

Wilhelm von Bode and the Art Market (Bern, 8–9 Nov 18)

Department of Modern and Contemporary Art History Institute for Art History,
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Wilhelm von Bode and the Art Market

Wilhelm von Bode (1845-1929) belongs categorically to the group of the most influential actors in the late nineteenth and the early twentieth century art market. Despite the fact that Bode's international agency has long been recognized, it has not sustained a focused attention. Certain aspects have received due scrutiny, for instance the acquisitions for the Royal Museums in Berlin, as well as Bode's complex relations to particular art dealers and private collectors. To completely understand Bode's agency within the art marketplace, however, a more detailed and de-mystifying analysis is required. Thus, the aim of the conference is to dedicate exclusive attention to Bode's involvement in the art trade and his multi-faceted role in the art marketplace of his time. Bode navigated the international art market by adopting different, often contradictory identities: he was an expert, a connoisseur and an advisor, but also a strategic buyer and a ruthless competitor. How did these roles intertwine? Where and when was he an innovator, a precursor, a pioneer or a rule-breaker? Did Bode's activity have impact on wider market trends and, vice versa, was Bode influenced by them as a client and an advisor? How did his powerful position as a curator and a scholar resonate in the marketplace? Were there instances when Bode's pursuits turned him into a bad actor? What were the reactions of other art market actors to his exceptionally varied activity within the marketplace?

Papers might address amongst other topics:

- Wilhelm von Bode's different identities and roles in the art market: a client, an expert, a connoisseur, an advisor, a tastemaker, a scholar, a rival
- Interdependence between Wilhelm von Bode and other actors in the marketplace
- Wilhelm von Bode's social network in the international art market and his strategies in relations to dealers, collectors and curators
- Wilhelm von Bode as a bad actor in the art market
- Reception and reactions to Wilhelm von Bode's activity on the art market

Please submit your proposal of up to 250 words with a short biography to Joanna Smalcerz at joanna.smalcerz@ikg.unibe.ch by 31 July 2018.

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