

Press release

The Reiner Winkler Ivory Collection in the Liebieghaus is complete

As of 2 June, the Liebieghaus will present more than 200 precious ivory sculptures of the Baroque and Rococo periods in the exhibition “Splendid White”

Press preview: Wednesday, 1 June 2022, 11.00 am,
Liebieghaus Skulpturensammlung

Frankfurt am Main, 11 May 2022. A few years ago, the Liebieghaus Skulpturensammlung succeeded in making the most significant addition to its own holdings in the history of the museum: a collection of precious ivory sculptures of the Baroque and Rococo periods from the estate of the patron Reiner Winkler (1925–2020). The Ernst von Siemens Kunststiftung, the Städelsche Museums-Verein, and the Städel Museum, with the support of the Kulturstiftung der Länder and the Hessische Kulturstiftung, acquired this unique collection, which was made possible in the first place by Reiner Winkler’s generous donation of the majority of the collection. Since then, masterpieces by world-famous sculptors, such as *Fury on a Charging Horse* (1610), *The Three Parcae* (ca. 1670), *Chronos on the Globe* (ca. 1720/25?), and the *Allegory of Damnation in Hell (Anima Dannata?)* (1736) have been on display at the Liebieghaus in the exhibition “White Wedding.”

With the exhibition and new collection presentation “Splendid White,” the Reiner Winkler Ivory Collection at the Liebieghaus is now complete: as of 2 June 2022, more than 200 historical ivory works will be presented – including a further twenty-one outstanding works of art that remained in the private collection of Reiner Winkler until his death and are now accessible to the public for the first time. In the new collection presentation, the beauty, virtuosity, and richness of variation of baroque ivory carving can be experienced in an impressive way. The last works of art to be displayed and hung in the patron’s private home, including portrait medallions, large-format reliefs with Christian religious motifs and genre scenes, as well as an impressive combination figure, add essential exhibits to the previous collection presentation at the Liebieghaus. The portrait of a pope and larger series of stately portraits expand the portrait section. In addition, the art landscapes of Sicily and Dieppe, as well as the oeuvres of pioneering sculptors and sculptor families, including, for example, Paul Herrmann and the two carvers Carl August Lücke the Elder and the Younger, can also be expanded. In addition, the close connection of ivory art with exemplary graphic or folk art becomes clear, making cultural-historical connections more visible.

“The donation of the world’s largest private collection of ivory artworks to the Liebieghaus in Frankfurt in 2018 was a highlight of patronage in the German and international art landscape. Reiner Winkler thus continued the philanthropy for which Frankfurt is renowned and paved the way for the acquisition of his collection – at the same time, the most significant expansion of the museum’s holdings in the history of the

Liebieghaus. With the exhibition ‘Splendid White,’ this unique collection of historical ivory art at the Liebieghaus is now complete. Today, the use of ivory as an artistic material is the subject of controversial discussions and is judged differently. As a museum, we are in a position to scientifically research outstanding works of ivory carving art of the Baroque and Rococo periods and to exhibit, classify, and didactically communicate them as part of our cultural-historical heritage. With the completion of the Reiner Winkler Collection, a milestone has now been reached in the scholarly research of historical ivory art,” explains Philipp Demandt, Director of the Liebieghaus Skulpturensammlung and the Städel Museum.

Maraïke Bückling, Head of the Renaissance to Neoclassicism Collection and curator of the exhibitions “Splendid White” and “White Wedding,” adds: “The ivory works from the 17th and 18th centuries, a golden age of ivory art, captivate with virtuosity and richness of design, as well as a remarkable thematic range. The hardness of the material combined with its elasticity allows for high carving quality with the finest details. Aesthetic pleasure and sensual associations also fascinated Reiner Winkler. His private collection included statuettes, groups of figures, reliefs, and vessels by important European artists. To have reunited the two parts of Reiner Winkler’s collection, from his ‘Kunstkammer’ and from his private living quarters, and to have integrated these into the museum’s holdings is a joyful moment for the Liebieghaus.”

The Reiner Winkler Ivory Collection

Over the course of decades, the collector and patron Reiner Winkler (1925–2020) compiled a private collection of ivory sculptures with a focus on Baroque objects. Winkler built up his collection continuously from 1962 onwards. After a few years of collecting sculptures in various materials and from different periods, he soon concentrated entirely on ivory sculptures of the 17th and 18th centuries, and to a very small extent of the early 19th century. Winkler was closely associated with the Liebieghaus Skulpturensammlung and provided the museum with loans for exhibitions on several occasions. At the Liebieghaus, his collection will now find “its new and permanent home” and will thus be preserved “as a ‘Gesamtkunstwerk,’” as Reiner Winkler wished and expressed himself on the occasion of the acquisition in 2019. The unique collection expanded the Liebieghaus’ own internationally important holdings at the highest level. The acquisition also established European ivory art as the central focus of the Liebieghaus’ Baroque and Rococo department – a focus that has since been intensively researched and didactically communicated.

Supported by the Reiner Winkler Stiftung, two publications on the Reiner Winkler Ivory Collection, “White Wedding” (2019) and “Splendid White” (2022) are now available, which illustrate the inventory of the collection and explain the cultural-historical contexts of the artworks. The Ernst von Siemens Kunststiftung supports the “Splendid White” presentation.

The acquisition of the Reiner Winkler Ivory Collection was made possible by the Ernst von Siemens Kunststiftung, the Städtelscher Museums-Verein, and the Städel Museum, with the support of the Kulturstiftung der Länder, and the Hessische Kulturstiftung, as well as private donations.

“Splendid White”

With the new exhibition and collection presentation, “Splendid White. The Reiner Winkler Ivory Collection at the Liebieghaus,” those works of art can now be seen that were previously kept in the private rooms of Reiner Winkler’s home. The collector and patron lived with these works until his death in 2020 – they are among his earliest acquisitions of historical ivory art.

Portrait medallions and portraits of married couples, of noble personalities, private individuals, and dignitaries complete the collection presentation with outstanding works, including a *Portrait of Pope Clement XI* (ca. 1710), of which there are at least three versions. In addition to the portrait in the Liebieghaus, two others have survived in the Green Vault in Dresden and the V&A in London. As gifts of conversion from the popes, they were handed over to princely converts. It can be assumed that the Frankfurt medallion and likewise other versions were made and given away for comparable, as yet unknown, specific occasions. Several ivory medallions in the Reiner Winkler Collection, such as the magnificent portraits of the Habsburg imperial couple, *Emperor Leopold I* and *Empress Eleonore Magdalene Therese* (both ca. 1696), can be included in series of rulers or princely families. Common features of the series are an exceedingly tight fitting into the high oval, so that hardly any narrow margin remains under the bust section, the soft, doughy undulation of the folds, the design of the lace jabots and the curls by means of arched notches, and the flat hair drawing on the edge of the wig above the forehead and nose.

In the early 18th century, David Le Marchand created the *Portrait of Charles Marbury* (1704–1720). This is the second portrait and the third work in the Reiner Winkler Collection by this Huguenot sculptor from Dieppe in France. Charles Marbury, of whom only his name and two portraits are known, is shown in profile facing right, dressed in a cloak draped around the bust and an open waistcoat. A long, splendid wig flowing down his back captivates the observer with its finely streaked hair arranged in numerous curls.

Active roughly a generation later was the Lücke family, who probably came from Dresden and were known for their ivory carving art: Carl August Lücke the Elder founded the workshop, and his sons Carl August the Younger and Johann Christoph Ludwig continued the tradition. The Liebieghaus has owned a small group of works by the Lückes since 2018. Three further reliefs by Carl August the Elder and the Younger, which hung in Reiner Winkler's living room, now complement this complex of works, culminating in the *Allegory of Damnation in Hell (Anima Dannata?)* (1736), exhibited in "White Wedding." The expansion in 2022 is significant because, until now, only portrait busts by the two artists could be exhibited, but no medallions.

Numerous works in the Reiner Winkler Ivory Collection depict Christian religious themes. One of the most unusual reliefs is the work *St Mary Magdalene, Penitent* (first half of the 17th century), for it is partly polychromed with paint, metal powder, and gold leaf and has applications of real jewellery. It is comparable in composition and figure detail with small devotional pictures in pearwood or boxwood depicting half-figures of saints – for example, the work *St Catherine with Angel Putto* (ca. 1600).

Depictions of the Crucified Christ or the Deposition from the Cross have rarely been found in the collection presentation so far. Now, a large-format *The Deposition of Christ* (second half of the 17th century) composed of several parts has been added. At 54 cm high, it is also one of the largest works in the Reiner Winkler Collection and hung for a long time in the patron's study. The carver based his work on an engraving by Francesco Villamena (1606) after a painting by Federico Barocci, which was executed between 1567 and 1569 for the Cathedral of San Lorenzo in Perugia.

Among the most beautiful and largest reliefs are the works *The Annunciation* and *The Visitation of Mary* (both ca. 1770–1780), which hung for a long time in a prominent position in Reiner Winkler's home. The model for the Annunciation relief is known to be a copperplate engraving by Laurent Cars after a painting by François Lemoyne. In both reliefs, the sensitively drawn facial features, the elongated bodies with delicate limbs, and finely designed hair are striking. Carefully and softly pleated, beautifully lined robes shroud the figures. These characteristic features suggest an attribution of the two panels to the ivory carver Jean-Antoine Belleteste (1731–1811) from Dieppe. This adds two extremely important works of art to the section on the

art landscape of Dieppe in “White Wedding.” *The Adoration of the Christ Child by the Shepherds* (first third of the 18th century?) also expands the range of ivory works from southern Italy and Sicily. Sicilian ivory carvers put their ambition into working multi-figured scenes from one piece of elephant tusk; an outstanding example can be seen with the *Fall of the Rebel Angels* (first third 18th century), on view in “White Wedding”.

In the Reiner Winkler Collection, the number of genre scenes is comparatively small, although the subject can also be found among ivory carvers such as Johann Christoph Ludwig Lücke, Wilhelm Krüger, and Leonhard Kern, as well as among sculptors of combination figures and masters who remain unknown. The works in the Liebieghaus are combination figures and village scenes. “Splendid White” features three new acquisitions: two genre scenes with a tendentious touch, *Man with Pipe and Tankard, Dozing Off* and *Seated Woman with Jug* (both first third of the 18th century), by the Dresden court sculptor Paul Herrmann (1673–1732) and a combination figure by Simon Troger (1693–1768). Until the Reiner Winkler Collection was transferred to the Liebieghaus, the museum did not own any examples of the famous so-called combination figures made of ivory and wood. Since 2019, this genre has been presented in “White Wedding” with artworks by Simon Troger, Matthias Kolb, and unknown artists. With the combination figure *Beggar-Woman with Tamburin de Béarn and Child* (1730s) by Simon Troger and workshop, the series has been impressively expanded. Troger specialised in the production of combination figures made of wood, ivory, and glass. In particular, the only scantily clad beggar figures and antique god figures in ideal nudity offered themselves as themes, with precious ivory being used for the unclothed parts of the body. Fabric remnants as well as garments were reproduced with precious woods. The starting point for Troger’s beggar figures can be considered to be, among others, nativity scene figures, to which the figure of the beggar also belonged. The closeness lies in the fact that the nativity figures and Troger’s beggar figures made of wood and ivory are comparable in size and that they could also be freely combined and assembled into different groups. A striking feature of the beggars and nativity figures is that they show strong and muscular, rarely injured bodies.

“White Wedding”

Since March 2019, the exhibition “White Wedding. The Reiner Winkler Ivory Collection Now at the Liebieghaus – Forever” presents almost all the pieces from Reiner Winkler’s former so-called “Kunstkammer.” Other ivory works from the Liebieghaus are juxtaposed with those from the Reiner Winkler Collection, and museum exhibits by the same artists, but made of different materials, are also on view.

With the help of the exhibits, the history of small sculpture in the Baroque and Rococo periods is vividly traced in thematic chapters. Several masterpieces from the Reiner Winkler Collection are highlighted: for example, the central work *Fury on a Charging Horse* (1610) by the so-called Master of the Furies (active ca. 1600–1625). The following works are also on display: Joachim Henne’s *The Three Parcae* (ca. 1670), Francis van Bossuit’s *Mercury, Argus and Io* (ca. 1670/75?), the relief panels carved by an unknown Augsburg sculptor *Minerva Introducing Sculpture and Painting to the Seven Free Arts* (second half of the 17th century), and the *Depiction of eight Cardinal Virtues* (second half of the 17th century), as well as Matthias Steinl’s *Chronos on the Globe* (ca. 1720/25?), the *Allegory of Damnation in Hell (Anima Dannata?)* (1736) by Johann Christoph Ludwig Lücke, and the *Fall of the Rebel Angels* (1st third of the 18th century) carved by an as yet unknown ivory artist in southern Italy or Sicily.

Germany and Austria played an extremely important role in ivory art, which is clearly evident in the Reiner Winkler Collection. This is why important artists such as Leonhard Kern (1588–1662), Georg Pfründt

(1603–1663), Jacob Dobbermann (1682–1745), the Lücke family of artists, and Johann Caspar Schenck (ca. 1620–1674) and his younger relative Christoph Daniel Schenck (1633–1691) are given their own chapters in “White Wedding”. One section brings together medieval works; and depictions of saints as well as works conveying biblical content form a further group. Works dedicated to ancient themes and those created by important court or chamber sculptors are also presented in a concentrated manner. In addition, three art landscapes are presented: the Netherlands, southern Italy/Sicily, and Dieppe.

“The Reiner Winkler Ivory Collection at the Liebieghaus is Complete”

Duration of the exhibition “Splendid White”: 2 June 2022 – 8 January 2023

Press preview: Wednesday, 1 June 2022, 11.00 am, Liebieghaus Skulpturensammlung

Curator: Dr. Maraike Bückling, Head of the Renaissance to Neoclassicism Collection, Liebieghaus Skulpturensammlung

Architecture: Bach Dolder Architekten, Darmstadt

Venue: Liebieghaus Skulpturensammlung, Schaumainkai 71, 60596 Frankfurt am Main

Opening times: Tue, Wed 12:00–6:00 pm, Thurs 10:00 am–9:00 pm, Fri–Sun 10.00 am–6.00 pm; closed on Mondays

Information: www.liebieghaus.de

Visitors’ service and guided tours: info@liebieghaus.de, buchungen@liebieghaus.de,

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Entrance fee: € 10; reduced price € 8; free admittance for children under 12

Catalogue: The exhibition is accompanied by a catalogue edited by Maraike Bückling and published by Hirmer Verlag, with greetings by Annette Winkler, the Reiner Winkler Stiftung, the Ernst von Siemens Kunststiftung, the Städtelscher Museums-Verein, the Kulturstiftung der Länder, and the Hessische Kulturstiftung, a foreword by Philipp Demandt, and contributions by Maraike Bückling and Hiltrud Jehle; 180 pages, € 29.90 euros (museum edition).

The complete programme accompanying the exhibition can be found under www.liebieghaus.de.

Social Media: The Liebieghaus Skulpturensammlung will be posting information about the exhibition in the social media with the hashtag #Liebieghaus

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