

Press release

Liebieghaus Skulpturensammlung Exhibition programme 2017

“Between Definite and Dubious. Sculptures and Their Histories” Acquired 1933–1945

4 May to 5 November 2017

In the spring of 2017, the Liebieghaus Skulpturensammlung will take a look at its own history and that of its collection during the National Socialist period, with a special focus on the acquisitions made during those years. On the basis of twelve selected objects, “Between Definite and Dubious. Sculptures and Their Histories (Acquired 1933–1945)” will revisit that eventful phase in the annals of the Liebieghaus and its holdings, and the stories of the people who were and are intimately connected with the artworks in question.

Back in 2001, the Städel Museum was one of the first museums in Germany to begin examining its collections with a view to artworks acquired in connection with Nazi persecution. In the spring of 2015, those efforts crystallized in a special project for the systematic investigation of the Liebieghaus Skulpturensammlung holdings with support from the German Lost Art Foundation and the city of Frankfurt am Main. The exhibition will present the results of this research project to the public in a tour of the museum’s three main departments – Antiquity, Middle Ages, and Renaissance to Neoclassicism – concentrating on representative cases. An introductory section will offer an overview of the Liebieghaus history with a special focus on the National Socialist and immediate post-war eras. The twelve selected objects will serve as examples of certain types of acquisition and the related courses of action. The show will also provide insights into the museum’s most recent, as-yet-unpublished research results and current restitution proceedings.

Team: Eva Mongi-Vollmer (curator), Iris Schmeisser (co-curator), Anna Heckötter (co-curator)

“With New Splendour”: The “Crucified Thief” by the Master of Flémalle in Context

15 November 2017 to 18 February 2018

The so-called “Crucified Thief” by the Master of Flémalle has been undergoing comprehensive conservation and restoration since October 2014. It is a key work in the history of European art, executed by one of the most enigmatic figures of Early Netherlandish painting. Painted on both sides, it is the only surviving section of a large-scale triptych of the Deposition that was among the most prominent and influential works of Netherlandish painting at the beginning of the fifteenth century. When the conservation and restoration measures reach completion, the precious work will literally shine in new splendour. In honour of the occasion, a three-month special presentation will be devoted to it at the Liebieghaus Skulpturensammlung.

The exhibition will not only shed light on the procedure and spectacular outcome of the technological examination and the restoration. It will also feature twelve selected comparanda in the mediums of panel painting, sculpture, drawing and book illumination, serving to contextualize the fragment in a wide variety of ways. Presumably executed for a Bruges church around 1430, the Deposition triptych again and again provided inspiration to subsequent generations of artists. As a result, various contemporary drawings, later painted copies and quotations of individual figures and figural groups have allowed us to reconstruct its original appearance for the most part. Our fragment will be shown alongside a painted copy of the triptych from the Walker Art Gallery in Liverpool and drawings from the Fogg Museum in Cambridge (MA) and the Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge (UK). The presentation will also include works of Netherlandish and German sculpture of the period in question, which is splendidly represented at the Liebieghaus by the so-called “Rimini Altar” and Hans Multscher’s “Holy Trinity”. The exhibition is a cooperative project of the Städel Museum and the Liebieghaus Skulpturensammlung.

Curator: Prof Dr Jochen Sander (Städel Museum)

Technological examination and restoration: Annegret Volk, certified conservator; Stephan Knobloch, head of painting restoration (Städel Museum)

The project to restore the “Crucified Thief” was made possible by: Bank of America Art Conservation Project, Städtelscher Museums-Verein e.V.

Press: Axel Braun (department head), Alexandra Hahn, Paula Stuckatz, Städel Museum, Dürerstrasse 2, 60596 Frankfurt, telephone: +49(0)69-605098-268, fax: +49(0)69-605098-188, presse@liebieghaus.de