative framing in collection display. This second, comparatively shorter part follows logically by examining the network, which allowed the same display through material and discursive means. Although, from a network perspective, even a distinction such as this is perhaps superfluous; they are just *means* whether they are physical or mental.

I use this last insight as a springboard to a more explicit engagement with the complex of theories known as actor-network theory (ANT) in the larger second half of this chapter and in the following chapter VII. As the first two sections of this chapter examine the traditional use of ‘the network’ with its advisors and experts, the following sections open up the same concept by insisting on its ambiguities and arguing for the fundamental parity and equivalence of various actors *in* a network – human, non-human or technical. I believe that the interconnectedness of networks to other networks means that no actor exists ‘prior’ to a network, and neither does ‘a collector’; actors are instead ‘performed’ by that network. Because of this, explanations of a networked modernity that are otherwise well founded in empirical data (re: Seigel 2012), must be fundamentally re-thought.

But first on to a desperate man and his quest to sell a painting ...

## 1. Networks and a fiction of disinterested experts

A man writes to his older friend on 23 December 1926:

As I may have told Uncle, I bought a couple of paintings together with Gregor in Paris in 1920. One of them was the little Courbet landscape which is now owned by Gregor and was reproduced in my Courbet dissertation under the title of Spring landscape from Ornans in private possession. Another was the large study by Delacroix, a Pandora. The only connoisseur who has seen it is Meier-Graefe who, in the presence of Gregor and me, declared that the picture was without any doubt genuine. He added: “And on top of that it is a very beautiful Delacroix, as good as an old Venetian, a Veronese, but probably not many will understand that” (RH to KM 1926/12/23 KB).

As it turns out, the letter writer has fallen into economic difficulties:

I need money for different reasons, and I would be incredibly grateful to Uncle if Uncle would take a look at it and give me his esteemed judgment which is always highly appreciated. Axel Gauffin has promised me to send it to the Art Museum [RKJ]: colloquial for The National Gallery of Art, Copenhagen] where it will arrive in a few days. For my part I am beginning to think it was painted some time during the middle of the master’s life and presumably in connection with some larger decorative task. In the art trade it was listed as part of Andrieux’s [sic] estate (RH to KM 1926/12/23 KB).

And Ragnar Hoppe (1885–1967), curator at Stockholm’s National Museum, already has a plan, which he suggests to the recipient and colleague, Karl Madsen, the highly respected director in the Danish capital:

Maybe it was something for Wilhelm Hansen? We will see when the time comes. I will be in Copenhagen sometime between Christmas and New Year’s. Will Uncle be home? (RH to KM 1926/12/23 KB)

The close succession of letters from Hoppe to Madsen details how he offers the painting to Wilhelm Hansen for 3,000 kroner, and how Hansen dismisses the offer since the painting is ‘too large for his gallery’ (RH to KM 1927/1/27 KB), ‘and too sketch-like’ (RH to KM 1927/2/27 KB). Throughout, Hoppe underlines his strong need for the money an eventual sale might realize, and he repeatedly asks for the older colleague’s – possibly reluctant – help in attributing the painting. The last letter on the topic tells how Leo Swane, curator at the National Gallery in Copenhagen, was the one to advise against the purchase of the painting. ‘It seems there is no prospect of placing it in Copenhagen,’ Hoppe writes, thus ending the part of the story we have access to through Karl Madsen’s papers bequeathed to the Royal Library in Copenhagen (RH to KM 1927/4/1 KB).

Hoppe’s desperation led to no apparent result – the painting was not attributed to Delacroix nor was it ‘dismissed’ as merely a work by his assistant Pierre Andrieu (1821–1892). ‘Pandora’ did not end up with any art collector with money to spare; at least not in this round.

As the rare instance where the collector is not the protagonist but rather the end point in a tale from the art world, this seemingly hopeless anecdote of an unsuccessful sale is actually highly informative: The inverted perspective helps crystalize some of the usual roles and functions associated with the art market during the period in question (and perhaps in some form also today) along with some inherent contradictions: As a seasoned employee at Sweden’s national gallery and an expert in his own right, Hoppe plays by established rules: In order to sell on the art market you need an object with a desirable name and identity. And this identity is sought through the authority of expert, independent testimony, which can then help perform a ‘something’ into a unique object of aesthetic and commercial worth: From something

insignificant; into something that is significant, but contested; then on to an established identity as either masterpiece or not. From here it can travel into further prominence or back into relative obscurity (cf. Clifford 1988).

Readily available expert testimony is the type of means made possible by a modern, autonomous network playing by its own rules. After the art historian Giovanni Morelli (1816–1891) first publishes his new connoisseurial method in the late nineteenth century, art experts take advantage of the distribution of ever more faithful reproductions, increasing ease of travel, new circuits of communication between owners and admirers of artworks along with new avenues of publishing and sharing of knowledge on aspects of authentication (Scallen 2004, pp. 27–33). This is a network of means that incorporates technologies, institutions and market, and this is the network Hoppe knows and relies on.



108. Bernardino Luini: Madonna and Child. 1515–1525. Oil on wood. 57 x 49,5 cm. Nivaagaards Malerisamling

The exchange of information on art is emphatically not happening in isolation, but is rather overlaid, furthered and sustained by the exchange of artworks themselves. Prospective buyers of painting both sponsor and rely on experts and their knowledge to verify and authenticate artworks. Art market and expert system are closely allied. When in 1907 Johannes Hage considers buying a rather expensive painting, uneasily attributed to Bernardino Luini [fig. 108], he readily draws upon his connections within the network – the

Dutch expert Hofstede de Groot (1863–1930), who ‘found’ the work with the British collector–dealer Sir George Donaldson (1845–1925), the Italian art historians Gustavo Frizzoni (1840–1919) and Georg Gronau (1868–1938), the conservator-restorer Albert Hauser (?–?) of the Kaiser-Friedrich-Museum, the art dealer Charles Brunner (?–?), and finally Karl Madsen, the director of the National Gallery. All are in play, and having been burnt before, Hage is clearly sceptical of them all promoting their own agenda in, one way or another. Via letter they all support, decline, doubt and argue the case for Luini in a system which is as much about negotiating position, connection, prestige and money and which cannot but include much of their other, professional engagements. (Larsen 2006, pp. 206–283). Like many other collectors, Hage would return again and again to the same people for the tasks of finding, selling and authenticating artworks.

As protagonist of his own story, Hoppe is on a similar quest, but seen from the seller’s viewpoint. Here we find ‘Uncle’ Madsen as one authoritative expert who could help the transformative attribution along, Julius Meier-Graefe, who wrote on Delacroix himself (1913) is another, and the famed collector, donator and connoisseur Étienne Moreau-Nélaton (1859–1927) mentioned as a third possibility (RH to KM 1927/2/27 KB). As Hage before him, Hoppe depends on a network already in place to ship his painting to Denmark, offer up the type of discreet and efficient negotiating long established between gentlemen, and find a well-known collector who can dispose of large sums – in this case the most substantial owner of nineteenth century French painting still left in Scandinavia, Wilhelm Hansen. A network of people with the right means – authority, institutional control and funds – to play the art game is already there, just as the same connections are in place for other collectors, connoisseurs and potential sellers of paintings.

But just like Hage’s frustrated search for truly independent testimony, Hoppe’s letters also reveal the neat division of seller-expert-collector as mostly fiction. On the surface, the relation between the Idealtypen is clear-cut and linear; they exist for the transfer and transformation of the painting in question: from its dormant state with the seller it is to be liquidated and transformed into an asset, preferably ‘a Delacroix’, before resting again with the buyer. These ready-made fictions are offered by what is – essentially – the art market itself and brought to life through Hoppe’s narrative. It is not at all obvious that they exist as clear-cut and well defined outside this narrative *focalized* by the letter writer (Bal 2002, pp. 35–46, Bal 2009, pp. 145–165).

Neither is it obvious, that the division seller-expert-collector actually exists when reading, for example, the details of Gee’s (1981) study of the Parisian art market and the subterfuge of experts who receive commission, the double roles of ‘disinterested’ appraisers that also deal or of critics with vested economic interests in the art they promote. Rather, I will argue that looking for neatly defined, independent positions like ‘advisors’ or ‘experts’ can only lead to frustration, that the ambiguous image of the ‘agent as double-agent’ of spy fiction is much more relevant, and that, consequently, I will have to look at the way networks themselves define actors.

## 2. Who were the advisors? Double agents, experts and networks

In reality, Hoppe's letters perform more than neat fictions. They are also attempts at recruiting 'Uncle Madsen' – a man whose life's work has encompassed the positions of artist, critic and art historian before becoming museum director – through flattery and intimate appeals to their friendship. This role as a kind of agent – or perhaps double-agent – ostensibly a neutral expert, but at the same time aligned with different interests (Keblysek 2011), is no stranger to Karl Madsen whose life in the field of art has gone through many different, often conflicting positions (Thorlacius-Ussing 1938). Looking abroad, a more clear-cut and perhaps criminal case of a double-agent might be Bernard Berenson (1865–1959) – eminent connoisseur of renaissance art – who simultaneously acts as an independent expert and as an advisor to collectors like Isabella Stewart Gardner and Duncan Phillips while he also has secret business agreements with the dealer Joseph Duveen (1869–1939) (Cohen 2013).

And the complications of agents and their agency also affect modernist collectors: Albert C. Barnes decides to 'buy some modern painting' in 1912. He enlists the American painter William Glackens (1870–1938), whom he supplies with \$20,000 to take with him to Paris as his agent, and the resultant purchases are traditionally seen as the beginning of Barnes' collection. The artist-in-exile Alfred Maurer (1868–1932) joins Glackens to help with translations and continues for a while afterwards as another paid agent of Barnes by updating him on the Parisian market for modernist art and introducing him to Leo Stein and his Matisse collection (Wattenmaker 2010, pp. 18, 21–22). But Maurer's role is in no way unambiguous. As art historian Anne Distel has revealed, Maurer receives a check for 4,500 francs from the art dealer

Ambroise Vollard (1866–1939) in December 1914 when Barnes himself is visiting Paris (his second visit that year) for 'commission Barnes sale' (Distel 1993, n. 3), thus complicating the question of whose agent he is.

Similarly, when Oskar Reinhart starts his collecting campaigns in the late 1910s, he employs independent agents like Alfred Gold (1874–1958) and Carl Montag, people who travel between collections, ostensibly in order to write about them, but at the same time arranging or building their own networks, and keeping (sometimes reluctant) look-out for their financiers in Winterthur (Reinhard-Felice 2003).

In the scholarly world of today, the concept of the agent is considered not as a profession but as a function of mediation and representation. An agent is someone, perhaps a privileged advisor, who takes up the task of associating between entities for money, prestige or the attainment of means. It is someone who does 'the actual work (...), one who acts for another, a deputy, steward, factor, substitute, representative, emissary' (Oxford English Dictionary cited after Keblysek 2006, p. 9). In relation to early modern Europe, agents are often understood as someone who ensures transactions between unequal partners, the bridge between a patron and a client. Art historian Marika Keblysek maintains that 'the main precondition for an agent's success was his ability to construct and maintain networks' (Keblysek 2011, p. 4), and to flexibly change use of these networks for very different things. But in analysis and history writing, it is quickly forgotten that the agent is often trusted with deciding in place of the employer while also having interests and inputs of her own (Keblysek 2006, p. 10).

Formally, this concept of ambiguous agents who both mediate *and* exert their own agency holds when shifting perspective to the early twentieth century, where the agent as expert can be recruited on short or long contracts

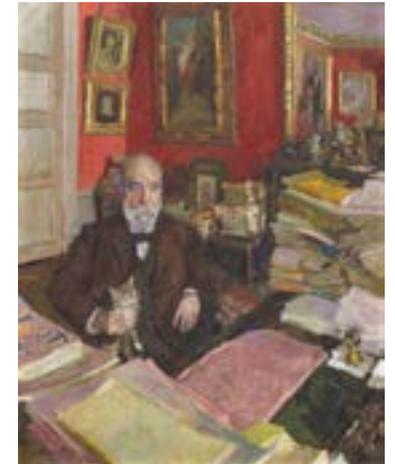
by both buyer and seller in the field of modernist art. No longer as necessary to diplomatic missions, the agent has retreated to where special inside knowledge is still needed, but as the above examples show, he/she is in many ways ‘untrustworthy’; they can have an own agenda or be recruitable more than once. The agent is therefore not a neutral medium for the transfer of messages between buyer and seller, nor a self-less guide, and neither is she ‘just’ an independent expert-critic. The ambiguous agent is thus emblematic of the networks of modernity where diverse interests intersect.

Collection studies has a long term obsession with agents that give advice, precious insight and inspiration: Which person gave the impetus to collect, decided on authenticity and advised for or against, and who found the actual objects to be had and who negotiated deals and prices? In the field of modernist art collecting, we might ask about a collector who once railed against New York’s radical 1913 Armory Show and belittled Gauguin and van Gogh, but less than 15 years later saw impressionism as just the beginning of new and exciting developments in art: Who were Duncan Phillips’ advisors, who gave the decisive impetus? Was it his personal friendships with American modernists Augustus Vincent Tack, Arthur Bowen Davies (1862–1928), Alfred Stieglitz (1864–1946) and Marjorie Acker (1894–1985), whom he later married? Or were the later friendships with C. Law Watkins (1886–1945), an educator, and Alfred H. Barr Jr., the first director of MoMA, more important still (Scott 1999a, Scott 1999b)?

Considering Ordrupgaard, the search for agents and advisors goes to the crux of a long standing question – who inspired and found the artworks for Wilhelm Hansen, an otherwise industrious and energetic businessman who previously had shown none of Duncan Phillips’ inclination for the torturous study of art and criticism? The sudden purchase of impressionist masterworks

in 1916 must surely be due to outside agency and advice? Who was the equivalent of the artist Glackens who was advisor and agent to Barnes, another business entrepreneur of no training in art?

So far, Wilhelm Hansen’s ‘interest in art’, has been explained by his friendship since childhood with Peter Hansen, who introduced him to the then radical Fynbo-painters and taught him to appreciate their aesthetic (Rostrup 1981, p. 17, Asmussen 1993, p. 13). In early spring 1916, it is also known that Wilhelm Hansen is in contact with the today forgotten painter Paul Molinard (1861–1946), who in turn promises to introduce him to other collectors and artists (WH to HH 1916/3/12 OA). And from here on, he has contact to Theodore Duret, the important early champion and collector of impressionism (Distel 1990, Nessler, Royer 2010),<sup>18</sup> whose collection he visits and who searches for artworks to offer Hansen back in Denmark (e.g. TD to WH 1917/7/6 OA, Rostrup 1981, pp. 23–26). Finally, Hansen must ‘naturally’ have discussed new purchases with Karl Madsen and his curator Peter Hertz (1874–1939), the author of the catalogue on Ordrupgaard’s Danish artworks, though this cannot be documented (Rostrup 1981, p. 26). Mentions in letters of visits to the Louvre, the Salons, museums in other countries, auctions and other exhibitions along with friendships with several Danish artists of his own generation can be used to reconstruct an interest in both Danish and French art that goes back to the beginning of his adulthood.



109. Edouard Vuillard: Théodore Duret in his study, 1912. Oil on cardboard on wood. 95.2 x 74.8 cm. National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C.

<sup>18</sup> Nessler, Royer (2010, p. 210) claims in passing that Duret already knew Wilhelm and Henny Hansen in the 1890s and introduced them to poet Stéphane Mallarmé (1842–1898). This seems to be a case of mistaken identity, though.

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None of these explanations seem wrong. Barnes did ask Glackens to give him advice, Hansen took the same from Duret – and probably also from his generation of Danish artists – while Kröller-Müller had the art-apostle Bremmer, who made a living from bringing collectors and artists together



110. Jan Toorop: Portrait of H.P. Bremmer. 1927. Pencil on paper. 42.7 x 32.2 cm. Museum de Lakenhal, Leiden

(Balk 2006), and Courtauld had the gallerist Percy Moore Turner (?–1950s) (House 1994, p. 22). Though to what degree other people and exhibition visits explain the most important elements of an interest in art – namely *acting* on it – is debatable. At the same time, a focus on persons and singular events overlooks the general availability of means: books, newspapers, magazines and guides and a plethora of information in the form of printed words and photographs all exist free of the people that have created them. The world of Wilhelm Hansen and his colleagues was a world of exhibitions, libraries and newsstands, and a place where the carrier of a message on the most interesting art did

not have to be a person. Agents would increasingly be found in other media than flesh and blood and the network itself could take on the role of advisor.

But a discussion of influence does not stop with realising that, oh, someone could also have read the books by Meier-Graefe, Duret, Lecomte and others or seen the relevant magazines. By, say, 1900, wealthy men and women had access to networks of historically unprecedented efficiency and information that went far beyond passive information – and likewise so did all the dealers, critics and collectors of Paris, Europe and Copenhagen: Everyone could conceive of cultivating a new interest in almost any type of field – from recreational fishing through automobiles to early French modernism – and

then quickly attain, not just expertise, but also the necessary tools to train and realize a goal. All of the means to accomplish these seemingly incidental interests, collectors like Wilhelm Hansen could easily come to possess – as he actually did – simply by connecting to a network where Packards, books on painting and shops carrying fishing rods were available. Or, for that matter a network of dealers, galleries, agents and artworks.

The opportunities offered by a network are not simply, passively there. As we have explicitly seen with the agent of modernist art, we can never know when allegiances are conflicted and interests doubled. Coming from the approach known as actor-network theory, the sociologist Bruno Latour (2007, p. 37ff.) conceptualizes this as an awareness of the difference between ‘intermediaries’ and ‘mediators’. A belief in intermediaries means a belief in the frictionless transfer: An agent or a book introduces you to modernist art, period. An insistence on ‘mediators’ complicates the picture by showing how transfer can also transform: An agent introduces you to modernist art, but framed on her terms – perhaps wishing to sell some to you, perhaps in order to combat other agents and their competing versions of modernism. Either way, as I have argued, the agent as intermediary will potentially always contribute something more.

This marks my departure into a full introduction of the idea of networks that are never passive but always transform and mediate. This is therefore a practical introduction, I hope, to ANT as an open approach for the analysis of collecting art. Here, I want to look at just some of the very actual networks of art that were available to collectors – and agents – of modernist art. Methodologically, this is a sociology of close description. The belief is that laying connections and associations bare is the closest we can come to explaining them. The following therefore starts with a single ‘case’ – in both understandings of the word.

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### 3. A Swiss misunderstanding

In November 1918, an impatient man writes to his contacts in Switzerland that he can wait no longer for the crate containing his twelve paintings. They are to be sent immediately from Genève to Zürich and then on to Copenhagen (CSd to AB 1918/12/5 ACG).<sup>19</sup> Especially noteworthy among the valuable artworks packed for transport are three long-awaited paintings by the French impressionist Degas, all bought at the first auction held after the painter's death at Galerie Georges Petit (Asmussen 1993, Dumas et al. 1997): *Portrait de Manet et de Mme Manet* (approx. 1867), *Cour d'une maison (Nouvelle-Orléans, esquisse)* (1873) and *Au foyer. Exercices de danse* (1880'es) (Galerie Georges Petit 1918b, cat. 2, 45, 46) [figs. 111, 112, see Table 4, p. 303].

But the shipment runs into transport problems. From the correspondence between the insurance director Charles Simon (?-?) and associates and the director of the Musée d'Art et d'Histoire and the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Genève, Adrien Bovy (1880–1957), it is possible to reconstruct the travails of the crate. At first, it gets lost on the way to German-speaking Switzerland (CSd to AB 1918/12/5 ACG). Then it is stuck since it needs an export license to go through Germany, which at this point is at war (CSd to AB 1918/12/7 ACG). Suddenly an invoice for an export fee of 2,000 Swiss francs appears – this horrifies Wilhelm Hansen, the owner of the contents of the crate, who implores his contacts to take further action (CS to AB 1919/1/9 ACG).

First Simon, then Bovy, write detailed letters about the matter to the department of public commerce in Zürich, in effect asking that the crate be re-branded from an object of export to an object in transit due to the 'problems with transport at present', a phrase that obliquely alludes to the

.....  
 19 I owe the discovery of archival material relating to this transport to Ernst Jonas Bencard, former curator at Ordrupgaard.

ongoing war (CS to MG 1919/1/8 ACG). Furthermore, the letter writers note that the paintings belong to a benefactor of Swiss cultural life, who has paid for exhibitions himself and waived entrance fees. In so doing, Simon and Bovy effectively establish Hansen as a grand collector and a magnanimous man. Without his support, it seems that the only two painting exhibitions held at the Musée d'Art et d'Histoire since its inauguration in 1910 just would not have happened. The letter writers then note that this 'misunderstanding' about

**Table 4. A crate and its contents**

From a handwritten list by Wilhelm Hansen in OA. The 12 artworks are marked as late arrivals in Madsen's catalogue of 1918

Presumably made of: wood, metal, paper

Contents: Possibly wood shavings and 12 artworks ...

1. Edgar Degas: *Edouard Manet and Mme. Manet*. 1868–69. Oil on canvas. 65 x 71 cm. Today: Kitakyushu Municipal Museum of Art
2. Edgar Degas: *Dancers practicing in the foyer*. 1880s. Oil on canvas. 71 x 88 cm. Today: New Carlsberg Glyptotek
3. Edgar Degas: *Courtyard of a house (New Orleans, sketch)*. 1873. Oil on canvas. 60 x 73.5 cm. Today: Ordrupgaard
4. Honoré Daumier: *The thirsty singer*. N.d. Watercolour. Present whereabouts unknown
5. Henri Fantin-Latour: *Self-Portrait*. 1861. Oil on canvas. 83 x 65 cm. Today: Foundation E.G. Bührle
6. Henri Fantin-Latour: *Roses*. 1902. 38 x 40 cm. Present whereabouts unknown
7. Eva Gonzalès: *The convalescent. Portrait of a young woman in white dress*. 1877–78. Charcoal and oil on canvas. 86 x 47.5. Today: Ordrupgaard
8. Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres: *Dante offering the Divine Comedy to Homer*. C. 1827 and 1864–65. Oil on canvas mounted on wood. 38 x 35.5 cm. Today: Ordrupgaard
9. Jean-François Millet: *Woman sewing*. C. 1853. Pen and wash on paper. 27.5 x 21 cm. Today: New Carlsberg Glyptotek
10. Jacques-Louis David: *Portrait of Comte de Turenne*. 1816. Oil on canvas. 112 x 81 cm. Today: New Carlsberg Glyptotek
11. Théodore Rousseau: *Sunset in the forest*. 1847. Oil and pastel on canvas. 128.5 x 190.5 cm. Today: Ordrupgaard
12. Jules Dupré: *The sea*. After 1875. Oil on canvas. 59.5 x 73.5 cm. Today: Ordrupgaard

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the fee makes both the museum and Switzerland not look good in the eyes of this selfless donor (AB to MG 1919/1/15 ACG).

And thus, a Zürich insurance director and the leader of a national museum put their weight behind the case of a single packing crate travelling through Switzerland on its way to Copenhagen.



111. Edgar Degas: M. and Mme Manet. C. 1867. Oil on canvas. 65 x 71 cm. Kitakyushu Municipal Museum of Art. Part of the Ordrupgaard Collection until 1923

The department soon replies that they never intended anything but waiving the fee, expressing their hopes the misunderstanding has now vanished (MG to AB 1919/1/21 ACG). By January 1919, the twelve now very much delayed paintings seem finally ready to be sent to Copenhagen, which happens some time in February or March – probably as part of a much larger shipment of artworks instigated by Hansen himself (WH to AG 1919/4/20 NA). This total shipment is

important for many reasons – one being that it represents maybe the largest transfer of modern art to Scandinavia, a topic we will return to in chapter VII – but first we have to look at a number of things implied by ‘the Swiss misunderstanding’.

One central concern of the complex of theories known as actor-network theory is to look at the way actors that go into a network are always defined and made to act by *other* actors working upon them (Latour 2007, p. 46ff). It is common sense to see Wilhelm Hansen and his Swiss contacts defining each other as actors. But as Hansen or the Swiss department express concerns over the fate of the packing crate, the heavy, burdensome crate also becomes *an actor*,

although in a previous, more untroubled world, it would simply be seen as just an intermediary for the carrying of paintings. But at the point that something stops working, stands in the way or revolts, it gains visibility (Heidegger 1962, pp. 102–107, Latour 1992). In the present example, objects such as the letters cited above still function uncontroversially as intermediaries that help human actors, institutional actors and thing-actors to work upon each other (Callon 1991); papers and telegrams still cross Europe despite the war.

Importantly, the distinction between human and not-human is not crucial; they all appear together as a network which is constantly being re-configured: A network, which is made up of associations – through intermediaries/mediators – between different actors that expect, allow and deny each other different things. The human letter writers, the department and the shipping crate shore up, re-shape or contest each other’s possibilities and identity.

On one side, Hansen asks Simon and Bovy to ‘work’ for him, shaping them to his image and making them his agents, thereby effectively extending his own network-reach into the Swiss state department. But Simon and Bovy are not simply the dupes of Wilhelm Hansen. Instead, they in turn ‘establish’ and ‘make’ him as a refined collector in contrast to some mean speculator as suggested by the imposed fee. The intermediating letters to the department paint Hansen as a force to be reckoned with and a self-less benefactor of Swiss culture in front of who ‘we’ are in danger of losing face. The fight over the status of the crate is therefore a fight over which group gets to *enrol* Hansen (Latour 2007, p. 28) to their cause: the friends of Switzerland or those who have to pay fees?

By group-formation and enrolment efforts, Hansen defines his actors who *in turn* define *their* actors. There is symmetry in these mutual definitions, but the way they come about is not the same. For instance, the inscriptions

used when the actors define each other are qualitatively different: ‘My friend Hansen’, Simon writes about *his* relation to Hansen, ‘the man whose support meant we could exhibit paintings’, Bovy writes about *his* relation to Hansen. Simon’s more intimate inscription as a friend would later be confirmed by Hansen’s very generous gift of the small Manet-canvas *Le poire* to his Swiss colleague (CS to AB 1918/10/20 ACG, cf. Ives, Stein & Steiner 1997, cat. 801, p. 88).

Both Bovy and Simon are themselves actors involved in large and differing networks as evidenced by their success in marshalling complicated companies (i.e. Simon) and institutions (i.e. Bovy), and also in publishing and arranging exhibitions (i.e. Bovy). The number of allies carried over from these many connections should predictably give them the weight needed to keep the Swiss State department from interfering with the crate. As a kind of symbolic payment, Hansen, Bovy and Simon actively acknowledge the existence and authority of the same actor – the State department – by interacting with it and arguing with it; a performative effect of the Kantian insight that what you criticize you also acknowledge (Hantelmann 2010, p. 180).

As these observations show, Hansen, even in this rather limited case, becomes associated with very different actors: Human, corporate and object – trying to persuade them into becoming allies on his terms and to work together on his goal of obtaining the twelve paintings. The demand of 2,000 francs and the general scarcity of trains and transport services show the existence of actors and competition beyond his reach, but through building and exploiting his network he can hope for a more successful alignment of allies (Callon 1991, p. 144–146). On a systemic level, ‘alignment’ here means that one actor is successful in pulling other actors closer; in empirical terms it means that all agree that the crate should move on. But ultimately this process allows much

more to happen. A normative by-product is established through the definitions of others as one actor, Hansen himself, is made into something that over time will stabilize his identity throughout: he is made into a collector.



112. Edgar Degas: Dancers Practicing in the Foyer. 1880s. Oil on canvas. 71 x 88 cm. New Carlsberg Glyptotek. Part of the Ordrupgaard Collection until 1923

#### 4. Networks make collectors

On some level, the insistence on detailing the various actors involved in the transport of some paintings might seem pedantic, especially when reference is made to crates and government departments. But the seeming banality is an aspect of the effectiveness of the highly specialized interactions happening between heterogeneous actors in late capitalism. Strong, convergent networks like that of collecting and trading art take time to build, but they tend to acquire solidity and to become normalized as they co-ordinate more and more relationships of different types (Callon 1991, p. 148–151).

The sheer complexity of trading networks builds stability while obscuring the complex inner workings. A stable network can therefore be said to be ‘punctualized’ (Callon 1991, p. 152–153) – it has become a closed node that interacts with yet other networks, as for example the art trade is a node in the larger system of market forces, and a system of collecting serves as a node in the network of the art world. Opening the black box of an established network such as that of collecting and trading art – something which is easier in times of large or small crises (Law, Callon 1992, p. 25) – lets us see that art collectors such as Hansen do not build and control every important aspect of their own world. They themselves are defined by a multitude of other actors and contingencies. By highlighting the ‘invisible work’ done inside networks the illusion that only some actors count is shattered; in reality most networks are composite and heterogeneous (Star 1991, p. 28–29).

When looking at art collecting we should, therefore, count more than advisors, and attempt to take in all the agents at play: Those tireless trains and crates, letters and cheques, and the people who – for most of their time – work their machines to pass artworks one way and money the other.

Modern society, assuming that such an entity exists, is made up of apparently mundane dealings inside large and ever-evolving networks that are absolutely fundamental to its existence yet curiously overlooked in traditional discussions of collecting. Studies that only look at the collector, his (human) agents and the things collected neglect the very associations of things and technologies that in the first place allow – but also delimit – collecting.

How *does* a person become a collector? By collecting paintings or any other objects available, yes, but surely there is more to this. Surely we gloss over how identities such as ‘being a collector’ are predicated on the many actions and extended networks that are not limited to the collector’s dictates. These are networks that – as the mythical shark in water – can only be upheld by moving: the continuous posting and receiving of letters and telegrams, the distribution of auction catalogues and sales information, the use of railroads, ships, porters and crates, and the exchange of money and credit. All in all, studies of collecting must also look at how people and things enrol each other to different ends. In this perspective, the image of a collector as defined, in essence, by attributes of refined taste and a good nose simply fades away. The *real* work for a collector is in building and upholding his network while potentially disturbing that of other competing networks.

This is a perspective on collecting where ‘the collector’ is no longer seen as an individual from whom initiative and actions emanate in a one-way direction. He/she is equally the result of many, many actions coming from other directions that ‘allow’ and ‘make’ collecting on a grand scale possible while at other times complicating or flat-out denying the same activity.

The small slices of a network thus far sketched – an actor-network of contacts and crates, before that of collectors and agents – is a relatively fleeting thing only held fast in description. Yet, it is important to acknowledge that

such networks hint at a larger network – what could be called *the network of collecting and trading art* – involving all the artworks, advisors, collectors, technology and mediators that are absolutely necessary for any collecting activity or for *the identity as a collector* to exist.

This extended association of allies might have a structure comparable to an imagined network at a slightly different place or at a different time – for example a hundred years prior, or a hundred years later – but in both quality and quantity it bears a distinct character from instance to instance; a fact which therefore makes the more fleeting specifics important to consider.

To exemplify, it does make a difference that the network of collecting and trading art draws on technologies and associations that did not exist at any previous time. In the decades after 1900, it seems significant that quick circulation of information and artworks allows someone to be defined as, for example, a collector of modernist art within the span of months rather than decades. It seems equally important that so many actors willing to do this kind of inscription have come into being: The type of press that writes about Ordrupgaard or the Phillips Collection did not exist in the eighteenth century, and neither did other possible actors in the form of a professional museum sector or the nominally independent critics. On the other hand, the still limited scope of the network means that it is comparably easy for it to be defined by relatively few actors. The newness of modernist art means that by 1900 there is really just one centre in Paris, and a few important galleries – for impressionism and their pre-cursors Georges Petit, Durand-Ruel, and the rising Bernheim-Jeune, for post-impressionism and the newer avant-garde dealers like Daniel-Henry Kahnweiler (1884–1979), Ambroise Vollard, Paul Rosenberg (1881–1959) and Paul Guillaume (1891–1934).

## 5. Ordrupgaard and other collections as networks

In most studies, a lot of the interesting mechanics that facilitate the collecting process are ignored, rather as if they are in the proverbial ‘black box’ known from engineering: the mechanisms of collecting are simply not examined, only the outcome (Latour 1997, pp. 2–3). Familiarizing ourselves with collecting by looking at people and things equally – what the sociologist Michel Callon calls a method of ‘generalized symmetry’ – is undoubtedly a healthy move (Callon 1986, p. 4). The following continues the engagement with actor-network theory and looks more broadly at Ordrupgaard as a case illustrating the network of collecting and trading art.

In a by now classic science study of biologists, scallops and fishermen, often seen as the birth of ANT as a distinct analytical approach, Callon (1986) lays the ground work for the influential concept of ‘translation [see Table 5, p. 313]’. In Callon’s words, *translation* as a concept covers the precarious process ‘during which the identity of actors, the possibility of interaction and the margins of manoeuvre are negotiated and delimited’ (Callon 1986, p. 6). This view has the benefit of highlighting the effort, uncertainty and risk in any large undertaking: ‘will it succeed?’ – and will Ordrupgaard succeed?

The establishment of a large art collection can be seen as a kind of precarious world building which is forever in danger of dissolution. History is filled with abandoned collections that are forgotten in time; very few have the fortune to anchor themselves; only in retrospect are ‘facts’ seen as inevitable. Even though the process of establishing the French art collection and gallery at Ordrupgaard involved the confluence of many things over an extended period of time – all tales need a beginning and a (pretend) *prime mover* (Callon 1986, p. 6). In the specific case of Ordrupgaard, we have already seen that

Hansen himself needed the actions of others in order to extend his reach and strengthen his identity, which meant a process of dually building and connecting with networks. As shown, this involved the enrolment and mobilization of various actors in order to solve minor or major tasks and problems concerning transport of paintings and building a collection.

For an art collection such as Ordrupgaard, the first moment of *problematization* – a concept from Callon (1986) – can be used to define the overall question as one of: ‘how to do a successful art collection?’

A part of problematization means defining *who* and *what* is needed to answer the question. In this case a collector, some good paintings, a suitably equipped building, the press, a section of peer connoisseurs and collectors and, finally, some visitors. The actors are thus defined and they *must* be shown to each have needs that can *only* be solved by attending to the task in hand – in this case building a successful art collection. Just as collectors such as Albert C. Barnes, Duncan Phillips, Helene Kröller-Müller or Karl Ernst Osthaus struggled to define *their* projects as *necessary* to a whole network, so did Ordrupgaard struggle to be placed as the answer to the needs of each of the actors in a network. Seeing Ordrupgaard – or the Barnes Foundation for example – as an answer to different needs is perhaps not controversial. In times of crisis, as are so usual today, museums argue for their existence through the needs they fulfil. It is important to note that the formulation of needs simultaneously shapes actors – it can be said to bring them into being by telling *what* they are.

A successful problematization must therefore make others *want* an alliance. Hansen performs his beliefs that the paintings themselves ‘want’ to be seen in a safe environment; that connoisseurs ‘want’ privileged access to beauty and a magnate’s friendship; that a place ‘needs’ a beautiful dwelling which is aesthetically realized; that the press ‘must have’ glamour and something to

**Table 5. Callon's (1986) four moments of translation**

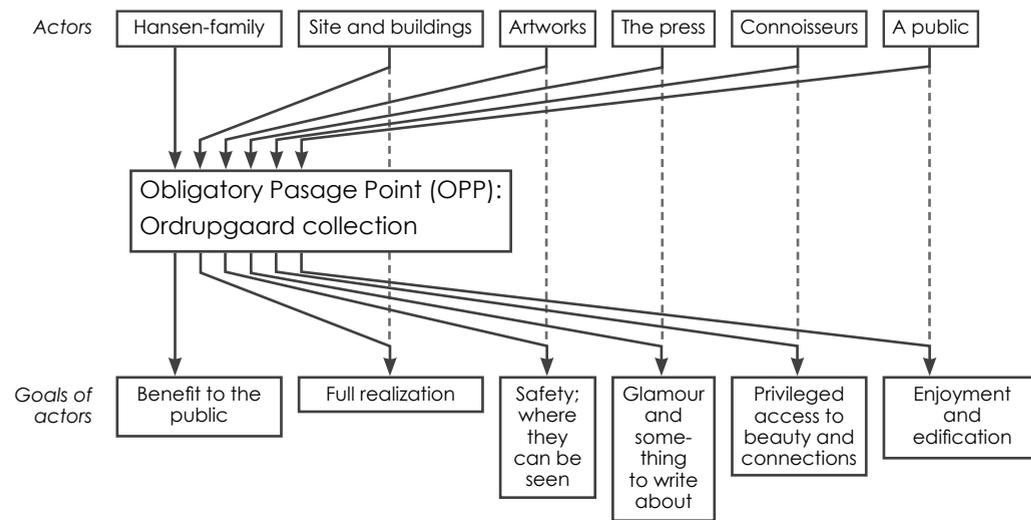
1. Problematization
2. Interessement
3. Enrolment
4. Mobilization

write about; and that a public absolutely ‘craves’ both enjoyment and edification. As we can read in the papers, all of this comes from the fact that Hansen and his family ‘want’ to be of service to the public.

All these divergent needs can be answered by building a successful art collection. Ordrupgaard is a way of answering the needs of a set of diverse actors by answering the question ‘how to do a successful art collection?’ [fig. 113]. It is an *obligatory passage point* which ties together each and every need of the actors defined in its network (Callon 1986, pp. 6–7). Ordrupgaard is the one bottle neck which directs all traffic. And as long as the collection remains the best answer to the needs of everyone, rivals who could think of other types of problematization are kept under wraps or entirely discredited: There are no problems as long as the public agrees that enjoyment and edification is what they want and see Ordrupgaard as the answer. There are no problems as long as the paintings ‘agree’ that safety and audiences are found at Ordrupgaard, and everything is good as long as the buildings and gardens seem best realized *as Ordrupgaard*, the home and collection of the Hansen-family.

But problematization is just an initial step. The next step is called *interessement*, which involves active persuasion in order to loosen the associations that actors already have to other actors and their competing problematizations.

For a collector of painting, interessement means forcing or seducing artworks and humans and parcels of land to dissociate themselves from their



113. Establishing Ordrupgaard as an Obligatory Passage Point that all actors have to 'pass through' in order to get their goals met, cf. Callon (1986)

previous connections in order to become connected to his collection: Hansen buys paintings and freights them away from their former owners. Meanwhile connoisseurs are flattered, bought or simply invited to participate, write about or simply visit the collection. Suitable land is purchased from others and a house erected and furnished in a specific scheme meant for paintings. Journalists and newspapers are offered good stories in exchange for their time and their newspaper columns. Through the mediation of the same newspapers, later perhaps by word-of-mouth, a promise of enjoyment and edification is given to a public, in a bid to wrench them away from race-tracks and cheap entertainment. Some of the same procedures of intersement repeat themselves everywhere large scale collectors and their collections occur, from Sweden through Germany to the USA. There are many differences between building successful art collections and building successful businesses, but processually it happens *the same way*.

Attracting actors – the process of *enrolment* – can be fraught with danger. Success is not guaranteed – the press might decide to write about something else, paintings might be delayed in transit, other connoisseurs might decide the collection is bad and the public might stay at the race-track. Johan Hansen, a contemporary collector of Wilhelm Hansen, placed his focus on Danish nineteenth century art, but sources suggest that he had trouble convincing actors to associate with his collection: While the press was eager to report on the opening in 1917, Johan's peers were reluctant to fulfil their role as supporters and were instead dismissive of the quality and selection of the Danish nineteenth century art in his collection (Petersen 1917b, Laurin 1932, p. 230). The collection, which was housed in a specially designed gallery, was later sold at auction without protest and is today virtually forgotten. Similarly, Albert Barnes had continuous trouble enrolling the actors needed for his version of a successful institution. A first loan exhibition was ridiculed, serious efforts to build a programme of art appreciation with the University of Pennsylvania in the mid-1920s failed and the philosopher Bertrand Russell (1872–1972) fled the educational chair he was given at the Foundation. Even a rare photo feature in colour in 1942 saw the paintings as mere 'decoration' and Barnes as an eccentric rather than engaging with the collector's vision for art (Wattenmaker 2010, p. 18).

For a time, the enrolment around the Ordrupgaard collection succeeded spectacularly. As reported in chapter I, the opening was given full news coverage, and the press wrote glowingly about the tasteful surroundings and magnificent grounds. As we saw, many paintings were enrolled and brought to the walls of the collection, while the surviving ledgers can attest to Ordrupgaard's attractiveness to visitors. Wilhelm Hansen's peers took on the role of connoisseurs by acknowledging the collection in both private letters and public

articles: Contemporary connoisseur-collectors such as Prince Eugen and Klas Fåhraeus frequented Ordrupgaard and corresponded with Henny and Wilhelm Hansen, Fåhraeus even wrote a scholarly article about the Manets on the walls (Fåhraeus 1918), thereby acting as a good ally, enrolled to the collection. More French, Swedish and German connoisseurs followed (Gold 1920, Hedemann-Gade 1921, Dumonthier 1922), with at least one of them, Alfred Gold, later revealed as a double-agent, ostensibly neutral but simultaneously working as a scout for Oskar Reinhart (Reinhard-Felice 2003, p. 42).

The final part of the concept of translation – that of *mobilization* – concerns whether *some* actors can become spokesmen for *several* actors. Are the paintings genuine paintings and therefore suitable stand-ins for *all* of French painting instead of poor-quality or even discredited fakes? Are the visitors actual visitors, are they the right type and do they arrive in the required numbers? Are the connoisseurs that are enrolled the right connoisseurs? Do the notices in the newspapers form a positive consensus? And if all of these actors are appropriate representatives, can Ordrupgaard – as the obligatory passage point – then represent them *all*? Does Ordrupgaard ‘speak for’ the connoisseurs, for art, for the public? Does it live up to the hype in the press, and does everything match the buildings and the buildings match to everything else?

In summary: Is Ordrupgaard (1) *problematized* as a solution to a question that can successfully (2) *interest* other actors and (3) *enrol* them and therefore be said to (4) *mobilize* diverse interests behind it so that it itself is representative of these same interests?

All this has to do with Ordrupgaard’s success – thereby answering the initial problematization: *how to do a successful art collection*. If this succeeds, Ordrupgaard has tremendous reach as an actor-network. As an institution it speaks with weight behind it, it is a successful *intervention* (cf. Skinner 2002,

Braddock 2012). Mobilization means that someone/something – in this case Ordrupgaard – is able to displace and move actors around and bring them together in new constellations (Callon 1986, pp. 14–15). Important paintings have left France to be part of this particular collection, people write about it instead of other things, the public visits, and the house and gardens form an integrated whole with the art collection that makes a lasting impression (cf. Levy 1921). As shown in chapter I, Ordrupgaard once spoke with great authority on a number of subjects: French painting, yes, but also on nature and on culture, on private ownership, on individual character and on the good life as a middle class pursuit.

The question of the success of mobilization highlights how a collection is more of a process than a one-off accomplishment, since representativeness can always fail and actors can abandon ship. In the first chapter, I treated Ordrupgaard as fixed in time – in the 1919 of our imagination – somewhat in the same way collections are kept ghostly and deliberately alive in auction catalogues after their final sale (e.g. Galerie Georges Petit 1918a, Galerie Georges Petit 1918b, Galerie Georges Petit 1919 etc.). But in actual reality – which is done and undone through interactions – it matters greatly whether the ‘right’ actors continue to ‘get behind’ a collection such as Ordrupgaard that wishes to ‘stay relevant’.

If, for example, some paintings by Toulouse-Lautrec and Manet appear forged, which was later the case (W.S. 1954), these actors are no longer representative of good painting, and Ordrupgaard’s status as the spokesperson of French painting is in danger. Or if the collector’s motives are questioned, which is what happened to Wilhelm Hansen (Winding 1922), the allies gained through the aesthetic disinterest of both collector and collection come into

doubt. Or, even worse still, if market agents problematize the whole economy of Ordrupgaard, which also occurred, then the most basic integrity is lost.

Employing actor-network theory in a de-familiarizing move allows several insights into how art collecting works as an extended process of seemingly inconsequential actions that all add up to performative success (or failure). It also shows – quite efficiently – the *limits* to art collecting and also how art collections *end*. To be quite explicit, a collection without a large established network *is not a collection*, and a collector who cannot maintain a network to define her/him *does not exist*.

Cornelius Gurlitt (1932–2014), the deceased Munich resident who harboured hundreds of artworks by highly prized modernists in his rental flat, was *not* known as collector and did *not* possess a collection before it entered into a network of *actors* – chiefly the press and a host of concerned art historians – in 2013; many of whom wanted to define him as a collector and his art objects as forming a collection, whether the contents were looted or not (Heil, Weber 2015). Additionally, collections can be in danger of losing themselves as they lose the network of actors they need for staying established. The famous case of the modernist art collector John Quinn being one example – the collection lost Quinn himself and his many connections in 1924, it lost the money to sustain it, and it lost the (inadequate) premises where it was held: Quinn’s large Manhattan flat (Zilczer 1979). The dispersal of the Quinn collection can be seen as one of the turning points in the history of the reception of modernism; yet another ‘crisis’ which can be used to ‘open up’ what otherwise feels like the black box of the network of collecting and trading art.

## 6. Collections, exhibitions and networks

Chapters I through V argued extensively for approaching collections as exhibitions. The obverse approach – that the temporary exhibition can be a fleeting realization of a sort of ‘ideal collection’ – has important implications. Comparing temporary exhibitions to their contemporary collections promises significant insights. Fully realized, such a history could fill volumes, but here for practical purposes I limit the scope of my comparison. First it is important to note that I am looking for something on another level than the already introduced concept of map and narrative and exhibition rhetoric. Rather, the focus here is on how exhibitions and collections involve the same *networks*.

By nature, exhibitions are transitory, ephemeral, even unstable, and they are particularly illustrative in the problematizations that occur around their genesis, realization and eventual dismantling. Perhaps more so than with collections – which often deny their impure origins – it is clear to see how temporary exhibitions are embedded in networks of diverse interests. They have an obvious processual nature and just like the crisis situation central to network studies, temporary exhibitions are delimited in time and space – they have a before and after. In this regard, temporary exhibitions are unlike the inscrutable black boxes we find in accomplished collecting. Instead, temporary exhibitions demonstrate the inherent instability of most networks: here today, gone tomorrow.

The gradual rise throughout the nineteenth century of the temporary exhibition outside the sanction of Salon and Academy is a story of many different actors – paintings, organisers, collectors, buildings, money, means of transport, government agencies and newspaper criticism – temporarily finding common cause and coming together around a project. This is the exhibition as a problematization and obligatory passage point in the manner of Callon’s

terminology, after which the diverse actors fleetingly enrolled tend to disperse. When seen from this angle, the private collection museums of modernist art and the temporary exhibitions on the same topic are similar – a lot of the same objects and people are involved in both – the crucial difference has more to do with intended permanence.

The role of the non-official, temporary exhibition for the promotion and introduction of new areas of art appreciation is too complicated to explicate in detail (cf. Altshuler 2008). One key feature has to do with the desire to establish dependable associations to support alternative exhibitions of art by living artists. To take Germany as an example, the large bourgeois collections of semi-contemporary art of the nineteenth century were at first influenced by the art unions (Ge: 'Kunstvereine') of cities like Berlin, Karlsruhe, Hamburg, Munich, Dresden and Düsseldorf that functioned as large networks bringing people, venues and paintings together along with modern avenues of publicity from newspapers to artist lithographs (Robin 1997, p. 67). The case was the same with the Copenhagen Art Union (Da: 'Kunstforeningen') founded in 1825 (Friborg 2000). Perceived as motivated by a love of art and nation, the network around art unions was joined with those networks evolving around the new artist's federations, exhibition societies and secessions in Germany and France that outwardly promoted themselves in terms of pure art. Together, non-government art unions and artists' groups seem to be two direct roads leading to a steady increase in the number and prominence of temporary exhibitions that eventually turn to more and more recent and 'difficult' art. From maybe the 1880s onwards, a template for presenting modernist art in commercial exhibitions has been developed for gallerists in Paris around Durand-Ruel (Jensen 1994). As regards any kind of modernist exhibition, official museums latch on much, much later.

It is important to note that these new networks of associations that form around the body of exhibitions are demonstrably *there*. This marks a difference to classical reception studies since, when also considering networks, changes in the appraisal of art can be found in more places than the writings of critics; the 'history of taste' does not need to be a separate study but can be approached as a web of exchanges. Considering the rising interest in modernist art slowly spreading from Paris, for example, this can be traced in a host of new associations where previously indifferent actors now find themselves involved in a network forming around a temporary exhibition: Government agency, bourgeois merchant, avant-garde critic and 'difficult' painting suddenly rub shoulders – in Paris, in New York and in Berlin.

As a network, the successful temporary exhibition is in many respects closely similar to the successful collection – a gathering of diverse actors *enrolled* and *mobilized* through *interesement* around a powerful *problematization*. For the now legendary London exhibitions at the Grafton Galleries on impressionism in 1905 and post-impressionism in 1910 and 1912 (Robins 2010, Robbins 2015), the *problematization* would seek to define a movement and its relevance through exhibition and, in passing, sell something. All this could only succeed by making the necessary actors such as paintings, buildings, visitors and the press *interested* in their own definition and in coming together – thus to succeed in *enrolling* them. From these criteria we can also say that immediate goals were almost met. Durand-Ruel's exhibition might only have sold 13 of the 315 paintings, but it *mobilized* what has since been seen as the most comprehensive presentation of impressionism ever staged and it received lots of attention and visitors (Robbins 2015), while Fry's much debated exhibitions quickly *mobilized* a new definition of French modernist art and secured 'French' itself as a lasting sign of progress (Falkenheim 1980, pp. 15ff).

Importantly for my point about temporary exhibitions and collecting, most major collectors of modernist art readily acknowledge the importance of the temporary exhibition. They visit exhibitions, they draw inspiration from them and they model their own collections in dialogue with what they see. The modernist collectors either routinely lend works in their possession or help arrange exhibitions, with some – Duncan Phillips being the prime example – even setting up the presentation of their own collection as a kind of rotating temporary exhibition. This modelling has as much to do with taking over networks, as it has to do with arranging paintings on a wall.

Temporary exhibitions are a way for collectors to connect to far reaching networks. When Wilhelm Hansen sends his collection of Danish painting to Stockholm in 1918 (Nationalmuseum 1918), it is both a particular network formed around a problematization – what is Danish art? – and a means to connect to Swedish actors who themselves are strongly connected – the likes of Carl G. Laurin, Richard Bergh, Prince Eugen, Axel Gauffin (1877–1964) and Stockholm’s Nationalmuseum. Wilhelm Hansen forms strong bonds with several of these collectors, especially when he takes a leading role in establishing the pan-Scandinavian French Art Association, also in 1918 (W. 1918a). A year later Eugen is offered the honorary presidency of the Association (WH to PE 1919/9/25 WA). To thank Eugen for his services to the Association, yet another temporary exhibition is arranged for the Copenhagen in the spring of 1922, this time of the prince’s own painting – a delicate matter since as a royal he himself cannot be seen to further his own ambition too obviously. The surviving correspondence (WA, OA) shows with due clarity how the art collector and practicing artist from Stockholm in turn makes Hansen his actor, agent and deputy in a Danish network of exhibition-making. Thus temporary

exhibitions are often involved in a network of associations between different collectors and their permanent collections.

Between formal and informal networks, an involvement in exhibition activity can help a collector ‘translate’ his collection into even more connections and associations. As an example, Hansen the collector took part in more formalized networks of museum and exhibition work that in turn gave him a wider reach: He was a board member of the Danish Art Museum Association from its foundation in 1913 – an elite economic support club and exhibition organizer modelled on the German examples of Bode, von Tschudi and Lichtwark (Robin 1997, pp. 164–165, Vergoossen 2006) – where Hansen was able to rub shoulders with everyone who was ‘something’ in collecting and the established museum world in exchange of his monetary support. With his chairmanship of the Danish chapter of the French Art Association from its inception in 1918, he is given direct access to borrowing – or symbolically ‘acquiring’ – artworks from otherwise inaccessible public collections in France and other countries for temporary exhibitions, and he gains access to important people and international institutions. The association also gives him opportunity to embed his own collection in travelling exhibitions, thereby ensuring important circulation and the recognition of his family’s possessions and himself. Exhibitions of Corot (in 1918), Degas (in 1920), Renoir (in 1921), Manet and Morisot (in 1922), Courbet, Daumier and Guys (in 1923) promote exactly the same art he col-

114. A network of important allies – a printed list of the Scandinavian board members of ‘Foreningen Fransk Kunst’ in 1919



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lects and they heavily feature loans from Ordrupgaard. Similarly, leading the Art Union in Copenhagen 1921–1925 gives access to the perhaps most prominent – and embattled – exhibition institution in the country and connects him, yet again, to key players in the form of artists and critics (Friborg 2000). As a member of the Scandinavian Museum Association (Da: ‘Skandinavisk Museumsforbund’) (Adriansen 2015), Hansen is formally recognized as a museum-man which, supposedly, gives him an even more official reach. Thus, art collecting and exhibition-making support and reinforce further networking.

As I have argued, the modernist collection as a provisional institution was an acknowledgment of the power of exhibition. The collection could ease entry into exhibition networks like those Hansen sought, but it could also be inspired by the temporary exhibition, and this is the way that Ordrupgaard and many other private museums, nationally and internationally, developed.

Going forward from Skinner’s and Braddock’s concept of intervention, the modernist collection can be seen as an attempt to make the networks of the temporary exhibition permanent – to institutionalize the intervention. In lieu of the temporary exhibition, the modernist collection sets itself up as permanent. In contrast to the exhibition, which opens in order to close again, the publicly available and modernist collection wants to become a permanent obligatory passage point for things and people to move through, potentially forever. This suggests two things: (1) That the modernist collection is a translation of the temporary exhibition into permanence; and consequently (2) that in a permanent collection the precarious networks of the temporary exhibition are neither available nor sufficient; they must be exchanged and transformed.

Dealing with the second point first: By nature, networks are marked by their instability – it is the rare case where one solidifies, which makes the transformation from provisional into permanent institution a real challenge.

Actors are fickle, they seldom want to repeat the same associations again and again: Neither paintings nor the public necessarily want to stay in the same place – other networks that present better offers are likely to intervene and mess with things – and the network represented by an official association has little interest in a private collection. It would seem that the best way to secure a collection, to make it permanent, would be to isolate it from the global network, to construct its own local network where only one actor, the collector or his foundation perhaps, allows passage from one to the other. This choice of isolation is often the ambition with complicated, technical development projects that attract many interested parties (Law, Callon 1992). Control-fetishists Barnes and Reinhart chose this road by limiting access to their collections during their lifetime and writing extremely restrictive wills. But another way to stabilize a collection – to make it known, to institutionalize it – is instead to construct as many new associations as possible and *punctualize* it (Callon 1991). Redundancy of associations can offer insurance against the break-up of a network. Most collectors would choose a middle-ground between closing off or opening their collection to the world. As touched upon in the introduction to chapter V, this raises questions about readiness for change, a point I will pursue further in chapter VIII. But for now, I want to explore the details of how a temporary exhibition held in Copenhagen in 1914 could become the basis of several attempts to build permanent collections – and institutions.

## 7. A Danish network of international, modernist exhibitions

Comprehensive exhibitions of international, modernist art – commercial or otherwise – were late to arrive in the Nordic countries. By 1900, Durand-Ruel and other, well-connected galleries had established durable networks to circulate a considerable number of modernist paintings outside France. Works by the impressionists and their perceived precursors and inheritors in the school of 1830 and among post-impressionists, were shown at first in America, then Germany, then the other major cities of continental Europe. Only very infrequently, a little modernist painting would find its way to local galleries in Scandinavia. In Denmark, modernist art in exhibition was still represented by local artists assimilating international trends (Abildgaard 2002).

But the network of collecting and trading art did come to play a major role in introducing newer types of international art to Denmark even if this was a bit roundabout. In 1888, the by then largest exhibition ever of French art outside France was actually held in Copenhagen. This happened in a temporary structure at the future town hall square and was initiated by the collector Carl Jacobsen. The French art was shown at the same time as Heinrich Hirschsprung's Danish collection at the Academy (Anonymous 1888, Saabye 2002, pp. 159–164), and it was framed as a prestigious supplement to the very large Nordic Exhibition – which also included an official Salon – in the same year: Two collectors presenting the local school vis-à-vis the best of current, international trends. Apart from a few canvases by Monet and Sisley, Jacobsen's exhibition mostly showed the type of French Salon and Academy art he collected for his Glyptotek (Hendriksen 1888, Glamann 1996). As network, the 1888 exhibition was an attempt to attract the type of truly international connections that form around a world's fair to the problematization of 'what

is French art today?/what is the best art today?' and further to enrol local, Danish artists, critics, museums officials, politicians, journalists and public in solving this question.

Jacobsen's French exhibition is an illustrative case of the power of temporary exhibitions. As an obligatory passage point, it actively delegated and associated roles to every actor it wanted drawn into its network. Each and every one should want what the exhibition claimed they needed, and they should want to be defined by this need: French officials and artists should want to sell France and to be associated with a glorious though decidedly non-progressive version of their culture while a Danish, Nordic and international public should want to visit, critics should want to proclaim their admiration of French art, and artists should, preferably, want to *emulate* the same. Initially, the exhibition project succeeded spectacularly with about 150,000 visitors and a comparatively positive reception (Glamann 1996, p. 146), and even in the long term, when this particular aesthetic waned considerably, connections to French artistic life ran deep and the primacy of French art was secure in the face of opposition from, for example, German art. In a Danish context, Jacobsen's exhibition – along with Hirschsprung's comparable showing of national art – is a very clear expression of a large network *as temporary exhibition* set in place for a collector's intervention into the art world. But this was just one case of an increasing number of alternative 'exhibitionary interventions' into the reception of art.

In most of Europe, the number and ambitions of temporary exhibitions of modernist art rose during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, especially in relation to the establishment of more and more exhibition societies and secessions. The earliest example in Denmark was the very active Den frie Udstilling (The Free Exhibition), which was founded

in 1891. It was in this organization's temporary exhibition hall, also on the future town hall square, that an interventionary, much debated exhibition of works by van Gogh and Gauguin opened in 1893 (Bodelsen 1985). A few years earlier, in 1889, the concept of impressionism was introduced at the



115. The temporary building for the French Exhibition on the future town hall square, Copenhagen in 1888

Art Union in Copenhagen through a small exhibition of Gauguin's own impressionist works and private collection, a similar event occurred in 1911 with more or less the same paintings, although by this time many had circulated and changed owners (Bodelsen 1970). But the battles for building networks for modernist art run in unpredictable tempi (Larsen 2002) – younger Danish artists were more interested in problematizing and networking their own productions

than those of foreign artists, which meant that international, modernist art was seldom a guest in the Danish capital (Abildgaard 2002, Gottlieb 2015, pp. 75–82) [Table 6, p. 330].

German gallerist Herwarth Walden (1879–1941) brought futurism, expressionism and cubism to Copenhagen in 1912–1913 (Aagesen 2002), but neither Danish galleries nor museum officials seemed to have much stake in the networks associated with international modernist art, neither the by now respectable impressionism, nor the more recent currents coming from Germany, Italy and Russia. In 1914, the year that war broke out, Copenhagen finally warmed to French impressionism, and for the first time the city saw a total overview of French painting of the nineteenth century through 356 items exhibited at the National Gallery:<sup>20</sup> From David, Ingres and the romantics

.....  
20 The catalogue carries 216 entries under painting and 140 under drawings, pastels and watercolours. The actual number was probably a little different. Of special interest is the fact that handwritten notations in several

through the school of 1830 to Manet and the impressionists and concluding with Cézanne, Gauguin, Seurat and Matisse, it is a canon recognizable a century later. The exhibition is equally remarkable for the nature of the network it enrolls: Honorary members of the organizing committee count the French foreign minister Gaston Doumergue and his Danish counterpart, Erik Scavenius, the director of Musée du Luxembourg, Léonce Bénédite, and artists like Monet, Renoir and Rodin, while top dealers like Bernheim-Jeune, Durand-Ruel, Petit, Vollard and Paul Rosenberg lend works to the exhibition as do prominent collectors like Paul Gallimard (1850–1929), Alphonse Kann (1870–1948), Théodore Duret, Félix Fénéon (1861–1944) and the descendants of Henri Rouart (1833–1912) (Madsen 1914). Human and non-human actors are impressively corralled.

Thus, the Danish exhibition held on the eve of war draws on a network of prestigious travelling exhibitions to which French galleries contribute on a regular basis, and where some items are discreetly for sale (Gee 1981, Jensen 1994) – catalogues with price annotations are still kept with New Carlsberg Glyptotek and the National Gallery. Karl Madsen is the nominal curator and his newly established Art Museum Association underwrites the exhibition. Meanwhile, Danish art-broker Tyge Møller is the man with the contacts to Parisian galleries (Madsen 1917). Møller is thus simultaneously an agent for commercial galleries and for the museum in Copenhagen, while also, as surviving letters attest, acting as an agent on behalf of Helge Jacobsen who debuts as a large scale collector in the same year. Once again, not surprisingly, the agent is a double- or even triple-agent.

.....  
extant museum copies reveal an extra cat. no. 131 bis: Manet, *Un bar aux Folies Bergère* with a price tag of 300,000 francs. This is none other than what later became the star canvas of The Courtauld Collection. Extant correspondence between Paul Cassirer (1871–1926) and Karl Madsen about transport of the canvas is kept in SMKA.

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Møller's complicated agent-position highlights how the network around an exhibition is many different things depending on vantage point. From Møller's position the exhibition mobilizes *him* as spokesperson for a number of interests. By arranging the exhibition, Møller is in a position to 'speak for' the French galleries, museum administrators and collectors as they are coupled to Danish government and museum officials and the wealthy art fans in the Art Museum Association. By interesting and enrolling an impressive network around answering a problematization similar to that of Jacobsen's 1888 exhibition – 'what is French art/the best art?' – Møller has put himself right at the centre. He is therefore – hopefully – set to gain from the many new associations between art lovers in Denmark and France that all have to pass through him. This certainly does not preclude a genuine interest in

**Table 6. Notable exhibitions of international modernist art in Copenhagen before WWI**

Note: Throughout the period, a few modernist artworks would occasionally be exhibited as part of commercial gallery shows

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1885.	Gauguin solo exhibition. Kunstforeningen
1889.	Nordic and French impressionists. Private collection of Gauguin. Kunstforeningen
1893.	The Free Exhibition. Gauguin and van Gogh. Den Frie Udstilling
1893.	March Exhibition at Kleis' Art Dealers. Gauguin, symbolists and Les Nabis. Kleis' Kunsthandel
1893–	Edvard Munch exhibits occasionally in Copenhagen
1908.	March Exhibition at Kleis' Art Dealers. Die Brücke. Kleis' Kunsthandel
1911.	Modern French Art in Danish Possession. Organized by Karl Madsen. Kunstforeningen
1912.	Italian Futurist exhibition. Organized by Herwarth Walden. Den Frie Udstilling
1913.	Cubists and Expressionists. Organized by Herwarth Walden. Københavns Kunstsalon
1914.	French painting from the nineteenth century. Organized by Tyge Møller and Karl Madsen. The National Gallery

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116. Edouard Manet: A Bar at the Folies-Bergère. 1882. Oil on canvas. 96 x 130 cm. The Courtauld Gallery. Manet's already famous canvas was for sale in Copenhagen in 1914 for 300,000 francs

furthering the cause of French modernist art, it is indeed its sincere foundation, but at the same time the Danish broker might hope to lure even more potential collector friends to join Helge Jacobsen and to latch on to the newly established network. As a true agent, Møller will at the same time see to his own interests, to that of his potential clients and to that of the French galleries and collectors he is on friendly terms with.

As war breaks out in July–August, perhaps two thirds of the artworks become stranded in Copenhagen for the duration. But artworks want to circulate, even when old roads are shut down. Later in 1914, the director of the National Gallery in Kristiania (today Oslo) thanks the World War for bringing 'the cream' of Danish exhibitions to his museum (Thiis 1914), and further exhibitions that include some of the same works are arranged in the National Gallery in Stockholm in 1917 and the Artist's League in Kristiania in 1918 (Nationalmuseum 1917, Bergh 1917, Halvorsen 1918). The now truncated network is forced to seek new directions: instead of sales to rich American or German bankers, an unexpectedly lively Nordic interest in collecting French modernist art emerges. In Copenhagen, there are collectors like Christian

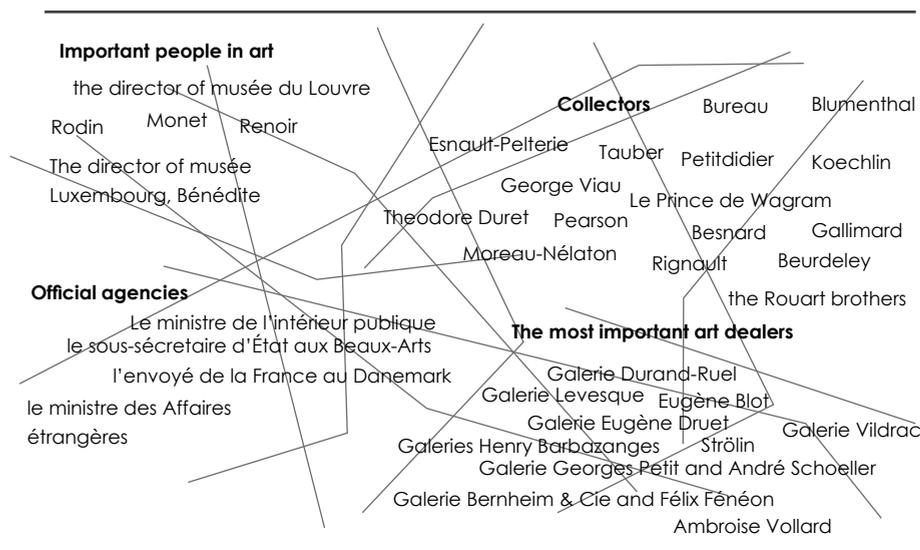
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Tetzen-Lund, Johannes Rump, Helge Jacobsen, Herman Heilbuth (1861–1945) and Wilhelm Hansen, the chief collector of early French modernist painting. And what a reversal of associations – though already a member of the Art Museum Association from its establishment in 1913, Hansen, a collector of Danish nineteenth century art, had at first wanted nothing to do with the French exhibition (Dansk Kunstmuseumsforening protocol, 1914/2/20 SMKA), Tetzen-Lund had likewise concentrated on Danish art, Rump on old master drawings, Heilbuth was not known to collect anything and Jacobsen stood entirely in the shadow of his father who only died that year. Within a few years, all would be avid collectors of French modernist art and its precursors.

In a long, illustrative letter to Karl Madsen – a kind of network-diagram – Tyge Møller names the galleries, collectors and official contacts that he had

117. A network of modernist art (somewhat impressionistic sketch) based on a letter by Tyge Møller to Karl Madsen in 1913. The network would later be utilized by Wilhelm Hansen and the French Art Association, Helge Jacobsen and possibly Christian Tetzen-Lund



or wanted associations to for the benefit of the coming exhibition [fig. 117] (TM to KM 1913/12/30 SMKA). The long text names those considered trustworthy, those who are duplicitous, those who are friends, those who are superficially 'American' (Gaston Bernheim-Jeune!), those who want an official medal in return, those who might help, those who will be hard to entice and so on and so forth. Further favours and counter-favours and the quickly scaffolded network around the exhibition can be followed in the still extant communication in the archives of the National Gallery (SMKA). Tragically, Møller dies in 1917 and his wife Asta Møller (1868–??) takes over some of his business. But it is not just his wife who ensures that the network lives on, the associations to Ordrupgaard, the other Danish collectors and to the New Carlsberg Foundation now controlled by Helge Jacobsen, who supports the impressionists his father despised, also continue to invigorate the links.

The exhibition of 1914 can thus be related to Ordrupgaard in two important ways: (1) Møller's and Madsen's exhibition has the same focus, content and time span as the future collection, (2) the exhibition of 1914 is exactly the network Ordrupgaard is embedded in – the same dealers, the same collectors, the same museum and government apparatus in Scandinavia and France. Thus, the exhibition of 1914 is an important mirror to the collection of Ordrupgaard – as a narrative of modernist art, yes, but especially as network. If one really needs an unequivocal origin or a prime mover – this is it. The exhibition of 1914 can be linked Ordrupgaard's conception, a networked beginning.

Thus, the networked nature of a temporary exhibition like that of 1914 has a model-like character. Exhibition and collecting activities seem indelibly connected, not just in the case of Ordrupgaard, but overall in the history of the canonization and dissemination of modernist art. The temporary exhibition is like an ideal collection, and the permanent collection is given shape through

exhibition – but the analogies are not just a question of identical displays and narrative techniques. Both collection and temporary exhibition are localized networks of the same actors – dealers, letters and telegrams, critics, paintings, collectors, museum and government officials, exhibition venues, public, and newspaper critique. Whether we look to Denmark, Sweden, Germany, Great Britain, The Netherlands, the USA or elsewhere, collections and exhibitions are networked.

## Chapter VII: Les Grandes Ventes

In the preceding chapter, I discussed how collecting high art is defined by networks and the ability for collectors, their agents and their collaborators to connect to, use and manipulate each other. In art collecting as in society, technology takes a central role since it allows many more connections to be carried further and farther away, and offers the prospect of safe recording and rational calculation (cf. Latour 1991).

At the turn of the twentieth century, collectors and agents could communicate via globe-spanning telegrams and postal services; information was shared and decisions were taken and their outcome swiftly and reliably carried on. Through the means of international freight, precious works were safely sent to all corners of the world while networks of banks and finance made it possible to buy and sell without the physical exchange of cash. What was exchanged was a *mélange* of information and things and people. Sometimes, these exchanges would involve relatively few defined actors – most people and things involved are reliable intermediaries – but sometimes frictions and breakdowns would occur, thus generating and involving many more actors, as for example when a packing crate goes missing.

In general, however, the networks of collecting and trading art of the early twentieth century had a high level of reliability, which in turn allowed a high degree of rational calculation – something associated with market thinking. A general dispersal of the marketplace to ever more areas and the rise in ‘market formatting’ seems to have been well under way in the western world during the nineteenth century. Many networks that were only imperfectly ordered and commercialised saw the introduction of calculative market approaches that previously might have seemed alien. The rapid marketization of collecting and trading art is one example. For collectors, dealers, painters, agents and collaborators, the market was yet another technology for extending network reach.

In the Paris around WWI, which concerns us here, art had become acknowledged as an important business in itself. Major sales and auctions were often reported in both newspapers – Le Figaro’s regular feature *Les Grandes Ventes* is just one example – and in special interest magazines. A clear and commercial sign of the success of impressionism and later modernist tendencies was when their paintings transcended the gallery and exhibition circuit to become successful in the ‘secondary’ market of collection sales and auctions, which is the market that garnered the most reports in the media. By this point impressionism was essentially a historical movement – although some of the leading painters, principally Renoir and Monet, were still active – and a number of competing isms and ideologies were jockeying to take its place. Yet, it was impressionist artworks that were providing solid material for the international markets.

As previously argued, impressionism and modernist art were dialectically developed in tandem with the introduction of new business techniques to stimulate and control the production, promotion and dissemination of this

particular art and its ideology. Taken together, the growth of a secondary, increasingly speculative market of modernist art and that same art’s formation within modern, commercial promotion is significant. French impressionism and early modernist art are closely connected to modern business practices and should therefore also be understood in the context of commodity exchange and the market. This chapter continues the exploration of collecting as essentially networked by tackling the perspective of commercial networks.

In a seminal essay, anthropologist Arjun Appadurai (1986a) defines *commodities* as any type of ‘thing’ which is exchanged. Commodity status is thus a way to define objects *as they are exchanged*, and exchange itself, is what *makes* value. ‘It is exchange which sets the parameters of utility and scarcity, rather than the other way round, and exchange that is the source of value’. In Appadurai’s analysis, the goal is to explore how ‘economic objects circulate in different *regimes of value* in space and time’ (Appadurai 1986a, p. 4). To him, instead of merely looking for signs and their meaning, an activity perhaps still favoured today by many inside cultural studies, this insight necessitates a complementary focus centred on things, their trajectories and biographies (Kopytoff 1986). Things gain their value precisely from their history of moving through time and space, not just by being set into a pre-existing system of values.

From this perspective, impressionist and modernist paintings are commodities *incarnate*: both as a group and as singular objects they are frequently exchanged, and a significant part of their value and identity is born from their circulation history. Appadurai’s theory on commodities is a further argument for looking at both the market and other forms of exchange when studying collections of modernist art. I am here claiming that the market must be considered as a central tenet of collecting from, perhaps, the middle of the nineteenth century onwards. Rather than playing a marginal role as something

'before' or 'after', market circulation is paramount in creating and sustaining the value of collections and their objects. As a network, it is a resource since it assigns values and constantly offers new painting-commodities, but it is also a threat, since the market can – if the collection is left weak or unguarded – once again try to lure the same objects back into circulation. This was the case with Ordrupgaard, as I will discuss towards the end of the chapter, as it inevitably is, sooner or later, for most collections of high value objects.

Following Appadurai, the art market thus represents a *regime of value* where art-objects acquire value through commoditization. But 'the market' is also a specific, historical way of understanding exchange, and something, which will eventually format 'reality' itself. In its basic, prevalent conception, 'the market' is believed to be an efficient framework designed to unambiguously identify contract seekers, simplifying their decisions and calculations, and letting them arrive at the best deal (Callon 1998b, p. 3). Other concerns deemed external to the deal – what we might call entanglements – are deliberately cut off so as to ease calculation. The 'performativity thesis' has recently been applied to the way economists influence and ultimately shape the markets they study (MacKenzie, Muniesa & Siu 2007, Healy 2015) – they come to perform what they merely claim to reflect. The same performative effect can be said of any market-like framing of exchange, whether of mundane artefacts or of artworks. Throughout the chapter, I am therefore also exploring art collectors who clearly think and operate on market terms and thus – in knowing collaboration with the practices of artists, dealers and critics – help format art collecting itself in a particular late-capitalist fashion.

The auction appears as a particularly ritualised market event in the art world. As a 'tournament of value' with actors competing for profit and status, the auction also represents an event where the values of commodities are set

(Appadurai 1986a, Geismar 2001). In a coming section, I focus on the sale of the collection left by the painter Degas as a particularly noteworthy event – and a concrete marketplace – which saw the participation of Wilhelm Hansen and his collaborators Herman Heilbuth and V. Winkel & Magnussen. Here, in a transient network shaped by the framework of the market, diverse things and people came together to put value to paintings by Degas, his elected, artistic precursors and his compatriots. The very well-researched auctions and their aftermath might best illustrate the triumph of the joint development of modernist art and the dealer-critic system (Dumas et al. 1997); right until the outbreak of WWII, this 'system' came to ensure that the art market adhered to a specific template of practice.

The participation in the auctions of Degas' collection in 1918 is one of several high points in the collection efforts of Wilhelm Hansen and his creation of a network around Ordrupgaard. In the two previous years, he has made his individual purchases with dealers and agents either in person or on his behalf by his trusted deputy, the director of the French branch of Hafnia, Emile Duval-Fleury (?–?). A sort of initial acquisition strategy was outlined by the curator Axel Gauffin in a contemporary article telling how his friend Wilhelm Hansen intended to build a limited collection of high quality: 'The succinct and demanding programme that he made a few years ago – was it in 1915? – stated: At most twelve paintings of each and every one of the leading French artists of the 19th century from Corot to Cézanne' (Gauffin 1920). But by the beginning of 1918, Hansen already is involved in larger, speculative purchases of French art and old master painting, an activity far from his original programme and the needs of his own collection.

Why the sudden shift? There is a big difference between building your own limited collection according to some strict guidelines, and taking part in a

speculative activity with business partners, mounting credit and the purchase in bulk of commodities unseen. What changed?

The following chapter seeks an answer in the type of market thinking which, at the time, offered an obvious frame for the collecting of art for a businessman and collector such as Wilhelm Hansen. The networks involved in collecting and trading art had, by this time, already been largely formatted as a market activity. When thinking in terms of investments and profit – that is calculating outcomes – the trading of art could make an obvious next choice.

Once it is acknowledged that markets played a central role in determining the successes and failures in modernist art collecting then it becomes important to consider the markets and investigate market rationality when discussing *the history* of collections. This should not be viewed as imposing the market from outside on helpless paintings and innocent collectors. Stating that marketization is inherently *wrong* is not an argument against studying its effects. A common complaint from social sciences would be that market rationality is simply ‘virtual’, an invention of economists, not a performative. In this view, analyses that actually take markets seriously represent a conspiracy to disregard the complex social forces which are the ‘real’ cause behind exchange (Miller 2002). A reasonable counter-critique would say that markets and what happens in them are indeed palpable occurrences: Why substitute them for the invisible, often unverifiable forces of the social, and why disregard the tremendous successes of markets? They get things done, and one of the crucial ways they do this is by severing the many immobile entanglements that are traditionally seen as ‘social’ (Holm 2007). To the premier collectors of modernist art in the early twentieth century, who were all business people and manufacturers – the market and market rationality was not in opposition to art – it was a foremost way to reach and relate to art.

That the market has become the most important way to give value to art objects should not obscure other types of circulation though. The temporary exhibition discussed in chapter VI is precisely such a network that can compete with the market as a place for the increase in value. This insight points to a theme that I will develop in the final chapter, chapter VIII, where I consider how a growing network of exhibitions and the exchange of artworks develops as an alternative way to maintain and enhance the reputation of impressionist and modernist art.

But first, let us look at the marketization of modernist art through the establishment of a remarkable business consortium ...

## 1. Consortiums

‘Un second Jacobsen’ – ‘a second Jacobsen’ – proclaims *Le Figaro* on the first of March 1918. The object of the comparison is none other than Wilhelm Hansen who gets likened to the best-known Danish collector of the preceding era, Carl Jacobsen, lover of Rodin and French Salon sculpture and founder of the New Carlsberg Glyptotek. The article goes on to tell how Emile Duval-Fleury, the Parisian director of a branch of the Danish insurance company Hafnia, has helped buy up whole collections of French painting including Collection Louis Sarlin and before that Montaignac and ‘several others’. These are actions that simultaneously flatter French art and contribute to the French economy, the reporter continues (Valemont 1918). For the same reason, ‘We should be deeply grateful to Monsieur W. Hansen’, another comment reads in *Le Gaulois* (La Rivaudière 1918), and in this way the Danish collector is introduced as a new force in collecting French art. He even intends to donate it all as a museum to the Danish state!

In reality the stories behind the sales are a little more complicated. By early 1918, Wilhelm Hansen, his close friend Herman Heilbuth and the Danish art dealers’ firm V. Winkel & Magnussen had established two consecutive consortiums ‘for the purchase and sale of artworks with the purpose of acquiring fine and outstanding art for Scandinavia’ (Consortium Protocol 1918, OA). These constructs pooled some previous acquisitions by the different partners, primarily Heilbuth, and then went on to borrow more money from Scandinavia’s largest bank, Landmandsbanken, to continue art purchases through the use of agents abroad. At the time, establishing consortiums was a common occurrence (cf. Gee 1981, Jensen 1994), and in contrast to regular companies, they allowed a measure of discretion as well as flexibility. The *Peau de l’ours* (the Bear’s skin, a play on a figure-of-speech), well-known to international

art collectors, was established in Paris in 1903 and built a handsome profit for its members (Gee 1981, p. 23–24), a consortium led by Joseph Duveen famously purchased Rodolphe Kann’s important collection of old masters *en bloc* in 1907 (Gloor 1992, p. 21, Scallen 2004, p. 204ff), and in Sweden, the merchant Axel Beskow (1872–1960) took the initiative in establishing several consortiums. In the years 1917–18 these Swedish enterprises employed the director of the Stockholm National Gallery, Richard Bergh, and his curator, Axel Gauffin, in order to buy art in Germany and France while prices were depressed (Osterman 1958). Not by accident, Gauffin was a close personal friend of the Hansen-family, and Bergh directly mentioned the enterprise in correspondence with Wilhelm Hansen (letter draft early 1918 NA).

A temporary fellowship of equal investors that employs credit to buy – by proxy – specific, but unseen goods of a very limited availability – is how the networked nature of the consortiums of Hansen, Heilbuth and V. Winkel & Magnussen could be described. In this undertaking, the consortium seeks to build a new, specialized and local network which takes full advantage of available technology. Significantly, the contemporary ease of communication could overcome the obstacles of war to make allies of dealers and paintings in Paris and of banks and credits in Copenhagen, thus bringing together what was previously distant. As a virtual agreement, a ‘paper construct’, the consortium is in need of actors of a more technological and physical nature in order to exist: its protocol, letters and telegrams that proclaim its existence as well as a number of documents such as written applications and grants of money that are, again, produced and delivered through technologies such as the postal service or telegraph.

A business consortium is both born and delimited by many kinds of actors – humans, technology and things. Inanimate things that can act – such as a

modest business protocol and the laws and rules that govern it – are absolutely essential to society because they tend to work very well and for a long time. Things afford stability to social interactions and relieve humans of many tedious or overly complicated tasks such as remembering all the details of a business agreement or delivering all communication in person (Latour 2007, p. 64ff, Latour 1991). The consortium, for instance, would have a hard time existing without written papers and laws and money to both shape and uphold them beyond face-to-face interaction.

An important point coming from an ANT-influenced analysis is the way that art trade and art collecting do not exist as ready-made fields where activity takes place. With reference to Bruno Latour's critique of the sociology of Bourdieu, there is no such thing as a before-the-fact structure, which structures all that happens in it (Latour 2007, also cf. Callon 1998b). As collectors, Hansen and Heilbuth do not passively step into the art field buying what is thrust upon them and proceeding to play by already established rules. They act upon and are in turn acted upon by many different instances. These simultaneously delimit their actions and allow them agency and gives them – for a time at least – the right to claim the status of art-collectors.

Talking of the 'art trade', 'the network of collecting and trading art' or even 'modern capitalism' should in this case not denote real forces, but simply function as a short-hand for activities, or a particular configuration of actors, we already have or are going to analyse in detail (Latour 2007, p. 11). It is the task of the next sections to pursue this configuration of actors that make up 'modern collecting' in 'capitalism' by going through the most spectacular case of the Danish consortium.

## 2. Acquisitions on a grand scale

During a seven-month period, between November 1917 to May 1918, Heilbuth, Hansen and their partners in V. Winkel & Magnussen bought from at least seven distinguished collections of French painting, in several cases wholesale, possibly making this the largest acquisition of fine art by one actor during the war (see Table 7, p. 351).<sup>21</sup> Presumably the financial transactions involved were so substantial they affected the exchange rate of the Danish and French currencies, causing a 4% depreciation of the krone relative to the franc (Le Curieux 1918). While acknowledged masterpieces of European art were involved, on the business side these exchanges were framed first and foremost as nostalgia free dealings. As shall become clear, it seems pertinent still to treat them this way.

The figurative spending spree was sparked off when Heilbuth purchased the 233 artworks that comprised the art dealer Isidore Montaignac's (1851–1924) private holdings, an action which cancelled the intended auction on 3–4 December 1917 at the Georges Petit Gallery (de Paris 1917). This collection comprised a good selection of 'modern paintings' of the nineteenth century including landscapes by impressionists and impressionist precursors – Corot, Courbet, Rousseau, Jongkind and Monet, as well as a good selection of Sisley and Pissarro (Galerie Georges Petit 1917). The second purchase, this time of parts of the collection of the dentist George Viau, followed in February 1918. Viau had wanted to liquidate at least parts of his collection in 1907 at an auction at Galeries Durand-Ruel (Durand-Ruel 1907a, Durand-Ruel 1907b), probably to shift collecting focus, but apparently changed his mind at the last moment. Later on, from 1909 to about 1912, he negotiated with

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 21 A part of the archival material used for this chapter was unearthed and compiled by Ernst Jonas Bencard, former curator at Ordrupgaard.

the collectors Jenny and Sidney Brown in Baden, Switzerland about selling some of the contents of his flat which they had visited several times [fig. 199] (Preiswerk-Lösel 1992, pp. 29ff, Preiswerk-Lösel 2005a, pp. 32–33).

Viau's sale to the consortium was of at least 207 artworks, among these were paintings and watercolours by Delacroix, Corot, Daumier, Manet, Renoir, Cézanne, Sisley and Morisot (Consortium Protocol 1918, OA). The money from his collection gave Viau the funds to reorient his efforts and buy a large number of artworks by Degas just a little later in the same year (Godfroy 1997, p. 266–267), and he went on collecting art until his death in 1939 (Hôtel Drouot 1942).

The second auction to be cancelled was that of Louis Sarlin's (?–?) art collection on 2 March 1918. In this instance it seems likely that Heilbuth put up the money so that Hansen and his deputy Duval-Fleury could acquire the lot. Among the 108 artworks was a very fine selection of paintings by Corot and Delacroix, and a considerable number of Barye sculptures (Consortium Protocol 1918, OA, Galerie Georges Petit 1918a). The Collection of Max Flersheim (?–?) was acquired later in March that same year. The majority of the 80 paintings were seventeenth century Dutch or Flemish, among these were a couple by Peter Paul Rubens (1577–1640) and Rembrandt, and others by

Adriaen van Ostade (1610–1685), Jan van Goyen (1596–1656) and Salomon van Ruysdael (c. 1602–1970) (Consortium Protocol 1918, p. 3, OA). During the same month, Heilbuth acquired the old master collection of the art historian and dealer Marcel Nicolle (1871–1934) including 54 Italian, Spanish, Dutch and French paintings by artists such as Tintoretto, Diego Vélasquez (1599–1660), Goya, Anthony van Dyck (1599–1641), Jan Steen (1626–1679) and Jean-Marc Nattier (1685–1766) (Consortium Protocol 1918, p. 3, OA). Around the same time, Heilbuth, seemingly on his own, acquired a collection from 'Count Avogli' (Madsen 1920), possibly the Comte René Avogli Trotti (?–?) who had a gallery with Nicolle on Place Vendôme under the name Trotti & Cie (Granger 2009). Significantly, Trotti would soon act as the consortium's agent in other dealings.

The consortium began negotiations with the wealthy entrepreneur Auguste Pellerin (1853–1929) about the purchase of 70 paintings by Cézanne. But Pellerin decided to remove a third of the paintings from the lot, and demanded what was apparently an unpalatable 3 million francs for the remaining paintings. At this point the consortium called off the deal (Consortium Protocol 1918, pp. 3–4, OA). Dealings with the famous collector Alphonse Kann also proved difficult – he declined an original offer on '30–40 pictures mostly of French impressionism, Cézanne, Gauguin and van Gogh' since he preferred to sell a larger number of works from his collection, possibly everything for 3.6 million francs (Consortium Protocol 1918, p. 4, OA). Eventually about 28 impressive paintings by the likes of Corot, Courbet, Daumier, Manet, van Gogh, Cézanne and Matisse were sold to the consortium (Consortium Protocol 1918, p. 15, OA).

Additionally, the consortium bought select artworks from dealers, some of them unspecified, others coming from the top-tier: three paintings by Degas from Galerie Vollard on 22 February, nine from Durand-Ruel on 21 March

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118. Berthe Morisot: Young Girl on the Grass (Mademoiselle Isabelle Lambert). 1885. Oil on canvas. 74 x 60 cm. 74 x 60 cm. Ordrupgaard. The painting was among the more than 200 artworks acquired from the collection of George Viau. A few years earlier, Viau had negotiated with the collectors Jenny and Sidney Brown of Baden where he had offered a small, more exclusive sample of his collection for sale, and among these artworks was the canvas by Morisot (see p. 372). The Swiss collectors passed up on this particular work, though

consisting of works by Pissarro, Sisley, Monet and Renoir, and on the same day four canvases by Henri Fantin-Latour (1836–1904) and one by François Bonvin (1817–1887) from Galerie Tempelaere (Consortium Protocol 1918, p. 15, OA). Recorded purchases decline after the auction of Degas paintings 6–8 May 1918, with the exception of a couple of one-off purchases in Zürich on 6 June and 31 August when works by van Gogh, Renoir and possibly Constantin Guys (1802–1892) were acquired. Two sales with unknown content are finally completed in Paris on 30 January and 14 April 1919.

To facilitate the large amount of capital needed for the purchases, Heilbuth had established several credit accounts in Landmandsbanken in 1914. Initially these accounts were dedicated to buying stocks. Since Heilbuth had a seat in the board he had virtually unlimited options for borrowing money without putting up any solid guarantee, and by the end of 1919 his personal debts amounted to close to a staggering DKK 19 million of which about 12 million had been spent on artworks between late 1917 and 1919 (Lange 2014, p. 37, Bankkommissionen 1924, pp. 157–158). The other partner, Hansen, followed suit albeit with more restraint. By September 1922 his personal debt on general speculation and art purchases was DKK 3.2 million. Once again there was little in the way of security; and the figure does not include the joint obligation toward the consortiums of up to DKK 1 million (Lange 2014, p. 50, Bankkommissionen 1924, p. 159). Also in this case it probably helped his credit to have a seat in several bodies of the same bank (Lange 2014, p. 15–16, 26, 44). Thus, a publicly prominent person with political appointments such as Heilbuth could mobilize many actors, he could credibly ‘represent’ many interests, and the same could, to some degree, be said of Wilhelm Hansen. The other partners, Viggo Winkel (1861–1921) and Peter Magnussen (1854–1932), were in this regard small fry, their debts to Landmandsbanken

Collection/ Collector	Time of purchase	No. of works	Character	Notes	Literature	Press
'Comte Avogli', probably Ernst Avogli Trotti	Before 1920	Unknown	Old Masters	Probably Heilbuth for himself	Madsen 1920	
Isidore Montaignac	November 1917	233	French nineteenth century, impressionists	Whole collection set up for auction November 1918. Acquired en bloc	Galerie Georges Petit 1917	de Paris 1917, Alexandre 1918, La Rivaudière 1918, Valemont 1918
George Viau	February 1918	207/215	French nineteenth century, impressionists	Whole collection acquired en bloc	Galerie Durand-Ruel 1907a+b	Alexandre 1918
Louis Sarlin	February 1918	108	French nineteenth century	Whole collection set up for auction 2 March 1918. Acquired en bloc	Galerie Georges Petit 1918a	Alexandre 1918, La Rivaudière 1918, Valemont 1918
Flersheim	March 1918	80	Old Dutch and Flemish Masters	Whole collection acquired en bloc		
Marcel Nicolle	March 1918	54	Old Italian, Spanish and eNetherlands, French 18th and 19th century	Whole collection acquired en bloc	Madsen 1920	
Collection Degas	1st Sale March, 2nd Sale May 1918, Print sale November 1918	At least 25 paintings + additional prints	Works by Degas and from his collection	1st sale: Trotti as agent. 2nd sale: Jos Hessel as agent. Print sale: Duval-Fleury as agent.	Galerie Georges Petit 1918b, Ives, Stein & Steiner 1997	Alexandre 1918
Alphonse Kann	April 1918	At least 10, probably 28	French nineteenth century, impressionist, post-impressionist			
Auguste Pellerin	Early 1918. Failed	70 paintings	Some 70 works by Cézanne	Failed		
Denys Cochin	Early 1919. Failed	Unknown	French nineteenth century, impressionist, post-impressionist	Failed	Galerie Georges Petit 1919	Le Curieux 1919

Table 7. The major consortium purchases

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were in connection to the consortium they had been pulled into by Heilbuth and Hansen. On their own, the network reach of these two players would have been considerably (in hindsight fortuitously) less.

In the first consortium agreement, economic responsibilities were officially divided in the ratio of 5/10 to W&M, 3/10 to Heilbuth, and 2/10 to Hansen, while the second consortium divided responsibilities equally and in solidarity, but these figures remain abstract due to the fragmentary nature of the records. As summarized, major purchases seem to have been made by Heilbuth but later divided between the partners along inscrutable lines. The amount of money spent by the actual consortium as a unified body is also hard to ascertain, but a tentative estimate puts this at DKK 3.7 million (Lange 2014, p. 44), meaning more potential debt on top of any debts the partners personally acquired in the period. Surviving notes and information indicate that these were also handled as partly collective purchases to be divided between the partners.

Considering the purchases identified from the sparse archival material, Heilbuth seems to have been the most active buyer. His involvement ensured direct association to the large bank and to networks of other speculators, while Hansen, on the other hand, was the public face presented to the (foreign and primarily French) public, and the man with the necessary connections and network in France. Every time a transaction is reported in the media it is linked to the name of 'Hansen', and it is his firm,



119. El Greco: The Repentant St. Peter. C. 1600–05 or later. Oil on canvas. 93.4 x 75.6 cm. The Phillips Collection. This painting was bought by Heilbuth in 1918 during the short existence of the consortium as part of the en bloc purchase of Collection Nicolle and sold on to the Phillips Collection through the Ehrich galleries in New York in 1922

Hafnia, which is the official name imprinted on the many packing crates used to store the works belonging to consortium partners. Finally, the firm of V. Winkel & Magnussen possessed the apparatus for selling surplus artworks not wanted by the two collectors in the wider Scandinavian, European and American market, and the involvement of this respectable company allowed everyone discretion and a certain anonymity. Altogether, the two collectors, the dealership, their allies and the collective connections make a perfect actor-network.

The consortium is revealed as a tight-fitting, local network where each member contributed their specialty in order to build a well-functioning circuit. To the rest of the world, it was simply an inconspicuous black box bearing the likeness of Wilhelm Hansen. The consortium-model, its speculation and the dependency on easy credit were to be kept strictly secret, as evidenced by Hansen's fury in a letter to his wife that the arrangement was 'revealed' in 1924 (WH to HH 1924/1/23, Bankkommissionen 1924, pp. 157–159). Even today it is simply not possible – let alone meaningful – to ascertain exactly how artworks and money were divided and transferred between the three partners. Instead, we are left with a chronicle-like list of purchases that says very little about the identity or relative importance of singular artworks – though many of these could possibly be traced further through deductive sleuthing.<sup>22</sup> But the sheer scale and anonymity of the purchases – probably disappointing to connoisseurs then and now – tell another, and very important story. This is a story of rapid transformations in the art market, and how the appraisal of impressionism, its precursors and inheritors was to become intimately enmeshed in networks *directly modelled on market logic*.

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22 By now, it should be obvious that for many reasons, this kind of detective work belongs to a wholly different type of art history than the present study.

### 3. Les Ventes Degas: guns and other concerns

The talk of the Parisian art world in early 1918 was the auction of Edgar Degas' collection of his own painting and that of his peers and idols (Rabinow 1997). The two first and most important of the sales were slated to take place on 26–27 March and 6–8 May under the management of the art dealers Joseph Durand-Ruel (1862–1928), son of the impressionist champion Paul Durand-Ruel, and Ambroise Vollard, the promoter of later generations of French art like that of Aristide Maillol (1861–1944), Cézanne, Matisse and Picasso. These auctions were to be held at the Galerie Georges Petit, a very large venue often doubling as auction house and by this point controlled by the two gallerists Gaston (1870–1953) and Josse (1870–1940) Bernheim-Jeune. This collaboration in many ways marked a symbolic death of the rivalry between the older Durand-Ruel and Petit (1856–1920).

While the donation of the impressionist collection of Gustave Caillebotte (1848–1894) to the French state in 1894 is seen as one watershed in the critical fortune and eventual public recognition of modernist French painting (Distel 1990, p. 296), the first spectacularly successful Degas collection sale in March 1918 and the equally successful first 'atelier' sale in May marked 'the last great Impressionist auction' (Distel 1990, p. 53). By virtue of ending an era, they also defined another watershed: the uncontested status and commercial apotheosis of impressionism, which was now a historical movement. Major international museums, private bidders from afar and the national press were all in place – thereby lending importance to the event – and the newspapers were filled with articles about the auctions despite being subject to wartime paper rationing.

From this time onwards, impressionist painting and the painting of Degas would be considered an integral part of French art history. The genre of

painting became a truly international commodity with an ever increasing price tag and fame to match: as canon and commodity this painting was now highly networked. In economic terms, the appreciation and trading of impressionism became 'locked-in' and tightly delimited (Callon 1998b, p. 48), thereby committing its collectors and allied institutions to stand by the artworks thus defined, and to do this both economically and morally for an indefinite time. In a broader perspective, the auction system was crucial in organizing and standardizing the market for Degas and nineteenth century French modernist art. The high degree of stability which was reached in the market meant that these artworks could then be subjected to the kind of calculation and investments associated with other markets in other goods.

Marking one transformative moment in the fortunes of impressionism, the several auctions are therefore also significant for the many interests that, for a moment, came together and 'passed through' the same small space. The auctioneers thereby succeeded in defining at least the prestigious first two sales as an *obligatory passage point* (cf. Callon 1986): a great number of things and people already involved in their own complicated constellations came together in their own 'interest' and submitted to following specific rules and roles.

As a local network, the auction has many similarities to the temporary exhibition – in some ways it can be seen as an even more marketized and accelerated version of the latter. The successful auction is a highly developed and 'locked' market that, similar to other networks, allots different desires and tasks to actors: Paintings become singular objects that attract admiration and money, visitors are potential admirers and buyers and the auctioneer is an authority you do not interrupt, and who quite literally points out and assigns objects and bidders. Behind the interaction on the auction floor, each participant is of course involved in his/her/its own network: While a collector could

be interested in adding to his collection, dealers such as the Durand-Ruels bid alone or in consortiums to augment their own stock, and delegates for museums like the National Gallery in London, The Metropolitan Museum and the Louvre are present for the sake of supplying their nation with patrimony (cf. Dumas 1997, p. 5). *Interessement* can of course be resisted since one can refuse to bid or participate, while, if *enrolment* does happen, it galvanizes the identities of 'opposed' actors: The more bidders and the more paintings that successfully attract attention – perhaps through bidding-wars – the more the auction and auctioneers also exist as a credible force. The whole network assigns and affords positions, and each and every position confirms or denies other positions by having to take stock of it and to 'anticipate' the other actors by following their line of thinking (Callon 1998b, p. 50).

On one hand, auctions are much messier than this. What happens is far from being carried by consensus or community, and the auction itself is not a 'precise, singular place of economic activity' (Geismar 2001). But precisely by masquerading as stable it also *creates* stability and helps dis-entangle what was hopelessly entangled. This again leads to calculability.

Many entanglements came into play at the Degas sale, but could in one way or another be more or less safely ignored for the sake of market thinking. But two particular actors at the sale – physically distant yet threateningly close – were especially talked about, feared, made fun of, criticized and grudgingly accepted. Put another way, these two actors were connecting to almost each and every human and thing in the assembly: these actors were war and the Americans.

Or, more specifically, there was the German Spring Offensive, which began on 21 March as a last, pre-emptive strike before the arrival of American *troops*. And then there was the concern that the European art markets would soon be

charged and besieged by American collectors, who had so far been held at bay by the poor possibilities for communication and travel (Stein 1997, p. 271).

As long as they continue to exist, networks tend to grow more and more connected, to converge and to normalize (Callon 1991, p. 149ff). If, after hundreds of years of existence, the largely western world of collecting and trading art is seen as one of these networks of many, many associated actors then describing it all in detail would be a near impossible task. But by looking at some of the concerns of one small section at a particular, critical moment in time is useful for providing a glimpse of the quality and extent of connections that might be found in the overall network of collectors, artworks, dealers and agents.

The things and teams needed to operate a howitzer can also indicate something about the larger network which is an army in conflict. And to every person present at the first auction on 26–27 March, the explosions caused by the guns, and which had been heard in regular intervals throughout Paris since the 23rd, are quite apparently a metonymy of the larger war itself. The two giant howitzers firing on Paris from the forest of Saint-Gobain more than 100 kilometres away are concrete attempts at influencing these same people. Should the 'Paris-Geschütz' succeed in landing a grenade in the assembly it would immediately re-configure a large part of the international art collecting network – a most violent enrolment – by literally rupturing connections and smashing people and things into casualties. But as a piece of psychological warfare – which was the 'real' aim for the Paris-Geschütz – success would entail some sort of tangible disruption of everyday life in the capital (Miller 1930). On both accounts – direct damage and indirect disturbance – the guns failed to connect to the auction (cf. Dumas 1997, p. 7, Rabinow 1997,

p. 293), or Paris itself for that matter to any great extent. Interessement was not followed by enrolment.

Director of the National Gallery in London, Charles Holmes (1868–1936):

Matters had droned on thus for a full hour, when, at three o'clock, a dull 'Boom' sounded outside, as if a smallish bomb had dropped. 'C'est le canon' was heard on all sides, and people began to leave the room. Still the paintings [Holmes was interested in] did not appear. At 3.15 a second 'Boom' showed that what we afterwards knew as Big Bertha had again got going. There was quite a considerable rush to the door, at least one prominent Paris dealer being among the fugitives (Holmes 1936, p. 337).

The auction, though, did proceed.<sup>23</sup>

As the hungry starfish that threaten a prized scallop population in Callon's (1986) foundational ANT-essay, the German guns could not be said to have any particular knowledge of the network of art collectors and dealers they were threatening. They were simply trying to 'interest' *someone* to slate their own hunger, and these 'someone' could be buildings, people or things, just as long as enough of the mental and physical network of Paris was disrupted. The same disinterest in target cannot be said for the other perceived threat to the French art world – the American collectors. Instead, they suffered from a lack of particular knowledge needed to make the viable connections. Though many American art collectors were interested the lots up for sale in Paris, the catalogues of the first 'Ventes' simply did not arrive in the USA in time for them to go into action and place bids with agents (Godfroy 1997, p. 264). So the people who actually *were* able to bid at the auction could successfully define

23 Miller (1930) and Holmes (1936) are in disagreement on whether the German guns fired on Paris on the days of the auction or if there was a complete standstill in operations from 26–28 March. They do both agree on the threat of imminent violence hanging over Paris from the start of the Spring Offensive on 21 March.

'the Americans' as a group, a singular and common threat from foreigners (cf. Callon 1986), that was (almost) successfully kept out.

'C'est pour le Louvre, Monsieur,' the British delegation from the National Gallery was chided when winning a bid on a painting by Delacroix. 'You are bidding against the Louvre, Monsieur' (Holmes 1936, p. 338). Thus, not all foreigners were kept out and efficiently written-off as 'Americans' – who are *over there* and *not here* in order to bid.

Already in 1916, Tyge Møller wrote to Helge Jacobsen of larger concerns in the art world: 'Knowledgeable men like Durand-Ruel, Vollard, Hessel have all said – as I myself have done in Denmark – that art of the highest quality will become markedly more expensive after the war' (TM to HJ 1916/1/29 NCGA). Later the same year: 'As soon as the war is over, they will come from America with much capital to buy French art for American museums; they have already made a committee with 50 million in capital – in other words, the money is there just waiting to be spent on art' (TM to HJ 1916/10/16 NCGA).

Did the American collectors succeed where the German guns failed? Could they even be said to exist as a single group? Considering the latter question first, the Americans certainly did exist as a group insofar as they without contest could be so defined, and the definition of such anti-groups is a regular feature of 'positive' group formations (Latour 2007, pp. 30–34) – in this case 'we French collectors' against 'the Americans'. It was also as a group that they achieved paradoxical success: Their plain existence provoked the establishment



120. Artistic rendition of one of the Paris guns from Miller (1930)

of several consortiums of Parisian dealers who wanted to stockpile for the benefit of the imminent return of ‘the Americans’ (Stein 1997, n. 1, p. 290) – once more demonstrating how ‘an actor is what is *made* to act by many others’ and that action is ‘overtaken’ (Latour 2007, pp. 46, 45).

**Table 8. Consortium acquisitions from the first Degas collection sale, 26–27 March 1918**

Agent: René Avogli Trotti

1. Camille Corot: *The bridge at Mantes*. C. 1855–60. Oil on canvas. 23.5 x 35 cm. Today: Sammlung Oskar Reinhart “Am Römerholz”
2. Camille Corot: *Chestnut wood among rocks (Auvergne or Morvan)*. C. 1860–65. Oil on canvas. 54 x 84 cm. Today: Sammlung Oskar Reinhart “Am Römerholz”
3. Alfred Sisley: *The flood. Banks of the Seine. Bougival*. 1873. Oil on canvas. 50 x 65.5 cm. Today: Ordrupgaard
4. Honoré Daumier: *Before the court. Hearing of a juvenile behind closed doors*. 1850–1860. Pencil, ink and gouache on paper. 21.5 x 34.5 cm. Today: New Carlsberg Glyptotek
5. Eugène Delacroix: *The death of Charles the Bold at the battle of Nancy*. 1828–29. Oil on canvas. 47 x 68 cm. Today: New Carlsberg Glyptotek
6. Eugène Delacroix: *Hercules Rescuing Hesione, sketch*. 1852. Oil on canvas. 24.5 x 47.5 cm. Today: Ordrupgaard
7. El Greco: *Saint Dominic in prayer*. C. 1605. Oil on canvas. 104.7 x 82.9 cm. Today: Museum of Fine Arts Boston
8. Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres: *Dante offering the Divine Comedy to Homer*. C. 1827 and 1864–65. Oil on canvas. 38 x 35.5 cm. Today: Ordrupgaard
9. Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres: *Woman kneeling, study*. C. 1840s. Charcoal and pencil on paper. 36.2 x 29.5 cm. Today: Ordrupgaard
10. Edouard Manet: *The departure of the Folkestone Boat*. 1868. Oil on canvas. 62 x 100.5 cm. Today: Sammlung Oskar Reinhart “Am Römerholz”;
11. Edouard Manet: *Portrait of Monsieur Brun*. C. 1879. Oil on canvas. 194.3 x 126 cm. Today: The National Museum of Western Art, Tokyo
12. Edouard Manet: *Pear*. C. 1880. Oil on canvas. 22 x 16 cm. Given as a gift by Hansen to Charles Simon in 1918. Today: Present whereabouts unknown

#### 4. The Danish consortium in the marketplace

The Danish consortium of Wilhelm Hansen, Herman Heilbuth and V. Winkel & Magnussen acquired several paintings from the first and most spectacular of the Degas collection sales. At the auction, as per usual practice (Gee 1981, Dumas 1997), more or less professional agents bid on behalf of collectors and wealthy people wanting to stay anonymous, making a popular guessing-game out of who controlled whom. Of these stand-ins, René Avogli Trotti, who had sold them his private collection previously, seems to have acted almost solely for the Danish consortium. Most of his purchases went straight to Wilhelm Hansen and Herman Heilbuth: two landscapes by Corot and one by Sisley, three paintings by Manet, painted studies by Ingres and Delacroix, a Daumier wash drawing and finally an El Greco painting (Ives, Stein & Steiner 1997).

From ANT comes the suggestion that we should study empirical agents acting upon each other – as opposed to looking for disembodied forces acting on the same agents from above – when we want to know what makes up the social. This also means a denial of anything outside, beyond or above this reality; if something has influence it can be localized somewhere (Latour 2007). Therefore agents are never closed off or wholly ‘themselves’; they are never alone or in absolute control since they are always already connected to other agents who induce or push them to do things. This has obvious importance for the analysis of economic transactions. The marketplace – since it connects in so many ways to so many actors – appears as an integrated and important part of what it means to collect art and the decisions and worries it entails. The market is an especially congealed network, and it structures and is in turn structured by the perceived worth of artworks. The market allows or denies art to be re-distributed, and a persuasive ‘market logic’ pushes for certain decisions.

The *must-have-it-whatever-the-price* spending sprees of J.P. Morgan (1837–1913), William Randolph Hearst (1863–1951), Henry Clay Frick (1849–1919) and other more or less well-known collectors (cf. Higonnet 2009) are just a few examples of actors being pushed into actions that appear illogical or



121. El Greco: Saint Dominic in prayer. C. 1605. Oil on canvas. 104.7 x 82.9 cm. The Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. This painting was bought by Ernst Trotti on behalf of Heilbuth and the consortium at the first Degas collection sale on 26 March 1918 while Paris was under bombardment from the German offensive. It was later sold on to the Boston Museum of Fine Arts through the Ehrlich galleries in New York in 1923

perverse within, say, an aesthetic or curatorial framing of the objects bought, but would make total sense when seen as the concrete, narratively accountable result of a number of forces acting upon the decision-makers: caught up in the market logic of acquisition – of power-play and dreams of monopoly – while other concerns are set outside the frame.

A tension-filled auction such as the first Degas collection sale illustrates this point – namely that *in themselves* actors can never make rational calculations. They are not atomistic monads but must search around for whatever network they can find to allow decisions. Manoeuvring through the bidding by other agents, known, half-known and unknown makes for an unstable situation (cf. Geismar 2001). In principle there can never be enough ‘inside knowledge’ of who is present and who is absent and what their

predilections might be. Instead, having ‘enough knowledge’ means actively drawing a line between what matters and what does not.

The *ability to calculate* comes from this delineated support system, which is set in place to handle exactly what has been deemed to matter. As with all

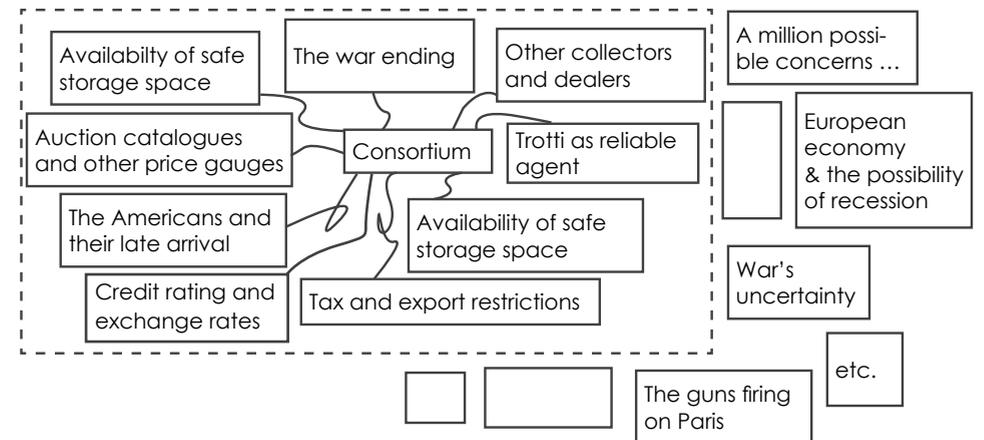
networks, even though he/she might be said to initiate it, the actor has little direct control – the whole network will be a cobbling together of pre-existing techniques and things that can help to perform calculation. This network covers techniques – such as the discipline of arithmetic – as well as actual things and media like newspapers, pencils and auction catalogues, in addition to institutions and personal acquaintances that allow privileged information access (rumours, price gauges, who has secret deals to bid etc.) (Callon 1998b, p. 10–11). To add further complication, ‘the calculative network’ does not only consist of frictionless intermediaries, but contains any number of mediators that influence, transform and translate (cf. Latour 2007, pp. 37–42).

A ‘calculative agent’ as a term therefore means a whole connected actor-network seeking a contract/price. In order to act – that is to buy or to not-buy – this actor-network must frame the immense number of available options into something manageable. In the process, a network of actors to be used for calculating alliances and conflicts is defined while other potential actors are set *outside* the frame (Callon 1998b).

In early 1918, the Danish consortium partners would want to know the range and quality of art to expect at the auction – not an easy task since travel was nearly impossible and the arrival of catalogues hampered. It does, however, seem that at least two sets of auction catalogues did arrive in Denmark. One of these can still (in 2016) be found at Ordrupgaard, the other one seems to have been used for reference purposes, with some fragments finding their way to the image archive of the Danish Art Library. As well as wanting to know about the quality of art on sale, the Danish consortium will also have wanted to get a feel for previous prices of these or similar works in order to predict what they might have to spend at the auction. In making these calculations the actors begin to create a number of associations. These would be to other

collectors and dealers, but also drawing on information like the hasty notations of prices paid at previous auctions, account books listing completed transactions or the archives of allied dealers.

Hoping for rising prices would need backing. In this case justification was partially ensured by calculating with actors such as: (a) the war, soon to be over, and (b) the delayed arrival of the big-spending Americans. A line of credit, as was established with Landmandsbanken in Copenhagen, would further ensure the complexity of the network and hence its competitive edge. Money, as the ever-present lubricant, would in many instances be glossed over as an unproblematic intermediary. In 1918, the French franc was depreciating at a brisk pace (Lange 2014, p. 27), so that money itself had become a very visible actor and an object of calculated speculation; and it is clear that both credit and exchange rates have a role to play in the calculative network, as does another currency – the available amount of safety. The Paris-Geschütz might have been ineffective, however in March 1918 there was also the threat of aerial bombardment or even siege, and the fate of Paris was far from certain. Deteriorated lines of transport and the impossibility of foreign export, which would mean finding somewhere safe to store artwork in the provinces, would also have raised concerns and been the subject of calculated risk assessments for the networks linked to the Paris auction. This, perhaps, would have been especially the case for a network involving Wilhelm Hansen whose job in insurance was to calculate such risks – it was also apparently a concern for Richard Bergh (Osterman 1958). As archival material shows, many of the consortium's purchases from before the 'Vente Degas' were actually kept in storage away from Paris, with the complex task of packing and expediting the transfers presumably left to Emile Duval-Fleury (cf. letters in ACG). A final concern in 'the calculative network' would have been a proposed luxury tax



122. The calculative network of a consortium: what is kept inside the frame, what is kept outside?

of 10% on sales and purchases that would take effect from 1 April 1918, just after the first collection sale, and a number of rumours about export-restrictions (Rabinow 1997, pp. 295–296).

As shown, agents can be very close even when very far away. The consortium partners back in neutral Denmark, storage spaces, the war, proposed legislation – were not physically present in the auction hall for the first 'Vente Degas', but as soon as these are all associated in a calculative network they *become* close. Looking at the kind of calculation made possible by a network can also highlight what is decidedly *not* to be included and more or less actively kept out. Signs of the end of WWI were taken seriously, whereas the potential threat of the guns on the outskirts of Paris were not, let alone war's general uncertainty. Still other concerns were similarly kept out of the calculative frame – fakes, dealer-conspiracies, over-saturation of the market and so forth – taken together we have an endless number of possible actors that are all kept outside the network and told not to interfere.

Another potentially disruptive actor was the future performance of the European economy. For the Danish art collectors' calculative network, however, the prospect of a post-war recession was simply not a part of the equation.

## 5. Freighting and framing commodities

For the Danish consortium, or for that matter any of the foreign collectors at the first Degas auction in Paris, getting the artworks they had bought out of France during the late stages of a world war posed major challenges (Holmes 1936). Transport by train was hard to achieve, unrestricted submarine warfare ruled the seas and on land effective organizations prevented the passage of goods between the belligerents through Switzerland (Degen 2010). But somehow, in early 1918, Hansen, his deputy Duval-Fleury and their combined network found a very specific solution.

During the First World War, the Entente and the Central Powers tried influencing the neutral European countries through various types of propaganda – films, theatre, literature and art exhibitions were some of the more sophisticated and easily distributable means. The gallerist Herwarth Walden worked as a German agent and took his avant-garde shows around Europe, even to Copenhagen (Aagesen 2002), as did important cultural personalities such as Harry Graf Kessler (1868–1937) and Paul Cassirer who promoted what at the time might have been considered more 'respectable' types of German visual art and theatre. Switzerland was a particular battleground state for 'hearts and minds'. Here the former-artist-turned-agent Carl Montag arranged several highly successful shows of impressionist and modernist art partly based on private collections of French art that had emerged in Winterthur, Oskar Reinhart's home city (Gloor 1992).

In 1918, the Danish art collecting consortium offered up some of its recent purchases for an exhibition of French art in Genève, which was arranged by Montag together with Auguste Bréal (1861–1941) at the French ministry of foreign affairs (Ville de Genève 1919, pp. 153–155, Musée d'art et d'histoire 1918a). In this way insurmountable restrictions on transport were overcome

by effectively ‘hitching a ride’ with French cultural diplomacy. *Exposition d’art français* at the Musée d’art et d’histoire from 15 May to 23 June attracted more than 8,000 visitors – a fine number compared to the museum’s 43,000 visitors for the rest of the year (Ville de Genève 1919, pp. 150–151). It is,



123. Théodore Géricault: The trumpeter. 1813/14. Oil on canvas. 48 x 38.3 cm. Österreichischen galerie, Belvedere, Vienna. The small canvas admired in a letter by Wilhelm to Henny Hansen in 1918 was part of the Louis Sarlin collection acquired by the consortium in 1918. By 1924 it was in the Belvedere in Vienna

therefore, not by accident that the museum’s deputy, Adrien Bovy later fought for the interests of Wilhelm Hansen in the incident of the packing crate.

Through the ingenious use of the exhibition, the French state and the Swiss museum was offered an attractive connection – a network – mediated and translated through the important paintings just acquired by Hansen and friends. These new alliances span otherwise insurmountable distances – before were only walls and borders, but now passages are cleared by the newly established network. And this part-alliance between Danish collector, Swiss museums and French nation is totally dependent on the paintings: when Hansen and Duval-Fleury the same summer want to cross the border between the two countries on their own business neither

Swiss nor French authorities are willing to facilitate their physical journeys (WH to HH 22/6/1918 OA).

Wilhelm Hansen, while stuck in Genève in June 1918, will have been able for the first time to see the artworks acquired by the consortium. Letters home

confirm his pride in the art secured for Denmark and his identification with French culture:

Dear K.M. [Karl Madsen]

I have just been to the exhibition here and it is a pleasure to say that I was not disappointed, quite the opposite. ‘Le manoir’ by Corot and ‘La trompette’ by Géricault were outstanding art, which I am proud to have played a part in acquiring for Denmark. Actually there are more of the same, for example Manet: portrait of Mme Lemonnier! It will be a treasure for Ordrupgaard! (WH to KM 1918/6/22 KB)

And to his wife:

Not only is everything here [in Genève] French – the people, the language, food and the look of the city, the exhibition is so French-French that it is an undiluted joy to see it, not least since it actually consists only of masterpieces, and you see, it is not unpleasant to know (and to be told) that there are just four exhibitors: Musée de Luxembourg [sic], Collection Hansen, Collection Heilbuth and Collection Beurdeley (latter one only drawings). To the collections Hansen and Heilbuth belong of course also the paintings owned by Winkel and Magnussen (WH to HH 1918/6/23 OA).

Inspired by the success of the exhibition, a new one is immediately discussed while Hansen is in Switzerland (Ville de Genève 1919, p. 156). As the contents of the first show are sent from Switzerland via Germany to Denmark – its imminent arrival in Copenhagen probably dictating the time of the opening of Ordrupgaard on September 14 – the transport of the second is planned by Duval-Fleury in France. The travels and travails of the many artworks that make up this even larger shipment can still today be followed through surviving packing lists (OA, ACG). From these it is clear that the shipments involved even more artworks than the 133 paintings and statuary that end up in the second Genève exhibition, *Exposition de tableaux anciens et modernes: Collections*

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*de M. le conseiller d'état Hansen à Copenhague* (Musée d'art et d'histoire 1918b). Somewhere along the way, the connection between the name of Hansen, art and France gained sufficient push in itself to move obstacles along tracks and across borders. This last hypothesis might explain why everything purchased by the consortium partners went under the name 'Collections Hansen', and why *everything* travelled in crates marked 'W.H. Hafnia'. With this, the nature of both exhibition-projects becomes clear: Partly a ploy in order to circumvent severe restrictions on transportation, partly as a celebration of Wilhelm Hansen himself, partly a manifestation of French, cultural hegemony. In this case, as with painting, *framing* means a lot.

After all is said, there remains the distinct impression that Wilhelm Hansen, Herman Heilbuth and the partners in V. Winkel & Magnussen bought a huge amount of art almost wholesale in a very short time with credit raised on shaky grounds. A twenty-first century framing of economics which is acutely aware of interconnected, globalized economies and the ebb and flow of markets tells us that this was bound to fail. Examining the probable rationality at the time – that is, the actor-network employed by the consortium – says something else.

All inputs into the calculator pointed at success: The war momentarily limited competition, the French currency was momentarily depressed and still dropping, this type of art had only seen rising prices before, and the arrival of rich Americans was imminent – all the pointers indicated that buying as much as possible now was a smart move. The only question for the collectors was how to identify the point at which prices were likely to leap, so that they would be ready to sell for maximum profit. Nothing indicated the need to calculate with a future negative state of European economy (Mørch 1990, pp. 37ff). In other words, all agents and actors that were consulted and incorpo-

rated into the network said 'buy, buy, buy'. Money was not an issue and the value of the goods could only rise.

As so many other magnates, Wilhelm Hansen and especially Herman Heilbuth were at the time enmeshed in a semi-closed, speculative market that had evolved in the Nordic countries during almost four years of war. Here, a large trade surplus together with limited investment opportunities meant that a constant search for new ventures had evolved. Central actors cooperated in framing this market as one of building and merging companies through regular emissions of new stocks and bonds to raise further capital. In this closed environment of increasing values and profits, credit was easy to come by and banks eager to lend money. Especially when centred on shipping and trade, there were few controls on speculation and very few tools for predicting bubbles or calculating with the vagaries of international economies (Mørch 1990). Compared to today, the calculative networks were simple.

It is not difficult to see how the framing of one speculative market could be transposed on other systems – and it seems the consortium partners did exactly this when approaching the system of collecting and trading art. An instructive line can thus be drawn between the acquisitions made by Hansen solo in 1916 and most of 1917 that, while made at high speed, all seem to have been done piece by piece, often in person and paid by cash. But then, as a member of the consortium, Hansen takes out major loans and becomes involved in wholesale trading of large numbers of artworks, which he then picks pieces from for his own gallery. Only later, when debts are suddenly called in, does this new framing present itself as problematic.

## 6. Collectors and economic framing

In the previous sections, I have treated what might be called ‘specific’ and local questions of economic calculation by treating the spectacular case of the Danish consortium of Hansen, Heilbuth and V. Winkel & Magnussen, then examining their possible concerns over the first Degas collection sale. But is it possible to generalize about the importance of economic consideration from these particular cases?

All collectors make decisions based *on* economy, and collecting choices are always impacted *by* economy. The question is whether the marketplace and economic thinking is marginal or central to the understanding of collecting: Aren’t economic decisions merely incidental? And if this is true, does the ‘spirit’ of art collecting not rather lie in aesthetic and personal motivations? This is certainly a viewpoint expressed in some histories of particular collectors. In these, economy is treated as an outside structure, which simply facilitates or hinders the collecting process.

I believe, however, that *calculation itself* is imperative to understanding art collecting. Deciding whether financial considerations are inside or outside the concerns of real collecting is not particularly relevant since there is no definite inside or outside to what does not reside in the mind. Collecting is, at one and the same time, *an activity* and *a grouping* of people and things. In building and maintaining these kinds of networks, it is also the kind of calculation typically associated with the marketplace – a *decision prone disposition* – which enables collecting, both in times of addition and subtraction.

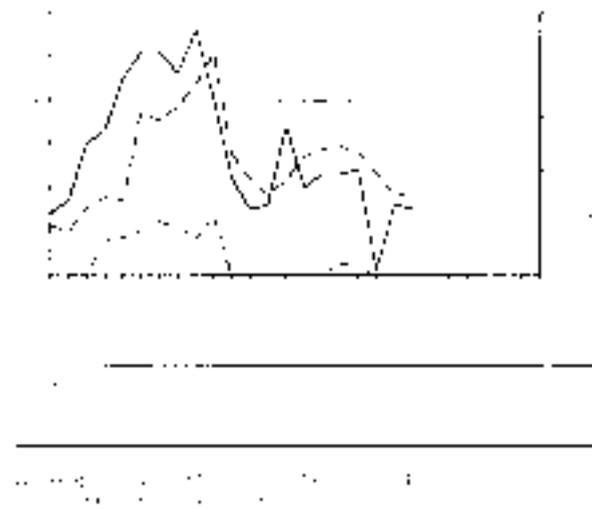
Here, an illustrative example of decision and calculation is in order. In March 1910, the collectors Jenny and Sidney Brown of Baden contemplate buying a selection of ten impressionist paintings from the Parisian dentist George Viau, whom we have met before. Carl Montag is the agent set to receive commis-

sion from the purchase – the largest ever made by the couple and a point of considerable soul searching. ‘As private people we have not worried about the commercial side before – we do occupy a different position than an art dealer – though I am not saying that an increase in value of one’s paintings does not bring joy’. But a simplified framing in terms of economic opportunity is itself difficult, since, ‘we would rather purchase one by one *so that a memory is attached to each picture*, something which makes them all so precious to us’ [emphasis mine]. In the end, the Browns come up with the idea to buy in instalments, and thus also receive their paintings in instalments, since it ‘really crushes the heart to let all the beautiful Impressionists go, knowing they will all pass to museums [...]’ (Jenny Brown to Carl Montag cited after Preiswerk-Lösel 1992, p. 33).



124. The gallery at villa Langmatt in Baden, Switzerland historical photo c. 1930. The villa was the frame for the Brown family’s intensely private enjoyment of art and was never meant for public access. Upon the death of their son, John A. Brown (1900–1987), the villa, gallery and collection was bequeathed to the public and opened as a museum in 1990

Even Jenny and Sidney Brown have set up for themselves a calculative framing which allows them to reach a decision. This framing is based on the partial anonymity guaranteed by an agent, so that the paintings belonging to a friend’s collection can become ‘alienated’ and more like the free-flowing wares of the anonymous marketplace (Callon 1999, p. 189). Thus, the calculations can be dramatically reduced to just three difficult yet manageable facts: regarding their prospective finances, regarding the present and future price of the paintings and regarding their own personal attachment to the artworks



125. Graph from Murdoch  
(1994)

to be traded. The questions of money and questions of personal, aesthetic and sentimental value are explicitly allowed to stay entangled: they recognize that the circumstances of acquisition are important – the rhythm and cadence of acquisition is a part of the artwork to them – but they also calculate explicitly with an economic supply-demand angle. And this second insight tells them that future access to the art that they like will be more difficult. Therefore, a staged and gradual purchase seems the best compromise.

As a case, this calculated framing of matters of feeling and finance into a concrete art deal is important. It reveals the possibility that many – perhaps most – instances of art buying are framed with feeling as an integrated part of a financial transaction. This insight stands in opposition both to a radical liberalism which would acknowledge only economic considerations in market transactions, or an aesthetic view of art which would disregard cool calculation altogether. It also shows how buying art can be opposed to other

kinds of transactions where feeling is explicitly externalised. Here, feeling, sentimentality and personal concerns are instead, probably very often, made internal to the decision. Tellingly, the art shopping experience presents a strong precursor example to the experience economy of the late twentieth century (cf. Pine II, Gilmore 1999).

I am here arguing for an integrated view of *collecting as calculative*. Every purchase, or decommission, is framed by a network and this can be more or less economic, aesthetic or sentimental – but it is always calculative, and it sees no qualitative difference between the above-mentioned motivations. In this light, collecting could at least sometimes be reconstructed as a number of unfolding, executive decisions following upon one another.

With this conception of calculative collecting which is hopefully a little less prejudiced, questions of economy can be seen to appear repeatedly. People such as Samuel and Elizabeth Courtauld, who were sufficiently wealthy that almost any purchase for the aesthetic furnishing of their Adam home could be facilitated, are also revealed as careful spenders – the major art purchases only come in the years of most profit on their factories (Murdoch 1994). Barnes is delighted to ‘discover’ the painter Chaim Soutine (1893–1943) through the agency of Paul Guillaume, but this delight is intermixed with buying the artist’s entire available production and effectively seeking a monopoly (Greenfeld 1989, p. 78–80). Initially, Karl Ernst Osthaus frames his collection and museum, as benefitting both commerce and industry – its revitalizing effects on the collective is good business (Dorsz 2012, Kuenzli 2013). Meanwhile, Helene Kröller-Müller openly calculates that every painting of the limited supply of van Gogh she buys will make prices and critical appreciation rise (Rovers 2009, pp. 246–248). And importantly, in the literature on the pioneering collectors of the French art of Zürich’s neighbouring cities Winterthur and

Baden, a frequent argument goes that *a climate of international and entrepreneurial outlook* decisively shaped their interests overall *and* in regard to modernist art (Brändli 1990, Preiswerk-Lösel 2005b, Hahnloser-Ingold, Sauterel 2011, Reinhard-Felice 2014, p. 133).

It is certain that what we can recognize as calculative behaviour by collectors of modernist art has only been made possible through the larger capitalist network of modernity. I argue that modernist art itself is a local network in this larger, global network. As scholars of impressionism and early modernist art have exhaustively detailed, the history of the reception of newer trends in French and European art is inexorably bound up with a new market economy. We find this in the introduction of specifically capitalist calculation into the network of collecting and trading art: speculation, monopolization, strategies of promotion and so forth, some of these pioneered in the London art trade and then updated for modernist and contemporary art by dealers like Durand-Ruel (Fletcher, Helmreich 2013, Patry 2015). Painters, critics, dealers, collectors, agents and all the intermediate positions employ as many connections as possible in order to strengthen their position. ‘This painting sells’ is to the gallerist as important as sympathizing with a painter or his ideology (cf. Jensen 1994, p. 18ff.), and, for the sake of sales and speculation, monopolizing the artist and promoting his ideology can be employed as a new, capitalist means of building networks. The ideas and isms and schisms of modernist art are bound to the market and to calculation. Rational calculation – which is often associated with decisions in the marketplace – is therefore a feature of modernist art to its core. It seems reasonable to argue the same calculative agency for collecting.

## 7. Dismembering a Danish collection

All the important publications on Ordrupgaard have put the sale of a little over half of the Ordrupgaard collection as the sad culmination to the Hansen-family’s collecting efforts (Swane 1954, Rostrup 1981, Asmussen 1993, Jensen 1996, Fonsmark 2011b, also cf. Søndergaard 2006). But dissolution and dispersal is an integral part of the history of collections, and it seems fair to say that most collections of modernist art – big or small – suffer this fate at some point. Following Appadurai (1986a), circulation of commodities is inherent to their attractiveness, and from a network perspective it is permanence that is the anomaly. Re-examined, as I am about to, the history of the Ordrupgaard sale can just as well be used as a last example of the network activity and calculative agency inherent in collecting and trading art.

But first a few words on narrative.

The story of how the near-bankruptcy of Landmandsbanken leads to Hansen’s economic distress and his subsequent quest during the second half of 1922 and early 1923 to clear his debts has been investigated in detail and meticulously described, especially in Asmussen’s (1993) survey of the first collection. Apart from details, it might seem nothing much could be added. Then again, the general narrative is visibly plotted, possibly tendentious. At least since the appearance of Hayden White’s *Metahistory* (1973), the historian cannot be seen as an innocent reporter, but rather as the author of a coherent story made out of bewildering events. She has to choose a plot, a category of arguments and a guiding ideology for the tale.

In the case of Ordrupgaard, one might write the narrative to be tropically identifiable as a tragedy. Hansen is first built up by describing him as an enterprising visionary in arts and commerce. He buys the best of French art in a business-like fashion. Then the catastrophe: The sale. This dark event is leav-

ened with the realization that almost half the artworks stay with the Hansen-family, and Ordrupgaard can continue as a coherent collection with Hansen's future, supplementary purchases. The ostensible refusal by the Danish state to save the collection for the nation serves as a narrative turning point to the dramatic highlight of the partial sale. Reassuringly,



126. Pierre-Auguste Renoir: *Confidences*.  
C. 1876–78. Oil on canvas. 61.5 x 50.5 cm.  
Sammlung Oskar Reinhart "Am Römerholz",  
Winterthur. Part of the Ordrupgaard Collection  
until 1923 when it was sold to Oskar Reinhart

the discovery of some kind of villain with agency is found. Through displacement, the confusion and the complex sequence of events have little impact on the direction of the plot as written, and a central moral is found and expressed as 'had they only been more farsighted!' Some earlier newspaper features such as Helge Jacobsen's self-serving 'The Ordrupgaard collection and the state's short-sightedness' (1945) help lay some of the narrative groundwork. Looking closer though, the identification of a villain in the plot seems to post-date Hansen's death, and at present no primary documents or primary witness statements have been found (cf. Finn 1936, Borchsenius 1943).

Previous histories and the 'popular' conception of Ordrupgaard's fate have failed to account for or even obfuscated the ways market rationality and networks were and still are a part of art collecting. Wilhelm Hansen can just as well be seen as an economic agent who makes decisions based on networked, calculable resources when he first buys his French artworks, and who certainly makes the same calculated decisions to the best of his abilities when facing financial crisis. Such a differently plotted view helps us further notice the same

networks involved in collecting and trading art – already *in the story* – are also involved when collections dissolve and other collections grow.

But before concluding with an alternative view of Wilhelm Hansen as actor-network, let us look at another actor, who could *just as well* be seen as the prime protagonist given a different focus (i.e. Reinhard-Felice 2003).

Through his personal network, late in December 1922, Oskar Reinhart received notice that Wilhelm Hansen's collection was up for sale. Most major collectors with specific interests follow each other to some degree, and Reinhart was one of the most well-connected at the time. Managing the family-owned Gebrüder Volkart, a massive trading house especially active in India, was felt like an unpleasant matter of almost Weberian duty. Meanwhile, he tends to his passion for art collecting in the same methodical, business-like manner of information control and delegation as his management of the trading house (Reinhard-Felice 2003, p. 58). Reinhart devoted considerable resources to track and trace the circulation of privately owned artworks that he fancied. With a diversified network of agents, dealers, critics and art historians, supplemented by exhibition visits and the purchase and reading of catalogues, along with copious planning with many notations and lists of 'desiderata' – art to purchase in the future – Reinhart was able to manage one of the most wide-reaching and effective networks for collecting in Europe at the time. It was this connectedness and efficiency that allowed him to trump everyone else when it came to dismantling the Ordrupgaard collection.

In late 1922, Reinhart's agent, the journalist and dealer Alfred Gold – himself a guest at the opening of Ordrupgaard (AG to WH 1918/9/15 OA) – and the Parisian gallery Barbazanges were both able to confirm that, yes, Hansen had hit hard times and was willing to sell (Reinhard-Felice 2003, p. 48). Reinhart quickly travelled to Copenhagen, possibly accompanied by Gold,

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in order to get first pick, and in early February 1923 letters affirm that a deal for 18 of Hansen's paintings along with two of Heilbuth's had already been made (WH to OR 1923/2/6 ORSA). This *modus operandi* of striking fast and hard became a specialty of Reinhart who would spend years waiting for specific artworks belonging to others to be put up for sale. The paintings from Hansen and Heilbuth, which he knew from the exhibition arranged by another of his agents, Carl Montag, in Genève in 1918 (OR to GR 1923/4/26 SORA), were first in a long line of major purchases from other collections. Through his archives and notes, and in a kind of 'shadow collection', Reinhart would prepare an ideal ensemble of paintings from artworks still in other collections.

Following the visit to Copenhagen, Reinhart lamented not purchasing more works. In his office at Hafnia, Hansen gave a last-minute offer of artworks by Daumier, Géricault and Degas (Reinhard-Felice 2003, p. 49) – all three belonging to Heilbuth.<sup>24</sup> But in this instance, the same meticulous planning that allowed Reinhart to make swift decisions, meant that he lacked the improvisation and flexibility of more opportunistic traders – Reinhart bought the Daumier, but the world-class paintings by Degas and Géricault are now in the musée d'Orsay and the Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, respectively. In terms of spending limits and credit, Reinhart's calculations were differently framed from those of Heilbuth and Hansen.

That Oskar Reinhart managed to buy so many of Hansen's treasures is a major feat when the competition is taken into consideration: A consortium led by the Norwegian art dealer Walther Halvorsen (1887–1972) (WH to HH 1922/12/16), the Japanese industrialist Matsukata Kojiro helped by his

.....  
24 Heilbuth's and Hansen's ownership has been misunderstood in previous literature and takes a little detective-work, but is important in showing how Hansen continued to present 'the face' of the consortium partners in regards to their artworks. Heilbuth's ownership of the works by Géricault and the Degas is mentioned in Bovy (1920), his ownership of the Daumier and Delacroix is mentioned in correspondence about payment and a handwritten receipt for payment by Heilbuth in SORA. The Degas and Géricault were at the same time in 1922–23 offered through Hansen to the New Carlsberg Foundation (APW to LZ 1923/1/30 NCF).

two agents – Léonce Bénédite (1859–1925), the director of the Luxembourg and Rodin museums, and the Galerie Barbazanges, who also deals with Albert C. Barnes on the side – and finally the New Carlsberg Foundation; at least two of these three competitors had very large and ready capital at their disposal. Reinhart's advantage lay with his tight, calculative network – he consulted no experts but instead invested his time in study. He had known for years the art that he wanted to purchase, and after a brief overture by his agent, Reinhart would, himself, step in to ensure the quality of the works (Reinhard-Felice 2014, p. 140). In other words, Reinhart frames his market exchange expertly since his



127. Honoré Daumier: *The Third-class Carriage*. C. 1865.  
Black chalk, pen and watercolour on paper. 23.2 x 33.7 cm.  
*Sammlung Oskar Reinhart "Am Römerholz", Winterthur. Part of the Ordrupgaard Collection until 1923 when it was sold to Reinhart*

network is both leaner and delegated to more compliant actors, which allows him more control. Both the New Carlsberg Foundation and Matsukata were hindered by the need to have several actors in alignment before a decision could be reached: The Foundation, while knowing about the sale since the autumn of 1922 (WH to HH 1922/11/5), was probably hindered by disagreements among board members (FP to LZ 1923/2/2 NCF, Asmussen 1993, p. 38, Søndergaard 2006) and the Japanese industrialist, who had to use Bénédite as stand-in, seems to have been waiting for Karl Madsen's catalogue with appended translation to arrive in Tokyo (WH to HH 1922/9/25, WH to HH 1922/9/26-1). When acquiring for his collection, Reinhart's decisions are thus framed – at once guided and delimited – by a stringent plan for his

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collection's growth, in-depth and up-to-date knowledge of art-work's whereabouts, and a reduced room for contingency and flexibility.

Of the actors successfully acquiring paintings from Ordrupgaard, Reinhart cheats the others to come first. According to communications between two New Carlsberg Foundation board members (APW to LZ 1923/1/30 NCF), Reinhart's January visit to Copenhagen, along with the still ongoing negotiations with Matsukata through Bénédite, pressured the inactive foundation into *doing something*, which is when it hurriedly purchased 19 artworks in late January (HJ to WH 1923/1/30 NCF, Politiken 1923). At this point an on-going deal worth 1.5 million francs with Matsukata through Bénédite has become complicated, but paintings are still swapped, and 34 specimens are transferred from Ordrupgaard in instalments beginning early March. These last purchases are shipped, not for Japan, but for long-term storage at the Rodin museum (Asmussen 1993, pp. 33–36) – again, for art collecting, the necessity of diverse networks of both people and things and even places is well illustrated.

It only takes a slight change in perspective to see how the actions of Reinhart and his network influences many others, far and wide. Turning to the traditional protagonist of the Ordrupgaard narratives, it can now be argued that 'Wilhelm Hansen' is not even one easily delimited person. Rather, when talking of responsibilities, the many connections of Wilhelm Hansen makes *a network of him* where things and people come together.

To illustrate: During 1922, the juridical entity known as Wilhelm Hansen receives more and more fervent recalls on his debts to the almost bankrupt Landmandsbanken. Both his part of the consortium debts, the amount of which is uncertain, and the larger, personal obligations of about DKK 3.2 million cannot be met by the securities alone – as a consequence, something

else has to be liquidated. Wilhelm Hansen's crisis is just a small effect of the much larger collapse of the bank and a worldwide recession (Mørch 1990, cf. Lange 2014). But since he is 'embedded' in the world and in numerous connections spanning near and far (Callon 1998a, p. 252), this economic reversal does not only affect the person. Indeed, a whole local network of family, house, possessions, public image, domestic employees and professional business interests is affected. In contrast to the individualist underpinnings of most of western law, the name 'Wilhelm Hansen' has a wide coverage – what will become of his wife and child, his employees, the home and gardens, the many objects gathered or the project of intervening in Danish art history? All of these connections are now pushed into uncertainty and disarray, their once secure associations in a tight network greatly weakened.

In this reading, both Hansen and his many dependents suffer a violent separation of bonds. Some are now forcefully pulled *into* the marketplace while others can just sit still to suffer the 'overflow' of decisions made in the same marketplace (Callon 1998a, p. 253). As we have seen in the much happier circumstances of the public auction, the market is a framework designed to unambiguously identify contract seekers, simplifying their decisions and calculations, and letting them arrive at the best deal. This simplification is certainly also a violent negation of any previous identity and history that is *cut away* in order to introduce now unbounded objects and traders into the marketplace (Callon 1998b, p. 18–19). In the case of Hansen and Ordrupgaard, as it is in all situations before marketization, it is not self-evident from the start what is to be traded, who is to trade, which marketplace is to be chosen, and who has to suffer the consequences – the so-called *overflow* and *externalities* – without having a say in the matter.

Examining the disruptive intervention of the market provides us with a paradoxically much clearer picture of the realities of Ordrupgaard: a precarious *local network* of various agents that – for the time being – collaborate in making it both a paintings collection, a family home, a work-place, an investment, a public intervention etc. In order to extract resources from a global network all kinds of projects seek to construct their own local domain (Law, Callon 1992). Whether an industrial project or – as I would argue – a private museum, which is also a home and a work place, as long as the project and its domain are policed and kept in place then all is well. This separation between local and global requires a kind of gatekeeper, an obligatory passage point, through which as many exchanges as possible can be routed.

As soon as Wilhelm Hansen's debts are recalled, this can be seen as a test of his control and gatekeeping of his local network. Changes in the global network mean that former allies – in particular those who gave credits – now try to pull resources out from his domain and into theirs; again, not very different from the hungry starfish preying on scallops in Callon's (1986) seminal essay. At Hansen's nadir, letters between the Danish businessman and Reinhart suggest that Hansen's new creditors – now part of Privatbanken – are considering simply *taking* his personal paintings (WH to OR 1923/2/6, WH to OR 1923/2/15 ORSA), like they might confiscate any other assets (Social-Demokraten 1922, Bankkommissionen 1924), including the paintings still owned by V. Winkel & Magnussen (Lange 2014, p. 99).

When Hansen – the agency constructed by laws and debts as well as the person – is no longer the obligatory passage point, this opens up for all kinds of new associations between the global network and what was once part of the local. From everyday crises all around us we know how economic strains lead to the whole or partial sale of houses, people losing or seeking new

occupations, family dissolutions, loss of possessions and so forth. Knowing conventional debt-collecting for what it is, the 'deal' that needs to be negotiated anew would most likely mean a radical re-configuration of networks – something needs to be cut loose and to go somewhere else. Prosaically, the choice stands between letting go of *one thing* or *another thing*.

Wilhelm Hansen can now be understood as both an actor and a network: an actor-network. And the task is to choose which part of the network to divest: House and servants, his dignity and credibility, artworks, family obligations? The potential list of dependents to let go is much longer, but as a question of economy, it has to be managed as simply as possible. He chooses the French gallery, which, both in buildings and identity, is more ancillary to the concept of Ordrupgaard as *first* a private home and a place for the family, and only *second* a public place. Not surprisingly, given the general bourgeois ideals that Ordrupgaard expresses, the dear idea of family is deeply connected to property and environment. Thus the massive house and gardens along with the many servants necessary for its upkeep are more important than the art collection and its promise of public intervention and immortality.

Late in 1922, sitting in his hotel in Paris after exasperating negotiations with the Galerie Barbazanges and Léonce Bénédicté about the sale of paintings, Wilhelm Hansen writes home about his worries. As documents to the vagaries of collecting and trading art, his correspondence is invaluable. But in this particular letter, he ends by summarizing what is now fundamentally at stake: 'I would have liked to write more, but I cannot; *only you, the boy and my home* are in my thoughts all the time' (WH to HH 1922/12/16 OA emphasis mine).

## 8. Coda: On collecting and networks

How to explain a collection of modernist art? I have tried answering that question in the preceding two chapters by examining the networks of just one, that of Ordrupgaard and the Hansen-family. The first five chapters of the dissertation probed the rhetorical and performative effect of collection display; the sixth and seventh chapters have examined the networks that allow the same display through material and discursive means.

This has consequently been a case study that drew on different sorts of archival and historical material in order to re-construct the past in the light of network theory. Theoretical, methodological and interpretive considerations have been at the forefront of this while Ordrupgaard, Wilhelm Hansen and the connections they shared to a larger network have been the focal point. I believe that the underlying approach – that of looking for the means that afford and curtail an art collection – has general relevance for the study of contemporaries to Ordrupgaard and also those of later collectors and collections of modernist art. This has, in many ways, been an extended argument for a network-approach to art collecting where both social and individual motives have been de-centred. Therefore, this has also been my second step in an advocacy for a pragmatic and performative approach to art collecting: By following the actors involved, the focus is on how art collecting *happens* and what furthers and hinders a collector such as Wilhelm Hansen, his consortium and other Danish and international collectors and museums interested in modernist art.



128. Henny, Wilhelm and Knud in Hafnia's offices in 1921 on the occasion of an anniversary. One year later, an economic crisis would force Wilhelm to choose family over artworks

In scholarship on collections, *who* inspired the collector has often been a central concern. Several likely candidates in the case of Wilhelm Hansen and Ordrupgaard have been proposed, but stopping here misses the point that information and access to modernist art was readily available through other means: the modern networks of the early twentieth century. Rather than just people, it is the network itself, which must be accounted for when considering large scale collecting of modernist art. Furthermore, examining the actual practices of ‘advisors’ to collectors makes it difficult to decide who actually controls whom. The so-called ‘agent’ is revealed as a double- or triple-agent with their own motives and projects. Disinterestedness is a fiction, and any focus on the collector as the prime mover is just a narrative choice. The uneasy position of ‘an agent’ is thus emblematic of larger networks of modernity.

In analysing the travels and travails of a crate of paintings going through Switzerland in 1918/19, I pointed out the different actors that were summoned to either ease its journey or impede its progress – people, government agencies, laws and regulations, trains and their timetables, the material form of the vessel which hindered easy passage, not to mention the highly advanced system of postal and telegram services. All of these very local actors were dependent on other actors to define them, and in this detailed case study it is shown how one collector needs to be associated near and far to a very diverse network.

Following actor-network theory, and especially the concept of translation laid out by Michel Callon (1986), the establishment of Ordrupgaard, and other ambitious art collections for that matter, can schematically be seen as a four stage process: *Problematization* (1), where the collection is defined as a necessary answer (an obligatory passage point) to a problem and the identities and needs of actors involved in the project are defined. Then follows

*interessement* (2), where actors such as paintings, the public and connoisseurs are drawn into the new network. *Enrolment* (3) means actors are actually and continuously attached to the project of the collection – people and press visit, admire and write about the collection while paintings are bought and kept in place. *Mobilization* (4) marks how the now established actor-network gains legitimacy for the future – is the collection a proper example of the art it should represent, does it deliver on its promises to the public and other connoisseurs of painting, and can the collection ‘speak for’ the many actors that were initially defined as in need of the collection?

Some of what marks out Ordrupgaard is the very broad network it enrolls. It is posed as an answer to the need for a different type of museum of modern art. Actors like the press, the public, paintings, buildings, experts and money are asked to come together behind the collection. As a place and an event, Ordrupgaard promises them different things in exchange – recognition of identities, something to do, something good to experience, safety and visibility. This local actor-network also places Ordrupgaard and Wilhelm Hansen as the controlling influence – the obligatory passage point that determines who gets access when and under which conditions. This means that a lot of new networks are established in a very short time – the already connected Wilhelm Hansen gets even more connected and a house in the suburbs is transformed into a meeting place and destination.

The collection and the temporary exhibition are quite similar as networks since they aim to bring some of the same actors together. The main difference lies in questions of permanence – since networks are inherently unstable, a thoroughly institutionalized art collection is itself an anomaly that invites explanation (i.e. the topic of the present dissertation). Going forward, the challenge is to keep the collection together – to continuously mobilize the

actors in its network. The survival of the modernist art collection as a provisional institution has to do with establishing it as a local network distinct from the larger network of collecting and trading art. As a private museum this means among other things to stay relevant as a separate circuit and to maintain a healthy economy. In the case of Ordrupgaard in the early 1920s, it is the last part that falters due to the lack of separation between the museum and its founder's finances, and the collection never really achieved the kind of independent network status that would have ensured outside or state support at a time of crisis.

Contemplating Ordrupgaard as a network which delegates roles and harvests support from its network has obvious analytical advantages. It helps us to see how much effort is needed to keep up Ordrupgaard as a project of many partners while moving focus away from biography and a frustrating search for inscrutable motives.

A network approach also counters sentimental history writing. The partial sale and the crumbling of the network around Ordrupgaard is the result of larger crises in a global network. That the art collector Oskar Reinhart rises above all other contenders and secures some of the best painting from Ordrupgaard is itself the result of superior connections to the same modern network of collecting and trading art, which in the first instance made Ordrupgaard possible. The same global network is permeated by a market perspective where techniques of promotion, speculation, monopolization and so forth ensure its growth. Modernist art itself was born from the increased marketization of art, and the decision of Hansen, Herman Heilbuth and the art dealers V. Winkel & Magnussen to enter the marketplace for speculative reasons should not be surprising. An 'atmosphere' of the marketplace clings to modernist art which, in Arjun Appadurai's (1986a) terminology, is itself a

modern *commodity* par excellence. Thus, the transfer of hundreds of precious artworks – mostly French nineteenth century painting but also works by old masters – to Denmark during a short period between 1917 and 1918, should be seen as speculative: a rational investment based on economic calculation.

A few years before, this quick and ambitious entry into networks of collecting and trading was not a given. Denmark was a relative late entrant into the global network for modernist art, but from 1914 connections were swiftly established to an already existing network of dealers, galleries, museum people, experts, collectors and artworks, in Paris and France. Tyge Møller, Karl Madsen, the Danish state, the National Gallery and numerous other actors marshalled each other in order to reach out and connect. A first result was the temporary exhibition of more than 300 French artworks of the nineteenth and early twentieth century. The sudden onset of the world war – itself an enormous network disturbance – seemed only to bolster the nascent network: Wilhelm Hansen, Herman Heilbuth, Johannes Rump, Helge Jacobsen and Christian Tetzen-Lund all at once started out as serious collectors of modernist, French art. Whether the prolonged access to the exhibited artworks or the possibility of getting a bargain was the motive is immaterial, but the many connections that developed from the temporary exhibition became the foundation for the network for the extended transfer – virtual or physically – of paintings to Denmark.

### §

Around WWI, very diverse things and people come together in order to make Ordrupgaard. The art collection and its collector can in many ways be seen as the convergence of these connections that spread far and wide. In contrast to earlier incarnations of the global networks of collecting and trading art,

modernity meant that the number of connections and their speed were dramatically increased, and calculative framing became a decisive factor. Modern developments meant, for example, that Ordrupgaard could be connected to art auctions held beyond front lines, to the cultural propaganda reach of the French state and to speculative markets in Danish shipping at one and the same time. The period also saw the number of desirable commodities rise, and along with this the number of competing collectors also rose, and the number of new opportunities for connections increased. The marketplace became the practical space for trade. Economic thinking became central to the practice of high-end art collecting since calculative framing appeared to be a genuine technique for assessing uncertainties, gauging worth and making decisions about art.

§

We are reaching a second stop in my study of Ordrupgaard and the international collection museums of modernist art. By discussing the networks that come together around an art collection I believe it is possible to answer the question of *how* Ordrupgaard: Ordrupgaard came to be through activities involving many different instances and interests at a specific point in time and place. It was not the creation of one man and his wife *ex nihilo*, but required the active efforts of others who in turn shaped the project by offering, demanding, expecting, hindering and allowing different things. Similar complicated networks can be found around all major art collections – historically and today.

Together, the first seven chapters of this study form an interrogation of Ordrupgaard and a handful of comparable collection museums of modernist art, primarily in their genesis. The epilogue and last chapter now faces the difficult task of offering up a short meditation on ‘what happened next?’ What

became of these provisional institutions as they became permanent? What is their legacy? Are there comparable collections today? What are the failures and futures in collecting modernist art for the sake of permanent intervention?

**Epilogue**

**& Conclusion**

## Chapter VIII: Futures

‘Museum of the Future’, the influential Danish critic, art historian and museum director Emil Hannover writes at the end of a 1908 article about Museum Folkwang. Earlier in the article, he praises its founder, Karl Ernst Osthaus, and his many projects for reintroducing culture to the lackluster, industrial town of Hagen in the Ruhr. He highlights Henry van de Velde’s architectural genius as expressed in the building and furnishings and he admires the museum’s singular dedication to the aesthetics of art rather than mere chronology. Hannover is a major figure in Nordic and European museum networks and his words carry weight (Christensen 2015). To him, the painting of van Gogh and Gauguin and their ‘youth, hope and striving’ are exemplary of the Folkwang Museum’s vision to introduce cultural change.

But then he wryly historicizes. The museum’s ‘future’ is actually to be a document – if indeed it survives – which tells of a particular age: a time where no singular style in art ruled, where the applied arts again rose to prominence after so much neglect, and where the dominance of French painting was agreed upon by all, even in Germany. ‘[...] and with this future mission, Osthaus should seek his comfort from the sad thought that it [the museum] does not seem to realise its present mission’ (Hannover 1908, p. 986). Hannover

compares Folkwang to John Ruskin’s St George’s Museum (founded 1875) in Sheffield, where societal reform through aesthetics is also the goal, and notes that in both cases ‘the uninitiated’, common people do not visit these spaces created for their enlightenment. ‘The hunger for bread will have to be satiated before the hunger for art can appear’ (Hannover 1908, p. 986).

Thus, the lofty visions of collectors and museum founders will at one point, often sooner rather than later, all be mere historical documents. Seemingly, collection museums run a heightened risk of fossilization (Gamboni 2007).

In chapter II, I discussed how there is always a tension between the ‘ideal’ and the ‘real’ experiences of those who visit and use galleries of art (cf. Falk 2009), as the experienced critic and museum director Hannover points out. Without a ‘reality check’, one can easily get lost in one’s own beliefs in the power of any keenly felt project; and art is often such a project. In order to have an audience it is necessary to align with that same audience – to speak to an interpretive community where rules and what is at stake are already agreed upon (Fish 1980).

Too great a distance between ambition and the feasible seems to result in a dramatically sped-up process of historicization. The distance between the two is pertinent, though naturally hard to measure, when considering the private museums that have sprung from collections of modernist art. Those I have detailed in this study were all invested in making a change, to be transformative and effect some kind of difference. These ambitions were more or less explicit, and often those programmes of intervention that feel most historic today are those that, from the outset, were the most detailed and far-reaching. And inflexible.

In this final chapter, the discussion revolves around the private museums and collections of modernist art as they transform from the provisional to the

Time →

<b>Phase</b>	The collection museum is formed and developed	Sleeping Beauty: The collection museum is made permanent	Museum of temporary exhibitions
<b>State</b>	Much network activity; collection is coupled to the global network of collecting and trading art	Less network activity; the local network of the collection is isolated from global networks	Much network activity again; collection coupled to several/many global networks

**Table 9. Three stages of change for collection museums**

permanent to beyond. Depending on plotting, this could play out as tragedy or comedy, or perhaps both, but for the sake of argument, I am proposing to follow a simplified progression in three parts: from provisional institution over permanent collection museum to contemporary museum of today [Table 9].

The first stage of the collectors’ direct involvement in creating a provisional institution is that which has occupied me in the previous seven chapters. The second period ‘after the collector’, is when permanence is gradually ensured, and this stage is often marked by rigidity and inflexibility and the impression that the collection is being ‘frozen in time’. In the last phase, fossilization is softened as the collection museum progressively becomes more open to change. Along the way, from the dynamic first phase through the second stage of dormancy to the final, more open museum, any larger project of transformation and social intervention is ameliorated, suppressed, perhaps eradicated.

Today, the once ‘eccentric’ collection museums are somewhat homogenized, at least to a degree, which is perhaps the price to pay for being efficient, and for still being institutions at all. With this observation, I am anticipating the open question which looms over most of chapter VIII, and which I will briefly tackle in the final section 5: how and if the peculiar identity of the collection museum of modernist art is preserved – or not.

But before the last section, I have several things to explore which have to do with the collection museums of modernist art and their legacies. Each

and every institution and collection whose beginnings I have referenced and analysed in the previous chapters has a rich and fascinating after-life from the death of their founder till today. I cannot do justice to the many twists and turns toward the particular musealization they experienced. What I *can* do is more limited: At first, I look at the failures and shipwrecks of collecting, and here it is important to note the conclusions of chapters VI and VII – that impermanence is the usual state of affairs and that the nature of collecting is to be networked and therefore out of the collector's control. From the threat of failure, I discuss the spell of 'Sleeping Beauty' that comes to pass – at least for a while – over many private art collections that are preserved as independent institutions. Later, dormancy is challenged as the private collection museums of modern art approach the 'museum of temporary exhibitions' of today. Before discussing this last development – and before concluding with addressing the aforementioned question of identity – I analyse the legacy of the private collection museum of modernist art in just one singularly important museum: The Louisiana Museum of Modern Art founded in 1958 as an institution which develops a lasting alternative museum approach founded on middle class values of intimacy, comfort and pleasure.

Before all this, let me now turn to a discussion of failure, futures, circulation and change in the collection museum of modernist art.

## 1. Failures and futures

Every collector has to consider the possibility of failure whatever the terms of success, and so do we, even though the present study is mostly about the collections that not only survived their founders but became public institutions. There are many failures in collecting, and they all help highlight the collections that we actually have. Sometimes fear of failure contributes to failure itself – for example when any kind of change is perceived as a threat to be guarded against. But failure can also have a utopic dimension, and talking about utopia itself can be a mirror to the present (Jalving 2010): What might have been? What are the alternatives to today? What do we want from the future?

The misfortune of Herman Heilbuth, the ambitious friend and consortium partner to Wilhelm Hansen, presents a first, straightforward case of failure in collecting. His collection is today partly shrouded in mystery, and sources and evidence of his activities as both a businessman and collector are scattered and fragmentary (Heinberg 1933). We know his paintings were divided into old masters and modern French painting, the former becoming the subject of an exhibition and 1920 catalogue by Karl Madsen, the director of the National Gallery and chronicler of Ordrupgaard's collection two years previous. Heilbuth was the owner of an important Rembrandt painting, *Lucretia*, 1664, now in The National Gallery, Washington D.C. [fig. 129], a fine selection of early Italian renaissance painting and significant paintings by El Greco, Frans Hals, van Dyck, Jan Steen, Goya and Nattier, and also a number of nineteenth century French works by Géricault, Delacroix, Corot, Renoir and Degas. A part of Heilbuth's nineteenth century French paintings were exhibited in Genève in 1918 along with the rest of the consortium purchases (Musée d'art et d'histoire 1918).

According to his will (HH to JR 1922/4/29 KB) and to conversations conducted with relatives many years later (LA, OA), at some point Heilbuth bought a property on Kollegievej, close to Ordrupgaard, with the intention of building his own villa and paintings gallery [fig. 9]. The idea was that the public, arriving



129. Rembrandt van Rijn: Lucretia. 1664. Oil on canvas. 120 x 101 cm. National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C. The painting was presumably bought by Heilbuth from the Jacques Goudstikker collection which was exhibited at the National Gallery in Copenhagen in 1919. From here, it went to the Ehrlich galleries in New York, the gallery of M. Knoedler and, finally, the collector Andrew W. Mellon (1855–1937)

from a southerly direction, would visit his collection first, Hansen's collection next.<sup>25</sup> Thereby the two venues would complement each other and at the same time show the French modernist and Italian renaissance and baroque painting largely absent from the National Gallery, whose strengths at the time lay in Dutch and Flemish seventeenth century and Danish nineteenth century art. Heilbuth's and Hansen's collections could very well be envisioned as strengthening both their claims to institutionalization as together they would have created a 'museum mile' in idyllic Ordrup, far from the busy city centre. Heilbuth always intended his collection to be donated to the public, or at least he claimed so in a 1922 letter to the artist Johan Rohde (HH to JR 1922/4/29

KB). As it turned out the financial upheavals that led to the dispersal of many of Hansen's works also impacted on Heilbuth, and like Hansen he divested himself of his artworks in order to survive. His short, posthumous entry in the

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25 Conversation notes and correspondence with Heilbuth's relatives have been made by Knud W. Jensen (1916–2000), director of Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, and Annette Rosenfold Hvidt, former curator at Ordrupgaard.

national biographical encyclopaedia simply states that after his crisis Heilbuth 'lived the rest of his years withdrawn from the public' (Jansen, Jørgensen 2011). Today, the splendid Heilbuth collection only lives on in tales of what was 'lost' to Danish culture. When considering large scale collecting which aims to intervene and to make something public – and this was apparently Heilbuth's goal – this could easily be considered failure. The fate of Heilbuth's collection – and by implication all other 'lost' collections formed to be public and effect a change – is the obverse of the successful collection museum of modernist art.

But *is* dissolution always a mark of failure?

Counter-examples are not hard to argue. Both the John Quinn and Katherine Dreier collections were dispersed to the advantage of several emerging institutions, and the debate over their fate was arguably important in raising consciousness about modernist art, and helped define long-term museum strategies. Leo Stein's important collection of early Matisse painting took on various roles – as a part of the 'museum' kept at the Steins' flat in Paris (Braun 2011), and then in the other 'museum' of Tetzen-Lund's semi-public collection in Copenhagen. In both cases, the Matisse paintings were part of directed interventions into a budding avant-garde and modernist art scene – Parisian and Scandinavian – and would have a big impact on both places. A good deal of young, particularly Swedish and Norwegian, artists had already sought out the Académie Matisse before WWI (Meister, Prytz & Sidén 2014), and Tetzen-Lund's collection presented a temporary substitute to the unreachable Paris for painters and as an introduction of the foundation of their new aesthetic to a critical public.

From this, failure presents another face. Returning to Appadurai's (1986a) idea that value arises from circulation, it is rather the wish to *hinder* circula-

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tion, which seems detrimental to value. The ‘arrestment’ of so many Matisse paintings, including a good part of Leo Stein’s collection, in the increasingly hermetic and inward-looking Barnes Foundation from the middle of the 1920s onwards could be seen as a real failure. The private collection finds a paradox here: for as long as it relies on outside validation and confirmation of value – if it is not wholly ‘a discourse addressed to oneself’ (Baudrillard 2005, p. 113) – then it cannot close itself off from the same outside and from the (market) circulation which threatens its coherence; not without ‘failing’. As previously argued, Albert C. Barnes probably chose isolation for his collection and foundation in the light of various disappointments. His intervention ‘failed’ as a utopic alternative and he mostly closed off his foundation to visitors and wrote a restrictive will. Instead of keeping his budding institution open to change, it was arrested and made inflexible.

By talking of the fates of Heilbuth’s, and Barnes’ collections, I am therefore discussing two versions of failure to consider in collecting: flat-out loss and dissolution, or the inability of the collection to fulfil its intervention. Both are failures of networks and the coupling of local and global systems, the collection and its ‘outside’. Outside actors either have too good an access – they come to ‘steal’ the network away – or they have no access at all and can thus not validate the collection as network.

Considering failure, the nature of what happened to Museum Folkwang is debatable – after the death of Osthaus the collection moved to the city of Essen and came under the leadership of the dynamic museum director Ernst Gosebruch (1872–1953) which seems more a continuation, at least in essence, of the interventionist network and programme (Fischer 2010). Yet, the museum’s successful institutionalization and openness to change and to a global network would also partly doom it – as a public museum the national

socialist regime had easy access to liquidate important parts of the collection (von Lüttichau 2010). Today, the partly reconstituted museum resides in buildings completed in 2010, which were designed by David Chipperfield. On the surface it looks and acts mostly like any ‘normal’ public collection. The ‘residue’ of applied arts and art objects from other cultures and ages plays little role. Museum Folkwang has survived in part, but its spirit has changed. Is this failure or survival? I am not sure.

Failure is perhaps too definitive a word to employ when considering the fate of institutions that still manage to survive in volatile networks – at least as long as future change is

always a possibility. Here, exploring latencies or ‘utopias of what might have been’ or what could be again, for collection museums, allows us the crucial ability to think the future differently. Potentiality and thinking about institutional identity go hand in hand – Duncan Phillips for example explicitly wanted his Washington D.C. museum to induce reflection and to inspire the erection of other institutions like his. By contemplating what might have been had the Barnes Foundation and Museum Folkwang kept developing their explicitly transformative programmes, we can also confront what we want from museums in the future: Should this museum seek to be transformative? Should that museum seek to help people reach a better existence? Should any museum promote ideologies of how art relates to life? Should all museums see



130. Museum Folkwang in Essen today

themselves as interventions – and should they be only for true connoisseurs, or should they cater to all?

Returning to the question of what constitutes failure. Above, I describe the Barnes Foundation in terms of ‘failure’, since it became fossilized and closed



131. The Barnes Foundation in downtown Philadelphia

in on itself. But in recent years the institution has been revitalized by engaging strongly with its past and its future identity. A long and torturous battle over its fate began in the 1990s and ended with the partial breaking with the collector’s last wishes, when it was moved to a new building in downtown Philadelphia. The original hang and room disposition were virtually kept intact inside a much larger

shell of a building (Linett 2004, Bailey 2012), but the long drawn battle also meant that the institution spent much time in exploring, working with and communicating its identity and history in various ways through its home page, temporary exhibitions, educational programmes and publications (Dolkart, Lucy 2012, Wattenmaker 2010, Barnes Foundation, Corbis Publishing 2003). The same goes, though less dramatically, with Museum Folkwang in Essen and the Osthaus Museum in Hagen, a small art museum, which exists today in the restored museum building by van de Velde and Gérard. The two German institutions have published a number of books and exhibitions confronting, explaining and commemorating their past identities as belonging to a truly

transformative museum project (Fischer, Schneede 2010a, Fischer, Schneede 2010b, Belgin, Dorsz 2012).

Hannover’s insight that museums become documents of their own ideals is fundamentally correct with most interventionary collection museums. But these ‘documents’ can still be explored or ‘read’, and they can serve as basis for new ‘scripts’ – if we are willing.

While probably all collection museums of modernist art – those I have studied and others – are no longer transformative projects in the way they once were, a recent willingness to reflect upon their own past and employ that same past in order to engage with audiences and build future activities is significant. It also suggests that ‘failure’ is relative, and that ‘success’ is not dependent on staying all the way ‘true’ to an original vision, but that critically exploring the legacy of an institution holds important value in itself. This last insight, of course, is a motivation for the present study overall.

Dormancy and inactivity are therefore far from being the equivalent of inevitable failure. With that in mind, I go on to a short exploration of Ordrupgaard’s long period as a fossilized/frozen time capsule and *how* and *why* it came about. In this, I relate to the long drawn out, melancholy influence that founders often exert on their collection museum. In asking about ‘the collection *after* its founder’, I also seek to reflect on the particular legacy of the collection museum as a melancholy preservation of something *authentic*.

## 2. Sleeping beauty – the collection after its founder

The paintings were thus bought. I remember the attention it awoke in Paris. It was exactly during the days where Paris was under bombardment from *Long Wilhelm*, and now the dailies pictured another *Wilhelm*, also known as Monsieur Ansen, who shot paintings just ahead of the French. Ordrupgaard was furnished, museum founded, and painting collection dedicated in the company of our most esteemed experts of art, Danish and French ministers. In connection to the solemn dedication along with the requisite medals and promotions, publicity and goodwill, the collection was finally – in a grand gesture – willed to the state.

– Andreas Vinding (1922) in *Politiken* during the crisis of Ordrupgaard 1922–23

In 1922–1923, the crisis surrounding Ordrupgaard, the Hansen-family, their home and dependents, public standing and many connections became the stuff of newspaper interest. Rumours of a coming sale surfaced in November 1922, and several prominent cultural figures, including Karl Madsen, were asked their opinion on this and the fate of Heilbuth's collection (BT 1922, Aage 1922b, Aage 1922a). Responses were very measured when considering the implication in the bank crisis. Star-journalist Andreas Vinding's (1881–1950) article appeared on the day of New Year's Eve 1922 in *Politiken*, the liberal-progressive newspaper based in the capital. In a sarcastic, stylistically sophisticated idiom, the text satirizes the building of a painting collection from credit, and asks what to do now that it might leave the country. Vinding makes oblique references to a price of 1 million kroner which cannot be raised,<sup>26</sup> and in the name of national interests, he concludes by urging the foundering bank, the

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 26 If we follow the line of thought in Lange's (2014) unpublished manuscript on Wilhelm Hansen, Herman Heilbuth and their debts, it is possible to deduce further that Wilhelm Hansen must have had a deal with Privatbanken, who took over the reconstructed Landmandsbank, to reduce all of his obligations to exactly this amount – 1 million kroner. This explains the rumour that the whole collection could be bought for this sum.

New Carlsberg Glyptotek and the state to reach a compromise. Less than a month later, Oskar Reinhart has beaten his opposition and forever precluded the possibility of the collection remaining as one unit but under different ownership.

Vinding's article expressed a widespread, negative opinion of the many speculative enterprises that had thrived during the war and were now seen as the cause of Landmandsbanken's downturn. Without contributing much to society or employment, speculators had seemingly harvested handsome profits, and the vulgar 'goulash-barons' – suppliers of canned mystery meats to the German army – was a prevalent, negative metonymy in popular opinion (Christiansen 2004, p. 241–244). In this perspective, the Ordrupgaard collection was simply one type of suspicious capital – economic – exchanged for another – cultural – and therefore an attempt at buying, without properly earning, social respectability (cf. Bourdieu 1993, Bourdieu 1999). Perhaps Wilhelm Hansen, who was indeed another self-made man, was no better than the other nouveaux riches and war-profiteers in their newly built mansions north of Copenhagen?

For a short, critical moment when associations were in disarray, Ordrupgaard was losing important allies in the press and public opinion.

If indeed a lack of allies explains the missing help from the state and the tardiness of the New Carlsberg Foundation, popular opinion soon moved on. With the sales and Ordrupgaard's partial survival, the press expressed some lament of losing so much art for the country (d-n 1923), and then all went quiet. New Carlsberg Glyptotek took over the mantle as the institution for early French modernism, and in 1928 Johannes Rump donated important French avant-garde painting by Matisse, Derain and others from the école de Paris to the National Gallery (Villadsen 1994). Like Sleeping Beauty, Ordrupgaard

was now enveloped in a vegetative state behind the tall trees and expanding vines; weekly opening days were, according to ledgers, partially resumed in 1925, but without publicity. In some ways this self-imposed, relative isolation mirrored the choices of Albert C. Barnes across the Atlantic following his own disappointments.

Had the project of Ordrupgaard become a failure? In the eyes of its founders and the public at the time, perhaps. From an analytical viewpoint the crisis involved both my two types of failure: A partial loss of the collection followed by the loss of its mission.

But again, ‘failure’ as analytical concept is a lens in which to gain different insights, not the whole picture. When looking from the future, the failures of the collection museum of Ordrupgaard were temporary, and the provisional institution was now entering a – for collection museums – rather *characteristic* stage of melancholy dormancy. As an institution on its way to permanence, it was simply *changing* in order to find a new shape for its own preservation. Eventually, the new Ordrupgaard – frozen in time, fossilized – would last for decades, way beyond its dedication as an official state museum in 1953.

Henny and Wilhelm Hansen had not amended their collective will since 1913. Back then, when the world was perhaps less complicated, the dream had been to have a hall in the National Gallery and thus keep their Danish nineteenth to twentieth century paintings together as a classic donor memorial (the will of WH and HH 1913/7/13 OA, cf. Duncan 1995, pp. 72–101). Soon after Wilhelm Hansen’s death, rumours of the collection’s future were again the stuff of public interest (Berlingske Tidende 1936, Borchsenius 1938), and the original plans were taken up in a confidential conversation between Henny Hansen and the museum director of the National Gallery, Leo Swane: Both French and Danish painting were now destined for the large museum

and the house and the grounds sold off for the benefit of the bequest. Knud, his wife and son were to have a new, presumably smaller villa down by the lake (Swane 1936).

Henny died in 1951. The will had been amended again in 1938 after the death of Knud (the will of HH 1939/4/3 OA). Now, in the absence of immediate family, *everything* goes to the state – buildings, gardens, furniture, paintings, linen, pots and pans – the whole material dream of a good life is to be preserved *forever unchanged* for public benefit. Should the state refuse the whole bequest, there are quite specific guidelines about how the park and gardens *must* be broken



132. The gardens at Ordrupgaard were an integrated part of the experience. Here, the mirror basin in 1931

up and liquidated so that the property can be developed for new buildings. Either the home of Ordrupgaard stays undivided as a memorial, or it must be erased. In this particular case, the dormant museum – Sleeping Beauty – seems born from both contingency and a wistful, melancholy wish to remember.

Like for example the Sammlung Oskar Reinhart and the Courtauld Collection in Home House, Ordrupgaard therefore became a memorial after its second ‘founding’: Memorials to lived life and to experiential pleasure; though not so much to the particular histories and personalities of the founders. Paradoxically, as a melancholy collection museum with a focus on ‘authentic experience’, Ordrupgaard joined a diverse group of small art museums not necessarily concerned with modernist art. This group spans from artist’s houses such as Sir John Soane’s Museum in London through collector’s homes

such as Hallwyl Museum in Stockholm, the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum in Boston, the Hill-Stead Museum in Farmington, Connecticut, or, most tragically, the musée Nissim de Camondo in Paris.

By performatively *generating* authentic experience with and through its visitors – pleurably, wistfully so – Ordrupgaard

actually sought to *preserve* the same experience under the mantle of melancholy. The intimate, domestic experience so treasured by its former inhabitants was now a way to keep the collection ‘alive’ after the disappearance and death of its founders – rather than it being just a frame for the promotion of art – a concern most succinctly expressed by Prince Eugen around the founding of his Waldemarsudde (see chapter III).

This drive to wistfully *preserve authentic experience by generating it* can be seen as both a historical stage and a still on-going process for most collection museums of modernist art: This, for example, is pretty clear with the original iteration of the Courtauld Gallery or the Sammlung

Oskar Reinhart “Am Römerholz”. Looking closer, authentic experience is also found as a major component of those museums that were founded as less overt memorials: the Kröller-Müller’s surroundings and placement in a nature reserve are still very much reflective of the aristocratic life and spiritual practices of its founder, just as the bourgeois, domestic surroundings of the Phillips Collection and the Barnes Foundation are expressive of the life their founders found ideal.



133. From the courtyard at Fenway Court in 1915, now Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum. Today, the museum strives to keep visitors’ experience as authentically close to that intended by their founder as possible

As suggested, ‘Sleeping Beauty’ was actually a phase for which most of the private collection museums of modernist art seemed bound after WWII: One cause for this development was a lack of funds which defines almost all collection museums after the death of their founders – no matter their focus – but the drive for authenticity through preservation is the more significant reason. The will to preserve follows from restrictive bequests as in the case of Sammlung Oskar Reinhart and the Barnes Foundation, or more often simply from reverence for the founders and wanting to keep their image and collection ‘intact’. The soul of the collection museum as it leaves the direct control of the founder and enters its ‘post’-phase is thus physically enshrined in ‘the collection’ as a closed totality of artworks and buildings as specified by the founder. The intangible but very real processual nature and shifting connections that most of these collections once demonstrated – their different moments of relative openness to a global network of things and people – is not an immediate concern. For now, authentic experience means preservation of the collection as an isolated, closed network.

‘Why study Ordrupgaard’ was the question initially asked at the beginning of chapter II. In this relatively innocent project – the preservation of authentic *experience* – we find a most poignant legacy of the private collection museum of modernist art. It is also a legacy, which brings us closer to considering the present day museum landscape where the pleasant, experiential framing of modernist art has once again become a concern of art museums worldwide.

### 3. Authentic experience: From Ordrupgaard aesthetics to *Louisiana Idiom*

In 1996, Knud W. Jensen (1916-2000), the founder, financier and director of the hugely successful Louisiana Museum of Modern Art (opened 1958), published his last book. Bearing the title *De glade givere*, roughly translatable as ‘The merry donors’, the book highlights a handful of important Danish individuals of the late nineteenth and twentieth century who had collected art and donated some or most of it to the public. By implication, Jensen asks readers to contrast and compare him and his legacy to these illustrious forebears and to see his museum as the end product of a distinguished line of development.

Jensen’s book is an important resource in general, but it also provides another example of the melancholy narrative of ‘if only they’d known better’ in relation to paintings ‘lost’ for Denmark, a version of which we have already encountered in the writings on Ordrupgaard. Tragic history has been a trope since at least the romantic era (cf. White 1973), but is here expressed in an idiom particular to a Danish context. In the book, this seemingly very common exercise of discussing past national failure is used to further underline by implication the importance of those art collections that *did* survive and pass into public possession. In the end, Jensen’s – heavily implied – efforts shine the brighter, and a rhetorical elision between man, institution and legacy occurs in an altogether not unreasonable way.

As a large, fully realized and highly professional institution with an extremely influential track record, Louisiana’s past and present importance for Danish culture and society is hard to overestimate. On an international scale, its significance is comparable to that of Moderna Museet in Stockholm (opened 1958), a significance derived not as much from Louisiana’s otherwise fine



134. Louisiana Museum of Modern Art in a contemporary photograph. The original villa, which serves as the main entrance, is just left of centre

collections and trendsetting exhibitions as from its contributions to museum architecture and for the pleasurable, intimate and recreative framing of visitor experience. In this context, the founder’s wish to write what amounts to a partial pre-history of the art donor and donor-museum in Denmark is significant since it points to important continuities from early interventionist collectors up to the present: Louisiana is a museum of authentic experience – but without the memorial.

As it is, Knud W. Jensen’s private museum presents a culmination in the further development of the Ordrupgaard and private collection aesthetic: a museum of modern art finely attuned to the pleasurable, ambulatory performance of middle class identity in a sprawling, anti-monumental architecture of interlocking and free-flowing spaces integrated with, and open to, a surrounding park [fig. 134]. From the perspective of Louisiana, Ordrupgaard is

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not the final chapter, nor just a Sleeping Beauty, but a beginning. Together with comparable private art collections and museums – the subject of chapters III through V – the older gallery can be seen as showing early signs of a slow turn towards a new type of art institution – a museum where ‘modern’ designates



135. The terrace next to the café overlooking the Sound

the art on display, yes, but also a complete way of living: The institution as a performative template. The embodiment of those ideas and ethics about things like artistic modernism and bourgeois comforts of the good life, which we find at Ordrupgaard and other comparable institutions, will take on significance for many more art museums in the second half of the twentieth century. And for the international dispersal of these ideas, Louisiana plays an important role.<sup>27</sup>

As with Ordrupgaard today, Louisiana takes more than its name from the once private residence at its heart – a white-painted nineteenth century patrician villa with magnificent grounds. The large, undulating garden overlooking the sound and the carefully cultivated feel of a personal retreat and an intimate home in nature frame the museum in terms of enjoyment rather than edification. The three exhibition pavilions that had been added before the opening in 1958 carefully extend the modest, human scale of the original residence and the glass-covered walkways that

27 Knud W. Jensen had early and fruitful collaborations with Arnold Bode (1900–1977) of documenta, Willem Sandberg (1897–1984) of Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam and Pontus Hulten (1924–2006) of Moderna Museet in Stockholm just to mention a few nodes in a large network. Research and scholarly literature on Louisiana is surprisingly sparse, and Pernille Stensgaard’s (2008) entertaining institutional biography has little about the international reception of Louisiana.

connect each in a continuous movement accentuate the experience of nature, light and free movement. The outside is pleasurably brought into the exhibition halls which, due to scale, proportion and the placing of domestic furniture by contemporary designers feel more like spaces for living than traditional museum halls [fig. 136]. As in the garden, the sheer material qualities of the buildings themselves are important – from the careful use of contemporary Scandinavian modern furniture to the walls of exposed brick.

According to the architects:

In the new section we have endeavored to carry on the homely atmosphere emanating from the old house to the contemporary line of thought by rather plain means such as working with low heights and through a lavish use of side light so as to create an atmosphere like in common living rooms (Bo, Wohlert 1958).



136. A Louisiana interior in 1958

And according to Knud W. Jensen:

The works of art can be enjoyed in a setting of modern architecture, emphasizing the interplay between the various forms of art. The abundant vegetation surrounding the museum, the park and the sea beyond, create a congenial atmosphere for quiet contemplation (Jensen [1968])

Especially in its first years, the younger museum is filled with furniture and design objects in a range of tableaux that strengthen the feel of a lived-in home (Møller 1958). The Louisiana founded in 1958 is essentially a gallery of

modernist art framed by nature in an architecturally updated domesticity – the same means for generating authentic experience as the Ordrupgaard of 1918.

Thus, in practical terms, Louisiana distillates a very particular style for the modernist/late-modernist museum after WWII – what I choose to call the Louisiana Idiom: *The framing of art in a homelike atmosphere and in close contact with nature.*

In a bit more detail, the Louisiana Idiom means:

- Human scale architecture
- Integrated use of nature
- Interior furnishings connoting ideal home and comfort
- Daylight and artificial light closely orchestrated
- Prominent use of wood, tile and other poignant materials
- Temporary exhibitions of modernist/late-modernist art and culture

By the post-WWII period, nature as recreation and the idea of comfortable domesticity belong to a transformed bourgeois ideology, which has gained almost universal acceptance; they are central preoccupations of a growing urban middle class. It was the same, though less universal, ideology performed by visitors to Ordrupgaard in 1918, and they are the same values performed by visitors to Louisiana from 1958 onwards. It is this bourgeois ideology, which frames the modernist artworks to be seen at both institutions, and these values are, ultimately, the content of most visitors' performance. By performing a version of 'the good life', visitors themselves have sought out freely, various types of art are not only made acceptable through its framing, it is made especially relevant if you aspire to live out a middle class life. Art comes to be part of authentic experience.

If impressionism, and particularly Cézanne and Gauguin, might still appear challenging to some in 1918, the challenge presented by abstract and post-WWII art at Louisiana is perhaps even greater. There is no longer any obvious congruence between artworks and their framing, as one could arguably say of impressionism and post-impressionism at Ordrupgaard. But Louisiana still succeeds in making this a performance of middle class identity. The walk through the museum is an incredibly well-choreographed staging which even culminates in hints of a bourgeois, domesticated sublime: from old villa and its domestic interiors through glass corridors where



137. *The Louisiana café around 1958*

architecture, art and nature blend in order to culminate in the cafeteria and its afternoon cake on the edge of a steep drop towards the magnificent Sound [fig. 135]. At Louisiana, difficult artworks and their pleasurable frame are *made* congruent: both are authentic experiences best approached aesthetically.

Louisiana makes good on the promise raised by Ordrupgaard: it is an efficient institution for the promotion of art through the performance of bourgeois pleasures. Art is the ostensible cause and goal for visits to both institutions, and the same art acquires both familiarity and legitimacy through authentic experience and visitors' simultaneous project of acquiring and maintaining identity. The modernist art being made familiar can be a story of French painting in 1918 or the theme of an international exhibition, curated by among others Willem Sandberg, on *Vitality in Art* (Louisiana 1960). From this perspective, regardless of any specific politics and ideologies of the modernist art in question, both Ordrupgaard and Louisiana are staging grounds

for the repeated performance of *bourgeois* modernisms in close alliance with a vision of ‘the good life’.

In contrast to the mostly silent Hansen-family at Ordrupgaard, Knud W. Jensen explicitly conceives of his museum as an actor in society and debate (Jensen [1968]). From the start, various performances, concerts, talks, readings, guided tours and a steady stream of catalogues and magazines are a part of the museum’s activities (Stensgaard 2008). With the inclusion of a café [fig. 137], the many spaces for rest and reflection, the gardens and the seascape, the visitor is approached as both a body and an intellect. Louisiana is thus an updated challenge – yet again – to the National Gallery in the big city: in the contemporary art and visual culture Louisiana endorses, in its basic and active openness as institution, and in the actual framing of art within an accessible and pleasurable home in nature.

The direct engagement with the public through art, nature and the pleasurably intimate is directly parallel to Ordrupgaard and the strong current of sincerity and emotional appeal it has displayed throughout its years. Since its birth, the word ‘democratic’ has been used many times to describe the younger museum – though this can certainly not be meant as the democracy of free exchange between equals as ideally promised in Habermas’ (1991) concept of the public sphere. Instead, as with mass democracy, the museum offers participation to all but not necessarily any reciprocity.

Louisiana is Knud W. Jensen’s project, and his 40-year involvement guaranteed a voice of personal sincerity. Yet, Louisiana is not an open dialogue since it presents no actual meeting of equal partners. Where Ordrupgaard can be seen as a tentative answer to the challenges of building mass society – legitimacy can no longer be sustained through free exchange, but has to be built on other kinds of involvement – Louisiana is the refinement of the same

approach. The sensual, embodied and spatial discourse of the older institution has been popularized. Like Ordrupgaard four decades previously, Louisiana is therefore a particular ‘modernist intervention’ into a particular place and time; though unlike Barnes’ original vision for his institution it is not radically transformative, it is also not as secluded as Oskar Reinhart’s aesthetic retreat; just more successful.

From this perspective, I am arguing that Ordrupgaard is the first rehearsal to Louisiana’s grand performance. More generally, the aesthetic of the collection museum of modernist art can thus be seen as an important precursor of recent trends in the globalized art world. From putting the visitor’s experience in focus and by creating rooms that are human in scale and open to the outside and to nature, the private collection museum came first.



138. Knud W. Jensen on Louisiana’s lawn in front of the original villa, 1960s

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#### 4. From static collection to changing museum

So far, I have traced two phases for the collection museum of modernist art – a dynamic first stage of intervention when the founders are actively building their collection as institution, followed by a more dormant phase of preservation and arrestment. But how did the collection museums of modernist art manage the further transition to the modern/late-modern museum institution? An important part of the answer lies in a new relationship between collection and exhibitions – or more specifically, in going from ‘collection museum’ to ‘museum of temporary exhibitions’.

When Louisiana was founded in 1958, the collection was already secondary to the changing loan exhibitions and various other activities and events. In the following decades, other museums of modernist/late-modernist art also began to see the temporary exhibition as part of their regular mandate rather than just an occasional activity.

By the late nineteenth century temporary exhibitions had risen to prominence in the general networks of collecting and trading art, and artists’ societies, dealers, art unions, critics, promoters and many others would use these events to their benefit. In 1900, the collector Karl Ernst Osthaus was already setting up changing exhibitions at his Museum Folkwang and by 1909 he had also set up the *Deutsches Museum für Kunst in Handel und Gewerbe*, a touring museum and exhibition of design and the applied arts with its base at the Folkwang but without a permanent display (Hesse-Frielinghaus 1971). Public art museums in Germany similarly took up the idea of curating their own temporary exhibitions in the 1920s, notably the Kronprinzenpalais under Ludwig Justi (1876–1957) and the Kunsthalle Mannheim through the efforts of Gustav Hartlaub (1884–1963) (Schneede 2010).

Among the early collection museums of modernist art, the Phillips Collection also followed a dedicated programme of temporary exhibitions from the middle of the 1920s. Helene Kröller-Müller sent her collection out as a travelling exhibition and similarly experimented with smaller, temporary shows at her first museum on Lange Voorhout in den Haag, although less regularly. These were all precursors to the model of the openly changing and developing museum institution otherwise associated with MoMA in New York (cf. Staniszewski 1998).

As explored in chapter VI, the collector Wilhelm Hansen had a direct involvement in organizing ever more ambitious exhibitions of French modernist art from 1918 until his death in 1936. These activities made it possible for him to continue building networks and successfully pursue goals similar to those of his provisional museum even after the disappointments and setbacks of 1922–23. Such a trajectory illustrates a new development concomitant to the gradual rise of the temporary exhibition – namely the building of networks for the ‘alternative’ circulation of artworks. Prices rise and more collections reach permanence in their own institutions or, more often, in public museums. Thus the temporary exhibition became a way to continue the circulation of



139. At the opening of the French exhibition in 1928; a network of people and paintings. From left: Wilhelm Hansen, Paul Jamot and Jean Guiffrey of the Louvre, Helge Jacobsen. In the background is Millet's *Angelus*, 1859

‘cultural commodities’, which is crucial to creating and maintaining value when these can no longer be easily bought or sold. In time, the complex associations afforded by temporary and flexible exhibition networks would become absolutely central to art museums.

In 1928, through the French Art Association, Hansen’s efforts resulted in a major Copenhagen loan exhibition of French nineteenth century painting before modernism where Millet’s *Angelus* – enshrined at the Louvre and widely known as the most expensive, and possibly most reproduced, painting of the nineteenth century [fig. 139] (Jensen 1994, p. 53) – took pride of place among major works by David, Ingres, Delacroix and the ‘school of 1830’ (Foreningen Fransk Kunst 1928). The 1935 exhibition, this time of art from the French eighteenth century, was an even grander affair (Foreningen Fransk Kunst 1935). Hansen was president for both exhibitions, as well as presiding over several smaller efforts in between. As ‘ideal collections’, these shows brought normally dispersed and incongruent actors together, ranging from French state museums through Danish royalty, to expensive and fragile art objects, and private collectors from several countries. For a short while everybody was associated in the type of temporary network only allowed through exhibition. Both for the out of luck collectors and the future museums and institutions, this type of association represents a logical next step for a time when techniques of ‘traditional’ collecting are no longer sufficient to create the desired connections. And in this regard, to the Danish milieu, the French exhibition of 1914 in Copenhagen provided a blueprint with unacknowledged reverberations till today.

As temporary exhibitions came to take on more and more importance – for art museums especially after WWII – a second dividing line appears: When and how does the now permanent collection museum of modernist

art become a museum of temporary exhibitions? When will it – *again* – take part in complex networks of art circulation?

With restrictive wills and charters stipulating no outgoing lending and, by default, no temporary exhibitions either, came an imposed insularity for the Barnes Foundation and the Sammlung Oskar Reinhart “Am Römerholz”. In contrast, the Phillips Collection was born as an institution open to its own change where the very development of the collection itself could be a subject for display and other outgoing activities. For others like the Kröller-Müller museums at first in Den Haag and later in Hoge Veluwe, the Courtauld Collection and Waldemarsudde, temporary exhibitions came gradually along with an increasing professionalization and openness to self-development. More recently similar developments have affected Thielska Galleriet (Svt Nyheter 2013). The history is different for each of the initially provisional institutions I have considered, and too complex to delve into here, but in general it shows the same, simple trajectory seen with almost all collection museums: from the collector’s provisional institution to permanent collection museum to modern, outgoing museum of temporary exhibitions [Table 9, p. 399].

For Ordrupgaard, nothing in Henny Hansen’s bequest explicitly forbade a more active role, but nothing really encouraged it either despite the fact that her husband’s success in building the large networks necessary for ambitious exhibitions could have served as a template for future activities. Not until the appointment of Hanne Finsen as director in 1978 did the museum begin to change from the closed, local network of a Danish collection museum into an open institution coupled to larger networks and with temporary exhibitions as a central activity (Munk 2003). Meanwhile, Louisiana had already taken the development much further by presenting *its* intervention in the shape of

the Louisiana Idiom: the museum of temporary exhibitions, which frames art in a homelike atmosphere and in close contact with nature.

Let me return to Table 1 presented in the introduction to chapter V (page 219), where the then *provisional* collection museums of modernist art were grouped according to two variables of weaker or stronger commitment: (1) regarding the outwards, explicit project of transforming people and society, and (2) regarding the inwards openness to change, impermanence and variation in the institution itself. This kind of selective schematization is not the stuff of statistics, but it does help us to grasp important developments: Of the four possible combinations of variables, only two provisional institutions committed to openness – Museum Folkwang and the Phillips Collection – and none combined this strong openness with a ‘weak’ outwards mission. This combination of openness and outreach without a transformative goal is rather a profile of the modernist/late-modernist art museum after WWII as pioneered by Louisiana, MoMA, Moderna Museet, Stedelijk etc. where different activities and temporary exhibitions became central.

	Static museum	Museum open to change
Implicitly transformative	Ordrupgaard, Sammlung Oskar Reinhart, Courtauld Collection, Kröller-Müller Museum, Waldemarsudde, Thielska Galleriet	Museum of temporary exhibitions
Explicitly transformative	Barnes Foundation	Museum Folkwang, Phillips Collection

Table 10. The collection museums of modernist art as they develop into the museum of temporary exhibitions: open to change, but with only an implicit commitment to transform audiences and society in turn, cf. Table 1, p. 219

Where we are now, in the second decade of the third millennium, most of the collection museums of modernist art have given up on profound transformation of society and visitors. They have committed, as well as possible, to more openness and impermanence. From the three corners of Table 1 in chapter V, almost all have moved to the fourth position as ‘museums of temporary exhibitions’, as seen here in Table 10. Only the Sammlung Oskar Reinhart “Am Römerholz” and, to a degree, the Barnes Foundation have been left as closed institutions, partly still in the second phase of dormancy; but these Sleeping Beauties, caught in frozen time, have many siblings when considering collection museums overall (again, cf. Higonnet 2009).

The development of most collection museums of modernist art into institutions with identities and missions different – and in some cases radically different – from their outset seems a result of a long, intervening period of dormancy: The original ‘activism’ could not co-exist with a wish for staying the same, thus intervention was put partly on hold as authenticity was chosen first.

For the past few decades, any strong ideology of transformation has run the risk of seeming either suspicious or sectarian. Meanwhile, a different kind of art museum has prospered enormously: Generally, museums of today still promise engagement and edification, but of a weaker, more implicit kind, while showing a willingness to change and *transform themselves* continuously. These are neither institutions of direct dialogue, nor are they monologic or static; they are rather participatory (though not quite the kind of participation associated with Nina Simon’s (2010) idea of the concept).

The promise held out by the first iteration of Ordrupgaard back around WWI, and then further developed by Louisiana, has found a new shape in a type of public art museum adopted for mass democracy and broadly middle class values: here you can feel at ease and experience a pleasurable confirma-

tion of identity. Collection museums seeking to wake up from dormancy and to enter into renewed vitality and relevance would do well by reintegrating themselves into this trend – a trend they had already helped develop during their time as oppositional and strongly ‘interventionist’ museums.

The collection museums of modernist art I have analysed have therefore – generally – followed a path from provisional, interventionist institution to permanent, largely inactive museum to the contemporary museum of temporary exhibitions. This is another way of saying that these once ambitious interventions have become more open to impermanence after abandoning any ‘definitive mission’ they might once have had. Thus they have arrived at the public museum they were once alternative to – some much sooner than others – while playing a role in changing the concept into what it is today: a place of consensus and adaptability serviceable to dominant ideology, but also a place more pleasurable and engaging for visitors.



140. Sven-Harrys Konstmuseum opened in 2011 in Stockholm

## 5. Coda: The collection museum of modernist art in the twenty-first century

‘Before we enter the home, please put the blue plastic covers on your shoes. Now, welcome to Sven-Harry’s Art Museum’. Back in 2014, I took a tour of Stockholm’s most recent art museum, which also contains a replica of a private dwelling. The building magnate, Sven-Harry Karlsson, developed the institution bearing his name in 2011 as part of a complex in central Stockholm, which also houses offices, shops and private flats. The replica of his former home and collection in an eighteenth century wooden mansion crowns the golden panelled structure overlooking Vasa Park.

Sometime later, in Cambridge, I was ringing the bell to Kettle’s Yard. The former home of the art collectors Jim (1895–1990) and Helen (1894–1977) Ede can only be entered through the front door leading to the small entrance hall where overcoats and bags are hung pell mell on coat hooks. The residence opened as a museum in 1973 after being enlarged with a new wing that was



141. The sitting and dining room at Kettle's Yard. Visitors are allowed to walk around freely

kept in agreement with the original home, but everything still feels very much personal and intimate.

The first – provisional – collection museum of modernist art opened to the public more than one hundred years ago. As we can see, others continue to appear. Since the founding of Museum Folkwang, scores of private art collections have opened to the public in some tentative institutional form or other, and many have gradually achieved a status as permanent museums of modernist art (again, broadly defined as art after c. 1860). Most have undergone several stages of change before ending up here – at the beginning of the third millennium. What does the future hold for the specific collection museums of modernist art, which I have analysed? What does the future hold for *any* type of modernist art collection as intervention? These are potentially very complex questions, and I can only hope to outline a few thoughts and insights.

## §

Sven-Harrys Konstmuseum and Kettle's Yard are two examples of more recently founded collection museums of art that keep very close to the characteristics defined at the end of chapter V (Table 3, p. 266). Here, many small gestures frame the experience so it becomes one of entering a private home rather than a museum: the children's drawings in the kitchen and the worn sofas of Sven-Harrys Konstmuseum or getting a personal greeting at Kettle's Yard before walking into a tastefully arranged, almost cluttered sitting room. At these and other collection museums it is the atmosphere conjured up by little things, together with a downplayed architectural scale and being close to nature, which often guide us to the most significant part of the experience.

As I have underlined several times, framing, whether by simple means or grand gestures, means a lot for any museum visit. The intimate and personal evoked by the home-like has a quite particular appeal. At one time or other, the collection museums of modernist art from the early twentieth century all mobilized this type of intimacy. They counted on this framing to be an alternative path to reach visitors and give them an understanding of art. No matter their original, much more diverse intentions or the many layers of complex meaning enmeshed in these collections, today, their most particular legacy lies in the development of an atmosphere of direct engagement with visitors as 'private' individuals. In bypassing 'instruction' and going straight for enjoyment, they promised *authentic experience*: a pleasurable, more immediate experience of another order – of art, of nature, of intimacy – in stark contrast to the large and impersonal museums of the nineteenth century and the white cube galleries of the twentieth.

Some of the privately founded museums of modernist art from the early twentieth century have kept the most essential parts of this original fram-

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ing – Ordrupgaard, Waldemarsudde, Thielska Galleriet, Sammlung Oskar Reinhart “Am Römerholz”, The Phillips Collection and, in parts, also The Barnes Foundation. And as I initially narrated, other private collections turned museum projects have since joined them in counting on the appeal of the home-like, the intimate and nature.

What I have dubbed the Louisiana Idiom is a further development of this aesthetic. As a template and practice, it marries the soul of the intimate collection museums like Kettle’s Yard and the original Ordrupgaard to the large and professionalized public museums of today.

Meanwhile, in becoming more openly evolving and less ideological, some of the original collection museums of modernist art have gradually lost the intimacy afforded by cramped rooms and dense atmospheres. The Courtauld Gallery and The Museum Folkwang have, in practice, almost completely abandoned their past as private collections and function much like any museum/gallery of today. They have evolved beyond the collection museum mission and aesthetic to become museums of temporary exhibitions.

The Kröller-Müller Museum was already on its way to the more impersonal museum when opening in Hoge Veluwe in 1938, but together with Louisiana, where intimacy has also been downplayed as the museum has grown, nature still contributes a strong element of the pleasurable experience. Likewise does the varied play of tactilities in both museum interiors. The Dutch and the Danish museums are possibly the strongest hybrids between the collection museum of before and the modern art museum of temporary exhibitions of today.

In a quite different developmental stage, Sammlung Oskar Reinhart “Am Römerholz” has remained frozen in time. Substantial renovations in 2007–2010 had the explicit goal to ensure the preservation of the authentic expe-



142. The extension to Ordrupgaard by Zaha Hadid. The French gallery is glimpsed on the left

rience of a private and personal collection (Piotrowski 2010). Meanwhile, the Barnes Foundation has been struggling to overcome its petrification (cf. Gamboni 2007) in order to become more like any other museum and to host temporary exhibitions of its own. For both institutions, it is an obstacle to becoming a highly networked museum of temporary exhibitions that they cannot use their collections as liquid capital in the ‘alternative’ circulation of lending and borrowing artworks.

Meanwhile, in 2005 an extension designed by the highly regarded British architect Zaha Hadid (1950–2016) was added to Ordrupgaard. This new space was created for the permanent collection, but it quickly became a way to step up an ambitious exhibition programme, which has led to an increase in visitor numbers and the museum’s visibility. In a short time period, Ordrupgaard has become a successful museum of temporary exhibitions and has deftly moved to build network connections nationally and globally. At the same time, the collections of Danish and French art have remained on display in the historical and well-preserved interiors of the original gallery and villa. The precarious

balance between the unique and inviting frame and the many new demands of opening up seems – for the time being – to be in equilibrium.

Today, private art collections still go public – and they *intervene* in local, national and international networks; whatever the more specific outcomes of



143. *me Collectors Room Berlin is just one of several private art collections worldwide which has an educational programme*

their interventions are. Those that are still under the direct control of their collectors most often carry an implicit promise of a more permanent status in the future: They are provisional institutions for the time being. But any grand gesture of transformation and impact is probably precluded – art in galleries seems to carry less radical potential than a hundred years ago.<sup>28</sup> It is also doubtful how many will continue

to involve the collector's home and its feel of intimate, bourgeois sincerity.

In many ways, private art collections made independently public now seem to be taking cues from the public museum of temporary exhibitions, especially as this has increasingly become the object of urban development and cultural renewal. Miami, a large city famously without any art institution to match until the opening of the Pérez Art Museum in 2013, is a good example: The Rubell Family Collection (since 1994), The Margulies Collection (since 1999), the Ella Fontanals-Cisneros Collection (since 2002) and the de la Cruz Collection (since 2009) are private initiatives partly remedying the absence of an active, large art institution. As provisional museums, the collectors' initiatives are

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28 To find explicitly transformative agendas of today, we should probably look to other types of collections – for example Gunther von Hagens' travelling Vanitas show, *Körperwelten* ('Body worlds'), which sets out to show that 'we are all different, yet alike' (Menschen Museum 2016). Recently the preserved bodies and body parts in dramatic arrangements have found an ostensibly permanent museum in Berlin.

publicly accessible in former warehouse locations and they have an interest in active community outreach and in developing and supporting art projects and artists. In their practices and shows, they are clearly inspired by contemporary art museums and non-profit galleries and they are, quite openly, attempting to intervene in local society (Goldstein 2014, Solway 2014).

## §

So, what does all this mean for the future of the collection museums of modernist art in the twenty-first century? I conclude, not with definitive answers, but with a few imperfect observations.

*First*, the now historical collection museums of modernist art have showed a way to frame and promote art, that is both unique and engaging. Their continued promise of authentic experience is at one and the same time their strongest asset and a real challenge to both preserve and develop. Paradoxically, this authentic and unique identity – something of a rarity by now – promises something, which is incredibly well suited to many of today's demands.

*Second*, it appears that permanent institutionalization and intimacy have a troubled relationship. It is generally in the nature of museums to want more – more exhibition space, more visitors, more revenue, more funding, more staff. This expansionist logic of capitalist society is the other side to museums opening up to their own change and impermanence. It seems inevitable that these demands, along with creeping homogenization, will always challenge the *other* impulse of collection museums to *preserve* in order to generate authentic experience with visitors.

Their private origin becomes almost a ghostly presence in some American art museums where an identity as collection museums is imperfectly preserved. At the McNay Art Museum in San Antonio (opened 1954), for example, the

past feels mostly like a palimpsest: Continuous expansions, donations and remodelling have changed buildings and collection fundamentally, and almost all of the original interiors have been stripped down and sanitized – only the lush courtyard really gives an experience of what once was. It is hard for collection museums to balance original identity with the demands of becoming a museum of temporary exhibitions. The realm of the private connoisseur and his or her intimately built connections between things, their placement and display will forever be challenged by institutionalisation *itself*.

*Third*, the model of the Phillips Collection, the Kröller-Müller Museum and Louisiana does show a way to preserve some of the qualities of authentic experience associated with the intimate collection museum in the face of the demands coming from opening up, constantly growing and changing. At all three museums, later architectural expansions have kept the downplayed architectural scale of their original incarnation and at the two latter museums, opening up to nature and letting it enter the museum still plays a large role. While much of the original furniture and specifically domestic feel has been given up, the three museums are quite attentive to building atmospheres that can still be described as intimate and contemplative.

*Fourth*, the collection museum does indeed have a strong ideological leaning, and this needs to be acknowledged. As a bequest from private individuals, it both praises and memorializes particular ways of life and values closely tied to the middle and upper classes of western society. It is equally enmeshed in notions of individuality and liberal democracy in mass society. As a place to visit and spend time in, the collection museum offers visitors the ability to perform themselves inside this ideology, seamlessly, and for better or for worse. This is a frame with potential to both *include and exclude* potential

users from a shared interpretive community – depending on how this frame is worked and mobilized.

*Fifth* – and this is perhaps the most direct recommendation coming from the whole dissertation – collection museums can profitably mine their past in order to build their future. This means looking at what once was, what never was, and what was once dreamt of. It means thinking about the utopia that every collection also is and it means looking at the type of *intervention* that is enshrined at the heart of every privately founded art institution. At their best, collection museums of modernist art were either attempts to build worlds to imaginatively inhabit, or they were attempts at giving us the tools to inhabit an already given existence. Sometimes both goals were in play at the same time. Examining the past means discussing what makes an institution – is it its buildings and the site it occupies, its collection of artworks and interiors, its ideas and ideologies and the experiences it offers, or is it everything taken together?

This prolonged self-examination should, hopefully, further a willingness to *learn* from the past, to ask what it can teach, and to use some of these insights for the development of future practices. It also means that this search should extend beyond the chapter published in a journal or the dissertation which is distributed in so-and-so many electronic files.

Examining institutional past should be a catalyst for discussions and perhaps for further change. It should also be shared, even when this institutional history contains traumas or problems or might lead to further discontent in the present. Any museum institution which still sees itself just a little like an intervention, a place which impacts people and society and which seeks to generate particular experience or even change, should also, with reference to the work of museologist Janet Marstine (2013), be *transparent*.

The first step has to be to discuss and to work with what makes the collection museum of modernist art unique, something that, after all, has also been the topic of this dissertation.



144. Oskar Reinhart rehangng his collection in 1955 with the assistance of his chauffeur Albert Fritschi

## Conclusion

Ordrupgaard belongs to a small group of collection museums of early modernist art which were founded in the first decades of the twentieth century in Europe and the USA. To begin with, these were all provisional institutions springing from private initiative. They were also interventions – they sought to make a difference in the appreciation of art, in museum culture, in society and in people's lives. As such, they became places for expressing and performing the values and identities of their founders and their intended middle-class visitors.

Collecting fine art and making a private museum is dependent on networks that involve people, things, organizations and techniques. The circulation of commodities had developed radically during the nineteenth century; by the twentieth century, market thinking and calculation permeated the appreciation of impressionism and modernist art and was an integrated part of art collecting.

The collection museums of modernist art were in opposition to the large public museums founded in the nineteenth century. Small scale, intimate, home-like arrangements of art and furniture were intended to give a different, more intimate and pleasant experience as was the proximity to nature, parks and gardens. Some of these traits can be re-found in later institutions like the

Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, and they remain a source of inspiration for art museums today. Over the years, the first collection museums of modernist art have evolved: they have become more open and they have more activities and temporary exhibitions. Their history therefore needs to be examined and discussed in order to preserve and develop their unique identity.

A nuanced approach is needed in order to analyse and explain the early collection museums of modernist art. Large and ambitious art collections express a desire to communicate and to have an audience. In analysing them, it is necessary to look at the way meaning was and is performed. This encompasses study of both written discourse and a critical and imaginative reconstruction on the basis of first-person experience of places, collections and artworks. It also means drawing on a broader type of primary material and using a more inclusive approach than traditional in collection studies.

### §

This dissertation has examined the private Ordrupgaard collection of French modernist art with a special focus on the years c. 1917–c. 1923. It was very publicly opened to visitors in 1918 as an alternative to the National Gallery and to other museums and collections in Denmark and was immediately promised as a future public donation. The collection housed in the rustic suburbs north of Copenhagen represented the first opportunity for most Danes to easily experience French artworks from the nineteenth century – romantics, realists, impressionists, post-impressionists and modernists – and this in a framing completely different from the mainstream practice of large, public museums. Comfort, intimacy and enjoyment was central to a visit, as were the experiences of feeling at home and being in nature. Ordrupgaard was initially a provisional institution, and as such an intervention into the

Danish art world, by showing itself as a self-assured alternative to the tiring universal survey museums. This unique quality was explicitly acknowledged by commenters at the time, and it puts Ordrupgaard in company with other provisional collection museums in Europe and the USA.

Visitors to Ordrupgaard were asked to participate in a ‘performative ritual’ where a specific type of art appreciation and a number of cultural values were celebrated and made ‘true’ by the fullness of experience. A cluster of meanings that can loosely be described as ‘bourgeois’ and middle-class were enshrined in the way artworks were hung and presented, and in the whole, desirable ensemble of Ordrupgaard as villa, park and gardens. The exclusive art collection was an open invitation for people to participate and to perform their own identity as belonging to a cultural class. In several ways, it was therefore a provisional museum attuned to the new mass democracy.

Ordrupgaard itself was the result of three years of collecting and preparation by Henny and Wilhelm Hansen. While he took the initiative, and she took care of the household and gardens, we can only surmise the scope of her contributions. Wilhelm made good use of an extended network of art dealers, agents, means of communication, transport and credit systems when building the collection. Modern networks and modern means are an essential part of an answer to how Ordrupgaard came to be so quickly and so well-defined. Another network which involved the press, other collectors, an available audience and desirable artworks came together around Ordrupgaard as a project and ensured that it was on its way to be a successful, *public* institution from the beginning.

The same networks that allowed so many things were also involved as the Hansen-family’s collection and institution was in danger of dissolution a few years later. Wilhelm Hansen, Herman Heilbuth and the art dealers V. Winkel &

Magnussen had been speculating through a consortium that, under the cover of WWI, brought hundreds of valuable artworks to Denmark. Marketization was extended to the trading of art in the nineteenth century, and market thinking was an indissoluble part of collecting modernist art; also for Ordrupgaard.

Ordrupgaard did survive as a collection and proto-institution, and it was donated to the state as a public museum in 1951, but it took many years of relative dormancy before it evolved into the more active and open museum institution which it is today.

This study has revealed how Ordrupgaard was both particular and somewhat typical of its time in a national and international context. It was an ambitious art collection and an ambitious provisional institution, and its early history represents an important moment in the institutional history of modernist art. Explaining Ordrupgaard throws light on the framing, narration and reception of art in a larger group of institutions and historical circumstances.

### §

Concurrently to the analysis of Ordrupgaard, I have examined a group of art collections that all have become museums: The Museum Folkwang, the Barnes Foundation, the Phillips Collection, the Kröller-Müller Museum, Prince Eugen's Waldemarsudde, Thielska Galleriet, The Courtauld Collection and Sammlung Oskar Reinhart "Am Römerholz" have all been analysed and discussed in contrast and comparison to each other and to Ordrupgaard. These are all existing institutions, and their early history makes them all fall under my designation of 'collection museum of modernist art'.

There are of course individual differences, but their history shows a number of significant similarities: these collections were meant as corrections and interventions in the art scene and in society of the early twentieth century,

they display a belief in the meeting of art and life, they hold strong bourgeois references and values, and they mobilise a domestic, intimate and pleasurable frame. The collector is strongly present in all of the collection museums of modernist art, and they promote the primacy of a narrow canon of 'classic French modern' on the basis of a formalist aesthetics, while at the same time showing a sometimes creative use of visual narrative.

Some of these provisional institutions were very explicit in their wish to transform society and visitors: The founders of the Barnes Foundation, The Phillips Collection and Museum Folkwang defined detailed programmes that were based on progressive ideas from philosophy, psychology and aesthetics, and they were interested in transforming the skills and easing the minds of people through art and education. Most of the provisional museums were a little more implicit in the transformation they sought. Some, like the Courtauld collection, the Kröller-Müller Museum and Sammlung Oskar Reinhart, specifically wanted to disseminate the exclusive experience of the art connoisseur to visitors – something which could, in some cases, be framed in almost spiritual terms.

The collection museum of modernist art is a definition which throws light on art collecting and the reception and canonization of modernist art in new ways. These early institutions show ways of relating to, framing, promoting and using visual art which was very different than what we experience in the neutral, 'white cube' museum hall of today. The collection museum shows how modernist art could be displayed in environments and situations that spoke to personal investment through identification, pleasure, attractive values and expectations.

### §

Previous scholarship on collections has often been reduced to biographies of collectors or been purely oriented toward objects without regard for their use or display. This dissertation has developed a number of new interpretative approaches to art collections and the practices of collectors that look to these as communicative and performative interventions: art collections *do* something and they *mean* something to the people who visit, and in turn, visitors make collections significant by using them. Collections are dependent on networks, and they come into being and gain legitimacy through connections to many types of actors. Throughout the dissertation, I have demonstrated the possibility and viability of close, empirically based readings of historical material combined with strongly reasoned, theoretical and conceptual considerations. What has been developed is not a strict, methodological script for the analysis of all historical collections, but I have applied a range of concrete approaches that are more synthetic and holistic than usual in collection studies. The very overall goal, of course, has been to understand the past better, but also to help us imagine and develop the kind of art collections and museums we want from the future.

Due to restraints of time and scope, a number of potential fields of study have only been suggested. Just to mention a few questions that merit elaboration: What were some of the other historical, concrete networks of collectors, critics, dealers and technologies in Europe and the USA that allowed modernist art to triumph? How has a pleasant, experiential and intimate way to frame art – what I have called the ‘Louisiana idiom’ – been a resource for later, globalized museum culture?

An obvious topic for future research would be the history and functions of later collections of modernist art: Are private art collectors still involved in making the same type of institutions, do they underwrite the same ideologies

and values, and do they perform in the same way? In connection to this, it will be relevant to critically study the networks of collecting and trading art made up by the use, reception and institutionalisation of art in the decades after WWII.

### §

Ordrupgaard and the collection museums of modernist art were founded in different times: a particular narrative of modernist art had not been canonized, public museums were generally authoritarian and not especially accommodating, and the values and world-view of the bourgeois middle-class were not as entrenched in new mass society. The provisional institutions all sought to do something about this.

What made the collection museums different in their day still persists as concrete buildings and environments – often well-preserved – and as the particular gift of a strong historical identity. Today, they can still be experienced as pleasant, atmospheric, more welcoming and intimate than many other museums. These ways of being differently engaging are – or should be – a mirror to many types of institutions that seek to make a difference today.

Going forward, the collection museums of modernist art are no longer as transformative or radically interventionist as they once were. They have been challenged by demands of more openness and more activities for their public, and most are therefore expanding to meet these new realities: more buildings, more exhibitions, more activities. Examining and discussing their past is also a way to ensure that the qualities that make them unique and particular will remain a resource for future development.



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Back cover:

Eva Gonzalès: *The convalescent. Portrait of a woman in a white dress*. 1877–78. Oil on canvas.

86 x 47.5 cm. Ordrupgaard

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## Dansk resumé

Denne afhandling analyserer og belyser Ordrupgaards tidlige historie. Som et museum for impressionisme og 1800-tals kunst fra Danmark og Frankrig er det i dag et af den vestlige verdens betydelige småmuseer.

Ved at stille spørgsmålet ”hvordan kan man forklare Ordrupgaard”, er dette et studium, der fører til en definition af en afgrænset gruppe museer fra det tidlige tyvende århundredes Europa og USA: samlingsmuseet for modernistisk kunst. Afhandlingen belyser og forklarer dermed både Ordrupgaard samt en hel kategori af tidlige, modernistiske kunstsamlinger, der havde stærke ambitioner om at bidrage offentligt.

Afhandlingens bidrag til forskningen kan i brede træk defineres som følger: (1) Afhandlingen definerer denne gruppe af private samlingsmuseer for modernistisk kunst og deres karakteristika samt udvikler en original og velfunderet metode til at analysere dem; (2) afhandlingen foretager det første komparative studium af Ordrupgaard og fortolker en stor mængde upubliceret og ukendt materiale om museet og den modernistiske kunsts samlingshistorie i Danmark; (3) afhandlingen forklarer samlinger af modernistisk kunst som performative: indsamling søger at skabe mening gennem udstilling og fremvisning, og indsamling sker ligeledes på basis af netværk.

Afhandlingen samlæser for første gang et stort materiale om modernistiske kunstsamlinger for at udvikle en række analytiske tilgange baseret på læsninger af nyere teoretisk litteratur udgivet inden for museologi, kunsthistorie, semiotik, sociologi og filosofi. Studiet bidrager dermed internationalt til discipliner som museologi, kunsthistorie og samlingsstudier. Dette sker ved at udvikle ny viden om den modernistiske kunsts tidlige institutions-, samlings- og udstillingshistorie og ved at åbne for nye perspektiver på denne histories betydning frem til i dag.

De centrale case-studier er de tidligere privatsamlinger Ordrupgaard i Charlottenlund, Waldemarsudde og Thielska Galleriet i Stockholm, The Courtauld Collection i London, Museum Folkwang i Hagen og Essen, Kröller-Müller Museet i Otterlo, Barnes Foundation i Philadelphia og Phillips Collection i Washington D.C. Andre kunstsamlinger som er – og til tider ikke er – blevet til permanente museer i Danmark, Europa og USA bliver nævnt og kort analyseret undervejs i afhandlingen. Empirisk set trækker studiet på arkivalisk materiale, tekster og fotografier fra Ordrupgaard og, til mindre grad, en række af de andre, nævnte samlinger. Lige så væsentligt for studiet er min egen første-persons oplevelse af kunstværker og deres præsentation samt stadig eksisterende bygninger og miljøer.

Undersøgelsesområdet er blevet defineret og afgrænset ved at trække på nylige udgivelser om private kunstsamlinger, der er blevet til offentlige museer. Anne Higonnet (2009) har her skrevet om samleres personlige museer for ældre malerkunst og kunsthåndværk mens litteraten Jeremy Braddock (2012) har påpeget, hvordan modernistiske kunstsamlinger kunne fungere som provisoriske institutioner med karakter af decideret intervention i samfund og kunstverden. I forlængelse af deres skrifter, og ved at se på samleres og samlingshistorie i Europa og USA, så er det muligt at identificere en afgrænset gruppe ”samlingsmuseer for modernistisk kunst”. Til at begynde med er disse provisoriske institutioner, senere bliver de permanente museer, og de viser alle fransk og fransk-relateret kunst inden for rammerne af private hjem og gallerier, der er åbne for, eller planlægges som åbne for, den brede offentlighed.

Afhandlingens *første del* udvikler en række metoder til at analysere Ordrupgaard og beslægtede samlingsmuseer for modernistisk kunst som tydelige interventioner i en given sammenhæng. Disse samlinger med en offentlig mission var ikke blot konceptuelle eller abstrakte serier af genstande,

men tog form som ret så konkrete udstillinger, hvor kunstværker, bygninger og omgivelser fremstod i velkomponerede ensembler. Gennem nære, kritiske læsninger af samtidig kritik og ved at anvende et fænomenologisk første-persons perspektiv får jeg gennem afhandlingen identificeret en række måder hvorpå besøgende blev tilbudt særlige narrativer og bestemte oplevelser: Modernistisk kunst blev her rammesat i hjemlige, komfortable, indbydende og intime interiører og eksteriører, hvormed kunstoplevelsen kom til at stå i skærende kontrast til den tids upersonlige, offentlige museer. Denne måde at udstille på udtrykte samtidig en formalistisk og ahistorisk tilgang til kunstoplevelsen som stadig var ganske ny omkring 1. verdenskrig, og i videre forstand var den et forsøg på at lære publikum, hvordan billedkunst kunne opleves fordomsfrit og umiddelbart i en fri og sansende tilgang. Flere kunstsamlere udtrykte endda ganske eksplicit, hvordan det egentlige udbytte dermed var en decideret forøgelse af væren på grundlag af fornøjelse, åndelig ro og nye indsigter. På baggrund af teorier om performativitet kan dog påvises et andet, mindre åbenlyst narrativ, som disse banebrydende institutioner også tilbød: forskellige værdier forbundet til et rent borgerligt verdensbillede, hvor privat rekreation og fornøjelse stod i skarp kontrast til det offentlige liv. Besøgende til de ansete, men stadig provisoriske kunstinstitutioner blev dermed også forsynet med muligheden for at *performe* sig selv som tilhørende en anset klasse og gruppe i samfundet.

Ordrupgaard, som blev grundlagt af Wilhelm og Henny Hansen, var historisk set præcis sådan en intervention i den danske og nordiske kunstscene, hvor international, modernistisk kunst stadig var svær at komme til at opleve, og samlingen blev gennemgribende promoveret som et museum for god, behagelig kunst og det gode, behagelige liv. Totaliteten udgjort af bygninger, park og have var derfor intenderet som en provisorisk institution – et for-

billede og en model for en fremtidig udvikling inden for museer, i kunstanskuelsen og måske for samfundet som sådan. Ordrupgaard delte dermed mål med en gruppe ligesindende og lige så banebrydende kunstsamlinger i tiden, der alle var i større eller mindre modsætning til eksisterende museums kultur. Ordrupgaard var rundet af borgerlige og til dels aristokratiske værdier, men søgte at udbrede denne kultur til en bredere del af befolkningen inden for betingelserne sat af det nye massedemokrati. Som institution hentede museet inspiration fra flere forskellige sider – ansete kunstsamlinger i Stockholm, en allerede veludviklet dansk tradition for at stifte offentlige museer på basis af private samlinger og endelig stifternes solide viden om tidens europæiske kunst- og samlers kultur. Opstillingen af kunstværker, møbler og andre genstande førte på Ordrupgaard til forskellige associative fortællinger – om vigtigheden af individualitet, om glæden ved ejendomsret, om det gode i komfort og intimitet. Hjemmet og det hjemlige var Ordrupgaards afgørende ramme, akkurat som det var tilfældet med de andre samlingsmuseer for modernistisk kunst.

Afhandlingens *anden del* omhandler hvordan en kunstsamling som Ordrupgaard, der søgte et offentligt engagement, måtte indgå i omfattende netværk for at kunne opstå og eksistere, få et publikum og finde anerkendelse. Ved at anvende aktør-netværksteori, og gennem case-studier af kunsttransporter, auktioner og de netværk, der dannes omkring særudstillinger, i tiden omkring 1. verdenskrig, vises hvordan indsamlingen af modernistisk kunst både blev muliggjort og begrænset af en pluralitet af mennesker og ting, der lå uden for samlerens egen vilje og styring. Rådgiveren, eksperten og agenten – til tider samlet i een og samme person – er kun et enkelt og overraskende ustabilt element i meget sammensatte netværk, der også bestod af togvogne, andre samlere, kommunikationsmidler, gallerister, jura, kredit, krig og mil-

lioni af andre ting, der samledes sammen for at muliggøre og afgrænse kunstindsamling. I sig selv er en samling også et netværk: kunstværker blev bragt sammen med offentligheden, pressen, bygninger og lokaliteter samt andre smagsdommere, og samlerens opgave var at placere sig selv som den, der kontrollerede og holdt al ting på plads. Afhandlingen viser, hvordan det var selve omskifteligheden og udsathed ved denne styring, der også er årsagen til, at de fleste modernistiske kunstsamlinger blev opløst igen uden at opnå nogen permanens.

Kalkulation og spekulation ud fra markedstermer var en ny og væsentlig faktor i den modernistiske kunsts gennembrud i anden halvdel af det nittende århundrede, og afhandlingen analyserer, hvordan markedstænkning også gennemsyrrer kunstsamling, og dermed giver det ingen mening at adskille valg foretaget på grundlag af æstetiske, idealistiske eller økonomiske grunde. En gennemført spekulativ indstilling blev udviklet i det neutrale Danmark under 1. verdenskrig efterhånden som økonomien boomed, hvilket også forklarer Wilhelm Hansens involvering i den i dag næsten ukendte overførsel af hundrevis af kostbare malerier fra Frankrig til Danmark i det, der sandsynligvis var det mest massive kunstkøb i sidstnævnte nations historie.

Afhandlingens *epilog* behandler arven efter samlingsmuseerne for modernistisk kunst: hvordan udviklede de sig, hvilken påvirkning har de haft, og hvad vil fremtiden bringe? Her vises, hvordan Ordrupgaard og de fleste sammenlignelige institutioner har gennemløbet tre stadier i deres historie: fra et første stadium under samlerens personlige involvering til en inaktiv, Torneroselignende søvn efter samlerens død og frem til i dag, hvor de fleste har undergået en metamorfose hen imod et åbent, udviklende og konstant foranderligt museum med mange aktiviteter og midlertidige udstillinger. En række private kunstsamlinger, som eksempelvis Kettle's Yard, er etablerede senere og er dog

ganske beslægtede, men arven er tydeligst hos Louisiana i Humlebæk, der har videreført og udviklet den hjemlige, behagelige og intime ramme om kunsten. Kunstmuseer har generelt udviklet og ændret sig enormt siden begyndelsen af det tyvende århundrede, og afhandlingen viser, hvordan samlingsmuseerne for modernistisk kunst har deltaget i denne udvikling – i modsætning til det vedtagne, ved at gå forrest i udviklingen og ved at vise alternative opgaver for kunsten.

Et underliggende mål med hele afhandlingen har været at udfordre den gængse form for samlingsstudier, som ofte er reduceret til enten samlerbiografier eller rent genstandsbaserede samlingsundersøgelser. I modsætning til disse tilgange, så fortolker afhandlingen kunstsamling som en aktivitet med stærkt kommunikative, processuelle og performative aspekter. Igennem hele afhandlingen er denne tilgang opretholdt gennem nære, empiriske læsninger i udveksling med teoretisk velfunderede overvejelser. Afhandlingen belyser dermed de modernistiske kunstsamlinger som altid og allerede forbundet i videre sammenhænge. Med dette søger afhandlingen endeligt at diskutere hvordan den historiske udvikling af disse institutioner for modernistisk kunst er relevant for at belyse nutidige praksisser og i forhold til de fremtidige udfordringer, som museer og offentlige samlinger står over for.

## Abstract

The present dissertation analyses the early beginnings of Ordrupgaard, a Copenhagen museum of impressionism and nineteenth century art from France and Denmark founded in 1918. Today, it is one of the great little art museums of the western world. By asking 'how to explain Ordrupgaard?', the study also defines a specific group of museums from the early twentieth century in Europe and the USA that are closely comparable: the collection museums of modernist art. As a result, the dissertation seeks to explain both Ordrupgaard and a whole category of early, modernist art collections with strong ambitions of public intervention.

The dissertation's original contribution to research can roughly be defined as three-fold: (1) It defines this group of privately founded collection museums of modernist art, their characteristics and an original, well-grounded methodology to analyse them; (2) the dissertation gives the first comparative study of Ordrupgaard and interprets a large amount of relatively unknown material about the museum and the history of collecting modernist art in Denmark; (3) modernist art collecting is explained as performative: collecting seeks to generate meaning through display and it happens through networks.

The dissertation brings material about a number of collections of modernist art together for the first time in order to develop a number of analytical approaches based on readings of newer theoretical literature in museology, art history, semiotics, sociology and philosophy. The study therefore contributes to the international fields of museum studies, art history and collection studies. It does so by developing new knowledge about the early history of modernist art in the museum institution, in collecting and in display, and by finding new perspectives on how to approach this history and its impact up until today.

The central cases studied are the formerly private art collections – now public museums – of Ordrupgaard in Copenhagen, Waldemarsudde and Thielska Galleriet in Stockholm, The Courtauld Collection in London, the Museum Folkwang in Hagen and Essen, the Kröller-Müller Museum in Otterlo, the Barnes Foundation in Philadelphia and the Phillips Collection in Washington D.C. Other art collections that have become museums – or sometimes not – in Denmark, Europe and the USA are referenced and sometimes briefly analysed throughout the dissertation. Empirically, the study draws on historical archival material, texts and photographs from Ordrupgaard, and, to a lesser extent, the other collections mentioned. Equally central to this study is my own first-person experience of artworks, their display and still extant buildings and environments.

The field of study itself has been defined and narrowed down by drawing on recent work on large-scale art collections that have become public museums. Among these, the art historian Anne Higonnet (2009) has written on the collection museums of private collectors of old master paintings and applied arts while literary scholar Jeremy Braddock (2012) has defined how modernist art collections were deliberate interventions in society that served as provisional institutions. In continuation of their work, and by looking at the history of collectors, collections and museums in Europe and the USA, it is possible to identify a specific group of ‘collection museums of modernist art’. These are at first provisional but later permanent institutions showing French and French-derived art in private homes and galleries open to, or planned as open to, the public.

*Part one* of the dissertation develops methods to analyse at first Ordrupgaard, then the other collection museums of modernist art, as clear *interventions* into society and the art scene. These art collections with a public mission were

developed not just conceptually nor simply as abstract series of things but as *concrete displays* where art, buildings and environments came together in total ensembles. From close readings of contemporary critique and through application of both critical ‘reading’ and a phenomenological first-person perspective, the dissertation identifies a number of ways of making narratives and offering particular experiences to visitors that went on in historical collection displays: here, modernist art was framed by the domestic, comfortable, pleasant and intimate in interiors and exterior environments – thereby giving an art experience in stark opposition to the public museums of the day. These presentations were expressive of a formalist and a-historical approach to art appreciation which was still new around WWI, and they sought to teach their audiences *to freely experience art* through heightened and unprejudiced sensation. The outcome was explicitly stated by several of the collectors as an increase in being – through pleasure, spiritual comfort and new insights. On the basis of performative theory, though, I identify the other, less obvious narrative which these pioneer institutions offered: a number of values associated with a thoroughly bourgeois world-view of private leisure where art represents a retreat from public life. Visitors to the prestigious collections and provisional institutions of modernist art were given the opportunity to *perform* themselves as members of a desirable social class and community.

The historical Ordrupgaard museum, founded by Wilhelm and Henny Hansen, was such an intervention into a Danish and Nordic art scene where international modernist art was still hard to get to see, and their collection was thoroughly promoted as a museum for pleasant art and pleasant life. The totality of art, buildings, park and garden was therefore meant as a provisional institution – a model and inspiration for a future development in the world of museums, in art appreciation, and perhaps in society as such. With these

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aims, it was part of a small group of like-minded, pioneering collections of the time that were all in varying degrees of opposition to existing museum culture. Ordrupgaard was shaped by bourgeois and partly aristocratic values, but it sought to disseminate this culture to a larger base of people within the new mass democracy. As an institution, it took inspiration from several places – notable Swedish collections in Stockholm, an already well-developed Danish tradition of making public museums of private collections, and the founders' acquaintance with the cultures of high art collecting in Europe. The actual arrangements of artworks, furniture and other objects told various stories through association – and these centred on topics of individuality, private possession, intimacy and comfort. Through all this, notions of home and domesticity was an overall frame to Ordrupgaard, as it was with all the collection museums of modernist art.

*Part two* of the dissertation looks to how an art collection with a public agenda such as Ordrupgaard needed extensive networks in order to come into being, to receive an audience and to gain recognition. By engaging with actor-network theory, and through case studies of art transports, auctions and temporary exhibition networks around WWI, it is shown how modernist art collecting was both made possible and delimited by a plurality of people and things beyond the collector's invention and control. The role of the advisor, sometimes expert and sometimes agent is only one, surprisingly unstable, element. Rail transport, other collectors, means of communication, gallerists, laws, agents, money, war and a million other things came together to allow, delimit and define art collecting. A collection is, in itself, also a small network: artworks were brought together with the public, the press, a venue and other art connoisseurs, and the task of the collector was to position himself as the one controlling instance which held everything in place. The dissertation

shows that it was the precariousness of this control, and the volatile nature of networks themselves, which was the reason why most modernist collections would disperse without becoming permanent institutions.

Calculation and speculation in market terms was a new and important factor in the breakthrough of modernist art in the second half of the nineteenth century, and the dissertation analyses how market thinking also permeates art collecting. Thus, it makes no sense to separate decisions made on aesthetic, idealistic or economic grounds. A strongly speculative mind-set was developed in booming, neutral Denmark during WWI, and this explains Wilhelm Hansen's involvement in the today little-known transfer of hundreds of expensive paintings from France to Denmark in what is probably the most massive purchase of art in the smaller nation's history.

*The epilogue* considers the legacy and impact of the early collection museums of modernist art: how they changed and developed, which impact they have had, and what their future holds. Ordrupgaard and most other comparable collections are shown to have gone through three typical stages in their history: from at first a stage of the collector's personal involvement, through a dormant phase like *Sleeping Beauty* after the collector's death, up till today, where most have transformed into constantly changing museums of many activities and temporary exhibitions. Private art collections such as Kettle's Yard that have been established later are similar and comparable, but it is perhaps the Louisiana Museum of Modern Art which has developed the legacy of the home-like, experiential and pleasant art collection the most. As art museums have evolved tremendously since the early twentieth century, the dissertation shows how the collection museums of modernist art participated in this development – sometimes in opposition to the mainstream, sometimes by showing clear alternatives, sometimes by being the front-runners.

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An underlying goal for the whole dissertation is to challenge traditional collection studies that are often reduced to either biographies of collectors or purely oriented toward the objects collected. Instead, it interprets historical art collecting as an activity and expression with strongly communicative, processual and performative aspects. Throughout the dissertation, this approach is maintained by the combination of close, empirically based readings with strongly reasoned, theoretical and conceptual considerations. The dissertation thereby explains its examples of large-scale art collecting in the past as enmeshed in wider concerns within society. With this, the dissertation also seeks to discuss how the development of those past institutions of modernist art pertains to present practices and future challenges for museums and public collections.

