

# **Georg Kolbe and the Art Market in National Socialism**

**“I am by no means  
in the position of  
having to sell my few  
bronzes at dumping  
prices.” Georg Kolbe’s  
Marketing Strategies**

## Preliminary Note

During his more than forty-year career as an artist, the sculptor Georg Kolbe worked with more than thirty different art dealers in Germany and abroad.<sup>1</sup> With each of these galleries, he developed very different business relationships. While many relationships remained episodic, others developed into long-term and intensive business partnerships. The surviving sources on this subject are as varied as the individual collaborations between the sculptor and “his” art dealers. The estates of many of the gallerists who were relevant to Kolbe have either survived only in fragments, are not publicly accessible, are not known, or—as in the case of Alfred Flechtheim—have been almost completely lost. For many years, there were also large gaps in the sculptor’s estate with regard to the art trade. With the acquisition of the estate of Kolbe’s granddaughter Maria von Tiesenhausen by the Georg Kolbe Museum in 2020, these gaps were significantly reduced. The more than 500 business documents and correspondences preserved in the holdings provide new perspectives on Kolbe’s marketing strategies and his relationship to important protagonists of the German art trade during the Weimar Republic and the period of National Socialism, and reveal the continuities and caesuras associated with them.<sup>2</sup>

### I. “Artists and the Modern Art Trade”

Georg Kolbe repeatedly commented on aspects of the art market in prefaces and articles. In one of his most comprehensive statements on this subject, he formulated his ideal conception of an art dealer in the art magazine *Der Kunstmärkter* in 1928. For the January and February issues, the magazine had invited sixteen artists “of the most diverse ‘tendencies’” to an “enquête” (survey) entitled “Künstler und moderner Kunsthändel” (Artists and the Modern Art Trade)<sup>3</sup> and was able to win over Kolbe, one of the most successful and sought-after sculptors at the time.

His solid position on the art market around 1928 was demonstrated, among other things, by the fact that he had the financial means to purchase a 2,000-square-meter plot of land in Berlin’s Westend and to build a modern studio and residential ensemble on it in the same year.<sup>4</sup> Gallery exhibitions in New York, Berlin, Cologne, Frankfurt am Main, and London,<sup>5</sup> acquisitions by museums, such as the purchase of a *Kauernde* (Squatting Female Figure, 1927) by the City of Detroit for the Detroit Institute of Arts through Galerie Flechtheim,<sup>6</sup> and public commissions, such as the so-called Rathenau fountain in Berlin’s Volkspark Rehberge,<sup>7</sup> completed in 1928, also attest to his national and international reputation at this time.

These successes were largely linked to the commitment of various gallerists; and Kolbe’s contribution to the *Kunstmärkter* survey documents that he, too, was aware of the importance and necessity of a progressive and risk-taking art trade for the successful marketing of his own work:

“Artists make a clear distinction between the two representatives of the art trade: the one that deals only with old, long-recognized art and the one that takes care of living artists. It is the latter that is important to us. He should not only show accountability to the buyer, but above all to the artist. He must be a passionate friend not only of art, but also of the artists as people. This requires a strong, highly talented fellow. The expertise of even the most renowned museum professional cannot help him. This is not about the authenticity of a name, but the authenticity of an emerging talent that is still being discussed. His task is to believe in this talent himself and to inspire such belief in others. And whoever is able to do that, and is proven right, should also make a lot of money. No, this is not profiteering! Of course, he has to be a man of rank. Not like ninety percent of his colleagues, who conveniently grab only big names and open a shop with them. No, an art dealer must not only ‘undertake,’ he must also ‘take over.’ In this way, he becomes a friend and indispensable helper of art and artists; he becomes a guide for art lovers. How often have we met such a man?”<sup>8</sup>

In addition to all the appreciation for the “indispensable helpers,” the text reveals a hierarchical understanding of roles in which “the art dealer” is primarily obligated to the artists. A possible obligation of the artists to the dealers, on the other hand, does not seem to exist. The article also reveals reservations about much of the art trade at the time by suggesting that a large group of “comfortable entrepreneurs” faced off against individual “helping friends of the artist as a person.” Comparable dichotomous views of the art market can also be found among other artists and art dealers of the time and attest to the competitive situation in which they saw themselves—depending on their point of view—with French or “old” art.<sup>9</sup> Kolbe’s business partner at the time, Alfred Flechtheim, also repeatedly propagated this competition.<sup>10</sup> In his “Zuschrift aus dem Kunsthändel” (Letter from the Art Trade),<sup>11</sup> published in the March issue of *Kunstwanderer* in response to the artist survey, he was able to report from his perspective that a “large number” of the “living German [artists]” he represented “[...] make a more or less good living from the conversion of their output into money,” but he, too, lamented the “misfortune” that “in the prominent Bellevue-, Viktoria-, and Tiergartenstrasse only Old Masters, French Impressionists, Chinese tomb figures, and signed chests of drawers were traded.” According to Flechtheim, there was still “too much propaganda for old art” through exhibitions and the press; however, it was the exhibitions of “new” art that spread the word “that it is also nice to own a Kolbe or a Klee.”<sup>12</sup>

Although Flechtheim was undoubtedly the type of dealer Kolbe had positively sketched, in his definition the sculptor may well have initially had the late Paul Cassirer in mind, whom Kolbe had similarly characterized in his obituary for the gallerist two years earlier: “God grant young art a mediator of equal potency, a dealer who is both resourceful and passionate, who as a whole represents an artist’s man like Paul Cassirer.”<sup>13</sup>

## II. Georg Kolbe and Paul Cassirer

Paul Cassirer's contribution to Georg Kolbe's artistic and economic rise is undisputed.<sup>14</sup> Therefore, only a brief outline of their common path will be given here. Around the turn of the century, the art dealer had taken on a young generation of sculptors, whose most prominent representatives included Georg Kolbe, Ernst Barlach, Wilhelm Lehmbruck, and August Gaul.<sup>15</sup> The first solo exhibition in November 1904 marked the beginning of the business relationship between Kolbe and Cassirer.<sup>16</sup> Like other sculptors of his generation, Kolbe strove for artistic autonomy far removed from the Wilhelminian commissioned sculpture that was prevalent at the time.<sup>17</sup> Through Cassirer, he gained the necessary access to the private art market and the corresponding circles of collectors. After the First World War, the gallerist remained an important partner for Kolbe, who became increasingly successful. The sculptor's works were repeatedly exhibited at the renowned Kunstsalon on Viktoriastrasse.<sup>18</sup> When Paul Cassirer committed suicide in January 1926, Georg Kolbe paid him a last tribute by taking his death mask and designing the art dealer's grave. His connection to the Kunstsalon and Verlag Paul Cassirer, both of which were continued by Grete Ring and Walter Feilchenfeldt, remained after the death of the art dealer.

During his time with Cassirer, Georg Kolbe developed into not only a successful artist but also a professional businessman and relentless negotiator. Not least for this reason, it can be assumed that the collaboration with the art dealer was formative and fundamental for Kolbe's later actions on the art market. The progressive form of presentation of the Cassirer exhibitions, which differed in their systematics and concentration from the often overloaded exhibitions of conventional galleries in the German Empire, the close cooperation with private collectors and Secessionist exhibition institutions, and the marketing through high-quality photographic reproductions, as in the case of the joint publication *Bildwerke* in 1913,<sup>19</sup> probably provided Kolbe with lasting standards for the successful positioning of his own work on the art market. Kolbe had pushed for a photographic documentation of his own works early on, and his preoccupation with Auguste Rodin most likely furthered this idea.<sup>20</sup> The Cassirer book, however, was the first professional use of his work photographs for a comprehensive marketing of his "Bildwerke" (sculptures). It can be observed that, from then on, Kolbe attached great importance to controlling and securing the distribution and use of his work photographs on the art market.<sup>21</sup> Later illustrated book projects in which Kolbe was involved, such as Rudolf Binding's book, published in 1933 and subsequently reprinted several times, *Vom Leben der Plastik. Inhalt und Schönheit des Werkes von Georg Kolbe* (On the Life of Sculpture. The Content and Beauty of the Work of Georg Kolbe)<sup>22</sup> and the volume *Bildwerke. Vom Künstler ausgewählt* (Sculptures. Selected by the Artist),<sup>23</sup> published in 1939 as part of the Insel-Bücherei series, may also have been influenced by his experiences with the early Cassirer publication. With the hiring of Margrit Schwartzkopff as his photographer in the late 1920s, Kolbe finally professionalized this area.

In addition, it can be assumed that Kolbe recognized the importance of a private art market in the years of the German Empire, which could offer economic security in times

of restrictive state cultural policies, and the advantages of his own independence in this market. Even though Cassirer acted as Kolbe's main dealer of sorts for the years between 1904 and 1926, the sculptor opted early on for the lifelong principle of not tying himself exclusively to a single art dealer.<sup>24</sup> This independence gave him the freedom to sell numerous casts directly to collectors, museums, and other galleries, which in turn led to greater financial autonomy as his successes grew.

### III. Georg Kolbe and Galerie Flechtheim

After Cassirer's death, Kolbe intensified his collaboration with Galerie Flechtheim (fig. 1). In March 1926, Flechtheim, who himself had received support from Cassirer in 1921 when he founded his Berlin branch,<sup>25</sup> donated a cast of the Cassirer portrait created by Kolbe (1925) to the Nationalgalerie in Berlin, which can be interpreted on the one hand as a posthumous tribute to the deceased and on the other hand as a symbolic prelude to the collaboration.<sup>26</sup> The correspondence between the sculptor and the gallery, which was preserved in the new estate, began shortly thereafter, in October 1926, with the preparations for the first joint exhibition at the Düsseldorf branch in 1927.<sup>27</sup>

From this point on, a collaboration developed that lasted more than six years and resulted in two solo exhibitions,<sup>28</sup> several group exhibitions, and numerous sales in Germany and abroad. Despite this successful partnership, the new sources document an occasionally strained relationship between Georg Kolbe and Alfred Flechtheim, who had in any case delegated Kolbe's day-to-day supervision to his two employees, Alex Vömel and Curt Valentin. In July 1930, the relationship between the sculptor and the gallery seems to have almost broken down. Kolbe's threat to withdraw from the business relationship and the reasons for the conflict can be reconstructed from a conciliatory letter written by Curt Valentin:

"We spoke at length about the Maillol affair. We both agreed that it was outrageous that you and Maillol did not meet. Flechtheim is also in complete agreement with us on this—and I must repeat that, in this case, Flechtheim did what was in his power. The fact that he did not have this power cannot be blamed on him.

Nor is there much point in talking in detail about Flechtheim himself; we have done that often enough. But if I may say one more word o n h i s b e h a l f , I would like to repeat that the many mistakes, which every sensitive person must take offense at, do not change anything or little about the fact that he stands up for the things he 'represents'—and he is perhaps the only art dealer in Germany today who is also willing to make sacrifices for the affairs of art. [...]

If the abundance of exhibitions he organizes gives the impression that he is, as you say, like a department store, 'interested in everything,' then, basically, there are not too many artists for whom he stands up and t r u l y stands up. [...] Even if Barlach were now to join Galerie Flechtheim, I do not think that this



1 (left to right) Alfred Flechtheim, André Gide, and Georg Kolbe in front of Galerie Flechtheim in Berlin, 1930, historical photograph

could be a reason to draw your final conclusions about Flechtheim. [...] If you are not convinced of Flechtheim in this respect, then I may perhaps say that Vömel and I—if I may say so—will really and with all our love and friendship and in any case stand up for you and your work. That, at least, you know!"<sup>29</sup>

The week before Valentin's letter, the French sculptor Aristide Maillol had visited Berlin and, on that occasion, met Ernst Barlach at Galerie Flechtheim. The meeting was documented photographically and later used by the gallery for promotional purposes.<sup>30</sup> Because Barlach was able to meet Maillol, whom Kolbe greatly admired,<sup>31</sup> while he himself was denied this privilege, Kolbe apparently felt slighted and no longer worthy of being represented by Flechtheim.

Kolbe's subjective perception, however, was at odds with the actual commitment that Galerie Flechtheim had shown to him during this period, far beyond the borders of Germany. The previous year, for example, Flechtheim had sold another work, *Assunta* (1919/21), to the City of Detroit for the Detroit Institute of Arts.<sup>32</sup> An exhibition at the Weyhe Gallery in New York in May 1929 also seems to have been realized in cooperation

with the Berlin gallery.<sup>33</sup> In addition, a comprehensive and much-discussed solo exhibition of Kolbe's work took place at Galerie Flechtheim in Berlin in March 1930.<sup>34</sup>

Another reason for Kolbe's irritation was obviously the contract for an extensive casting program, which Flechtheim and Barlach had signed shortly before the Maillol meeting and which henceforth bound the presumptive competitor more closely to the gallery.<sup>35</sup> There was a pronounced rivalry with Barlach in particular, which was further expressed in the fact that Kolbe not only cut out and collected articles about himself, but also articles about his sculptor colleague.<sup>36</sup> An increasing presence of Barlach in the gallery's program apparently led Kolbe to a verbal all-out attack against the alleged Flechtheim "department store"<sup>37</sup> in order to strengthen his own market position.

The contractual agreement between Barlach and Flechtheim has been preserved in Barlach's estate as a summary in letter form.<sup>38</sup> Meanwhile, a 1928 contract between Kolbe and Flechtheim has been made available to researchers through the estate of Maria von Tiesenhausen (fig. 2).<sup>39</sup> A comparison of these two "sculptor's contracts" reveals two different philosophies of self-promotion: while Barlach concluded a comprehensive framework agreement with Flechtheim, granting the latter exclusive distribution rights for sixteen works from the years 1907 to 1930, Kolbe granted the gallerist only the nationwide distribution rights for a *Sitzende* (Seated Woman)<sup>40</sup>—with all other works remaining subject to negotiation. In contrast to Barlach, Kolbe also retained control over the production and quality of the casts and only passed the bronzes on to Flechtheim on commission. The fact that Kolbe himself limited his business partners' scope of action with such restrictive contractual conditions, while at the same time placing exaggerated expectations on the representation, once again demonstrates his utilitarian relationship to the art trade. The extent to which Kolbe's actions were guided by careerist and egocentric thinking remains to be examined in greater detail, especially with regard to his actions in the art industry during the National Socialist era.

Despite the obvious tensions, the collaboration between Kolbe and Galerie Flechtheim continued after 1930, as is well known, which may have been due in no small part to Curt Valentin's conciliatory actions.<sup>41</sup> In 1931, another solo exhibition followed at Galerie Flechtheim, Berlin.<sup>42</sup> One year later, presumably with the help of the gallery, Kolbe received a commission from the city of Düsseldorf for a monument to Heinrich Heine.<sup>43</sup> The fact that the gallery took on much more far-reaching tasks than simply the mediation of sales is further demonstrated by the Kolbe exhibition held by the Kestner-Gesellschaft in Hanover in January 1933. With fifty sculptures and numerous works on paper, it was one of the most comprehensive presentations of Kolbe's work during his lifetime.<sup>44</sup> From the surviving correspondence in the archive of the Kestner-Gesellschaft, it is clear that Curt Valentin played a major role in the organization of the exhibition and the catalog, and that he clarified all questions in advance with the exhibition director at the time, Justus Bier.<sup>45</sup> In his correspondence with Bier, Valentin always had Kolbe's sensibilities in mind:

"The exhibition has been put together with a great deal of care and effort, and it is my wish that it will be a real success, hopefully also in material terms. In any case, I would like to ask you to refrain from exhibiting Barlach bronzes at this time. If you have created a new room on the ground floor, it would be good if the Kolbe exhibition could be placed so generously that it would gain even more weight by being presented in all of your rooms."<sup>46</sup>

Some time later, Valentin confirmed receipt of the Kestner-Gesellschaft's room plan, which was to be supplemented with the respective positions of the exhibits and returned to Hanover.<sup>47</sup> This plan has not survived in the archive of the Kestner-Gesellschaft; however, a copy was found in 2020 in the new estate holdings at the Georg Kolbe Museum (fig. 3). Together with the exhibition views preserved in the estate (fig. 4), this plan documents Kolbe's last major retrospective before the NS era and completes the picture of an intensive collaboration between the gallery and the artist. It can also be proven that Curt Valentin took over the staging of the bronzes for the subsequent exhibition at the Kunsthütte Chemnitz.<sup>48</sup> Although Kolbe had also repeatedly collaborated with Galerie Gerstenberger in Chemnitz, most recently in 1932,<sup>49</sup> there was no question that Valentin, and not Gerstenberger's managing director Wilhelm Grosshennig, should represent the sculptor's interests locally, which points to the leading role of Galerie Flechtheim and Valentin in Kolbe's network of art dealers.

#### **IV. Georg Kolbe and the Art Market between 1933 and 1945**

The exhibition at the Kestner-Gesellschaft opened in the last days of the Weimar Republic on January 19, 1933, when it was already clear what the new political reality in Germany would be with the transfer of power to the National Socialists eleven days later.<sup>50</sup> It ended as scheduled on March 5, 1933, the day of the Reichstag elections, which were preceded by massive and brutal persecution of political opponents of National Socialism after the Reichstag fire and in which more than fifty percent of the eligible voters voted for the NSDAP and national conservative parties. The profound repercussions of the new power relations were also quickly felt in the art market. State-organized anti-Semitism and ever-increasing repression led to a wave of emigration, with many German art dealers and collectors of Jewish origin leaving the country. Galleries closed or suspended their exhibition activities.<sup>51</sup> As a result, numerous collections and business structures no longer existed or were absent from the German art market.

The extent to which these repercussions also affected Kolbe is made clear by the biographical research on the Kolbe collectors listed in Ludwig Justi's Kolbe monograph published in 1931.<sup>52</sup> Of these forty-five representative names, thirty-one were living in Germany in 1933. More than one-third of these individuals were subject to systematic exclusion and persecution after 1933. In addition, Alfred Flechtheim, Kolbe's most important gallerist at the time, fled Germany in October 1933.

V e r t r a g.

Zwischen Herrn Georg Kolbe, Berlin-W.10, Von der Heydtstr.7, und der Galerie Alfred Flechtheim G.m.b.H., Düsseldorf und Berlin, wurde heute folgender Vertrag abgeschlossen:

§ 1

Herr Georg Kolbe über gibt der Galerie Alfred Flechtheim G.m.b.H., Düsseldorf und Berlin den Alleinvertrieb der Plastik "Sitzende" für Deutschland. Als Nettopreis der Plastik in Bronze werden M.1000.- festgesetzt und als Verkaufspreis M.1500.-. Bei Verkäufen an Händler hat die Galerie Flechtheim 20% Rabatt zu geben, sodass in diesem Falle der Verkaufspreis M.1200.- ist.

§ 2

Es werden im Ganzen, vom heutigen Tage ab gerechnet, 10 Exemplare dieser Bronze hergestellt, welche der Galerie Alfred Flechtheim G.m.b.H., Düsseldorf und Berlin zum Alleinvertrieb übergeben werden.

§ 3

Transport- Versicherungs- Verpackungs- und Reklame-Umkosten, die durch den Verkauf der Bronzen entstehen, gehen zu Lasten der Galerie Flechtheim G.m.b.H., Düsseldorf und Berlin.

- 2 -

**2** Contract between Georg Kolbe and Galerie Alfred Flechtheim for the exclusive right to distribute the sculpture *Sitzende* (Seated Woman), 1928, Georg Kolbe Museum Archive, Berlin

§ 4

Georg Kolbe gibt der Galerie Alfred Flechtheim G.m.b.H. die 10 Bronzen in Kommission; d.h. dieselben bleiben Eigentum von Georg Kolbe bis zur Bezahlung. Bei Barverkäufen ist der Nettobetrag sofort an Kolbe abzuführen; bei Verkäufen auf Ratenzahlung sind die Netto-Raten-Beträge sofort nach Eingang abzuführen. Im letzten Falle übernimmt die Galerie Alfred Flechtheim G.m.b.H. das Obligo für den Käufer. Längerer Kredit als 4 Monate zu geben, ist der Galerie Flechtheim nicht gestattet.

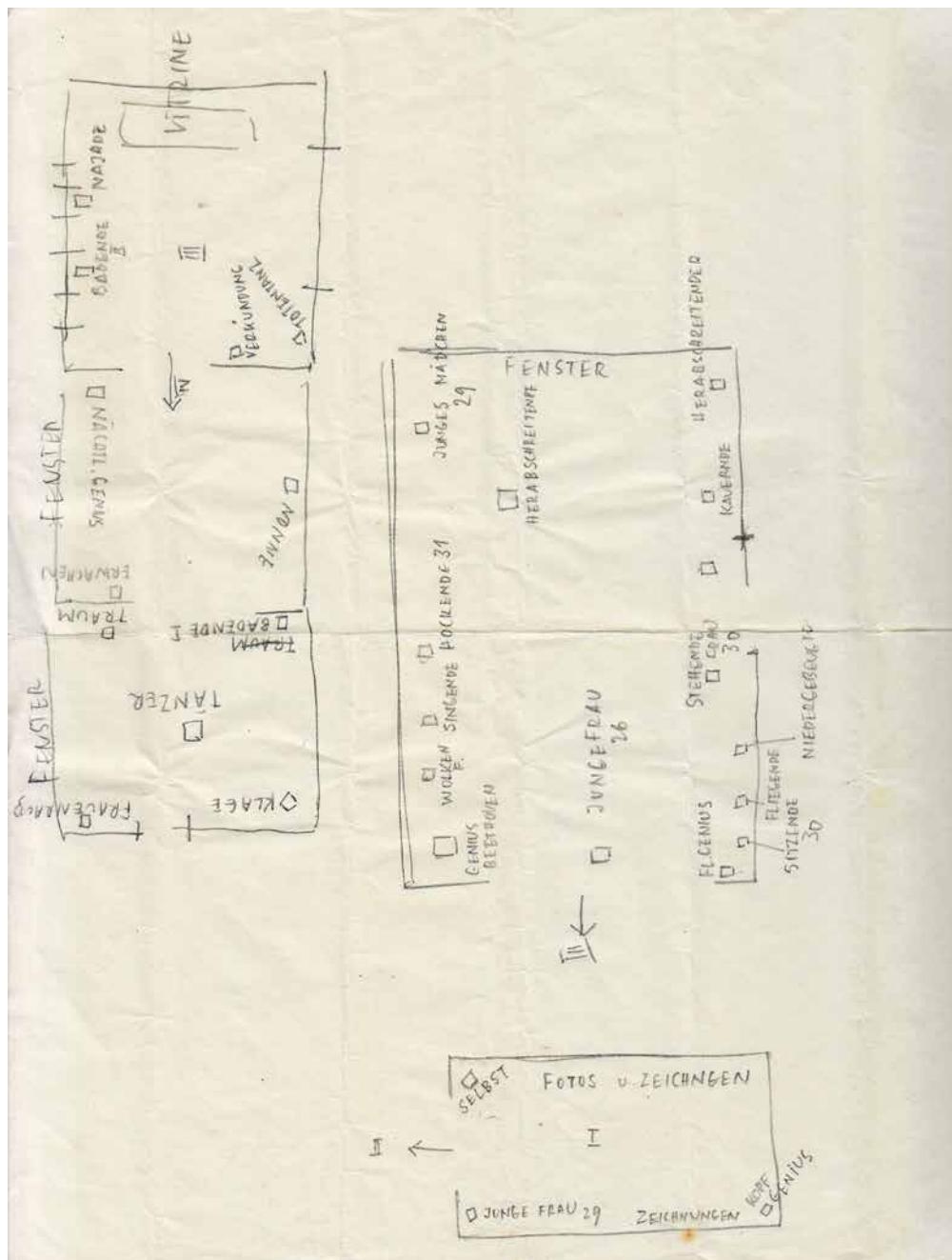
§ 5

Nach Verkauf dieser 10 Güsse steht es der Galerie Flechtheim frei, eine weitere Anzahl unter gleichen Bedingungen in Kommission zu nehmen, also den Vertrag zu verlängern. Steigerung der Gusspreise würde eine Änderung der Netto- wie Verkaufspreise zur Folge haben.

Düsseldorf, 8. 5. 29.

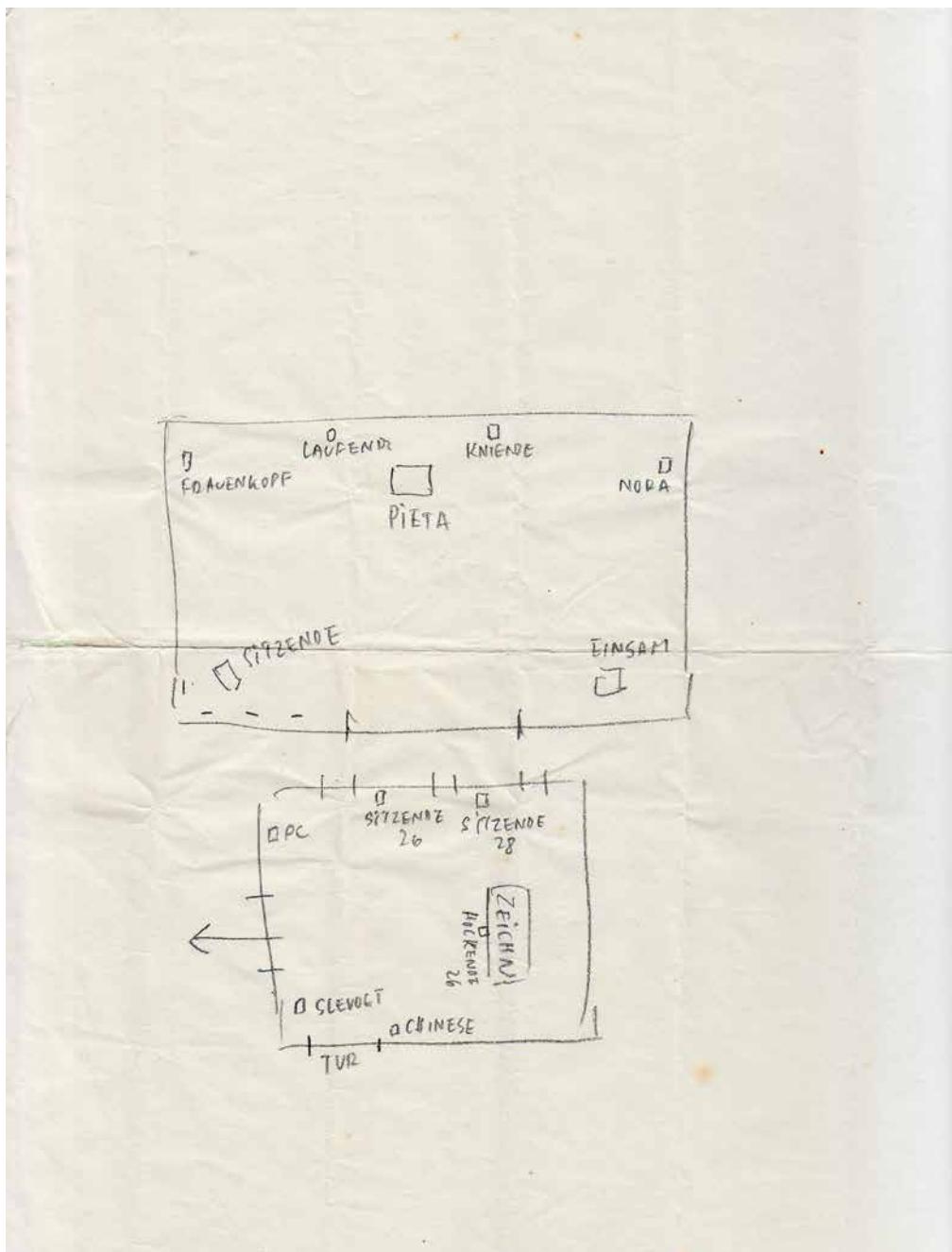
Galerie Alfred Flechtheim  
G.m.b.H.

Georg Kolbe



3 Two-page plan of the exhibition at the Kestner-Gesellschaft in Hannover, 1933, drawn up by Curt Valentin, Georg Kolbe Museum Archive, Berlin

**174** "I am by no means in the position of having to sell my few bronzes at dumping prices."



# KESTNER-GESELLSCHAFT HANNOVER

FEBRUAR-MÄRZ 1933

*Katalog*



4 Exhibition views in the rooms of the Kestner-Gesellschaft in Hannover, 1933, Georg Kolbe Museum Archive, Berlin, historical photographs from Georg Kolbe's exhibition album compiled by Margrit Schwartzkopff



5 In the upper display window of Galerie Buchholz in Berlin is the *Kniende* (Kneeling Woman, 1930) by Georg Kolbe, ca. 1934, historical photograph

Despite Flechtheim's emigration, however, personal continuity prevailed in Kolbe's network of art dealers, which is why there was no major break. Flechtheim was replaced by his former employees, who had already worked closely with Kolbe while Galerie Flechtheim was still in existence as such. In the spring of 1933, Alex Vömel opened his own gallery at the Düsseldorf premises.<sup>53</sup> Shortly thereafter, Kolbe's assistant, Margrit Schwartzkopff, sent him photographs of six available Kolbe bronzes and an updated price list with the cautionary note: "Professor Kolbe expects the gallery to be satisfied with a moderate commission."<sup>54</sup> Curt Valentin<sup>55</sup> continued to work from Berlin. In November 1933, he wrote to the painter Paul Klee: "I will, of course, cooperate with Vömel. [...] The German sculptors (Kolbe, Marcks, Sintenis, etc.) are allowing me to represent them."<sup>56</sup> The following year, he moved to the Berlin bookshop and gallery of Karl Buchholz (fig. 5), which placed an emphasis on sculpture in its program and from then on regularly exhibited Kolbe's work (fig. 6). After Valentin's emigration in 1937, the gallery also represented the sculptor on the American market. The distribution of Kolbe's works in Germany continued almost seamlessly in 1933, as galleries such as Gerstenberger in Chemnitz and Nierendorf and Möller in Berlin also remained as business partners.



AUSSTELLUNG VOM 27. OKTOBER BIS 24. NOVEMBER 1934

# ZEICHNUNGEN DEUTSCHER BILDHAUER DER GEGENWART

AUSSTELLUNGSRAUM DER BUCHHANDLUNG KARL BUCHHOLZ.

Berlin W 8, Leipziger Straße 119/120, Fernruf A 1 Jäger 5645  
(zwischen Mauer- und Wilhelmstraße)

*Kolbe*

6 Exhibition catalog *Zeichnungen deutscher Bildhauer der Gegenwart* (Drawings by Contemporary German Sculptors), Galerie Karl Buchholz, Berlin, 1934

It can therefore be assumed that Georg Kolbe had a relatively solid market position at the beginning of the National Socialist era. Even in the following years, in which the NS state intervened massively in the cultural sector, this established position and the economic successes on the private art market were to change little. Kolbe's figurative sculptures could be publicly exhibited and traded in galleries throughout the entire period of National Socialist rule. Although today there is a broad consensus in art-market research that the market could continue to function well even for artists defamed by the National Socialist state—as long as they were members of the Reichskammer der bildenden Künste (Reich Chamber of Fine Arts)<sup>57</sup>—Kolbe's status nevertheless seems comparatively privileged. Despite the fact that individual works by Kolbe that were on public display, such as his Heinrich Heine monument in Frankfurt am Main, were attacked,<sup>58</sup> there is no evidence of a comprehensive defamation of Kolbe's art. On the contrary: with the probably best-known art-political diatribe of the so-called Third Reich, the book *Säuberung des Kunsttempels* (Purging the Temple of Art) published by Wolfgang Willrich in 1937, there is evidence that there was also recognition for Kolbe in *völkisch*, i.e., national-racial circles. Although the sculptor was mentioned in denunciatory enumerations because of his membership in the Arbeitsrat für Kunst (Workers' Council for Art), as well as in the monograph written by Ludwig Justi in the series *Junge Kunst* (1931), Willrich went to great length to clarify in these passages that Kolbe had nevertheless "remained healthy" as an artist and was "of significance."<sup>59</sup>

**178** "I am by no means in the position of having to sell my few bronzes at dumping prices."

Thus Kolbe was able to continue working under the new cultural-political conditions without major restrictions. Since many of his business relationships had existed continuously since the years of the Weimar Republic, it is not surprising that there was likewise little change in his collaboration with individual gallerists. He continued to circulate his bronzes, prints, and photographs among art dealers in order to be present in as many regions of Germany as possible. At the same time, he carefully controlled which works and groups of works were shown when and in what context. Not every art dealer received the loans and consignments he requested. In May 1937, for example, Kolbe declined to have his solo exhibition in Mönchengladbach taken over by Galerie Vömel: "This collection is, however, not suitable for Düsseldorf—the objects have long been known. I do not have anything new, and besides, I'm tired of exhibitions."<sup>60</sup> This control and circulation could repeatedly put gallerists in the position of temporarily not having any of the sculptor's works on commission. Whether this temporary scarcity was partly Kolbe's intention must remain speculative. In any case, working with several art dealers at the same time created a competitive situation conducive to marketing, which strengthened Kolbe's position and often relegated the galleries to the role of supplicants. The sculptor continued to retain extensive control over the new casts of his bronzes, which he either passed on to the art trade on commission or explicitly on order at fixed prices and commissions, or sold directly from the studio. Prices and commissions initially remained largely the same before and after 1933, rising by ten to twenty percent in 1941, possibly due to the wartime shortage of materials and the resulting ban on casting.<sup>61</sup>

Deserving dealers and those who sold well, such as Alex Vömel, could also hope for a price concession—depending on the work and availability. However, the available sources also show how rigid Kolbe could be in financial matters. When the Basel collector Richard Doetsch-Benziger wanted to purchase a cast of the *Junge Frau* (Young Woman, 1929) through Vömel in December 1933 and asked for a discount, Kolbe wrote to the dealer: "please do not bother in this case. – I am by no means in the position of having to sell my few bronzes at dumping prices. It would be sinful for me to accept such underbidding."<sup>62</sup> When Vömel nevertheless made the—ultimately successful—attempt to find a compromise and was initially unsuccessful with the collector, Kolbe reprimanded him: "you had bad luck—I had warned you strongly against it."<sup>63</sup> Towards Vömel in particular, Kolbe repeatedly acted in an authoritarian and reprimanding manner, underscoring the asymmetry of the relationship between the sculptor and the art dealer.

Although the episode ended with the sale of the sculpture to Doetsch-Benziger, it also shows that the sculptor was in the privileged position of not having to sell at any price. This was not least due to the continued high demand for his works, which did not cease in the years that followed. Alex Vömel, for example, reported in March 1940: "hardly a day goes by without people asking for your works."<sup>64</sup>

The business correspondence with the Vömel, Buchholz, and Franke galleries preserved in the new estate sheds light on which of Kolbe's works were requested by art dealers and private collectors in the years after 1933 and which were offered by the sculptor when



7 Georg Kolbe, *Sitzende* (Seated Woman), 1926, bronze, h. 28.5 cm, historical photograph



8 Georg Kolbe, *Kniende* (Kneeling Woman), 1926, bronze, h. 54.5 cm, historical photograph

only a general interest in buying was expressed. An analysis of the correspondence with the three galleries shows that more than two-thirds of the sculptures mentioned date from the time of the Weimar Republic. In the actual sales of these three galleries that can be reconstructed, works from the 1920s and early 1930s also predominated. This may not be surprising for the years 1933 and 1934, since there were hardly any recent works by Kolbe available at that time, but it is nevertheless remarkable for the following years. The surviving invoices of the Noack foundry<sup>65</sup> also document a constant production of small sculptures from the time of the Weimar Republic between 1933 and 1940. In particular, the frequently cast sculptures *Sitzende* (1926, fig. 7) and *Kniende* (1926, fig. 8) were often requested or actively offered by Kolbe. There was also repeated interest in sculptures that had been planned as one-offs or had long since been discontinued due to their limited editions, such as *Adagio* (1923), *Einsamer* (Lonely Man, 1927), and *Klage* (Lament, 1921).

Accordingly, there were continuities not only in the art dealers and marketing strategies, but also in the works that were demanded and traded. One possible hypothesis is that the successes of the 1920s had already established a "Kolbe brand" before 1933, with which the public associated above all the female figures, mostly depicted in dancing poses, which had ultimately helped the sculptor to achieve his great popularity and represented his work in museum collections and in public spaces. This "brand" continued to function after 1933, and the art market was consequently less interested in innovations

than in works that were perceived as prototypical of Kolbe. Illustrated books with large print runs, such as Rudolf Binding's 1933 publication,<sup>66</sup> may also have contributed to this entrenched perception.

In contrast, Kolbe increasingly appeared in public projects and state exhibitions with large-scale, sometimes larger-than-life, muscular figures that reflected a changed ideal of the body that was compatible with NS ideology. This suggests that Kolbe—whose self-image may have been to continue to be perceived as one of Germany's most important sculptors—was primarily striving for success in the state cultural establishment with his new works, while a functioning art market provided him with security without much pressure to innovate. The new emphasis is also reflected in a quote by Kolbe that appeared in an exhibition catalog for the Haus der Kunst in Berlin in May 1938, which affirmed distorted images of National Socialist propaganda due to the use of the ideologically charged term “new Germany” and the irritating distinction between museums and private collections on the one hand and “the people” on the other: “While in the past, my works went to museums and private collections, today—thanks to the commissions of the new Germany—they find their way to the people.”<sup>67</sup>

Kolbe's oscillation between the independent art market and the state exhibition business was also evident in 1941 during preparations for a solo exhibition at Günther Franke's Graphisches Kabinett in Munich (fig. 9). When planning began, the sculptor insisted that the “show had to be staged before the opening of the big Munich art exhibition [meaning the *Große Deutsche Kunstausstellung* (Great German Art Exhibition) of 1941, at which Kolbe was represented with only one sculpture,<sup>68</sup> author's note], that is, in May.”<sup>69</sup> In addition, Kolbe made it a condition that no works by other artists be shown in parallel.<sup>70</sup> Both of these measures were probably aimed at minimizing the competition for his own exhibition in Hitler's proclaimed “capital of German art”<sup>71</sup> and thus attracting as much attention as possible. This strategy apparently worked, for the surviving documents on the exhibition attest to the sale of almost all of the works on offer (fig. 10)—in this case, too, works from before 1933 predominated<sup>72</sup>—and Franke regularly reported large numbers of visitors, occasionally also from abroad.

With twenty-three sculptures and seven chalk drawings, this was, according to current knowledge, the last major presentation of Kolbe's work to take place in the German art trade during his lifetime. The decline in business activities after 1941 is also reflected in the surviving art-dealer correspondence, which is significantly less frequent and extensive than in previous years. The main reason for this was the wartime ban on the casting of bronze, introduced in 1940, which led to a shortage of available works, especially since Kolbe refused to have designs already executed in bronze cast in zinc.<sup>73</sup> As evidenced by Kolbe's handwritten correspondence instructions to Margrit Schwartzkopff on a letter from Vömel dated October 1941, the sculptor began to withdraw consignment works from the art trade at this point at the latest: “What is still with Vömel? I demand back: bronzes!”<sup>74</sup> For the following period, only a few correspondences with Vömel and Buchholz have been preserved. They indicate that, from 1942 on, the sculptor did not provide the two remaining gallerists<sup>75</sup> with any sculptures or drawings, and that he concentrated only on



9 Catalog of Georg Kolbe's solo exhibition at the Graphisches Kabinett Günther Franke in Munich, 1941

exhibitions and commissions in the state art business until he left Berlin for Hierlshagen at the end of 1943.

Kolbe did not return until January 1945 and experienced the end of the war in Berlin. For the two years after the war until his death in November 1947, there is little information and correspondence regarding the art trade. Judging by the numerous works that Georg Kolbe sold directly from his studio to Allied military personnel and other interested parties after the end of the war, he was probably his own best art dealer during this period.<sup>76</sup> In October 1946, Kolbe was represented with two sculptures in the opening exhibition of Galerie Franz, Berlin.<sup>77</sup> Ferdinand Möller had resumed contact as early as April 1946.<sup>78</sup> However, his works were not included in the exhibition *Freie Deutsche Kunst* (Free German Art), which was co-organized by Möller the following August.<sup>79</sup> The correspondence with Curt Valentin, who supplied the sculptor with care packages from New York, could also be continued after having been interrupted by the war.<sup>80</sup> In May 1947, Alex Vömel contacted him full of energy: "Dear Mr. Kolbe, when will it finally be possible to show your works here again? The good old collectors are always asking for you."<sup>81</sup>

VERKAUFE u. ZAHLUNGEN

Graph. Kabinett Franke, München. Mai/Juni 41

<u>Werk</u>		<u>Zahlung</u>	<u>Teilzahlung</u>	<u>Käufer</u>
Kl. Liegende	24	500. -	500. - erledigt	Dr. Hildebrand, Berlin
Statuette	25	700	700	Verleger Vötterle, Kassel
Sitzende	26	1200	1200	Leo Habig, Hagen
Kniende	26	2200	1.100.- 1.100	Heberle, Bln.-Lichterfelde
Kopf Genius	28	600	600	Verleger Vötterle, Kassel
Kauernde	30	2200	1.100.- 1.100.-	Oberregierungsrat Clemens, Sachs/ <del>Wien</del> , <sup>Staatsminister</sup> München
<b>FLORA</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>2.500</b>	<b>2.500.-</b>	<del>Dr. Adalbert Fischer, Frankfurt/</del>
Jungmädchen	34	5000	2.500.- 2.500	<del>Main</del>
		<u>94900</u>	<u>14900</u>	
<u>Z E I C H N U N G E N</u>				
Nr. 519		300.-	erledigt	<del>Gesamtzahlung</del> von Mangoldt
" 520		300.	"	Graph. Sammlung Albertinum, Wien
" 549		300	"	
532		300. -	erledigt	Reemtsma, Hamburg
" 547		300. -	"	Reemtsma, Hamburg
471		300.-	"	

12.VI.41

Abschlusszahlung

8.7.41 6.700.-

Steuert Sdrw.

10 List of sales, Graphisches Kabinett Günther Franke, Munich, 1941, with notes by Georg Kolbe and Margrit Schwartzkopff, Georg Kolbe Museum Archive, Berlin



**11** Poster for the Georg Kolbe retrospective at the Kunstverein für die Rheinlande und Westfalen, Düsseldorf, August 1–October 31, 1948, organized with the support of Galerie Vömel, Düsseldorf



**12** Exhibition view with works by Georg Kolbe at Galerie Alex Vömel, Düsseldorf, 1952, historical photograph

**184** "I am by no means in the position of having to sell my few bronzes at dumping prices."

## Outlook

“The good old collectors,” of whom Alex Vömel reported, had to be patient for another year before Kolbe’s works could be shown again in Düsseldorf. In May 1947, Vömel could not have foreseen that this would be a memorial exhibition for the sculptor, who had died in the meantime (fig. 11), organized by the Kunstverein für die Rheinlande und Westfalen in cooperation with Vömel. The group of stakeholders who henceforth endeavored to trade posthumously in the sculptor’s works repeatedly showed clear continuities with the years before 1945 and sometimes also before 1933. Thus gallerists such as Curt Valentin, Alex Vömel, and Ferdinand Möller continued to represent the sculptor’s work after 1947 (fig. 12). The administration of the artistic estate was taken over by Kolbe’s former assistant, Margrit Schwartzkopff.

In addition to the question of how Schwartzkopff organized the trade with objects from the estate and posthumous new castings, there is a need for further research on the continuities and breaks within the large group of collectors. The business correspondence in the new estate provides the names of numerous buyers and interested parties who acquired or inquired about Kolbe’s works through the art trade between 1933 and 1943. Future research on these individuals, in comparison with the catalogue raisonné currently in preparation, will provide a clearer picture of the contexts in which Kolbe’s works were collected and the extent to which the collectors’ circles changed after 1933.

## Notes

- 1 To date, solo and group exhibitions and/or sales can be documented for the following galleries and art dealers (in alphabetical order): Ernst Arnold/Ludwig Gutbier (Dresden), Dr. Andreas Becker & Alfred Newman (Cologne), P. H. Beyer & Sohn (Leipzig), Alfred Bodenheimer (Darmstadt), Karl Buchholz/ Buchholz Gallery – Curt Valentin (Berlin, New York), Gebrüder Buck (Mannheim), Bruno Cassirer (Berlin), Paul Cassirer (Berlin), Commeter (Hamburg), Otto Fischer (Bielefeld), Alfred Flechtheim (Düsseldorf, Berlin et al.), Günther Franke (Munich), Reinhard Franz (Berlin), Gerstenberger (Chemnitz), M. Goldschmidt & Co (Frankfurt am Main), Hans Goltz (Munich), Victor Hartberg (Berlin), Huize van Hasselt (Rotterdam), Marie Held (Frankfurt am Main), Dr. Jaffe – Alice Guttmann (Cologne), Keller & Reiner (Berlin), Kleine Galerie (Berlin), Heinrich Kühl (Dresden), Carel van Lier (Amsterdam), Lutz & Co. (Berlin), Ferdinand Möller (Berlin), Gustav Nebehay (Vienna), Karl and Josef Nierendorf (Berlin, New York), Manfred Schames (Frankfurt am Main), Casimir Stenzel (Breslau, today's Wrocław), Justin Thannhauser (Munich, Berlin), F. C. Valentien (Stuttgart), Alex Vömel (Düsseldorf), Dorothy Warren (London), Erhard Weyhe (New York), Wildenstein & Co. (New York), Rudolf Wiltschek (Berlin). There are also references to other art dealers; for example, Kunstsalon Abels in Cologne advertised the sale of Kolbe's works in 1928; cf. *Der Kunstmärkte 10*, nos. 1/2, August 1928, p. 511. In many cases, Kolbe's relationship to the individual art dealers remains a desideratum.
- 2 I would like to express my sincere thanks to the staff of the Georg Kolbe Museum, who have greatly supported my research with information, references, and digital copies: (in alphabetical order) Elisabeth Heymer, Carolin Jahn, Thomas Pavel, and Elisa Tamaschke.
- 3 "Künstler und moderner Kunsthändel. Eine Enquête," in: *Der Kunstmärkte 10*, nos. 1/2, January 1928, pp. 201–204, here p. 202.
- 4 For more on the acquisition and construction history of the property on Sensburger Allee, see: Ursel Berger and Josephine Gabler (eds.), *Georg Kolbe. Wohn- und Atelierhaus. Architektur und Geschichte* (Berlin 2000); Julia Wallner (ed.), *Moderne und Refugium. Georg Kolbes Sensburg als Architekturdenkmal der 1920er-Jahre* (Berlin 2021).
- 5 A list of Kolbe's solo exhibitions and more extensive group exhibitions is published in: Ursel Berger, *Georg Kolbe – Leben und Werk, mit dem Katalog*
- 6 Detroit Institute of Arts, inv. no. 28.113, <https://dia.org/collection/squatting-female-figure-51126> [last accessed June 10, 2023].
- 7 See: Thomas Pavel, "Steuerschraube oder Symbol der Kraft?" in: Julia Wallner (ed.), *Georg Kolbe* (Cologne 2017), pp. 112–121, here p. 121.
- 8 Künstler und moderner Kunsthändel 1928 (see note 3), p. 202 [translated].
- 9 For more on the market situation of "living German artists" and their promotion by the Kronprinzenpalais, and for two other examples of authors (F. Möller and K. Nierendorf), see: Gesa Jeuthe, *Kunstwerte im Wandel. Die Preisentwicklung der deutschen Moderne im nationalen und internationalen Kunstmarkt 1925 bis 1955 [Schriften der Forschungsstelle "Entartete Kunst," vol. 7]* (Berlin 2011), pp. 35–37.
- 10 Flechtheim's texts on the subject of art dealing are published collectively in: Rudolf Schmitt-Föller (ed.), *Alfred Flechtheim. "Nun mal Schluss mit den blauen Picassos!" Gesammelte Schriften* (Bonn 2010), esp. pp. 127–166.
- 11 Alfred Flechtheim, "Künstler und moderner Kunsthändel. Zuschriften aus dem Kunsthändel," in: *Der Kunstmärkte 10*, nos. 1/2, March 1928, p. 298.
- 12 All quotes in this paragraph: ibid. [translated; emphasis in the original].
- 13 Georg Kolbe, *Auf Wegen der Kunst. Schriften, Skizzen, Plastiken, mit einer Einleitung von Ivo Beucker* (Berlin 1949), p. 17 [translated].
- 14 See: Ursel Berger, "Wie publiziert man Skulpturen? Die Kolbe-Monographie von 1913," in: *Ein Fest der Künste. Paul Cassirer. Der Kunsthändler als Verleger*, ed. Rahel E. Feilchenfeldt and Thomas Raff, exh. cat. Max Liebermann Haus, Berlin (Munich 2006), pp. 201–213, here pp. 210–211; Berger 1990 (see note 5), p. 38.
- 15 For more on Cassirer and the sculptors of his gallery, see: Ursel Berger: "Paul Cassirer und seine Bildhauer," in: *Berlin SW – Victoriastraße 35. Ernst Barlach und die Klassische Moderne im Kunstsalon und Verlag Paul Cassirer*, ed. Helga Thieme and Volker Probst, exh. cat. Ausstellungsforum und Graphikkabinett, Ernst Barlach Stiftung, Güstrow, 2003, pp. 47–62.
- 16 For more on the exhibition, see: Bernhard Echte and Walter Feilchenfeldt (eds.), *Kunstsalon Paul Cassirer. Die Ausstellungen 1901–1905*, vol. 2 ["Man steht da und staunt"], (Wädenswil 2011), pp. 571–598.

**17** See: Kolbe's introduction to the exhibition *Moderne Plastik* (Modern Sculpture) at the Kunsthalle Mannheim (1912), published in: Kolbe 1949 (see note 13), p. 9.

**18** Including three larger exhibitions in October/November 1921, October/November 1925, and March 1928.

**19** Georg Kolbe, *Bildwerke* (Berlin 1913).

**20** See: Berger 2006 (see note 14), pp. 204–207.

**21** From 1927 onwards, Kolbe collaborated with the photographic archive of the Institute of Art History at the University of Marburg. From the late 1920s onwards, photographs were also distributed by Galerie Flechtheim. The example of the exhibition at the Kestner-Gesellschaft in 1933 reveals that the gallery also selected the illustrations in exhibition catalogs on behalf of the artist. Postcard from Curt Valentin to Justus Bier, December 14, 1932, NLA HA, dep. 100, no. 50; letter from Curt Valentin to Justus Bier, December 29, 1932, NLA HA, dep. 100, no. 50.

**22** *Vom Leben der Plastik. Inhalt und Schönheit des Werkes von Georg Kolbe, mit einer Ausführung von Rudolf G. Binding* (Berlin 1933).

**23** Georg Kolbe, *Bildwerke. Vom Künstler ausgewählt, Geleitwort von Richard Scheibe* [Insel-Bücherei, no. 422], (Leipzig 1939). Significantly, the same title was chosen here as in 1913 for the Cassirer publication.

**24** See: Berger 1990 (see note 5), p. 38.

**25** In 1921, Cassirer had temporarily made two rooms available to Flechtheim. See: Ottfried Dascher, "Es ist was Wahnsinnges mit der Kunst." *Alfred Flechtheim, Sammler, Kunsthändler, Verleger* (Wädenswil 2013), p. 153.

**26** See: letter from Alfred Flechtheim to Ludwig Justi, March 13, 1926, SMB-ZA, I/NG 999, sheet 212.

**27** See: letter from Alfred Flechtheim to Georg Kolbe, October 11, 1926, MvT Estate, GKM Archive, Berlin.

**28** The exhibitions took place in March 1930 and November/December 1931 at Galerie Flechtheim, Berlin. See: Georg Kolbe, exh. cat. Galerie Alfred Flechtheim, Berlin, 1930; Georg Kolbe, exh. cat. Galerie Alfred Flechtheim, Berlin, 1931.

**29** Letter from Curt Valentin to Georg Kolbe, July 20, 1930, MvT Estate, GKM Archive, Berlin [translated; emphasis in the original].

**30** "Flechtheim had cleverly used the morning to bring Maillol to his gallery and photograph him there with Barlach (who some time ago had refused to co-sign the invitation to the Maillol exhibition)" [translated]. Diary entry (edition text) by Harry Graf Kessler, July 15, 1930, in: *Harry Graf Kessler. Das Tagebuch* 1880–1937, online edition, ed. Roland S. Kamzelak (Marbach am Neckar 2019), EdView version 1.0 beta 3 (February 2023), <https://edview.dla-marbach.de/?project=HGKTA&document=10373> [last accessed June 10, 2023].

**31** For more on Kolbe's admiration of Maillol, see Kolbe's 1925 review "Zu einem Buch über Maillol," in: Kolbe 1949 (see note 13), pp. 23–24 [erroneously dated 1928; information kindly provided by Thomas Pavel].

**32** Detroit Institute of Arts, inv. no. 29.331, <https://dia.org/collection/assunta-51116> [last accessed June 10, 2023].

**33** The exhibition was advertised in the catalog of the André Derain exhibition at Galerie Flechtheim, among the "German exhibitions organized abroad by Galerie Flechtheim." See: *André Derain, exh. cat. Galerie Alfred Flechtheim, Berlin, 1929*.

**34** See: exh. cat. Berlin, 1930 (see note 28).

**35** See: Volker Probst, "Die Flechtheimsche Herrlichkeit verging, von Cassirer ist keinerlei Förderung zu erwarten ...". Ernst Barlach—Alfred Flechtheim," in: Ottfried Dascher (ed.), *Sprung in den Raum. Skulpturen bei Alfred Flechtheim* (Wädenswil 2017), pp. 353–386, here pp. 359–364.

**36** These newspaper clippings have been preserved in the Archive of the Georg Kolbe Museum, Berlin. They occasionally contain annotations and comments by Georg Kolbe.

**37** The "department store" imputation on Kolbe's part can be found in the quoted letter from Curt Valentin. Although it can be assumed that Kolbe did not have a pronounced anti-Semitic worldview, it must be pointed out at this point that the negative connotation of the department store metaphor in relation to a Jewish business partner conveyed a widespread anti-Semitic resentment that was well known around 1930. See also: Hannes Ludgya, "Warenhausfrage," in: Wolfgang Benz (ed.), *Handbuch des Antisemitismus. Judenfeindschaft in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, vol. 4 [Ereignisse, Dekrete, Kontroversen], (Berlin and Boston 2011), pp. 432–434.

**38** Letter from Alfred Flechtheim to Ernst Barlach, July 14, 1930, Archive of the Ernst Barlach Stiftung, Güstrow, inv. no. LM 100. The letter is also reproduced in: Probst 2017 (see note 35), pp. 360–361.

**39** Contract between Georg Kolbe and Galerie Alfred Flechtheim G.m.b.H., Düsseldorf and Berlin, May 8, 1928, MvT Estate, GKM Archive, Berlin.

**40** It has not yet been possible to clarify exactly which *Sitzende* is meant here.

**41** Whether, in the final analysis, Kolbe would have actually left Galerie Flechtheim or whether this

announcement was merely a threat, must remain speculative.

**42** See: exh. cat. Berlin, 1931 (see note 28).

**43** In a congratulatory letter preserved in the estate of Maria von Tiesenhausen, Alex Vömel wrote: "Do you remember how skeptical you were when we first talked about the Heine monument; [...] I told you then already that you should rely on us. [...] A. F. will also be pleased; he has done everything humanly possible in the matter." Letter from Alex Vömel to Georg Kolbe, May 9, 1932, MvT Estate, GKM Archive, Berlin [translated].

**44** See: Georg Kolbe. *Bildwerke, Zeichnungen, Radierungen, 1914–1932*, exh. cat. Kestner-Gesellschaft, Hannover, 1933.

**45** Correspondence regarding the exhibition has been preserved in the Lower Saxony State Archives. See: NLA HA, dep. 100, no. 50.

**46** Letter from Curt Valentin to Justus Bier, November 15, 1932, NLA HA, dep. 100, no. 50 [translated]. My thanks go to Thomas Pavel, Berlin, for the exchange and his advice on this matter. For more information on the exhibition, see also: Thomas Pavel: "Ein wirkliches gutes Werk" für Hannover? Georg Kolbe's 'Menschenpaar' am Maschsee," in: Landeshauptstadt Hannover (ed.), *Hannoversche Geschichtsblätter*, vol. 74 (new sequence), 2020, pp. 22–50.

**47** Letter from Curt Valentin to Justus Bier, December 20, 1932, NLA HA, dep. 100, no. 50.

**48** In the exhibition register of the Kunsthütte Chemnitz, there is the note: "Present for the placement of the sculptures: Mr. Valentin, Galerie Flechtheim, Berlin." Kunstsammlungen Chemnitz, Archive, exhibition register of the Kunsthütte zu Chemnitz 1933–1937, p. 25 [translated]. I am thankful to Tatjana Fischer, Kunstsammlungen Chemnitz, for providing this information in October 2016.

**49** See: Ulrike Saß, *Die Galerie Gerstenberger und Wilhelm Grosshennig. Kunsthandel in Deutschland von der Kaiserzeit bis zur BRD* (Vienna et al. 2021).

**50** On January 14, 1933, the art dealer Karl Nierendorf wrote in his diary: "I had never noticed the worried expression and the dull, depressed mood as I did this time. [...] Even Flechtheim seemed depressed at the Cassirer opening, and his Valentin is also no longer the same." Quoted in: Stefan Pucks, "Zur Topografie des Berliner Kunsthandsels 1918–1945," in: *Gute Geschäfte. Kunsthandel in Berlin 1933–1945*, ed. Christine Fischer-Defoy and Kaspar Nürnberg, exh. cat. Aktives Museum im Centrum Judaicum, Berlin (Berlin 2011), pp. 17–19, here p. 18 [translated].

**51** See: Jeuthe 2011 (see note 9), pp. 52–60.

**52** Ludwig Justi, *Georg Kolbe. Mit 32 Tafeln und einer Heiliogravüre [Junge Kunst, vol. 60]* (Berlin 1931), p. 13.

**53** See: Axel Drecoll and Anja Deutsch, "Fragen, Probleme, Perspektiven—Zur 'Arisierung' der Kunsthändlung Alfred Flechtheim," in: Andrea Bambi and Axel Drecoll (eds.), *Alfred Flechtheim. Raubkunst und Restitution* (Berlin 2015), pp. 83–99, here p. 90; for more on Galerie Vömel, see also: Gesa Jeuthe, "Die Galerie Alex Vömel ab 1933—Eine 'Tarnung' der Galerie Alfred Flechtheim?" in: *ibid.*, pp. 107–115.

**54** Letter from Margrit Schwartzkopff to Alex Vömel, May 12, 1933, MvT Estate, GKM Archive, Berlin [translated; emphasis in the original].

**55** For more on Curt Valentin, see: Anja Tiedemann, *Die "entartete" Moderne und ihr amerikanischer Markt. Karl Buchholz und Curt Valentin als Händler verfeindter Kunst [Schriften der Forschungsstelle "Entartete Kunst," vol. 8]* (Berlin 2013), esp. pp. 179–205.

**56** Letter from Curt Valentin to Paul Klee, November 3, 1933, quoted in: Ralph Jentsch, *Alfred Flechtheim, George Grosz. Zwei deutsche Schicksale* (Bonn 2008), p. 16 [translated].

**57** See: Anja Tiedemann (ed.), *Die Kammer schreibt schon wieder! Das Reglement für den Handel mit moderner Kunst im Nationalsozialismus [Schriften der Forschungsstelle "Entartete Kunst," vol. 10]* (Berlin 2016); Gesa Jeuthe 2011 (see note 9).

**58** The attacks on the Heine monument in Frankfurt am Main and the Rathenau fountain in Berlin are likely to have been directed primarily against the protagonists commemorated.

**59** Wolfgang Willrich, *Säuberung des Kunsttempels. Eine kunstpolitische Kampfschrift zur Gesundung deutscher Kunst im Geiste nordischer Art* (Munich 1937), pp. 73 and 170 [translated].

**60** Letter from Georg Kolbe to Alex Vömel, May 27, 1937, MvT Estate, GKM Archive, Berlin [translated].

**61** Cf. the net prices of the works *Sitzende* (Seated Woman, 1926) and *Kniende* (Kneeling Woman, 1926), in: letter from Margrit Schwartzkopff to Günther Franke, October 3, 1940, and in the price list of the exhibition at Graphisches Kabinett Günther Franke, Munich, March 28, 1941, MvT Estate, GKM Archive, Berlin.

**62** Letter from Georg Kolbe to Alex Vömel, December 8, 1933, MvT Estate, GKM Archive, Berlin [translated].

**63** Letter from Georg Kolbe to Alex Vömel, December 14, 1933, MvT Estate, GKM Archive, Berlin [translated].

**64** Letter from Alex Vömel to Georg Kolbe, March 12, 1940, MvT Estate, GKM Archive, Berlin [translated].

**65** See the file on the Hermann Noack Bildgiesserei, GK Estate, inv. no. GK.480.1 (1930–39) and inv. no. GK.480.2 (1940–46), GKM Archive, Berlin.

**66** Binding 1933 (see note 22). The book appeared in a total of nine editions until 1949. The ninth is an expanded edition.

**67** *Kleine Kollektionen. Malerei, Plastik, Graphik*, exh. cat. Haus der Kunst, Berlin, 1938, p. 12 [translated].

**68** See: *Große Deutsche Kunstausstellung 1941 im Haus der Deutschen Kunst zu München*, exh. cat. Haus der Deutschen Kunst, Munich (Munich 1941), p. 49.

**69** Letter from Georg Kolbe to Günther Franke, March 11, 1941, MvT Estate, GKM Archive, Berlin [translated].

**70** Ibid.

**71** See: Adolf Hitler, "Kein Wiederaufstieg ohne Wiedererweckung deutscher Kultur und Kunst." Rede bei der Grundsteinlegung zum Haus der Deutschen Kunst in München," in: Robert Eikmeyer (ed.), *Adolf Hitler. Reden zur Kunst- und Kulturpolitik 1933–1939* (Frankfurt am Main 2004), pp. 57–60.

**72** See the list of sales and payments from the exhibition in the Graphisches Kabinett Günther Franke, Munich, June 12, 1941, MvT Estate, GKM Archive, Berlin.

**73** See: letter from Georg Kolbe to Günther Franke, August 21, 1941, MvT Estate, GKM Archive, Berlin.

**74** Handwritten note by Georg Kolbe on a letter from Alex Vömel to Georg Kolbe, October 15, 1941, MvT Estate, GKM Archive, Berlin [translated].

**75** Correspondences and more extensive collaborations with other art dealers are not known for this period.

**76** Extensive lists of Kolbe's sales between 1946 and 1947 have been preserved in the estate added in 2020; MvT Estate, GKM Archive, Berlin.

**77** See: *Plastik und Bildhauerzeichnungen unserer Zeit. Erste Ausstellung vom 19. Oktober bis 30. November 1946*, exh. cat. Galerie Franz, Berlin, 1946.

**78** Letter from Ferdinand Möller to Georg Kolbe, April 4, 1946, GK Estate, inv. no. GK.458, GKM Archive, Berlin.

**79** See: *Freie deutsche Kunst. Gemälde, Aquarelle, Graphik*, exh. cat. Amt für Volksbildung, Neuruppin, and Galerie Ferdinand Möller, Zermützel, Karl-Marx-Haus, Neuruppin (Zermützel 1946).

**80** See: letter from Georg Kolbe to Curt Valentin, August 14, 1947, Curt Valentin Papers, III.A.15.[3], The Museum of Modern Art Archives, New York.

**81** Letter from Alex Vömel to Georg Kolbe, May 24, 1947, MvT Estate, GKM Archive, Berlin [translated].