

## THE COLLECTION OF KURT ROHDE AND FRIEDA HINZE

*Stefan Körner*

As the last wisps of vapor from the flash powder slowly disappeared, the exciting, eventful story of an art dealer began to unfold. With turtle soup in tureens of Meissen porcelain, chester cake for dessert and military marches by the wedding band, the best of Dresden society turned out to greet the young bridal couple in the late summer of 1912: Charlotte Berbig, the daughter of wealthy textile industrialists from Dresden and Kurt Rohde, a dashing officer in the Prussian army, had summoned their guests together for a wedding photo on Brühl's Terrace at the Belvedere.

However, it was more the building's magnificent features and less the military marches which captivated the groom. Kurt Rohde was much more fascinated by art and collecting than by the ability of his troops to march in step, and even the guests, with all their titles of court and commerce, of privy councilor and war councilor, much preferred to revel in the style of the upper class associated with the late empire than to busy themselves with the social upheaval and escalating political tension rampant in Europe. In 1912 the Berbig clan celebrated the young couple with an opulence reminiscent of this "bygone era", oblivious to the world around them. For the ambitious Kurt Rohde, however, the marriage would provide him with the financial possibilities to make his dreams reality.

### ADVANCEMENT WITHIN THE EMPIRE

Kurt (Paul Friedrich Franz) Rohde was born in 1882 – quite randomly, as it were, in Erfurt – considering that the family constantly moved due to the father's job as customs inspector during the prosperous era of Germany's Gründerjahre. A military career seemed to be the logical continuation of mobile service as a family tradition, and was pursued by three Rohde sons; membership in Emperor Wilhelm II's army was also considered as especially prestigious and career-enhancing. The oldest, described in reports as the lively and vivacious Kurt, attended cadet school in Wahlstatt and joined the cadet corps in Großlichterfelde near Berlin in 1899 as a corporal. It was here that he began to educate himself, especially in languages, and achieved the rank of military interpreter for Arabic, Japanese, French and Polish. In his daughter's

*Kurt Rohde and Charlotte Berbig's wedding photo taken on Brühl's Terrace at the Royal Belvedere in Dresden, photo 28 September 1912*





*Both photos left: Kurt and Charlotte Rohde's apartment in Wilhelmshaven, Victoriastr. 10, photos ca. 1913*

*Center: Kurt Rohde and his wife Charlotte in a captive balloon, photo ca. 1917*

*Right: Kurfürstendamm, corner of Uhlandstraße, photo ca. 1924*

opinion, Kurt Rohde lived “according to his military upbringing and in the best sense of old, Prussian tradition, a strict sense of duty, honest criticism. ‘Obstacles are meant to be overcome’”, was the 28-year-old’s motto.

Rohde advanced his career in the imperial army and within the civically proud empire. In 1912 he was made first lieutenant and managed the climb to social success: his bride Charlotte (1892–1984) was the daughter of Karl August Richard Berbig (1859–1916) of Dresden, purveyor to the Royal Court and textile industrialist, and his wife Elisabeth Dreschke (1870–1945).

Charlotte, described as being fond of art and riding, brought along as dowry the best connections to Dresden’s finest society, an extravagant marriage endowment (paid out in 1917), the Berbig’s fortune, and Italian and German 16th century paintings which hung in the parental villa on Chemnitzer Straße. The wedding march set the tone: “Peace and quiet he shuns / Exams, that’s the fun / That led him to Berlin”. However, this plan was thwarted by the outbreak of the First World War; Rohde was stationed in Wilhelmshaven and sent to the West Front in Flanders with the rank of a major.

#### **PURCHASING ART BETWEEN BATTLES**

This war lasted longer than anyone had anticipated. The battles of Antwerp and Ypres quickly turned the initial euphoria into excruciating misery, also for Major Rohde. And while the walls of the Gothic city sank into ruins, Rohde began purchasing art in the occupied cities of Bruges and Ostend. The invoices neatly made out to “Monsieur Rohde” for gems and jewelry verify the extensive purchases made during these years.

Numerous purchases of antique furniture and porcelain made during furlough in Berlin and during stays at the local military hospital – such as those from the art dealer Otto Held in Charlottenburg – have also been documented. Rohde mainly purchased antique rugs during the First World War, mostly from the Caucasus. In 1914 he became a customer of Oriental Rugs Vitali S. Gerera based in Constantinople (Dresden branch) and of the large-scale importer Dari Amar in Berlin, who also received payment of over 1,000



marks for a rug. Jewelry was purchased from the Dresden court jewelers and the Berlin jewelry company Margraf and Co. Paintings – for the most part 19th century – became part of Rohde’s collection by way of the Painting Gallery of the West and particularly from the art salon Gustav Seeling. The intention was clear: The imperial major wanted to collect art and began – wherever possible – to lay the foundation of a future business.

#### UHLANDSTRASSE: THE CENTER OF ART AND COLLECTING

When the war ended in November of 1918, Kurt Rohde was a recipient of the Iron Cross 1st Class, father of a daughter – Elisabeth was born in 1915 – and unemployed. The victorious powers intended to fuse the German armed forces, thereby drastically reducing their number. This led to Rohde’s decision to request his discharge from military service on May 15, 1919, during the negotiations over Germany’s future at Versailles. With this decision, he made his furlough activity and passion for art into a career: He “carved out an existence in commercial business, in the art trade, with untiring diligence and devotion.” The Rohde family moved to Berlin, just as the wedding cantata suggested before the war that was to change Europe. The proud, retired major thus escaped the depression visited upon the phased-out military officers and emperor-less upper class and ventured the “leap in the dark”, as Reich Chancellor Theobald von Bethmann Hollweg (1856–1921) described the period.

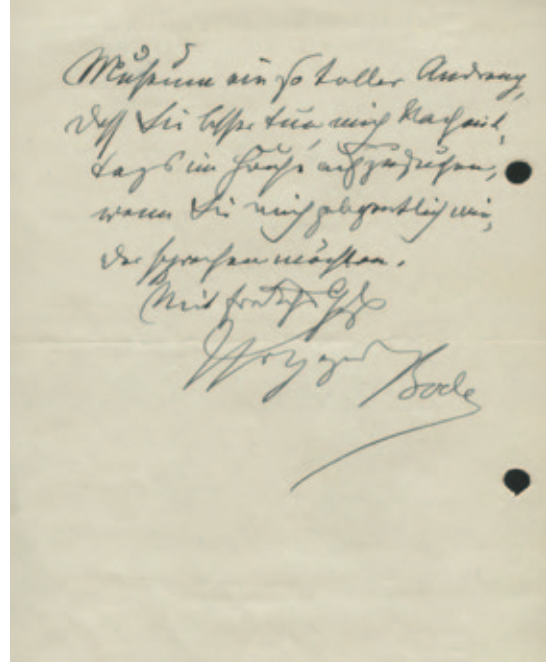
If one goes by the invoices for the works of art Rohde purchased at the time, it is obvious that he was well familiar with Charlottenburg – at that time the largest city of the so-called Weimar Republic and part of greater Berlin after 1920 – and the Kurfürstendamm. The poets and bohemians met here in the street’s coffee houses, in the Romanisches Café or Café Möhring. It was here that the wealth of the capital showed itself, the wealth that had outstripped London, Cologne and Paris as the centers of the art trade and collecting before the war. Here lived the entrepreneurs and Jewish bourgeoisie, many of whom were art patrons. Here was the center of the

collecting culture that had established itself with vehemence in 1871 and which enjoyed reveling in the public eye.

Victor Hahn’s (1869–1932) collection on the Kurfürstendamm at the corner of Uhlandstraße stood open to the interested art world. His private rooms overwhelmed with paintings from the Italian Renaissance and the Dutch Golden Age. In 1923, the art dealer Alfred Flechtheim moved in “right around the corner” (Bleibtreustraße 15–16), where he created an “elegant extension of his gallery” by mingling works of the classical modern with antique rugs. It was to this area, between the collections of old and contemporary art, between the sophisticated, fashionable “Ku’damm” and the vibrant, pulsating Bahnhof Zoo that the unerring Rohde aspired with his “gallery”. What was missing was the knowledge and understanding of art; however, as he commented later in life, “I acquired the knowledge through independent study and hands-on experience.”

In October, 1919, Rohde moved into a front apartment with nine rooms on the second floor at Uhlandstraße 31; an apartment of the same size directly above was rented later. Clients were received in the living and gallery quarters and the enthusiasm for rugs and furnishings shared, as Charlotte Rohde describes in her diary daughter Elisabeth, also called Lisa: “She likes our rugs so much and thoroughly enjoys rolling around on them. She once stood in front of a large picture, gazing at it with obvious pleasure and then asked her father whom it belonged to. The answer was Papa. She philosophized a bit further and said when Papa is dead, it will belong to Lisa – I wonder when Papa is going to die!” That seemed to please the 38-year-old “Papa” because in addition to his absolute loyalty to his partners, the daughter also emphasized his humor and his absolute passion for the Old Master paintings, which increasingly became the foundation of his business.

Such names as El Greco, van Goyen, Bassano, Sorgh and Rubens quickly filled up the inventory ledger, which was kept after 1920. Rohde classified his pictures under the art historically accurate terminology of “school”, “-esque”, “copy”, or “attributed”. He acquired the works primarily from figures of Berlin society.



In doing so, the young collector and art dealer followed contemporary taste, which saw especially in the Old Masters an everlasting value in the face of discussions deploring the decline of modern art, since they were considered to be free of the vogues of art history. The latter was essentially determined by Wilhelm von Bode (1845–1929), who had been the general director of Berlin’s museums since 1905. He was an expert and in much demand as a consultant and thus defined hierarchies of taste and as such, the focus of many collections. Bode’s focus of interest – and therefore of the collector, as well – included, in addition to rugs, paintings of the Italian Renaissance, Dutch genre painting and large-scale Flemish works from the so-called Golden Age. Rohde’s collection was also clearly orientated on the model of the renowned Bode, who also happened to be a neighbor. Kurt Rohde established his gallery only three intersections away from Bode’s mansion at Uhlandstraße 4/5, which was designed by the architect Hans Grisebach. And as if that was not enough, in 1920 he took on a young “Bode pupil” as an important assistant and business partner.

#### BODE’S PUPIL AND ROHDE’S PARTNER: FRIEDA HINZE

“During the difficult years of establishing a new existence [...] a person in the form of Miss Hinze, who assisted and supported him with unrestrained devotion and who with the deepest affection remained loyal to the family for 30 years”, entered Rohde’s life. Elisabeth wrote this later about her father’s new assistant. The 18-year-old Frieda Hinze had come from the country to start a career and succeeded in a way only possible in the young Weimar Republic, with all its upheaval, and especially in the inquisitive city of Berlin.

Rosalie Marie Frieda Eschholz was born as an illegitimate child in the town of Cammer near Belzig in Brandenburg and was adopted by a carpenter named Hinze. The father of three daughters was apparently drawn to Berlin in 1914, where they lived in the working class neighborhood of Grazer Platz in the southern area of Schöneberg. Her training and job as a short-hand typist with the Imperial German Army Air Service ended with the fusion of the armed forces following the World War.

She began her new start with a passion, as Elisabeth Rohde later wrote, because Frieda Hinze “was a person devoted to beauty her entire life [...], she felt an emotional connection – perhaps only instinctively – with the perfection of God’s creation. This sense, this purpose [...] led her to the career that would become the fulfillment of her life.” The diligent Miss Hinze, also called “Hinze Puss” by the Rohde family, quickly became the irreplaceable assistant at the address on Uhlandstraße. “Here she experienced what has become for us the historical period of Berlin’s Golden Twenties. Frequent trips to the museums increased her familiarity with the world famous art collections and provided her the opportunity to expand her knowledge to the entire field of art,” said Elisabeth Rohde. The contact to the renowned neighbor was especially crucial to Hinze’s education: “In the former Kaiser-Friedrich-Museum, especially W. v. Bode recognized the particular talent in art history and the poised, confident sense of style and quality the young Frieda Hinze possessed. He became determined to encourage and support her.” According to family legend, the young Frieda Hinze was the only person allowed to visit the aged privy councilor at his villa during the midday rest. Letters from the company archive attest to the close relationship the two enjoyed.

#### DEVELOPMENT DURING THE CRISIS YEARS

The first years of the young Republic were years of crisis and unrest in which Rohde sharpened his image as collector and dealer. The initial works of the late 19th century completely disappeared from the purchase documents and were replaced with Dutch genre painting. Paintings by Dirck Hals, Ostade, Dusart and the Haarlem School were purchased much to the delight of the family, something the mother observed about her daughter in December 1920: “Lisa [...] was taking the pictures down and putting them back up again. When I asked her in surprise what she was doing, she answered in a tone of utmost self-assurance: I am rearranging the pictures just like Papa does! She then stood in front of a little picture (a nude baby standing on a saucer), keeping a respectable distance, and said in a casual, acknowledging tone: Looks pretty good here, that Ostade!!”

Sehr geehrte Frau Frieda Hinze,  
für Ihre Liebenswürdigkeit  
benede ich mich sehr und hoffe  
auf die baldige Rückkehr,  
wenn ich mich mit Ihnen  
in der nächsten Zeit treffen  
kann. Ich bin sehr dankbar  
für die vielen Liebesbriefe,  
die ich von Ihnen erhalte.  
Ich bin sehr dankbar für  
Ihre Liebesbriefe und hoffe,  
dass Sie bald wieder in  
Berlin sein werden.  
Mit herzlichen Grüßen  
an Sie und Ihre Lieben.

Left: View of the “Berliner Zimmer”  
in the Rohdes’ apartment on the  
third floor of the building Uhland-  
straße 31, photo ca. 1925

Center: Letter from Wilhelm von  
Bode to Miss Frieda Hinze, Berlin,  
May 6, 1928

Right: View of the apartment building  
Uhlandstraße 31, Berlin-Charlotten-  
burg, erected 1898 (Landesarchiv  
Berlin/National Archive Berlin)

Below: View of von Bode’s villa,  
Uhlandstraße 4/5, Architect:  
Hans Grisebach, photo ca. 1910



In 1922, a year of hunger and inflation, nine pictures were entered into the ledger; just a year later, in 1923, there were 17 – including a work by Josse de Momper or an “Italian picture with figures”, as the Italians had now also been added to the inventory. The fact that these cost respectively 20 million and 80,000 (paper) marks illustrates the problems suffered by the German art market before the transition to Reichsmark in 1924/25: collectors did not have any money, museums were forced to sell their pictures and auctions squandered art for worthless money was the prevailing tenor of the time. Thus, in the summer of 1924 Rohde was compelled to pay for a large paradise landscape by Brueghel from the Gilbert de Poultron Nicholson Collection with the more reliable Rentenmark (lot 3033).

Rohde operated three antique shops in Berlin Mitte during these years which offered a selection of porcelain, small furniture items and rugs, in other words “furnishings”. However, he purchased Old Masters for his painting collection at auctions and from the large galleries in the Tiergarten district.

Responsible for this relatively crisis-resistant art dealership was the work of Bode and his experts in the very vibrant, dynamic museums. They worked hand-in-hand with the trade and made their expertise available to collectors and dealers. In return, private treasures were opened to art historical appraisal and donations from grateful collectors found their way into the museums. With this combined “system” of top research, acquisitions and donations, Berlin’s collections during the empire advanced to world class status and employed experts who also provided their expert knowledge to the Rohde Collection. This is proven by the appraisals which exist for almost every picture in the Collection and which are especially numerous for the years 1925 to 1931.

In addition to Moritz Julius Binder (1877–1947), director of the Zeughaus and himself a collector of Dutch painting, and Hermann Voss (1884–1969), curator of Italian Painting at Berlin’s Old Master Paintings Gallery and a later friend of Frieda Hinze, it was especially Max J. Friedländer (1867–1958), director of the Museum of Prints and Drawings, who appraised Rohde’s painting acquisitions. He often dedicated his written expertise to the 25-year-old “revered Miss H.” “with the greatest devotion.”





*Above left: Materials and forms from Gallery Frieda Hinze, 1930s*

*Below left: Neon sign at Bahnhof Zoo, photo ca. 1930*

*Second from right: Josephine Baker in a sulky harnessed to an ostrich in Berlin, photo 1926*

*Right: The Smiling Girl, 1926 procured by Duveen from the Gallery Rohde (National Gallery of Art Washington)*

## BREAKTHROUGH WITH AN EXHIBITION

In 1925 the golden twenties finally arrived – also in the Gallery Rohde. Berlin outdid itself in every respect in the first crisis-free summer after the war. As an art metropolis, the city attracted visitors from all over the world: “We are right in the middle of summer but the foreigners are here. And they will be astonished at how vast the holdings of Berlin’s private collectors have become within just a decade,” the Berliner Tagblatt wrote full of euphoria in their arts section about an exhibition Bode had opened in July.

Once again, the 80-year-old had organized a large show and demonstrated on Pariser Platz what he was decisively responsible for: “Old Masters from Berlin’s Private Collections” was the title of the exhibition. Bode had mobilized the concentrated potential of Berlin’s collectors and was supported in the organization by the afore-mentioned Friedländer, Voss and the young museum assistant Irene Kunze (1899–1988). The educated art historian and the autodidact Frieda Hinze were Bode’s only female “pupils”. The way in which the museum administrator called the women into his director’s office in the Kaiser-Friedrich-Museum is legendary: “Hinz and Kunz come in here please!”

Four hundred and fifty pictures hung in Bode’s exhibition. Fifty private collectors were represented along with the “serious [...] art trade in order to introduce its most prominent paintings to the art show” and to revive it after years of stagnation. The gallery on Uhlandstraße had to be among those present!

Kurt Rohde purchased a masterpiece by Jacob van Ruisdael from the Paris dealer Joseph Depret on March 21, 1925 specifically for the exhibition – Bode was familiar with the painting since March 24, 1924 – and turned it over to the newly-registered, independent art dealer Frieda Hinze as a loan for the show. The plan to create a sensation worked; the press praised not only the Old Master but also the young lender: “The landscape art of the 17th century Dutch painters [...] is brilliantly represented. Jacob van Ruisdael is a forerunner with eight pictures of great quality from the collections of [...] Frieda Hinze, Franz v. Mendelssohn [...].”





The 23-year-old started her career with the exhibition in 1925; her mentor, however, officially ended his museum career, as the *Abendblatt* wrote: “Those gathered were deeply saddened. But the organizer of Berlin’s museums expressed the hope that the collections would continue to recover and that new treasures would flow into and enrich Berlin’s artistic life” The idea caught on, because thanks to the Ruisdael loan – and that of a second picture (lot 3080) – Frieda Hinze was introduced into the upper circle of collectors. This was the clientele who Kurt Rohde and his young partner wanted to do business with and who wanted to be inspired by Berlin’s golden twenties.

One of the collectors to whom Frieda Hinze now provided consultation was the Lysoform manufacturer Walter Heilgendorff (1882–1945) from Berlin, who acquired his first painting from her in 1925. The invoice confirms the purchase of a landscape by Jan van Goyens and a still life by Jan de Heem, two classics of Dutch painting with which Hinze, and de facto the Gallery Rohde, had presented herself in 1925. This purchase laid the main focus of the Heilgendorff Collection, which would later attain prominence.

#### THE SENSATION OF THE “CHARLOTTENBURG VERMEER”

Everything seemed possible in the golden twenties, as the theaters and variétés on the Ku’damm rang in a new era with their neon signs. Exuberance, a joy of life and sensations defined Berlin society, which once again found itself the center of the world. Women had new opportunities, such as the “Miss Wonder” Frieda Hinze – who came from the country and thrilled and inspired with a Ruisdael – or Josephine Baker (1906–1975), who bewitched Berlin with a skirt of bananas.

At the same time as Baker’s first legendary German performance on January 14, 1926 in the Nelson Theater (Kurfürstendamm corner of Fasanenstraße), another sensational event of an art historical nature took place just one corner further, at Rohde’s: “Trove of Pictures Still Exist!” exclaimed the front page of the *B.Z.* in the spring of 1926. Because what Baker was for the glamorous nightlife seemed to be the discovery of the

“Charlottenburg Vermeer” for the art world, which at the time celebrated the Dutchman as the most famous painter on earth.

What happened? Rohde had received the portrait of a smiling girl from Russian holdings. The “wonderful head [...] views the observer with its good-natured, fiery eyes” and delighted Bode, who was shown the portrait by Frieda Hinze at the end of April, 1926. His publications about this Vermeer discovery attracted the most prominent art dealer at the time, Joseph Duveen (1869–1939), to Charlottenburg. Kurt Rohde complied with his wish to also hear the opinion of Frederik Schmidt-Degener (1881–1941), the director of Amsterdam’s Rijksmuseum. Frieda Hinze journeyed to Amsterdam and The Hague with the “Smiling Girl” and it seemed to be confirmed: “The Charlottenburg Vermeer is a female portrait and a counterpart to the portrait of a girl in Mauritshuis.” Miss Hinze wrote to Privy Councilor Bode from her hotel on May 5 that “[...] the Vermeer business had ended well” and eagerly continued: “I hope now to use the remaining time available to me and take advantage of the local, educational opportunities so very important to my career.”

At the end of May Duveen, regarded as the pontifex maximus of the art trade, held a press conference to announce the acquisition of the fortieth known Vermeer for an American collection. Every art historical expert of the time published about the picture afterwards. The “Smiling Girl” finally ended up in the USA as a showpiece of billionaire Andrew W. Mellon’s (1835–1937) foundation, who founded the National Gallery of Art in Washington for this purpose.

The publishing fuss surrounding the “Charlottenburg Vermeer” was considerable for Kurt Rohde and Frieda Hinze. The story became legendary among collectors and dealers alike, much as the golden twenties with Josephine Baker’s banana skirt.

Doubts about the painting’s authenticity first arose in 1970; since 2008 it appears certain that it is the work of the forger Han van Meegeren (1889–1947). However, the art dealers on Uhlandstraße were to never find out. The Vermeer deal was to open up completely new opportunities after 1927.



## THE GALLERY'S GOLDEN AGE IN THE GOLDEN TWENTIES

The "Charlottenburg Vermeer" was expensive. It supposedly cost 18,000 pounds (today ca. 2 million dollars), whereby Frieda Hinze had negotiated a price within the upper third of Vermeer premium prices for the period. The Gallery Rohde received a provision of 350,000 Reichsmarks and Bode, respectively the Berlin museums, received a donation. The retired museum expert was allowed to choose a painting by Adam Elsheimer from the art dealership Dr. Curt Benedict, which Rohde paid for and Frieda Hinze donated to the Kaiser-Friedrich-Museum. Rohde wanted to remain anonymous, which made Miss Hinze one of the first and youngest female donors to the Museum Island.

If the Gallery Rohde's books officially show just six purchases for the turbulent year of 1926 amounting to a meager total of 1,600 Reichsmarks, they show an acquisition of four times as many paintings for over 30,000 Reichsmarks the following year with the income from the Vermeer business. This included the Head of the Apostle by Anthony van Dyck (lot 3030), which advanced to the showpiece of the collection.

Furthermore, in 1926 Rohde sent Hinze to the Mensing auction in Amsterdam, where she successfully raised her hand more than once: in addition to a Madonna by Isenbrant (now attributed to Cornelis, lot 3018) there was a portrait by Jacob Gerritsz Cuyp (later attributed to Palamedes) and a large English portrait. From now on Rohde and Hinze sat in on auctions from Amsterdam to Munich to Berlin and continued to increase the gallery's inventory, which had by now also become a dealership.

This prompted Rohde to give up his antique shops in Berlin Mitte in 1926, as daughter Elisabeth explained to her teacher on her first day of school at the lyceum: "[...] my papa sells old things like old porcelain, old cups and such. We used to have three shops in the city, now people come to our apartment." The rooms on both floors of the house on Uhlandstraße were documented shortly afterwards by the Berlin

photo studio v. Dühren and Henschel. The *Weltkunst* ran the title page "Room and Painting" and praised the gallery as "an exceptionally fortunate type of art dealership", where the "tasteful restraint [...] of the collection's paintings is presented" by Old Masters and minor masters which "indicates a versatility of interests ranging from a Gothic altarpiece to works of the Romantic that, in this era of specialization, is nothing less than amazing."

The large rooms on the second floor – the *belle etage* – were covered in monochrome velvet and presented a blend of carefully selected Renaissance and Classical furniture pieces, sculpture, paintings, and Far Eastern porcelain (Japanese tea bowl lot 3151). In their concentrated simplicity, they conformed to the prevailing taste that had bid farewell to the pomp so common at the turn of the century. Along with masterpieces by Raoux, Teniers, Brueghel and Lavinia Fontana, the Apostle's Head by van Dyck held a prominent position on the red presentation wall of the windowless showroom. Here, clients could sit in club chairs, ashtray in hand, and carefully view the art work under artificial light.

There was a greater range of art works on the floor above, where a large number of objects, together with rugs, furniture and pieces from Asia, "sold" more of a cozy atmosphere. The telephone was also an important fixture, since Rohde was available to his clients at the number "Bismarck 6753". This differentiation of art works between first and second quality – those in the top range and furnishings category – was customary in national and international galleries and enabled Rohde to address his various collector groups in targeted fashion.

The Rohde Collection achieved international fame around 1930, when the *Amsterdam Telegraaf* reported on the "kop van een lachend meisje uit de collection-Rohde" in an article about the Mellon Collection. Rohde and Hinze were well connected in The Hague and in Amsterdam. Their most important business partners were located in the Netherlands, who by now had built up an impressive inventory of Dutch masterpieces.



## Raum- und Bildkunst

Ein besonders glücklicher Typ der Gemäldehandlung scheint in Berlin von Major a. D. Kurt Rohde in seinen Räumen, Uhlandstraße 31, geschaffen worden zu sein: Unaufdringlich präsentieren sich in geschmackvoll-zurückhaltend eingerichteten Zimmern die Sammlung der Gemälde, die in ihrer Qualität vom Spitzenwerk bis zu der hier besonders gepflegten Kunst der Kleinmeister nicht nur dem Kennersinn des langsam in diese Materie hineingewachsenen ehemaligen Offiziers das beste Zeugnis ausstellt, sondern auch in der historischen Weite vom gotischen Altarbild bis zum Werk der Romantik eine Vielseitigkeit der Interessen erkennen läßt, die in der Zeit des Spezialistentums erstaunlich ist. Die in den Ausstellungsräumen (siehe Abbildungen S. 2, 4) zur Schau gestellten Sammlungen umfassen vor allem auch eine Reihe darstellungsmäßig und kunsthistorisch seltener und eigenartiger Werke.

Left: View of the room with the bay window in the Gallery Rohde with (from left to right) Jean Raoux's *Allegory of Architecture* (today Charlottenburg Palace, Berlin), Carel de Moor's *Portrait of a Man* (last auctioned by Christie's Amsterdam, 1999), Jan Brueghel the Younger's *Paradise Landscape* (lot 3033) and David Teniers' *Stall Scene* (lot 3036). Photo by v. Dühren and Henschel, Berlin 1928

Top and right: Article and views of the gallery from *Weltkunst*, December 1933

There were ties to the Galerie Internationale Den Haag (The Hague), where Rohde submitted works for auction or bought pictures at auction, and whose owner in turn transacted business through Rohde. The art dealer Kees Hermesen, who had businesses in The Hague and New York, offered Rohde 231 pictures for sale. While staying at the Hotel Victoria in The Hague in April, 1932, he purchased further pictures from Hermesen for 1,200 Goldmarks (also including lot 3022). Others, such as the dealer L. Groneveld from Scheveningen, brought their goods to Berlin, as a receipt from the Hotel Eden am Zoo proves.

German dealers who provided the Gallery with pictures over and over again were Walter Louran, Rheinland-Galerie and Konrad Strauß's Haus für antike Raumkunst in Berlin. In Vienna, Rohde worked together with the Galerie St. Lucas, where he obtained Anthony van Dyck's "Portrait of the Cardinal-Infante Ferdinand of Spain" in July, 1933. A friendship linked him to the art dealer P. Rusch in Dresden, who did business with silver from Saxony, early Meissen porcelain and pictures from the Dresden School. The business tone between dealer friends was relaxed: "Just come here, put 16 grand in your bag and the thing will be taken care of."

During the gallery's golden era, Miss Hinze also rented her own gallery rooms in Berlin Mitte, certainly on behalf of and with pictures from Rohde. The business "Frieda Hinze Art Dealership and Paintings" located in the ground floor rooms of the famous Hotel Kaiserhof on Wilhelmplatz can be verified from 1931/32.

These showrooms were right in the middle of the capital's government district near the ministries and the Reich Chancellery, where Chancellor Brüning attempted to stop Germany's deflation. However, even the flair of the Kaiserhof with its international guests, the extravagant parties celebrated by the upper class and the large art shows could not make the changing political situation be forgotten: in 1931, major industrialists met with Adolf Hitler in one of the hotel's suites and assured him of their political support in his candidacy for chancellor. The era of racist fanaticism had long begun.





*Left: View of the corner of the hotel Kaiserhof, across from the Church of the Holy Trinity, where Frieda Hinze's gallery was in 1931/32, photo 1931*

*Center: Flagon belonging to Duke Christian of Saxony-Weißenfels. Purchased 1935 at the Van Diemen Auction. Procured 2014 by Weißenfels Palace on amicable agreement from Grisebach*

*Right: Securing the frieze of the Pergamon Altar with sandbags, photo by Elisabeth Rohde 1939*

*Photos previous page:*

*View of the Gallery Kurt Rohde, Uhlandstraße 31, photos by v. Dühren and Henschel, Berlin 1928*

*"Berliner Zimmer" with Lavinia Fontana's Portrait of a Boy (lot 3006)*

*"Berliner Zimmer" with Giacomo Francia's Holy Family (lot 3000) and a Northern Italian Madonna terracotta (lot 3002)*

*The salon and balcony room of the apartment on the third floor, over the sofa hangs Pietro da Cortona's The Battle of Alexander (sold to "Mannozi" in the 1980s)*



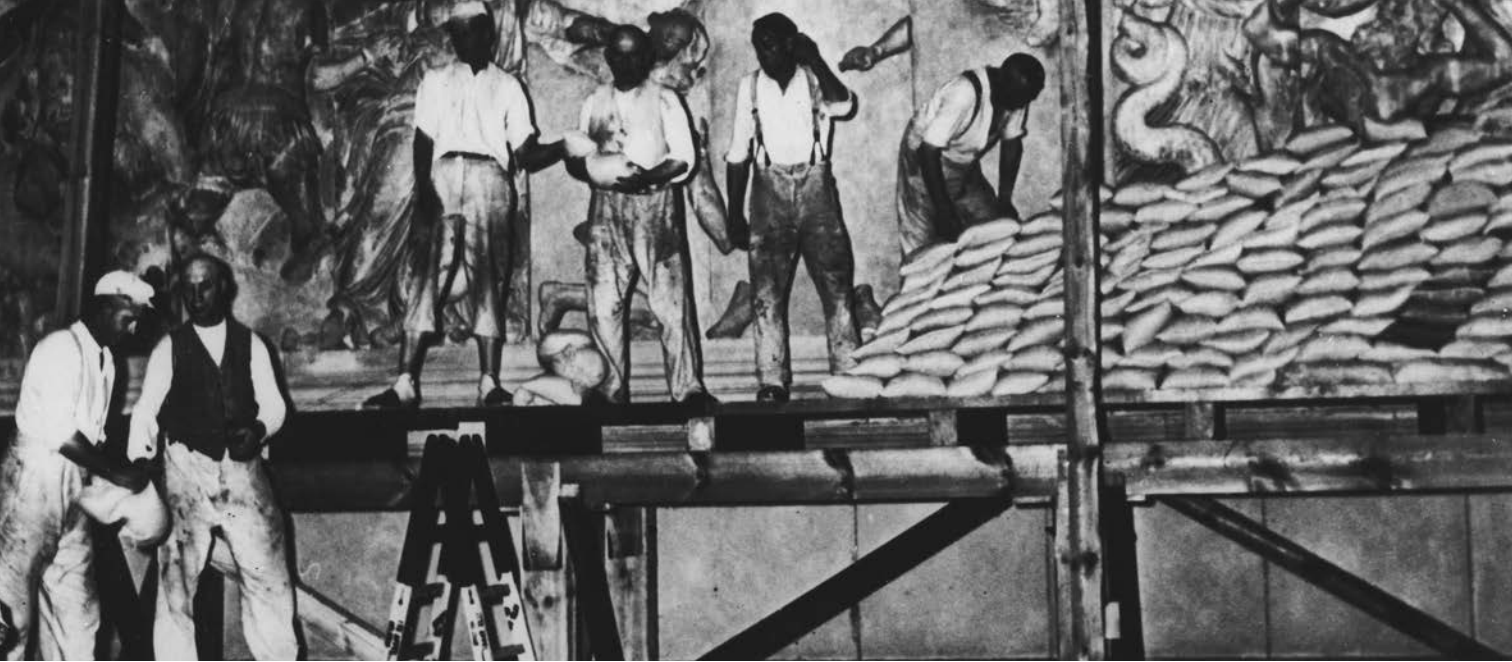
## STAGNATION DURING THE NAZI PERIOD

With the political instability of the Weimar Republic, the economic situation also worsened, which provided an upswing for the radical political forces around 1930. The branch of the art dealership in the Kaiserhof is no longer accounted for in the address books following 1933. Frieda Hinze moved to Uhlandstraße, where she from then on lived with the Rohde family.

Kurt Rohde had been active in the German Democratic Association Charlottenburg, which was part of the German Democratic Party. This last bourgeois-liberal party would be forced to dissolve under the forcible-coordination of the National Socialist German Worker's Party (NSDAP), which had come to power in March, 1933. In 1950 Elisabeth Rohde wrote about her father, who had never been a member of the Nazi Party: "During the Hitler era, his sense of justice and his political views rejected the brutality of the regime. [...] Always a Democrat, he never judged a person by his origin or nationality but rather by his intrinsic value."

Professional life was also affected by the forcible-coordination: The Association of German Art and Antique Dealers, of which Hinze and Rohde were members, was dissolved by the Reich Chamber of Culture Law and all art dealers were forcibly coordinated under the aegis of the Reich Chamber for Fine Arts. Both continued to run the business – which was the family's livelihood – but were forced to join the Specialist Group of Art Publishers and Dealers and were also forced to prove their "Aryan" origin in 1937.

The works of art offered in Berlin's galleries seem to have worsened in the first few years of the Nazi dictatorship with the strained economic situation, as the private opinion of Rohde's friend Rusch shows in 1937: "While recently in Prussian Berlin [...] I saw so much bad stuff displayed in the art dealerships that I was discouraged from going in to look from the 'inside'." Thus, beginning in 1933 Rohde's international sales stagnated at around 5,000 Reichmarks and in 1936 his contacts to Holland broke off. Domestic purchases also



seemed low (1933 18 acquisitions, 1934 8 acquisitions), when one considers that the enormous transfer of art caused by the wave of fleeing Jewish citizens and collectors had already long begun. Rohde's neighbors in Charlottenburg – such as the collector Hahn and the gallery owner Flechtheim – fled as well.

Frieda Hinze, for example, sat with the “directors of the most important German museums” at the auction of the The Van Diemen Gallery, which had been forced to close by the Nazis. The gallery belonged to the Margraf Group, from whom Kurt Rohde had made purchases since 1916, and was now offering at auction the flagon belonging to Duke Christian of Saxony-Weißenfels, which Frieda Hinze acquired. In 2014 the piece was finally procured by the Museum Palace Weißenfels on amicable agreement with the Margraf heirs.

The art trade also profited from the economic boom resulting from the Four-Year Plan and the Olympic euphoria of 1936. The account ledgers neatly kept after 1937 verify the differentiation of the business areas: while Rohde tended to the Old Masters, Frieda Hinze dealt with the objects, especially porcelain and small furniture pieces. However, purchases continued to be made usually from private and in part from regular clients. As such, purchases from the house and art auctions which took place en masse as opposed to the private acquisitions are hardly taken into account during these years. During the Third Reich, the descendants of the Jewish collector and factory owner Georg Reichenheim were among the approximate 140 clients from whom Frieda Hinze purchased art objects, until 1941; Rohde had also purchased from them for almost 20 years.

Another case was the fate of the art dealer Dr. Fritz Rothmann, from Berlin (1893–1983): He was one of the first to purchase from Rohde in 1921; Frieda Hinze exhibited with him in Bode's exhibition in 1925. And it was from him that the three panels of the famous Cyriacus Altar by Bartholomäus Bruyn (lot 3020) were transferred to Kurt Rohde in 1930. Following the expansion of the Reich Flight Tax in June, 1934, Rothmann was sought with an arrest warrant by the

tax authorities – he went underground after a business trip to Holland. The rest of his collection was confiscated and sold by compulsory auction in 1936 by the Union Auction House. Frieda Hinze attended this auction but did not purchase anything – and knew later that the art dealer had emigrated to London in possession of several works of art. The fact that the altar panels first appeared in 1937 for a comparatively high price in the books of the Art Dealership Rohde – naturally with “Rothmann” indicating previous ownership – just shows how complex the provenance history of the period is.

It was also impossible for the Rohde-Hinze Art Dealership to elude the absolute permeation by the Nazi regime in all areas. As an economy preparing for war made itself felt in the spring of 1939, Rohde wrote to his friend Rusch regarding the problems of sales in the art trade: “Remember what old Shakespeare said in his ‘Merchant of Venice’: ‘Those who wish to sell, must sell for cheap!’” – In September war returned to Europe.

#### SAVING THE COLLECTION FROM THE DAMAGES OF WAR

The invasion of Poland, which sealed the outbreak of war, also had immediate consequences for the gallery on Umlandstraße: the museums that had developed into clients closed in the winter of 1939. Italian pictures were on loan to the Nassau Landesmuseum Wiesbaden (Museum Wiesbaden), which the new director Hermann Voss had opened with Rohde's Martinelli (lot 3007); Berlin's Museum of Decorative Arts and the National Gallery had constantly purchased art works from Rohde since 1937. This all came to an abrupt halt, and Frieda Hinze's friend Irene Kunze, now married to Ernst Kühnel, director of the Islamic Collection, was responsible for securing Berlin's Old Master Paintings Gallery against war damage in the bunkers.

Rohde, who was now almost 60 and no longer in the best of health, was not drafted into the military. Thus, in December of 1940 he experienced the air raids by the French and English on Berlin, which led to the transfer of the most significant works of art from all the Berlin museums into the bunkers of the control towers at Zoo and Friedrichshain. Rohde's



daughter Elisabeth, who was studying classical archeology at the University of Berlin, also helped to secure the world renowned Pergamon Altar. The war had reached the Uhlandstraße when the house was Aryanized in 1941 and beginning in the summer of 1942, at the same time the museums were trying to secure their art works under Irene Kühnel-Kunze, the search began for suitable depots in the country for the Rohde-Hinze Collection.

Rohde first deposited his most important paintings in the Reichsbank – the largest vault in Germany at the time with three subterranean levels. The gallery on Uhlandstraße was to be completely vacated on orders of the head mayor dated September 15, 1943, after the rooms had been repeatedly damaged by air raids and, in addition to “a great deal of antique furniture, over 30 original paintings by Old Masters alone had been severely harmed”, as Rohde wrote.

After the Old Museum, located on Museum Island, burned out on December 1, 1943, the gallery’s remaining activity centered completely on obtaining removal trucks to evacuate the collection, which had been rated as being of “artistic and historic value”. In June, 1944 – the Red Army had already crossed the Vistula River – there were already 24 depots containing works of the Rohde-Hinze Collection. The works were stored in labeled packages and boxes in – among other places – garden houses on Lake Wannsee, a forestry house in Prignitz, a cow shed in Wriezen, in the attic of the guest house in Zechin in Oderbruch, but also in the Winckelmann Institute at the University of Berlin, where Elisabeth Rohde served as assistant to Gerhart Rodenwaldt (1884–1945), an archeology professor.

However, even when a vast majority of the house at Uhlandstraße 31 was no longer fit to use following air raids in the summer of 1944, Rohde still made an attempt to pursue the business, the passion he so loved: Among just the eight purchases made was an “Italian landscape in the style of Poussin” which had been purchased over the Christmas holidays from Rusch in Dresden, which had not yet been destroyed. Back in the ruins of Berlin, Rohde acquired a “cheerful landscape”

from Union Auction House on January 25, 1945, thus becoming a buyer at the last auction in a city which had now become part of the frontline.

While Rohde’s painting “Heaven and Hell” burned in the cellar of one of the depots in Berlin and the vaults of the Commerzbank on Ludwigkirchplatz housing the Italian masters caved in, burying the collection, daughter Elisabeth defended her dissertation in classical archeology in mid March, 1945. Her professor, Rodenwaldt, committed suicide on April 27 – in fear of the Russians, who had been bombarding the area around the Kurfürstendamm since April 21, and where the salvaged pieces of the Pergamon Altar had survived the final battle for Berlin in the Zoo flak towers. On May 1, the Red Army reached Uhlandstraße and the apartment of Kurt, Charlotte and Elisabeth Rohde, Miss Hinze and their housekeeper, Frieda Retzlaff. On May 2, Berlin – which lay in ruins and ashes – capitulated... but not the Art Dealership Rohde-Hinze.

#### A NEW BEGINNING AMONG RUINS

Following the capitulation and liberation in May 1945, life began again among the ruins. The Berliners were happy to have simply survived and were seized by an almost unbelievable force of action, as the astonished victors observed. Art trading also resumed on an Uhlandstraße almost impossible to maneuver because of the ruins, although the circle of vendors was small. The sale of their porcelain, rugs and jewelry pieces assured survival. Frieda Hinze had registered her business again with the Russians on May 17 and with the English occupying forces responsible for the district of Charlottenburg on June, 26, 1945.

Elisabeth Rohde had also found a position in Berlin’s desert of rubble: As an academic “laborer” she helped clear out the Zoo flak bunker under supervision of the Soviet officer for art conservation and preservation. The 29-year-old was there on July 8, 1945, as “last, [...] a slab from the large Pergamon frieze, a cabinet with antique gems and Priam’s Treasure” were packed up and sent to Moscow as war loot.



It took her father until October, 1945 to gather together the objects of his own collection: the contents of the Commerzbank's safety deposit box were "stolen by the Russians", as noted in the inventory; the so-called Reichsbank archive appeared to be unharmed, however. Using his daughter's contacts to the art conservation and preservation officers, he hoped to have his pictures returned by City Commander Berzarin at the archive's opening. Thus, on June 9, 1945 he wrote to the vault keeper: "How does the issue of my pictures look [...]? I have the opportunity to make immediate contact to a Russian authority in this regard. Could you perhaps advise me to whom I can turn [...] in this matter?" This was all in vain, because on the list of 34 paintings that Rohde had stored in the Reichsbank, a lapidary "gone" was written next to 26 of them. And also in East Prignitz one regretted to Rohde, "[...]" that it had been impossible to save the private belongings that had been stored on the estate by various owners. Only one small picture of yours was found in the cellar area."

The confusion of the post-war years and the winter of starvation 1946/47 "brought about a calamitous acceleration of change in ownership of art property." Hinze acquired a small wooden panel by Jan Brueghel in September, 1947 that Alfred Sommerfeld, restorer for the palace administration, had apparently stolen from the collections and sold for 8,500 marks, an astronomical sum at the time. This loss of war was identified in 2014 during academic research on the Rohde-Hinze Collection and returned to the Prussian Palaces and Gardens Foundation Berlin-Brandenburg.

Looking back, the world of art summarized the misery of the period: "Back then, when the Cold War paralyzed the entire business activities of a city of four million, the chances for art (and for the art trade) were next to null." From the 130 art dealerships at the time, most of them were little more than junk dealers and were often run by women. Most notably Miss Hinze, who at the time was busy repurchasing paintings from collections she had built up herself during the Weimar Republic: thus, the proceeds from the resale of paintings served Walter Heiligendorff's son-in-law in rebuilding the factory in 1949.

*Left: Elisabeth Rohde at her desk, photo ca. 1944*

*Center: The Kurfürstendamm and the Kaiser Wilhelm Memorial Church, June 1945, photo by Hein Gorny*

*Right: Jan Brueghel the Younger and Pieter van Avont: Maria with Child and the Young John the Baptist and Angels, ca. 1626/27. Verified in City Palace, Potsdam since 1698, sold by a restorer 1947, restituted 2015 to the Prussian Palaces and Gardens Foundation Berlin-Brandenburg*

Reconstruction of the art dealership on Uhlandstraße in the West Sector of the city had also begun. Elisabeth Rohde, however, applied her energy to saving the museums damaged by war in the East Sector: her description of the work in the destroyed depots on Museum Island is gripping. The friendship which developed with the director of collections and managing director of the museums, Carl Blümel (1893–1976), was to last until his death and compensated for the death of the father, who died in 1950.

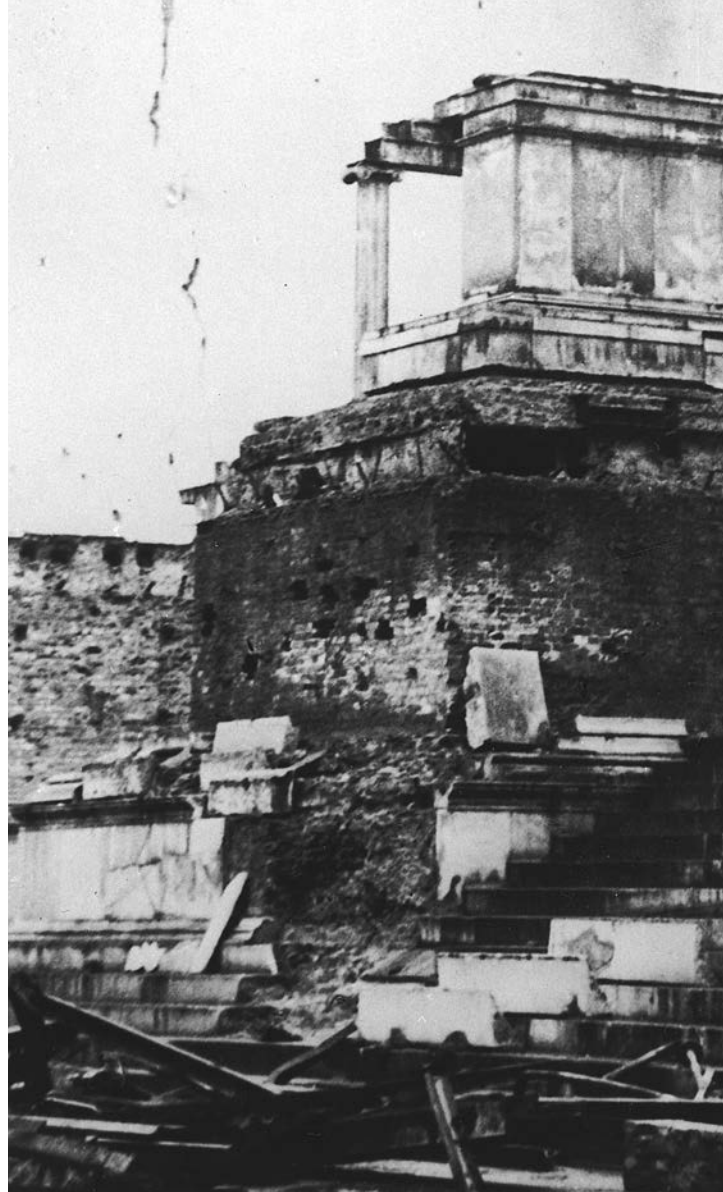
Kurt Rohde left two-thirds of the inventory and collection to his daughter Elisabeth and one-third to his widow Charlotte, including approximately 200 paintings. Frieda Hinze loaned furniture from the Rohde women, on whose behalf she later sold pictures from the Rohde Collections as “Galerie Frieda Hinze”. Elisabeth Rohde later termed this exceptional living and business relationship “communal living”.

Ernst Kühnel, director of the Museum of Islamic Art, re-established the Art Historical Society in West Berlin in early 1952. Frieda Hinze was a founding member and the first representing art dealers in this circle of extraordinary figures from Berlin’s history of art which Wilhelm von Bode had founded. Contact to museums was also re-established: In 1955 Frieda Hinze loaned the Westphalian State Museum of Art and Cultural History pictures from the Rohde Collection, also intended as a type of “insurance” outside the three-sector-city. The large “Still Life with Meat Life and Page” by Frans Snyders is still a highlight of the museum’s collection.

#### OLD CONNECTIONS IN THE LAND OF ECONOMIC MIRACLES

At the end of the 1950s, West Berlin impressed with “a new energy and has adapted to the extraordinary political structure of the city, lively, knowledgeable, open and confident in itself [...]. The Berliners [...] have managed to make the best of things and that includes Berlin’s art trade” praised the Weltkunst.

Berlin tried to forget the war and its ruins by erecting sophisticated skyscrapers on the Kurfürstendamm. One enjoyed





Above: *The destroyed Pergamon Hall*, photo by Elisabeth Rohde 1945

Below: *Frans Snyders, "Still Life with Meat Basket"*, ca. 1640, from the Collection Rohde (on loan to the Westphalian State Museum of Art and Cultural History)



the boom, bought televisions and sat for hours on end in the old Café Möhring on the corner of Uhlandstraße over coffee and cake. In 1956, Frieda Hinze participated in the new Art and Antiques Fair in Munich as the only exhibitor from Berlin. She also tried her hand at procuring works of the Classical Modern during these years.

Spurred by the quick economic recovery, the art dealer started to once again acquire important collector objects after 1959. She assumed porcelain, rugs and furniture, including Mainz convertible furniture (lot 3103) from the estate of Curt Mossner (1850–1929), the former editor-in-chief and proprietor of the Finanz-Verlag. For decades she obtained drawings, sketch books and studies from Marline von Werner (born 1919), the granddaughter and heir of Anton von Werner. She also purchased small objects from Wilhelm von Bode's daughter Anna (1903–1983). More important, however, were the acquisitions of Indian and Chinese sculpture from the collection of the political scientist and member of the Bundestag Ernst Wilhelm Meyer (1892–1969), who served as ambassador of the young Federal Republic in New Dehli until 1957 (lots 3132–3134, 3138). Frieda Hinze also maintained good business relationships with such emigrants as the art dealer Eduard G. Schiffmann in Alexandria, Virginia. Thus, she used her good network and her respected position during the Weimar Republic period to her advantage and strongly reacted to any type of defamation.

She let the director of the Old Master Paintings Gallery, the controversial Hermann Zimmermann, know: "Like you and everyone else, I also have my reputation. Mine has up to now been [...] impeccable in terms of morals and expert, professional competence. As such, you will certainly understand that I must protect myself against any type of slander or libel when I find out you are making remarks such as "unserious" about me."

Elisabeth Rohde was also an energetic fighter for her life's work. When a large number of the art works looted by the Russians at the end of the war were returned to the Berlin museums in 1958, she was the one who managed the re-



erection of the Pergamon Altar as curator of the Collection of Classical Antiquities. Her legendary guide, “Pergamon. Burgberg und Altar” (Pergamon. Castle Hill and Altar) was published in 1961, the year the Berlin Wall was built. Shortly before that it was announced that she would succeed Blümel as director of the Collection of Classical Antiquities. However, it would take ten years before Elisabeth Rohde became the first female director of Berlin’s State Museums, which is attributed to political change and a certain degree of skepticism directed towards the scholar who lived in the western part of the city. Every morning, a permanent visa in hand, she crossed the internal German border at the so-called “Palace of Tears” border crossing on Friedrichstraße until her retirement in 1982. Along with Walter Felsenstein, Elisabeth Rohde was one of the few to whom the GDR granted “cross-border commuter” status. Her purpose in life was the Collection of Classical Antiquities, no matter if the works were located in the East or the West of the divided city: “Her involvement in the archeological community of West Berlin was of great advantage to the collections on Museum Island because she was familiar with the Antiquities Museum of Charlottenburg and maintained contact to the respective directors – what officially was not allowed”, recalled Günther Schauerte.

The cordial, meticulous “Miss Dr. Rohde” financed her living in the West with the proceeds from her father’s art dealership, which essentially meant the sale of paintings. The salary she received in East marks went directly to her aunt, who lived in Dresden. Like Frieda Hinze, Elisabeth Rohde never married.

### STRONG WOMEN BUILDING MUSEUMS

The decades following the war were a time of strong women. They rebuilt German as Trümmerfrauen, or “rubble women” and mothers, and occupied important positions in West Berlin, especially in its cultural life. This brings to mind Margarethe Kühn (1902–1995), who as the first administrative director of the State Palaces and Gardens, managed the reconstruction of Charlottenburg Palace, or of Irene Kühnel-Kunze, the aforementioned friend of Frieda Hinze, who as a

German consultant to the War Department of the American Military Government, was responsible for the return of Old Master Paintings Gallery to West Berlin. A fellow student of Elisabeth Rohde’s presided over the Berlin Museum as founding director after 1967: Miss Irmgard Wirth (1915–2012) was a neighbor on Knesebeckstraße and close friends with the ladies on Uhlandstraße.

This female network was the basis of many sales to the Berlin museums, which attempted to fill any gaps of war loss with art works from the Rohde-Hinze Collection: porcelain and silver went to the museums to furnish the rooms of Charlottenburg Palace, and the palace administration later purchased Jean Raoux’s painting Allegory of Music and Architecture under Margarethe Kühn.

In 1958, Elisabeth Rohde and Frieda Hinze gave “Merry Company (in the open air)” by Willem Buytewech as a loan to the Old Master Paintings Gallery and its curator Kühnel-Kunze, which was now located in Dahlem. The picture filled a gap in the West collection, since the Buytewech remained in the Berliner Galerie in the East. Following Hinze’s death, the picture was guaranteed “to the Old Master Paintings Gallery for its duration because of its exceptional quality and also because of its meaning for the Gallery.” Frieda Hinze supplied works to almost all the other collections of the State Museums in West Berlin, such as the Museum of Decorative Arts, the Art Library, the National Gallery and the Museum of Indian Art, which procured objects from the Asian Collection Meyers.

Especially the newly-founded Berlin Museum owed much to Frieda Hinze and the former collection of Kurt Rohde for numerous art works. The contact to the director Irmgard Wirth was very intense. Numerous drawings by Anton von Werner or paintings by Franz Skarbina, sculpture from the late 19th century and an abundance of prints were purchased. The portrait of Luise Henriette of Brandenburg by Gerrit van Honthorst purchased from the Rohde Collection in 1972 was the highlight of the exhibition about the “Berliners”. The private collection was an abundant source of “discoveries from





private ownership” in the 1970s, especially for the exhibition programs of the Berlin museums. Exhibitions and museums throughout the FRG drew on the rich and visionary Rohde-Hinze Collection, which had in the making since 1920.

#### LAST GLORY IN THE CIRCUS OF THE TRADE FAIR

The highlight of the year for Frieda Hinze was the Art and Antiques Fair in Munich, which took place each fall and which had attained international status in the 1960s. Besides the Galerie H.P. Buchen, with whom Hinze often shared a stand, and the tapestry and carpet dealer A. & L. Bodenheim, who had also saved and carried over his business “from the old era”, Hinze was the only Berliner at the fair. Her Old Master pictures from walled-in Berlin were in demand: “The Berliner likes to use the Munich fair as a window to the West and [...] knows how to direct attention to herself”, wrote the daily paper *Die Welt*.

In 1965 stood: “The antique dealer Hinze had already sold for more than 10,000 marks just hours after the opening: small portraits, some medium-sized still lifes.” The *Tagesspiegel* carefully observed the “senior citizen of Berlin’s art trade”: “She is surrounded by prospective buyers” because the stand offers the right mixture of larger art works and smaller objects, such as jewelry. However, at almost 65, Frieda Hinze was one of the “oldies” at the largest national art fair, and the taste of the crowd was changing. In 1967 she had to “fiercely defend” her offering of simple Art Déco silver and Old Masters “against attackers” and new entrants such as “Kunsthaus City”.

The stoical Frieda Hinze earned well, although her prices were usually rated as too high. She was also indifferent to the fact that the international market increasingly influenced the business of the German dealers because she offered a “museums quality” that attracted clients despite the high prices: Jan de Brays’ “Idolatry of Solomon”, that had hung in the hall of the apartment on Uhlandstraße was acquired by the Alfred R. Bader Collection in Milwaukee. Cornelis Liebrück’s coastal landscape was seen by the Minneapolis Institute of Arts

*Left: View of the exhibition “Berlin’s Collector Tradition” at the Haus am Lützowplatz with the painting by Anton Graff from the Collection Rohde-Hinze (lot 3089), photos by Bruno Schuch 1950*

*Center: The Kurfürstendamm, photo by Friedrich Seidenstücker 1955*

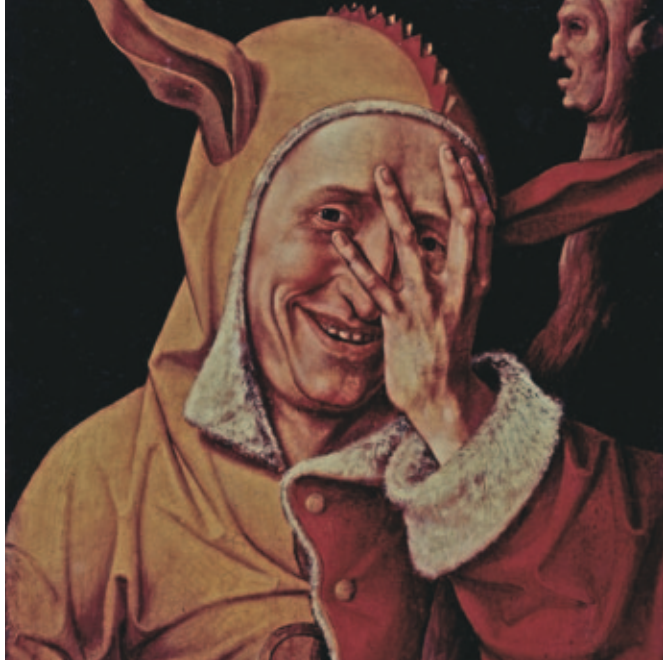
*Right: Willem Buytewech: Merry Company (in the open air), 1616/17. (On permanent loan to the Old Master Paintings Gallery Berlin from Frieda Hinze)*



*Left: Visit by Bavaria's Minister President Alfons Goppel to Frieda Hinze's stand at the Art and Antiques Fair Munich, photo by Georg Schödl 1963*

*Center: Attributed to Quentin Massys: "Portrait of a Fool Looking through His Fingers", ca. 1500, former collection Rohde-Hinze*

*Right: Bavarian Broadcasting at Frieda Hinze's stand at the Art and Antiques Fair Munich (painting by Carlo Portelli da Loro), photo by Georg Schödl 1963*



at the Munich fair in 1967 and was purchased. Alessandro Turchi's large "Judgment of Paris", part of the Rohde Collection since 1928 and shown in Wiesbaden in 1935, was sold to the London gallery of Michael Simpson. At the age of 67, however, Frieda Hinze ended her fair business and withdrew to her own four walls in 1969.

#### THE LAST YEARS OF AN ART DEALER

The great era of Berlin's art dealing could not be revived. The young art dealer Volker Westphal decreed pragmatically in 1971: "We know that Berlin was one of the most important centers of art dealing. We also know that this is no longer true and we know the reasons why. It is useless to complain about this development." Berlin's upper class had shrunk since 1929, had been pursued and murdered after 1936, and had then left for the West and the South before 1961. Without the financial power of buyers and without any significant art works, the art dealership within the walled-in city gave the magazine *Weltkunst* the "impression of a flea market."

The efforts of the Senate to strengthen Berlin's economy with shopping malls did nothing to help. The house on Uhlandstraße in which the Rohde family had lived since 1920, was torn down in 1971 to make way for the so-called *Ku'damm Karree*. It was met by a storm of protest led by the elderly ladies, who energetically founded a citizen's initiative because they had no intention of being forced to move to "make way for an entertainment center." – In vain.

Frieda Hinze and Elisabeth Rohde, along with her mother and aged housekeeper, moved to the nearby Bundesallee 213/214, where they set up house in an apartment with over 4,300 square feet – and never unpacked a majority of the fine art objects and paintings from the moving boxes. Visitors were only shown into the front rooms of the apartment; behind the large "Berliner Zimmer" they imagined treasure rooms full of the paintings, frames and valuable remnants of the collection that had been established in the golden twenties. The art historian Helmut Börsch-Supan recognized the historical value: "In educational and informative discussions, the visitor



learns something from her [Frieda Hinze] about the great era of art dealership in Berlin.”

Elisabeth Rohde, with her father’s collection, and Frieda Hinze, with her art dealership, had become an anachronism. Their reputation and the former gallery became a myth: “Even Frieda Hinze, who in specialist circles made a name for herself as a painting expert that extended much further than Berlin, did not appreciate unannounced visitors [...]. She also knows where pictures depicting a certain motif and by a certain hand can be found. That is her “capital.”

The ascetic “Grande Dame of Berlin’s art dealership” made this capital available one last time, on the occasion of the city’s 750th anniversary celebration: For the palace administration, Frieda Hinze procured the reacquisition of a coin tankard belonging to the Great Elector and a secretary desk from the Spindler workshop. The director of the State Palaces and Gardens, Jürgen Julier, duly honored the art dealer: “She has greatly helped us with her knowledge and her open and sharp, bright nature, and has always conveyed a feeling of personal empathy.”

When Frieda Hinze died in 1991, the Wall had fallen and the city, which she had seen change so often during her lifetime, was already on its way to new heights and new shores. For the girl who came from the country in 1914, a “long life full of work in the service of art” had come to an end, as Elisabeth Rohde formulated it in the obituary. This companion of hers, with whom she had lived together since childhood, would now guard the legacy of her father alone.

Elisabeth Rohde died in 2013 at the age of 98. Her passion remained devoted to ancient art, although she worshiped the legacy of her father for his sake. Her scholarly estate was placed in the Central Archive of the Berlin State Museums, where “Miss Dr. Rohde” worked her entire life. The extensive archive of the collection and art dealership of her father Kurt Rohde and his business partner Frieda Hinze are also housed there, so that research can give a detailed view of the history of the last important art dealership and collection in Berlin

which was built up during the golden twenties and which survived almost a century.

#### COMING FULL CIRCLE ON THE KURFÜRSTENDAMM CORNER OF UHLANDSTRASSE

The last photo of Elisabeth Rohde shows her together with Irmgard Wirth in front of Café Möhring, located on the Kurfürstendamm and corner of Uhlandstraße. With its closure in 2000, the story of a legendary, long-standing Berlin institution ended which was able to preserve the brilliance of the empire and the golden twenties through the chaos of war and the period of a divided city.

The story of the Rohde-Hinze Collection began in 1912 in Dresden with a wedding photo and chester cake. It ended almost a century later with the picture of two women who, over a last piece of Möhring cake looked back on a time in which they, together with Frieda Hinze, took on the role and purpose of extraordinary women for the art of Berlin and beyond.

Villa GRISEBACH – only a stone’s throw away from Uhlandstraße – would like to memorialize the people and the Rohde-Hinze Collection with this catalogue. The scholarly work documents their paintings, sculptures and objects of fine art one last time in its entirety – before the art works find their new owners.

*Translation by Dayna Sadow*

...udreos, ...  
...mies bild  
...schaft, becker  
...  
...Familienbild  
...der, Kinder mord  
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139 Gemälde, alt, lo  
140. Gemälde Kirche  
142. Gemälde, ha  
144. Gemälde, He  
146 Gemälde  
1925-153 Gr. Gemälde  
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