

## Press Conference on the Future of the Essl Collection

Press conference, 18 October 2018

Federal Minister Gernot Blümel, Prof. Karlheinz Essl, and General Director Klaus Albrecht Schröder announced today that the Essl Collection, which numbers 1,323 artworks (with a total of 2,134 individual objects), has been donated to the ALBERTINA Museum. This generous donation enables the ALBERTINA Museum to reinforce its profile in terms of contemporary art, for which purpose it will be opening its second location in the center of Vienna one year from now.

The ALBERTINA Museum's repositioning began in 2000 with the renovation of the classicist State Rooms as well as the addition of large exhibition halls that have since facilitated the museum's first-ever presentations of important retrospectives featuring artists ranging from Dürer to Monet to Keith Haring.

In 2007, the acquisition of the Batliner Collection by the ALBERTINA Museum opened a new chapter in the museum's history, when it became Austria's first federal museum to anchor classical modernist art in its permanent collection. 2018 now marks yet another new beginning: Prof. Karlheinz Essl, his wife Agnes, and his son Martin have decided to donate to the ALBERTINA Museum their shares in Essl Collection owner SE – Sammlung Essl GmbH.

### **Donation of the Essl Collection**

This generous donation was preceded by the de facto division of the Essl Collection, which took place by mutual agreement of the Collection's owners over the past few months. In parallel to this, Vienna's Auktionshaus Im Kinsky undertook an ongoing appraisal of this donation that ranged from € 84.5 to 91.1 million on the basis of the 2014 appraisals by Sotheby's and the Dorotheum as well as taking into account current art price indices and the international art market.

The artworks now owned by Dr. Hans Peter Haselsteiner following the collection's division will be made available to the ALBERTINA Museum for at least the next 27 years as a long-term loan.

The entirety of the Essl Collection will soon be shown in various exhibitions at the ALBERTINA Museum's new second location in the Künstlerhaus on Karlsplatz in Vienna.

The foundation Haselsteiner Familien Privatstiftung (HFPS) will assume the costs (estimated at a total of ca. € 40 million) of renovating and modernizing the Künstlerhaus in accordance with the ALBERTINA Museum's museological requirements.

Furthermore, the company Künstlerhaus Besitz- und Betriebsgesellschaft (KBBG), which is majority-owned by HFPS, will cover the operating expenses for this second ALBERTINA Museum location.

Thanks to all of these developments, a tremendously grateful Federal Minister Mag. Gernot Blümel can now officially announce the generous donation of the Essl Collection—a great step that goes far beyond the cooperative relationship previously agreed upon between Sammlung Essl GmbH and the ALBERTINA Museum. This step was preceded by intensive talks involving Prof. Karlheinz Essl, Dr. Hans Peter Haselsteiner, and Prof. Dr. Klaus Albrecht Schröder: these pertained to budgetary provisions for the cooperation between the ALBERTINA Museum, Sammlung Essl GmbH, and KBBG as well as to more detailed questions regarding the permanent loan and storage contract with SE GmbH and the cooperation agreement with KBBG.

Starting in March of this year, the legal and financial conditions were formulated for the possible donation of the Essl Foundations' shares in the collection to the ALBERTINA Museum—from the necessity of dividing the collection to the guaranteeing of ongoing preservation and research work to the question of the feasibility of a second ALBERTINA Museum location, which is essential for this collection's appropriate presentation due even just to its significance alone.

## **Contribution by the Austrian State**

In order to facilitate preservation and research work on the Essl Collection, the Austrian State will be providing € 800,000 this year and € 850,000 in 2019 (2017: € 850,000). Furthermore, from the point in time at which the ALBERTINA Museum's second location opens, additional funding (in an amount that has yet to be precisely defined) will be made available for the purpose of running this new facility.

## **Federal Minister Gernot Blümel:**

*“We view the Essl Collection as an important collection of Austrian and international art, for which reason it would be extremely unfortunate if it were no longer accessible to the public. I am therefore very happy that, with its donation to the ALBERTINA Museum, we have been able to agree upon a solution for the Essl Collection's long-term preservation. This will make it possible to show the complete Essl Collection in the ALBERTINA Museum at a justifiable cost to the Austrian state. Our heartfelt thanks go to Prof Karlheinz Essl, his family, and the Essl Foundations! A collection of this rank is of historic value even just in and of itself, for which reason it also represents a great enhancement of the collections owned by the Austrian State.*”

# ALBERTINA

*At the same time, the experience and competency of the ALBERTINA Museum will ensure their objective presentation. In this, we will have effected the decisive reinforcement of the overall presentation of post-1945 Austrian and international art history in Vienna. And the ultimate beneficiaries will be all connoisseurs, friends, and lovers of art.“*

## **Prof. Karlheinz Essl:**

*“It has always been our desire to show our collection to as broad a public as possible in Austria’s capital city. This partnership with the ALBERTINA Museum makes all of us, my wife Agnes and our whole family, very happy. I also extend my thanks to Dr. Hans Peter Haselsteiner and the KBBG, which will create and make available this new location of the ALBERTINA Museum for presenting the art of our times. I look forward to the moment when my family and I can view our own collection in the same way as normal visitors. And I hope that this collection, which extends far beyond Austrian art, will enrich a large number of people intellectually, visually, and emotionally to the same extent that it has provided us with joy over the past several decades.“*

## **General Director Klaus Albrecht Schröder:**

*“Today, the ALBERTINA Museum and thus the Republic of Austria have received a gift that is intended to be passed on to hundreds of thousands of people as we show them contemporary art in the context of the Essl Collection and our museum’s own collections. For this, my deepest thanks go to Prof. Karlheinz, Agnes, and Martin Essl, as well as to all members of the Essl family and all of the foundation board members. I also extend special thanks to Federal Minister Mag. Gernot Blümel for showing us his trust and actively joining us in pursuing and supporting the overall strategy of the ALBERTINA Museum with our acceptance of the Essl Collection and establishment of a second location. This assignment to create something new is, of course, associated with expectations that we will bear responsibility for fulfilling in the future. It is a responsibility of which I am most deeply committed.”*

## **Press images:**

<https://www.albertina.at/presse/>

## **The complete donation:**

<http://sammlungenonline.albertina.at/essl>