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The Contemporary Perception of the Book “Verfemte Kunst” – Questioning Werner Haftmann’s Historiography of Modern Art¹

Werner Haftmann was a highly influential West German art historian who, after World War II, played a central role in the dissemination of knowledge concerning modern German and international art in the Federal Republic of Germany. The theoretical conception of the first edition of the documenta exhibition in Kassel in 1955 was grounded in his writings and canonization of 20th-century art history. This major art event was intended to represent a new beginning for the Federal Republic of Germany, not only in the field of art but also for society following the end of the Nazi regime [36, p. 10].

In recent years, research has focused on Haftmann’s biography, especially on his membership in the *Sturmabteilung* (SA) and the Nazi Party, as well as his unclear activities during the Nazi period [2, p. 693; 4; 7, pp. 164, 178–180, 275–278; 5, p. 63; 10; 31, p. 81]. Many questions have arisen about Haftmann’s art historical work. There are two specific reasons for this. Firstly, as an art historian, Haftmann is considered one of the greatest advocates of modern art in the post-war period and a staunch defender of the artists considered “degenerate” by the Nazis. Secondly, part of modern art historiography in West Germany is rooted in Haftmann’s art historical works.

This paper will provide a brief description of Haftmann’s biography and art historical career before and after World War II. The focus will primarily be on Haftmann’s main curatorial work as co-curator of the documenta in Kassel and as director of the Neue Nationalgalerie in West Berlin. Thereafter, it will analyse conceptual key aspects of the book *Verfemte Kunst: bildende Künstler der inneren und äußeren Emigration in der Zeit des Nationalsozialismus* (*Ostracized art: visual artists of internal and external emigration during National Socialism*) [24]. Finally, it will discuss how — in contrast to younger generations that, during the 1960s and 1970s, questioned his canonization of modern art and conservatism towards contemporary art — Haftmann’s reactionary character strongly emerged. The emergence of this reactionary stance demonstrates how his education and the beginning of his career in the nationalist context of the 1920s and 1930s shaped his understanding and approach to art.

¹ The subject presented in this paper is part of my doctoral research on the curatorial work of Werner Haftmann (1912–1999) at the Neue Nationalgalerie in Berlin from 1967 to 1974. Available at: <https://www.uni-heidelberg.de/fakultaeten/philosophie/zegek/iek/forschung/doktoranden/benedettino/> (accessed 9 August 2021).

Two lives at the turn of World War II: Haftmann's biography and career

Werner Gustav Haftmann was born on 28 April 1912 in Fort Hake, near Głowno in the former German province of Poznań, which is today part of Poland. He spent his childhood during a politically turbulent period. Due to the political consequences of the Polish uprisings in Upper Silesia from 1919 to 1921, his family was forced into constant travel and changes of residence². His father, Karl Ernst Gustav Haftmann, was a chief customs inspector during the German Empire and seemingly played a political role in the Upper Silesian movement against Polish independence³. Werner Haftmann attended various schools in different towns in Upper and Lower Silesia. According to his statements, he also had experiences in labour camps (*Arbeitslager*) in Bulgaria, where, in addition to engage in work activities, children and young people gained insight into the problems faced by German-speaking population in the Balkans⁴.

In 1929, Werner Haftmann and his family moved to Magdeburg. In 1932, he received his high school diploma and obtained a scholarship to study art history at the Friedrich Wilhelm University's Philosophical Faculty in Berlin⁵. On 3 November 1933, he joined the SA⁶. In 1934 and 1935, Haftmann published his first articles on contemporary art in the Berlin magazine *Kunst der Nation*. The contributors of this magazine were, on the one hand, convinced National Socialists, and, on the other hand, art historians and artists who had already committed themselves to modern art during the era of the Weimar Republic [12, p. 27]. In this struggle, the founders of *Kunst der Nation* — which was opportunistically protected for a time by Joseph Goebbels — hoped to spare Expressionism, which they presented as a national expression of Nordic and German culture, from being banned [12, p. 23]. Haftmann's articles from this period clearly demonstrate the trend of presenting modern art from a nationalist point of view [9, pp. 26–27].

In 1935, Haftmann moved from Berlin to Göttingen⁷. After completing his doctorate in 1936 on a Renaissance subject [16], he moved to Florence, where he became the first assistant to the director of the Kunsthistorisches Institut, Friedrich Kriegbaum (1901–1943); he held this post until 1940⁸.

Despite its semi-private status, the institute was financially dependent on the German state, which was at the time in the hands of the Nazi Party. In June 1936, the staff of the Berlin-based association that ran the institute was replaced by “politically reliable personalities” to ensure

² Werner Haftmann's curriculum vitae, undated, doctorate file, Universitätsarchiv Göttingen, Phil. Prom. 9, Nr. 19. I express my sincere thanks to Angelika Handschuck and Dr. Holger Berwinkel.

³ PA 10395, Hedwig Haftmann, Landeshauptstadt Magdeburg, Stadtarchiv. I express my sincere thanks to Isabell Bastian; letter from Friedrich Kriegbaum to Hans Sedlmayr, 10 August 1939, Nachfolge Novotny, Archiv des Instituts für Kunstgeschichte der Universität Wien. I express my sincere thanks to Dr. Friedrich Polleroß and Gerd Micheluzzi.

⁴ Werner Haftmann's curriculum vitae, undated, Nachfolge Novotny, Archiv des Instituts für Kunstgeschichte der Universität Wien.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ HU UA, NS-Doz. 2, ZB II 1376 A. 24 Ka 097. I express my sincere thanks to Dagmar Seemel and Dr. Aleksandra Pawliczek.

⁷ Werner Haftmann's doctorate file, Universitätsarchiv Göttingen, Phil. Prom. 9, Nr. 19.

⁸ Werner Haftmann's employment contract, 15 September 1939, Verein zur Erhaltung des Kunsthistorischen Instituts in Florenz, Akte Nr. 79, SMPK-ZA, III/VKI 023 Mitarbeiter des Instituts 1912–1945. I express my sincere thanks to Beate Ebelt-Borchert.



Fig. 1. Book cover of Haftmann's encyclopaedia.
 © Haftmann W. *Malerei im 20. Jahrhundert*, Munich,
 Prestel Publ., 1954 [18]

After multiple publications, including the book on Paul Klee which received enthusiastic reviews [17], the encyclopaedia *Malerei im 20. Jahrhundert* that was started during the war was published in 1954 (Fig. 1).¹⁴ This publication marked a turning point in Haftmann's already promising career [18]¹⁵. In 1955, artist and designer Arnold Bode (1900–1977) appointed him

that the institute's activities would come under the control of the Nazi Party [25, p.58]. On October 1st, 1937, Haftmann became a member of the Nazi Party⁹. During the war, Haftmann worked at the German delegation of the Italian armistice commission with France in Turin¹⁰. He occasionally took part in the activities of the *Abteilung Kunstschutz* between 1943 and 1944 [7, p.276] and assumed the leadership of hunts for partisans in central and northern Italy [11, p.97].

After World War II, in 1946, he returned to Germany, where he settled in Bremen arriving from Bielefeld; he subsequently moved to Kalkar and, later, to the outskirts of Munich¹¹. Haftmann then began his career in the field of modern art. He published articles in the newspaper *Die Zeit*¹², collaborated with American art historians at the Central Collecting Point in Munich [28, p.202], participated in programs about modern art on the Bavarian radio in Munich¹³, and worked as a professor of modern art at the Hochschule für bildende Künste, Hamburg [41, p.246].

⁹ Haftmann, Werner NSDAP–Gaukartei, BArch R 9361–IX Kartei/13020147. I express my sincere thanks to Michael Schelter and Frank Anton.

¹⁰ Kartei Sonderführer, Werner Haftmann, RW59/2139, Bundesarchiv, Abteilung Militärarchiv, Freiburg im Breisgau. I express my sincere thanks to Irina Bühler.

¹¹ Werner Haftmann's registration card, Stadtarchiv Bielefeld, Bestand 104,3/Einwohnermeldeamt, Nr. 27: Meldekartei Gadderbaum, Abgänge 1930–1960, ca. I express my sincere thanks to Dr. Jochen Rath. Werner Haftmann's registration card, StAB 4,82/1–1/0514, Haftmann, Werner Gustav. I express my sincere thanks to Monika Marschalck and Marion Alpert. Werner Haftmann's registration card, Stadtarchiv Kalkar, Meldekartei Gemeinde Hanselaer, Hanselaer I. I express my sincere thanks to Anna Gamerschlag and Mathis Ingenhaag.

¹² Werner Haftmann's curriculum vitae, 22 February 1958, Registratur III.1.18, Lehrstühle Berufungen 1949–1958, III/11 Verhandlungen Generalsekretär — Dr. Schwend, Dr. Haftmann — Prof. Dr. Schmidt 1958, Archiv der Akademie der Bildenden Künste München. I express my sincere thanks to Dr. Caroline Sternberg.

¹³ The programme's transcripts are stored at the BR, Historisches Archiv in Munich. I express my sincere thanks to Manuel Schwane and Stefan Merl.

¹⁴ Letter from Werner Haftmann to Hermann Henselmann, 16 August 1946, SLUB Dresden / Mscr.Dresd. App.2817. I express my sincere thanks to Janine Klemm, Dr. Thomas Haffner and Bettina Erlenkamp.

¹⁵ In Germany, the book was edited in the following years: 1957, 1962, 1965, 1976, 1979, 1987, 1996 and 2000. An extended and revised edition was published in German in 1962. The book was translated to English and Italian in 1960.

co-curator of the documenta in Kassel [26, pp.163–164]. Haftmann also collaborated as a theorist for the second and the third editions, which took respectively place in 1959 and 1964.

The display of Haftmann's own art historiography (part one):

The documenta in Kassel in 1955

Scholars such as Dina Sonntag, Harald Kimpel, and Ulrike Wollenhaupt-Schmid have noted that the theoretical concept of the exhibition *documenta, Art of the XX century. International Exhibition*, which took place at the Fridericianum museum from 15 July to 18 September 1955, was based on Haftmann's encyclopaedia of modern art [38, p.105; 26, p.164; 43, p.49]. Moreover, Annette Tietenberg argued that the illustrated volume that Haftmann published in 1955 [19] served as a catalogue for the selection of paintings to be presented in the exhibition [40, pp.266–275]. In the encyclopaedia, Haftmann affirmed the establishment and increasing popularity of abstract art during the post-war period as a logical, not contingent, consequence of the development of art in the first half of the 20th century. Documenta pursued the goal of presenting an overview of the most important avant-garde artists to rehabilitate Modernism in West Germany after Nazi rule. However, based on Haftmann's book, the exhibition presented a short selection and omitted socially and politically engaged art movements, such as Dadaism and Russian Constructivism. Jewish artists, many of whom were murdered in concentration camps, and political emigrants were equally neglected [14, pp.219–220; 42, pp.68–76].

Furthermore, the exhibition presented predominantly artistic positions intended to demonstrate continuity between the old masters of the avant-garde and a selection of artists who were active in West Germany at the time. Thus, during the documenta, no experimental art works and movements were presented, only established artists who were already known prior to World War II. The influence of Nazi rule had faded. Despite its deliberately partial focus, after years of dictatorship and wars, the exhibition, according to scholar Harald Kimpel, acted as a form of "cultural denazification" [26, p.255].

Due to disagreements with the curatorial concept of the documenta IV, which was supposed to concentrate on contemporary art selected by a large board of curators, Haftmann did not participate in its organization [37, pp.9–10].

The display of Haftmann's own art historiography (part two):

The curatorial work at the Neue Nationalgalerie (1967–1974)

In West Berlin, Haftmann developed a curatorial program primarily based on solo exhibitions of the great masters of the first half of the 20th century, such as Piet Mondrian, and predominantly abstract artists born at the beginning of the 20th century, such as Mark Rothko (Fig. 2), Ernst Wilhelm Nay, Wols, and Hans Hartung. Both in his temporary exhibitions and acquisition policy for the museum's permanent collection, he neglected contemporary art currents that emerged during the 1960s and 1970s and the local art scene in West Berlin. In particular, Haftmann criticized Pop art and new artistic expressions such as performances, which he negated as art [18, pp.518–523; 19, pp.334–335]. The reasons for such aversion are profound. Art currents such as Pop art and Op art which went beyond the traditional means of painting and sculpture and attempted to establish novel relationships with reality contradicted Haftmann's thesis of the triumph of abstract art as the expression of the democratic post-war

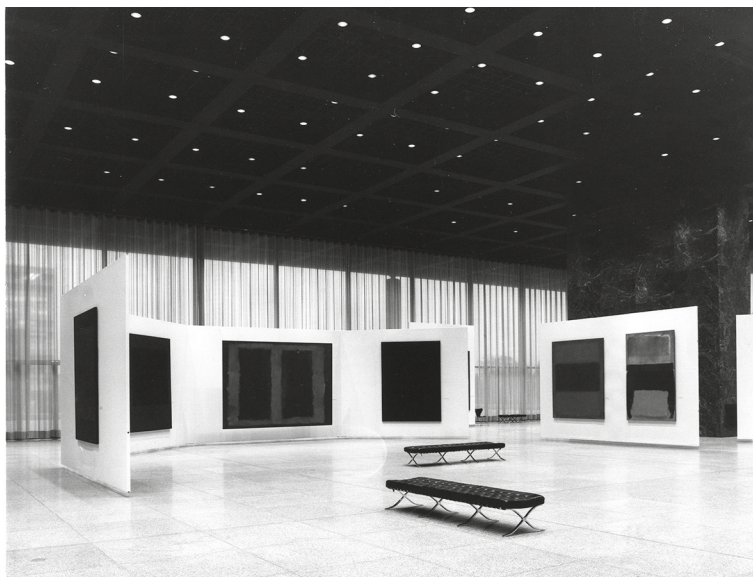


Fig. 2. Book cover of Haftmann's publication on ostracised art. © Haftmann W. *Verfemte Kunst: bildende Künstler der inneren und äußeren Emigration in der Zeit des Nationalsozialismus*. Cologne, DuMont Publ., 1986 [24]

world [20, p. 17]. In Berlin, Haftmann shaped a curatorial program that summarized his theories concerning the worldwide spread of abstract art, art as the expression of the individual instead of the collective experience — according to his theory that “art is what important artists do” [21, p. 14; 23, p. 48] — and his rejection of art movements with a social and political background. After seven years of curatorial work, Haftmann resigned from his post in 1974 and returned to Florence to devote himself primarily to Renaissance art [30].

Latest editorial work aimed at confirming a tendentious canonization of modern art history: The book *Verfemte Kunst*

The extensive volume titled *Verfemte Kunst* (Fig. 3) was commissioned by the German government and based on an idea suggested by Chancellor Helmut Kohl, a member of the Christian Democratic Union of Germany party [24, p. 7]. The publication of this book was intended to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the exhibition *Entartete Kunst*, which fell in 1987 [24, p. 30].

This work can be seen as a product of Haftmann's efforts to legitimize the artistic careers of the select German painters and sculptors who developed their work in Nazi Germany, as well as to rehabilitate them as victims of National Socialism after the war [26, p. 252]¹⁶. Haftmann exploited the myth of the lone apolitical fighter who resisted the regime in silence and solitude [24, pp. 17–19]. Furthermore, he mythologized the figure of the artists who continued their

¹⁶ Kimpel considers the documenta exhibition in 1955 as a “(wenngleich selektive) Rehabilitation der Märtyrer”.



Fig. 3. Mark Rothko exhibition, Neue Nationalgalerie. Berlin, 1971.
© SMB, Zentralarchiv/Reinhard Friedrich

work as “internal emigrants”, a controversial concept that was questioned by writers such as Thomas Mann (1875-1955) — who fled Nazi Germany [44, pp.56–58] — or exiled Jewish historians such as Hannah Arendt (1906-1975) [1, p.22].

He equated the struggle of artists who became internal emigrants with that of artists in exile. According to Haftmann, the fact that both artists who became internal emigrants and those who went into exile carried out their artistic activities in the realm of non-objective art legitimized the national and international dimensions of the post-war diffusion of abstract art, which he had advocated for since 1946. Haftmann wrote that both artists who became internal emigrants and those who went into exile explored in their work the mythical source that preserves reality, which found visible expression in pictorial and allegorical metaphors. In his view, this was evident in the works of old masters, both those who had gone into exile — including Max Beckmann and Paul Klee — and those who had become internal emigrants — including Willi Baumeister and Oskar Schlemmer. According to Haftmann, these artistic changes laid the groundwork for the development of post-war art by a younger generation of artists, both who had gone into exile — including Hans Hartung, Wols and Rolf Nesch — and who had become internal emigrants in Nazi Germany — including Ernst Wilhelm Nay, Fritz Winter and Hans Uhlmann [24, pp.44-45]. Haftmann linked select artists of the younger generation born at the beginning of the 20th century to art movements that he identified as expressions of German modernism, namely Die Brücke, Der Blaue Reiter, and the Bauhaus.

Interestingly, one of the artists whom Haftmann presented as a victim of the regime was Emil Nolde, who was considered “degenerate” by the regime despite sympathizing with National Socialist ideology. An extensive historical research has been published on the exhibition *Emil Nolde. Eine deutsche Legende. Der Künstler im Nationalsozialismus*, which was organized by the Nationalgalerie in 2019 at the Hamburger Bahnhof in Berlin and documented the contradictions of this artist’s biography as well as the construction of his myth as an artist during the postwar period, in a process in which Haftmann played an active role [8, pp. 221–244].

Haftmann’s intention to portray German artists, without distinction, as victims of the regime also served the goal of legitimizing them as heirs of and successors to the German avant-garde of the early 20th century. The idea of a harmonic continuity between the war and the regime in the field of art and the silence of art historians such as Haftmann on the recent past were nevertheless highly criticized following the end of the 1940s in West Germany by, for example, the philosopher Theodor W. Adorno (1903–1969; exile during National Socialism) [13, pp. 32–33].

Haftmann presented artists as apolitical people. In his opinion, they did not have much time to engage with politics [24, p. 17]. Haftmann stated that during the Nazi rule, artists withdrew completely from society to devote themselves to their art. Each of them was, according to Haftmann, an “individual fighter” who, through independent achievement, helped to save contemporary art from oblivion. Haftmann stressed the importance of each artist’s personal artistic accomplishment, which needed to be analysed independently of the historical and political context [24, p. 19].

The same thesis that characterized his books and curatorial work throughout his career, from his 1954 encyclopaedia to the curatorial concepts of the first three documenta exhibitions in Kassel and shaped his curatorial program as director of the Neue Nationalgalerie, is at the heart of his latest book, which was published in 1986.

Haftmann’s understanding of modern art, which had not fundamentally changed since he expressed it in the first edition of *Malerei im 20. Jahrhundert*, seemed to receive definitive political and social recognition through this work. The book, which sold out in its first edition shortly after publication, was regarded as one of the best works of the 1980s [27]. However, the younger generation of art critics objected to Haftmann’s overly personal and non-issue-oriented style. Haftmann’s position as a contemporary witness and his time-bound analysis were contested, for instance, in an article by art historian Uwe M. Schneede published in the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* of 28 February 1987 [35].

Criticism of Haftmann’s curatorial work and historiography:

Reactions from Wieland Schmied, Franz Rudolf Knubel and Dieter Hacker

In the context of my research, I ascertained that criticism against Haftmann’s theories began in the late 1960s and intensified during the 1970s, when he was the director of the Neue Nationalgalerie. Haftmann’s work was questioned by young artists and art historians, as well as by art critics. The main object of criticism was his conservatism, his antiquated idea of the museum, and his personal aversion to many art movements of his time. The call for the democratization of art history and culture in general, which spread during student demonstrations in 1968 and was one of the most discussed topics during the 1970s [3; 39],

brought out Haftmann's reactionary side. By the time he was appointed director of the museum in 1967, his theories were considered outdated. For instance, Berlin art critic Heinz Ohff argued that Haftmann was a "yesterday man" [29]. During a speech on the role of museums, given in Hamburg in 1969, Haftmann openly declared that museums should be dedicated to traditional instead of contemporary experimental art [22, pp.33-34]. He openly stated that the call for democratization was purely rhetorical in nature [23, pp.52-53]. One of the art historians who publicly challenged Haftmann's positions was Wieland Schmied (1929-2014), the director of the Kestner-Gesellschaft in Hanover. In 1967, Schmied reacted to Haftmann's statements about contemporary art, especially the Pop and Op art movements, which, as previously mentioned, Haftmann did not consider art expressions [32]. In his article published in *Die Zeit*, Schmied emphasized how an "old resentment" was rising against contemporary art and literature [6, pp.104-109]¹⁷. He argued that considering the Nazis' condemnation of modern art during the 1930s, it was dangerous to describe contemporary art as "vulgar, denatured", and "orgiastic", as Haftmann did [33].

Several artists from the Berlin art scene, such as Franz Rudolf Knubel (1938-2020) and Dieter Hacker (1942-), came into personal conflict with Haftmann. Knubel, for example, refused to exhibit his works in 1969 at the Neue Nationalgalerie due to Haftmann's indifference to the demands for democratization expressed by the artists of the Berlin art association Deutsche Gesellschaft für Bildende Kunst¹⁸. Similarly, in 1973, Hacker organized the exhibition *Unsere Nationalgalerie* in his Art Gallery 7, Produzentengalerie (Fig. 4), in which he questioned Haftmann's curatorial work and referred to the Nationalgalerie as a bourgeois institution. He provocatively encouraged the creation of another Nationalgalerie that would be more in line with current problems and the needs of the people [34, pp.62-64; 15, unnumbered]. Haftmann, who did not appreciate the initiative, held the artist responsible for the gunshots fired on the night of March 5, 1973, at the museum's stained-glass windows. Haftmann believed that what he called a "criminal attack" against the museum was due to Hacker's exhibition and his advocating for a different curatorial approach at the Neue Nationalgalerie¹⁹.

Reassessing Haftmann's contribution in the field of art historiography: Final remarks

Haftmann's conservative and selective approach to art criticism, which is characterized by his curatorial concept for the first three documenta exhibitions and affirmed in his publications from the encyclopaedia until his latest book, *Verfemte Kunst*, manifested itself prominently in his curatorial work at the Neue Nationalgalerie in Berlin. The city was, at the time, one of the centres of the German student demonstrations that began in 1968. In the late 1960s and during the 1970s, Haftmann's categorical refusal to consider the claims of democratization as well as to open the museum to contemporary art should represent a starting point for re-

¹⁷ Schmied refers to the literary controversy that took place after Emil Staiger's speech at the award ceremony for the Zurich City Prize for Literature on 17 December 1966. Max Frisch reacted to Staiger's attacks on contemporary literature, especially on the *littérature engagée*.

¹⁸ Letter from Rudolf Knubel to Werner Haftmann, 31 January 1969, SMB-ZA, VA11097, Schriftwechsel des Direktors A-L, 1969, vol. no. 01, letter K.

¹⁹ Letter from Werner Haftmann to Dieter Hacker, 7 March 1973, SMB-ZA, VA11122, Schriftwechsel des Direktors A-K, 1973, vol. no. 01, letter H.

17. Plakat

Unsere Nationalgalerie

Eine Ausstellung vom
5.3. - 7.4. 73
Mo - Fr 16 - 19, Sa 10 - 14 Uhr



Da steht sie und behauptet, sie könne nicht anders, die Nationalgalerie und unter ihr das Volk, die Tröstungen der Kunst empfangend. Von unserem Geld dick und faul genudelt, verdeckt sie ihren Bauch durch eine elegante Fassade.

Betrieben von Kunsthistorikern - Hennen, die brütend auf alten Eiern sitzen.

Für wen wohl?
Für uns?

Wir, die Leute, haben andere Probleme. Mit unserem Leben, unserer Arbeit, unseren Fotoalben, Schrebergärten und

Wohnungen hat die Nationalgalerie nichts zu tun.

Nicht einmal mit denen von uns, die sie hin und wieder besuchen, die beim Betreten den Hut abnehmen, sich nur flüsternd unterhalten und die Bilder ablaufen, die Hände hinterm Bauch verschränkt.

Aber nichts wird sich ändern, solange wir darauf warten, daß andere es für uns tun.

Die Nationalgalerie selber machen! Das müssen wir lernen.

Eines Tages - vielleicht - wird dann im Immobilienteil der Frankfurter Allgemeinen zu lesen sein: Nationalgalerie zu verkaufen.

7. Produzentengalerie

Dieter Hacker

1 Berlin 15 Schaperstr. 10

Kooperative:

Paramedia

7. Produzentengalerie

Berlin 15

Schaperstrasse 10

Fig. 4. Dieter Hacker, Poster of the exhibition *Unsere Nationalgalerie* at the 7.

Produzentengalerie, Berlin, 1973. © Schmie W. (ed.). *Die politische Arbeit des Künstlers beginnt bei seiner Arbeit* / 7. Produzentengalerie, Dieter Hacker / Zwischenbericht 1971-1981: Catalogue. Berlin, Daadgalerie. Berlin, 1981, p. 62 [34, p. 62]

examining Haftmann's contribution to the interpretation of 20th-century art. This refusal, along with Haftmann's biography, his upbringing in a conservative and nationalist context, as well as personal and professional implications with the Nazi regime at the beginning of his career as an art historian, is of primary importance when questioning and re-evaluating his role as an advocate and defender of modern art in West Germany.

Archives

BArch, Bundesarchiv, Berlin
 HU UA, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin Universitätsarchiv
 SMB-ZA, Zentralarchiv der Staatlichen Museen zu Berlin, Preußischer Kulturbesitz
 Stadtarchiv Bielefeld
 StAB, Freie Hansestadt Bremen Staatsarchiv Bremen
 Dresden Sächsische Landesbibliothek — Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek Dresden (SLUB)
 Bundesarchiv, Abteilung Militärarchiv, Freiburg im Breisgau
 Universitätsarchiv Göttingen
 Stadtarchiv Kalkar
 Landeshauptstadt Magdeburg, Stadtarchiv
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Title. The Contemporary Perception of the Book “Verfemte Kunst”: Questioning Werner Haftmann’s Historiography of Modern Art

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Abstract. Can the legitimacy of Werner Haftmann’s (1912–1999) historiographical and curatorial work, who is considered one of the most influential German promoters of modern art in the post-war period in the Federal Republic of Germany, be questioned? Did Haftmann’s personal and professional associations with the Nazi regime before and during World War II leave traces in his later work and career?

The article considers Werner Haftmann’s art historiography and curatorial program influenced by his biography, education, and early professional activities during the 1920s and 1930s. His dogmatic and conservative approach emerged during the student protests of 1968, in which younger generations demanded the democratization of culture. Therefore, it is argued that this aspect of Haftmann’s background should be considered as a starting point to reassess his contribution to the canonization of 20th-century Western art history.

The article describes Haftmann’s biography and career focusing on his most important curatorial experiences, namely serving as a co-curator of the first ‘documenta’ in Kassel (1955) and as the first director of the Neue Nationalgalerie in Berlin (1967–1974), and analyses the conceptual aspects of Haftmann’s historiography of modern art in his latest book, *Verfemte Kunst. Bildende Künstler der inneren und äußeren Emigration in der Zeit des Nationalsozialismus*. This book, which was commissioned by the German government and published in 1986, can be interpreted as Haftmann’s final effort to portray select German painters and sculptors who remained in Germany during World War II as victims of the Nazi regime. In doing so, he equated these so-called “internal emigrants” with those who had to flee. Finally, the article demonstrates that, despite enjoying institutional support, Haftmann’s art historiography and curatorial work were strongly contested by younger art historians and artists.

Keywords: Werner Haftmann, Wieland Schmied, Verfemte Kunst, National Socialism, documenta, Neue Nationalgalerie, Berlin, historiography, modern art, canon

Название статьи. Современное восприятие книги “Verfemte Kunst”: подвергая сомнению историографию современного искусства Вернера Хафтмана

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Аннотация. В статье рассматривается историография искусства и кураторская программа Вернера Хафтмана (1912–1999), на которые повлияли его биография, образование и ранняя профессиональная деятельность в 1920–1930-е гг. Его догматичный и консервативный подход проявился во время студенческих протестов 1968 г., в ходе которых молодые поколения требовали демократизации культуры. Поэтому утверждается, что этот аспект биографии Хафтмана следует рассматривать как отправную точку для переоценки его вклада в канонизацию истории западного искусства XX в. В статье сначала описываются биография и карьера Хафтмана, с особым вниманием к его наиболее важным кураторским опытам, а именно к его работе в качестве со-куратора первой 'documenta' в Касселе (1955) и в качестве первого директора Новой национальной галереи в Берлине (1967–1974), а также анализируются концептуальные аспекты его историографии современного искусства из его последней книги «Verfemte Kunst. Bildende Künstler der inneren und äußeren Emigration in der Zeit des Nationalsozialismus». Эта книга, написанная по заказу правительства Германии и опубликованная в 1986 г., может быть истолкована как последняя попытка Хафтмана изобразить избранных немецких художников и скульпторов, оставшихся в Германии во время Второй мировой войны, жертвами нацистского режима. При этом он приравнивал этих так называемых “внутренних эмигрантов” к тем, кто был вынужден бежать. Наконец, в статье показано, что, несмотря на институциональную поддержку, историография искусства и кураторская работа Хафтмана были серьезно оспорены молодыми искусствоведами и художниками.

Ключевые слова: Вернер Хафтман, Виланд Шмид, национал-социализм, Новая национальная галерея, Берлин, историография, современное искусство, канон