

Petition Gemaeldegalerie Berlin

Berlin, Jul 1, 2012–Jan 1, 2013

Jeffrey Hamburger

Please consider signing the following petition regarding the Gemaeldegalerie in Berlin:
<http://chn.ge/NjXhr4>

For your convenience, I have included the text of the petition letter below:

We write to you to ask that you reconsider the current plan to empty the Gemäldegalerie to make room for a display of twentieth-century art from the Pietzsch collection.

We understand that Mies van der Rohe's Nationalgalerie provides inadequate space for Berlin's growing collections of modern art, and we welcome the prospect of a permanent home for them.

However, finding that space in the Gemäldegalerie at the expense of one of the world's premier collections of Old Master paintings, without also making concrete plans to display that collection concurrently in its entirety, would be a tragedy. In the current plan, it appears that once again the past is being asked to make way for the present without sufficient attention to its future. The disappearance into storage of whatever paintings cannot be displayed in the Bode Museum – which we call on you to disclose – is not acceptable, even for only six years. In the current political and economic climate, and with stiff competition for funding from politically more expedient, if culturally more dubious, plans to rebuild the Stadtschloß, we fear that six years could easily become a decade or more.

All too often, it seems, great works of art in Berlin serve as pawns in a seemingly endless chess game, to be moved about and sacrificed at the will and whim of politicians. Germany is fortunate in that culture remains a focus of political and public concern. That concern, however, would best be expressed by finding a reasonable solution, one that respects a legacy that barely survived the centuries and that deserves better than to be rendered invisible for an indeterminate length of time.

We therefore write to ask, not that you shelve your plans for the Pietzsch collection, but rather that you complement them with an adequate strategy that will do justice to the whole of Berlin's extraordinary collections. We believe that the Old Master collection should be moved to make way for the Pietzsch collection only after space on the Museuminsel had been found to accommodate it – hardly a rash proposal.

Yours sincerely, Jeffrey Hamburger, Kuno Francke Professor of German Art & Culture, Harvard University

ANN: Petition Gemaeldegalerie Berlin. In: Arthist.net, Jul 2, 2012 (accessed Jul 4, 2025),
<<https://arthist.net/archive/3572>>.