



Museum Acquisition Policies in Germany and France: Alfred Flechtheim and the Interwar Advocacy of *Cahiers d'Art*

Chara Kolokytha

“I became a dealer in December 1913....I opened my gallery in Düsseldorf, with paintings by Rhenish painters and some German artists living in ParisDuring the war, my gallery was turned into a military hospital.... I reopened my gallery in 1919....It was not until 1921 that I opened a branch in Berlin.”—Alfred Flechtheim

“Which artistic event in Germany has struck you the most since the beginning of the century? Flechtheim, lighting another big cigar, said: ‘Schmeling, the boxer’.”—Christian Zervos¹

In 1921, the German art dealer Alfred Flechtheim (1878–1937) turned his Düsseldorf gallery’s small catalogs, referred to as ‘Marginalien’, into the artistic and literary review *Der Querschnitt*. He announced that the luxury tax law had thwarted his affairs and that he would postpone his exhibitions until the tax was repealed or made reasonable.² The same year, however, he opened two more galleries: one in Berlin, the other in Frankfurt. Alongside Paul Cassirer (1871–1926) and Daniel-Henry Kahnweiler (1884–1979), Flechtheim is best known for promoting modern French art in Germany before the war. However, the dealer’s support for French contemporary art is attested to in his early activities dating before the opening of his Düsseldorf gallery in 1913 and, more precisely, in

Unless otherwise stated, all translations are the author’s own. I am grateful to the editors for their valuable remarks.

- 1 Christian Zervos, “Nos Enquêtes: Entretien avec Alfred Flechtheim,” in *Feuilles Volantes—Supplément à la revue Cahiers d'Art* 10, 1927, p. 2.
- 2 Alfred Flechtheim, “Mitteilungen der Galerie Flechtheim,” in *Der Querschnitt* 1, January 1921, p. 12; see also Otfried Dascher, “*Es ist was Wahnsinniges mit der Kunst*”: Alfred Flechtheim: Sammler, Kunsthändler und Verleger, Wädenswil, 2011.



- 1 *Internationale Kunstausstellung des Sonderbundes Westdeutscher Kunstfreunde und Künstler zu Köln*, Catalogue 1912

his involvement in the third exhibition of the *Sonderbund westdeutscher Kunstfreunde und Künstler* in Cologne (fig. 1).³ The outcome of the war fostered rivalries in the artistic exchanges between the two countries, although Flechtheim successfully continued playing the role of the cultural mediator for some time.⁴ While German contemporary art was utterly unknown in France, Alexandre Kostka has interestingly noted that exhibiting

3 See Stephanie Sonntag, *1912 Mission Moderne: Die Jahrhundertschau des Sonderbundes*, Cologne, 2012.

4 See also Hélène Ivanoff, "Alfred Flechtheim (1878–1937): un passeur de l'art moderne, de l'art des Mers du Sud et de l'art africain"; and Chara Kolokytha, "Christian Zervos, les galeries Cahiers d'Art et M.A.I., la suppression des -ismes de l'Art," in Denise Vernerey and Hélène Ivanoff (eds.), *Les Artistes et leurs Galeries: Paris-Berlin, 1900–1950*, vol. 2: Berlin, Mont-Saint-Aignan, 2020, pp. 111–129 and 281–299.

Pablo Picasso and Fernand Léger in Berlin after the war was conceived as defeating the enemy, as disarming France.⁵ This climate was, in fact, cultivated by Flechtheim. The first issue of *Der Querschnitt* published a humoristic text presenting art-related news in Germany, which included the French quotation “Nous avons perdu la guerre, mais nous avons gagné Marie”—a “blasphemous” comment on Marie Laurencin’s success in Germany.⁶ Flechtheim’s commercial affairs with France and his position toward Parisian art were undoubtedly affected by the national antagonism nourished during the war as well as by the postbellum inflation and rapidly rising market value of modern French art.

This change in the German dealer’s preferences became evident through his collaboration with the influential Parisian art review *Cahiers d'Art*—launched by the Greek-born former editor of the interior design review *Les Arts de la Maison* (Editions Albert Morancé), Christian Zervos (1889–1970)—in 1926, one year after the initiation of the debate about the creation of a museum of “living art” in Paris in the French press.⁷ Although Flechtheim’s original involvement in the Parisian review concerned his and Zervos’s (fig. 2) shared interest in both Picasso and the primitive arts, it is worth noting that their disagreement developed in line with the post-World War I rivalry between the two countries. This fact calls out for closer investigation, mainly regarding the interests of both parties. The article discusses museum acquisition policies in France and Germany and the role of art dealers in the institution of contemporary art in both countries through close observation of the course and outcome of Flechtheim and Zervos’s collaboration and their renegotiation of the pre-World War I market conditions for French art on postwar ground.

5 Alexandre Kostka, “Une Crise Allemande des Arts Français? Les Beaux-arts entre diplomatie et propagande,” in Gilbert Krebs and Hans Manfred Bock (eds.), *Echanges Culturels et Relations Diplomatiques*, Paris, 2005. pp. 243–252.

6 “Urteile über den Querschnitt,” *Der Querschnitt* 1, 1921, p. 194; also quoted in Kostka, 2005 (note 5). On the reception and diffusion of German art in France, see also Marie Gispert, *L'Allemagne n'a pas de peintres: Diffusion de l'Art Allemand Moderne en France durant l'Entre-deux-guerres, 1918–1939*, PhD thesis, Université Paris I, 2006; and Mathilde Arnoux, *Les Musées Français et la Peinture Allemande: 1871–1981*, Paris, 2007.

7 On Zervos see, amongst many papers by the same author, Christian Derouet (ed.), *Cahiers D'Art: Musée Zervos à Vézelay*, Paris, 2006; and Chara Kolokytha, “Christian Zervos critique d'art: partis pris, polémiques et débats,” in Catherine Méneux and Marie Gispert (eds.), *Critique(s) d'art: nouveaux corpus, nouvelles méthodes*, Paris, 2015, website of l'HiCSA, published online April 2019, pp. 257–272, URL: http://hicsa.univ-paris1.fr/documents/pdf/PublicationsLigne/Actes%20Critiques%20art%20Meneux%20Gispert_2019/14_KOLOKYTHA.pdf [accessed: 17.01.2022]. On the debate, see Chara Kolokytha, “The debate over the creation of a Museum of Modern Art in Paris between the wars and the shaping of an evolutionary narrative for French art,” in *Il Capitale Culturale: Studies on the Value of Cultural Heritage* 14, 2016, pp. 193–222.



2 *Feuilles Volantes – Supplément à la revue Cahiers d'Art* 7-8, 1927, p. 7

Picasso, Ortiz et Flechtheim, s'entraînaient pour un concours à la nage.

A Franco-German Cooperation Initiative

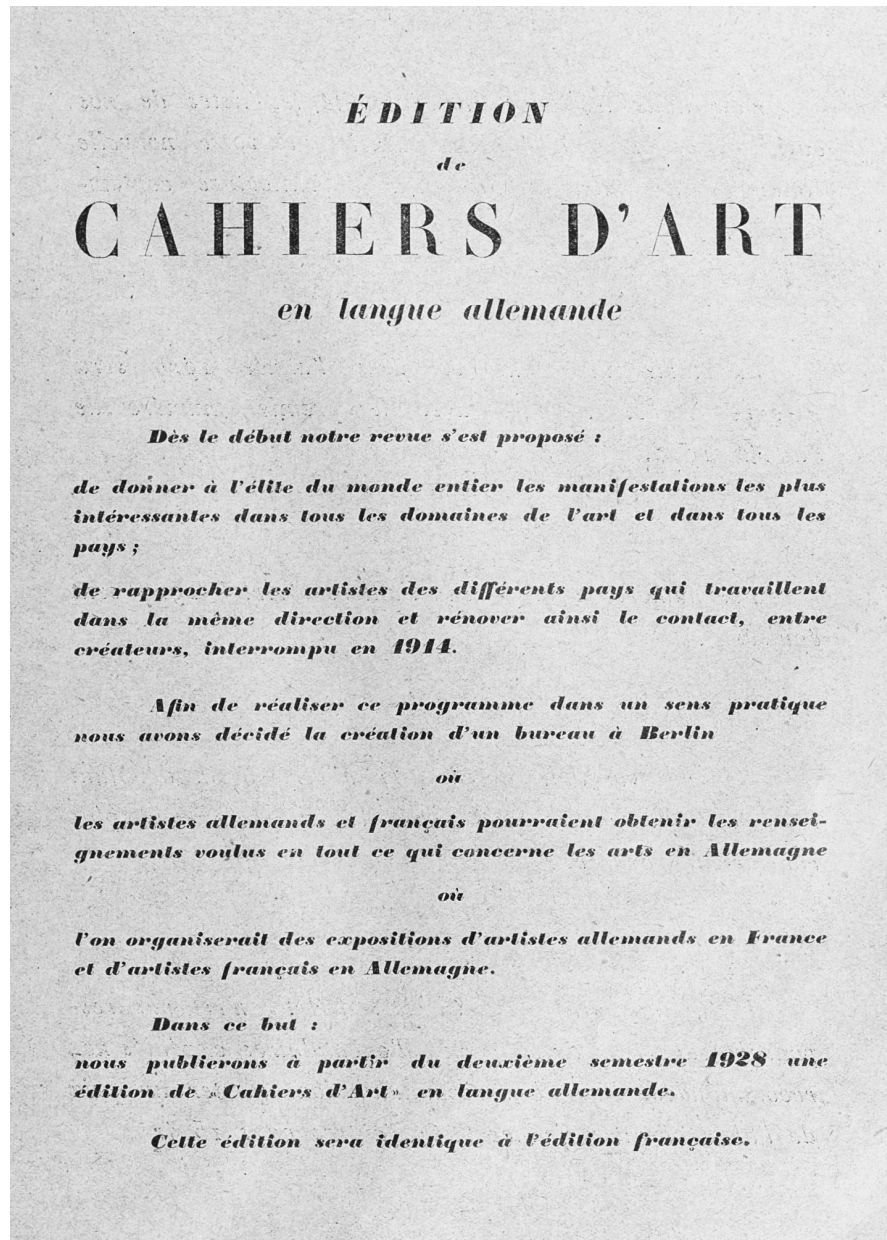
“It is my opinion that art can never be the exclusive property of any single nation but belongs to all mankind.”—Alfred Flechtheim⁸

Flechtheim's opening speech for the Dietz Edzard and Paul Kleinschmidt exhibition in his Berlin gallery in 1928 discordantly coincides with his turning his back on contemporary Parisian art, which was the reason behind his dispute with *Cahiers d'Art*. Although, as Malcolm Gee has shown, the years from 1926 to 1929 were “relatively prosperous and stable” in Germany, marking a period during which “relations with the West, particularly France, were normalised,” the situation changed considerably in the triennium that followed, when the political-economic climate became increasingly inauspicious, notably for modern art.⁹ In France, Zervos struggled to avoid bankruptcy shortly after *Cahiers d'Art*'s first year of publication—a situation that persisted until the mid-1930s. His review counted on gallery subscriptions and advertising fees for subsistence, and he established

8 Anon., “Art Belongs to Mankind, says A. Flechtheim,” in *The Chicago Tribune*, European Edition, Paris, 1 March 1928, p. 7.

9 Malcolm Gee, “Defining the modern art collector in the Weimar years,” in U. Wolff-Thomsen and S. Kuhrau (eds.), *Geschmacksgeschichte(n): öffentliches und privates Kunstsammeln in Deutschland, 1871-1933*, Kiel, 2011, p. 117 (and 115-130).

3 *Cahiers d'Art* 10,
1927, n.p.



links with most of the newly founded art galleries situated in the proximity of the sixth and eighth arrondissements, such as Myrbor; the Bibliothèque étrangère; and the Zak, Pierre, Van Leer, and Katia Granoff galleries. It also published full-page advertisements for established dealers, such as Etienne Bignou and Flechtheim. Early subscriptions in Germany were signed by Julius Meier-Graefe, Alexander Koch, Hans Hartung, Walter

Friedlander, the Hamburger Kunsthalle, and the Warburg Library. Zervos avoided paid advertisements for *Cahiers d'Art*, arranging reciprocal advertising with Alexander Koch's *Deutsche Kunst und Dekoration* and *Innen Dekoration*. Furthermore, he started collaborating with German dealers and magazine editors who had supported or looked favourably on Parisian contemporary art since the early issues of *Cahiers d'Art*. Texts on Picasso, Georges Braque, Raoul Dufy, Pablo Gargallo, and Léopold Lévy, originally published by *Cahiers d'Art*, also appeared in German translation in Flechtheim's *Der Querschnitt*, Bruno Cassirer's *Kunst und Künstler*, Paul Westheim's *Das Kunstblatt*, and Koch's *Deutsche Kunst und Dekoration*.

By the end of 1927, and despite his precarious financial situation—oppressive financial status, Zervos started planning a German edition of his review (fig. 3) under the title *Neue Kunsthefte* in collaboration with Flechtheim and his then assistant, Curt Valentin. The German edition of *Cahiers d'Art* was advertised as being identical to the French and was promoted as a revival of contact between the two countries, which had been interrupted since 1914. It also announced the opening of an office in Berlin, which would serve as a meeting point for German and French artists, with exhibitions of German art in France and French art in Germany.¹⁰ Although the initiative was deemed reciprocal and part of the effort to normalize Franco-German relations, Zervos faced interventions in the content of his periodical by any third-party with unilateral skepticism. *Cahiers d'Art* continued its program, presenting fragmentary reports on certain aspects of German art that conformed to its editor's personal taste and sympathies. Flechtheim, on the other hand, envisaged the German edition as a discussion forum for Franco-German art, where his protégés would be treated on equal terms with the French while their strategic side-by-side presentation with internationally acclaimed Parisian artists would boost their reputation and market value. According to a letter from Valentin to Zervos, the first issue of the German edition of *Cahiers d'Art* proposed including texts on Renée Sintenis and Mies van der Rohe. Only the second appeared in the original French edition, as part of the architectural column that was an integral part of the review's early issues. The German involvement and pressure Flechtheim put on Zervos was one of the many administrative and financial reasons why the project—whose conception was rooted in the rationale of the prewar market—was called off.¹¹

10 “Edition de Cahiers d'Art en langue allemande. Dès le début notre revue s'est proposé: de donner à l'élite du monde entier les manifestations les plus intéressantes dans tous les domaines de l'art et dans tous les pays; de rapprocher les artistes des différents pays qui travaillent dans la même direction et rénover ainsi le contact, entre créateurs interrompu en 1914. Afin de réaliser ce programme dans un sens pratique nous avons décidé la création d'un bureau à Berlin où les artistes allemands et français pourraient obtenir les renseignements voulus en tout ce qui concerne les Arts en Allemagne où l'on organiserait des expositions d'artistes allemands en France et d'artistes français en Allemagne. Dans ce but: nous publierons à partir du deuxième semestre 1928 une édition de Cahiers d'Art en langue allemande. Cette édition sera identique à l'édition française.”: *Cahiers d'Art*, 1927, (note 1), n.p.

11 A thorough discussion can be found in Chara Kolokytha, *Formalism and Ideology in 20th century Art*:

The German edition collapsed in 1928 together with *Feuilles Volantes*, the short-lived supplement to *Cahiers d'Art* launched about a year earlier, which published interviews with art dealers such as Flechtheim (fig. 4), Kahnweiler, Paul Guillaume, Berthe Weill, Bignou, and the Rosenbergs. Flechtheim continued exerting pressure over the continued publication of the *Neue Kunsthefte* until the early 1930s, when he eventually launched another magazine, *Omnibus*, in Germany. He had offered significant backing to *Cahiers d'Art* and had most of his protégés—namely Willy Baumeister, Max Beckmann, Ernesto de Fiori, Georg Kolbe, among others—subscribed ad interim to the review and occasionally even paid for their subscriptions. Zervos emphatically advertised the non-commercial character of his activities. By 1928, he sought to establish contacts with German museum directors. In a letter to the Berlin Nationalgalerie director, Ludwig Justi, he proposed an exhibition of young Parisian artists at the Kronprinzenpalais in Berlin, headed by Justi since 1919. The letter is interesting, as Zervos opposed the involvement of art dealers, who, according to his own words, would turn this artistic manifestation into a commercial affair. He proposed, in return, an exhibition of German art in Paris.¹²

Although there is no indication that Justi responded, in this letter and elsewhere, Zervos is a self-proclaimed fervent supporter of modern German art, pointing out the indifference of his German colleagues who insisted, as he informed Justi, that “German art is not worth showing.” His support was nonetheless parochial and overtly reduced to a small number of reproductions of German artworks in *Cahiers d'Art* in the late 1920s, the first solo exhibitions of Kandinsky and Klee in Paris, and a Franco-German exhibition of sculpture at the Georges Bernheim gallery in 1929—all planned in collaboration with Flechtheim and with the involvement of Tériade (1897–1983), a *Cahiers d'Art* critic and future founder of the reviews *Minotaure* and *Verve*. Apart from his commentaries on Kandinsky and Klee, and despite his close collaboration with Will Grohmann, Zervos avoided commenting on German contemporary art in his review. Instead, he repeatedly underpinned the fact that French modernism could well serve as an example for German artists to follow. But while

Cahiers d'Art, Magazine, Gallery, and Publishing House (1926–1960), PhD thesis, Northumbria University, 2016, pp. 96–105.

- 12 “Je prépare pour octobre une Exposition à la Maison Municipale de Prague des jeunes peintres de Paris, dont voici les noms: Beaudin, Borès, Chirico, Cossio, Max Ernst, Fautrier, Ghika, Jean Lurçat, Marcoussis, Masson, Miro, Olivares, Ozenfant, Tarsilla, Vines, Viollier, et les sculpteurs Henri Laurens, Jacques Lipchitz J’aimerais beaucoup faire cette exposition en Novembre à Berlin, mais je préférerais éviter les marchands de tableaux afin que cette exposition reste comme une manifestation d’art et non comme une affaire commerciale. Je pensais donc vous demander s’il serait possible de faire faire cette exposition en [sic] Kronprinzepalais vers le milieu Novembre.... En retour nous pourrions organiser une exposition de peintres allemandes [sic] à Paris.... J’ai déjà essayé de mettre en exécution ce projet l’année dernière mais la plupart des allemands que j’avais consultés m’avaient invariablement répondu que les artistes allemands ne valaient pas la peine d’être montrés, ce qui n’est pas du tout mon avis, considérant qu’en ce moment l’art n’existe qu’en France et en Allemagne.”: Zervos, letter to Ludwig Justi, 18 July 1928, in Fonds Cahiers d’Art, CAPROV 1, Bibliothèque Kandinsky, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris.

feuilles volantes

BULLETIN DE L'ACTUALITÉ ARTISTIQUE. PEINTURE. SCULPTURE. ARCHITECTURE. MUSIQUE. MISE EN SCÈNE. DISQUES. CINÉMATOGRAPHIE. ÉDITIONS DE LUXE. OUVRAGES D'ART, PORTRAITS D'ARTISTES. LES PÉRIODIQUES. LES VENTES, ETC.

DEUXIÈME ANNÉE

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Nos enquêtes : Entretien avec Alfred Flechtheim

M. Flechtheim possède à Berlin une belle galerie donnant sur le quai de Lutzow, traversé de temps à autre par un remorqueur à longue cheminée et qui semble s'amuser avec les canards qui s'y ébattent en foule, comme les pigeons à la place Saint-Marc.

Dans le petit jardin qui précède la Galerie, un homme nu de de Fiori lève les bras comme les éphèbes fixés par la statuaire hellénique. Il implore qu'on le soustraie au froid féroce qui semble vouloir faire craquer son corps.

Il supplie qu'on l'introduise dans la douce atmosphère de la Galerie. Mais le maître, nerveux, suçante un gros cigare, affairé, va d'un pas court et rapide, sa petite tête enfoncée dans les épaules, précédé de ses bras pendus, d'une salle à une autre salle. Il n'écoute rien, il ne veut rien écouter...

Tantôt dans une salle, tantôt dans une autre, tantôt dans un bureau, tantôt dans un autre, toujours suçante un gros cigare, il faut un temps infini et l'aide de plusieurs secrétaires et de son chauffeur-factotum Bernhard, pour coincer le patron et le faire poser. Tendue en avant, contractée décorée d'yeux fouineurs, sa figure vous rappelle les gargouilles. Fébrile, vil, joyeux, désespéré, sensuel, calculateur, injuste, enthousiaste, Flechtheim est tout cela à la fois. Il s'exalte et se révolte en même temps. Habité par des démons de toutes sortes, son corps est une mécanique de vie et de sensibilité vibrante, toujours en état de désir passionné. Il est, par excellence, le type du juif intensément lyrique. Lyrique dans ses tractations, dans ses amitiés, dans ses vices.

Abondant de paroles comme un feu d'artifice, il cherche à vous expliquer sa pensée. Et l'on sent son esprit s'étendre constamment, se remuer en tous sens, pour se rétracter aussitôt avec l'inquiétude d'avoir dit trop long.

Et d'abord une réserve pour se donner plus de souffle :

— Dommage que vous ne m'ayez interviewé plus tôt. M. Paul Rosenberg vous a dit tout ce que j'avais à vous dire

d'essentiel et, avec tant d'esprit et d'à-propos que j'en suis désolé.

Puis avec laisser-aller et confiance :
— Je suis né en Westphalie que vous connaissez si bien en France, grâce à *Candide*. J'ai passé deux années à Genève dans une école de commerce. Mon père, comme mon grand-père et arrière-grand-

moment par l'entrée de René Sintenis et les chaleureuses accolades que Flechtheim s'est mis à lui prodiguer. René Sintenis a un chien et des mains remarquables.

... Ma conversion à la peinture fut opérée lors de mes voyages à Paris. A ce moment Wilhelm Uhde était installé à Paris dans un somptueux appartement, plein d'emblèmes d'étudiants allemands et de toiles de Picasso, de Braque et surtout d'Henri Rousseau.

En ce temps-là, Kahnweiler était installé rue Vignon, dans une toute petite boutique pleine de chefs d'œuvre de la jeune génération et d'un tout vieux domestique, beau à peu près comme la bonne de chez Vollard.

Un jour je passais pour affaire rue Laffitte, mais au lieu d'entrer dans une banque comme je me le proposais, je me suis laissé tenter par la boutique du père Sagot où j'ai acheté des eaux fortes de Picasso dont j'ai fait la connaissance dans cette même boutique et dont la figure m'avait beaucoup impressionné. Je ne m'en expliquais pas alors la raison car j'étais encore dans les blés.

Le père Sagot était l'homme le plus charmant du monde et avec cela d'une honnêteté dont je garde le souvenir le plus touchant. Son portrait par Picasso se trouve maintenant chez mon ami Reber. Un peu plus tard, j'ai fait la connaissance de Félix Fénéon qui me vendait des aquarelles de Rodin, des pommes de terre de Van Gogh, des soldats de Cézanne et beaucoup d'autres choses.

Mais pour moi, la connaissance la plus fertile était celle de Kahnweiler, à qui je dois d'être devenu ce que je suis maintenant, un propagandiste de l'art contemporain français en Allemagne, ce que Paul Cassirer a été pour les impressionnistes.

En 1912, toujours marchand de grains, j'ai organisé avec les directeurs des musées rhénans et quelques peintres de Dusseldorf l'exposition du Sonderbund de Cologne, exposition qui fut un succès retentissant pour l'art vivant et qui l'a fait connaître non seulement chez nous, mais dans le monde entier.



A. Flechtheim, photo Riess, Berlin.

père, peut-être même mes bisaïeux et trisaïeux, étaient négociants en grains (même pedigree que les dynasties des Rosenberg, de Rembrandt, puisque meunier, et de Pascin, exportateur de grains sur le Danube). J'ai voulu être le digne successeur de mon père. Pour m'initier aux arcanes du métier, j'ai passé ma jeunesse dans toutes sortes de maisons de céréales, à Londres, à Anvers, à Paris, en Russie, en Roumanie, en Espagne, en Italie. Mais à la longue j'en ai eu assez du seigle, de l'orge, des tourteaux, du tournesol, de la hausse et de la baisse à Chicago et à Anvers.

La conversation fut interrompue à ce

Flechtheim dealt with accommodating German museums' interest in buying German contemporary art, Zervos and his colleague Tériade reminded him on several occasions that Parisian modernism was little known in Germany without bearing a share of responsibility for the fact that German art was entirely unknown in France.

In 1929, in the wide-circulation Parisian daily *l'Intransigeant*, Tériade mockingly wrote about a German art dealer's—quite likely Flechtheim's—prognostic of the future of Berlin as a world art market, an aspiration revealed earlier in *Der Querschnitt*.¹³ He expressed disbelief in this development unless, he argued, “the young elements of Parisian painting rekindle new enthusiasm for Germany.”¹⁴ Both Zervos and Tériade devaluated the Expressionist nature of German art that Flechtheim had begun to present in his galleries in the mid-1920s, showing a keen interest in the quests of New Objectivity and, earlier, in the promotion of Rhenish Expressionism. Tériade referred to German Expressionists as the “fauves allemands,” who remain in the state of Fauvism for their whole lives. In France, Fauvism, he vouched, had been a moral movement indicating the primal state of youth but had become morale in Germany.¹⁵ Vindicating *Cahiers d'Art*'s mission, Tériade explained that Parisian art was being largely ignored in Germany, with Cubism playing a paltry role. At the same time, German artists were unwarily attached to the Fauvism of Matisse, the objectivity of Derain, the mechanism of Léger, and the Greek spirit of Maillol¹⁶—all four of whom had solo shows in Flechtheim's galleries around that time.¹⁷

Not all exhibitions organized by Flechtheim were commercial. In fact, he displayed both artworks that were the property of his galleries and loans from private collections. The German dealer revived the strategy that he had introduced with Kahnweiler at the 1912 Sonderbund exhibition and the effort to legitimize new developments in certain artists' work through the retrospective presentation of their oeuvres.¹⁸ While that was one aspect of his strategy, another was bringing together artworks by reputed artists and younger unknown artists in group exhibitions to attract attention to their work. Flechtheim had thereby become a useful connection for museum directors, assuming

13 Malcolm Gee, “The ‘cultured city’: The Art Press in Berlin and Paris in the early Twentieth Century,” in Malcolm Gee and Tim Kirk (eds.), *Printed Matters: Printing, Publishing and Urban Culture in Europe in the Modern Period*, Oxon/New York, 2002.

14 E. Tériade, “Une Enquête en Allemagne: La Peinture à Berlin,” in *l'Intransigeant*, 15 April 1929, p. 4.

15 Ibid.

16 Ibid.

17 February–March 1928: *Fernand Léger*, Gallery Flechtheim, Berlin; March 1928: *Aristide Maillol*, Gallery Flechtheim, Düsseldorf; November–December 1928: *Maillol*, Gallery Flechtheim, Berlin; April 1929: *André Derain*, Gallery Flechtheim, Berlin; November–December 1929: *Seit Cézanne in Paris*, Gallery Flechtheim, Berlin; and September–October 1930: *Matisse Braque Picasso, 60 Werke aus deutschem Besitz*, Gallery Flechtheim, Berlin.

18 Béatrice Joyeux-Prunel, “La construction internationale de l'aura de Picasso avant 1914: Expositions différenciées et processus mimétiques,” *Revoir Picasso*, conference papers, 26 March 2016, URL: http://revoirpicasso.fr/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/RevoirPicasso-2015_J2_Circulations.pdf [accessed: 30.10.2021].

the role of intermediary between museums and collectors. In 1928, the director of the Kunsthalle Mannheim, Gustav Friedrich Hartlaub, took advantage of Flechtheim's connections to borrow works from private collections for the Max Beckmann exhibition at the museum.¹⁹ *Der Querschnitt* started publishing long lists of modern German art acquired by museums from his gallery since 1925 (fig. 5).²⁰ The Belgian *Sélection* praised the institution of contemporary art in Germany and Moscow's modern art collections, presenting them as examples for other countries to follow. Meanwhile, in France, the troubled history of the Caillebotte bequest had become a cautionary tale for French museums and a rallying cry for progressive voices that called for policy change.

French Art in German Museums

In November 1920, while Flechtheim was busy expanding his affairs in Germany and, later, Austria, the first issue of the post-World War I series of *Cahiers d'aujourd'hui*, launched by Georges Besson (1882–1971), published an extensive list of French artworks acquisitioned by German museums before the war. The commentary addressed pointed criticism of the place reserved for modern and contemporary French art in State museums, referring specifically to the Musée du Luxembourg, the first museum of contemporary art in France, and its director Léonce Bénédite (1859–1925). The latter had been held accountable for the unfair treatment of the Caillebotte bequest (1894) and the outdated art presented in the museum.²¹ About a year later, in August 1921, the director of the École des Beaux-arts, Paul Léon (1874–1962), officially granted living artists the right to claim museum honors, a right until then exclusively reserved for academic artists.²² That change not only marked an important date in the history of modern art but also coincided with the opening of the contemporary art section of the Musée de Grenoble, the first veritable museum of living artists in France, whose collection of contemporary art,

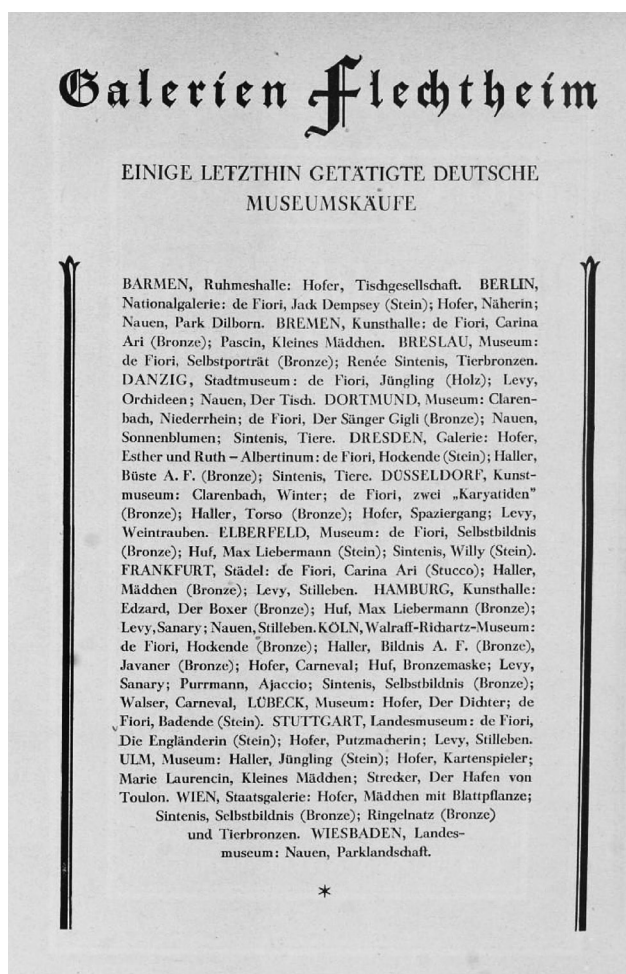
19 For more information, see the Alfred Flechtheim website, URL: <http://alfredflechtheim.com/en/artists/deutsche-moderne/> [accessed: 30.10.2021]. Zervos's voluminous Picasso catalog, launched in 1932, falls under the same rationale, with him acting as a key contact for those interested in Picasso's work.

20 "Galerien Flechtheim: Einige letzthin Getatigte Deutsche Museumskaufe," in *Der Querschnitt* 5/11, 1925.

21 "In 1914, a friend gave us the list of modern French paintings scattered in German Museums. It contained...two-hundred works that show the true tradition of French painting since Ingres and after Delacroix.... In 1914, French museums could barely count a hundred works comparable to those listed above.... It sometimes happens that the State...decides to buy the painting of a great living painter. It is purchased...often at 1/10th of its market value, under the promise of its assignment to the Luxembourg.... To welcome the new artwork it would be necessary to remove at least one Bouguereau, Lefebvre, Detaille, Roll, Chabas.... Therefore, the canvas acquisitioned at a discount is moved to some deposit. It stays there. Bénédite cares little for it.": Anon., "La peinture française en Allemagne," in *Les Cahiers d'aujourd'hui*, November 1920, n.p.

22 Jean Mirande, "Le Musée de Grenoble," in *Sélection* 9, 1924, p. 351.

- 5 “Galerien Flechtheim. Einige letzthin getätigte Deutsche Museumskäufe”, in *Der Querschnitt* 5, Heft 11, 1925



under the direction of Pierre Andry-Farcy (1882–1950), grew significantly through donations by artists, dealers, and collectors. A relatively minor institution, the Musée Albert André—established in 1917, when artist Albert André became director of the cantonal Musée Bagnols-sur-Cèze in Gard—was, in fact, the first museum of modern art in France, its collection enriched through donations by André’s artist friends, including, notably, Auguste Renoir. Between the public subscription for the acquisition of Edouard Manet’s *Olympia* by the State in 1890 to the individual donations to the Musée de Grenoble beginning in 1921, one witnesses strikingly minor changes in French museum acquisition policies for modern art.

The unhealed marks of postbellum inflation hindered the recovery of the art market, specifically affecting museum acquisition policies and publishing activities in both countries. Nevertheless, Zervos was determined to do his part to support the institution of con-

temporary Parisian art, which was striving to revive German interest and awaken French officials to the risks of cultural erosion. He started paying regular visits to Germany in the late 1920s. While planning the international exhibition of Franco-German sculpture at Georges Bernheim's gallery in 1929, *Cahiers d'Art* published a survey on "La Sculpture en Allemagne et en France" along with responses from Zervos's German colleagues. Grohmann's response is telling, as he asserts that—with the exception of Aristide Maillol, Edgar Degas, and Picasso, who were popular among the younger generation—Jacques Lipchitz, Henri Laurens, Charles Despiau, and Antoine Bourdelle were not household names in Germany.²³ The review sought, in fact, to promote the living influence of Cubism on the next generation.

A closer look into Kahnweiler's affairs in Germany before the outbreak of the war sheds much light on the reception and high visibility of French modern art in several German metropolises.²⁴ It is worth noting that the first work to enter a German public collection—a gouache by Picasso (*Acrobat et jeune Arlequin*, 1905)—was purchased for 1 200 Reichsmarks by banker and avant-garde patron August von der Heydt at the Galerie Marseille & Vildrac as early as 1911 and subsequently donated to the Elberfelder Museumsverein. In 1912, when the Musée du Luxemburg annexed the Orangerie to host part of the Caillebotte Impressionist collection, Kahnweiler sold Picasso's *La Famille Soler* portrait to the Wallraf Richartz Museum in Cologne. In France, the first work by Picasso to enter a public collection was *Femme lisant* (1920), donated by the artist to the Musée de Grenoble in 1921; a work by Matisse followed in 1922. In 1935, to ensure the posterity of his contribution to the renown of Parisian modernism, Flechtheim donated a portrait of himself painted by Karl Hofer in 1922.

Cahiers d'Art published a second survey on "La Peinture Française en Allemagne," inviting responses by German museum professionals. Then Kunsthalle Mannheim director Hartlaub expressed his willingness to carry on the work of former director Fritz Wichert and enrich the museum collection with works by not only French but also German modern and contemporary artists. He, nevertheless, pointed to the core problem of the postbellum art market, explaining that, while he expected to enrich the collection with works by Matisse, Picasso, and Braque, their high prices were prohibitive for German museums' modest budgets.²⁵ Hartlaub responded warily to the survey, as he was well aware of his commitments as a museum director to German art. He had started his career as an assistant to Gustav Pauli at the Kunsthalle Bremen and had witnessed the protests of Bremer artists against the speculation of the art market and the public debate over Pauli's acquisitions of French art to the detriment of

23 Will Grohmann, "Enquête sur la sculpture en Allemagne et en France," in *Cahiers d'Art* 10, 1928, pp. 370–376.

24 *Daniel-Henry Kahnweiler: Marchand, Editeur, Ecrivain*, Isabelle Monod-Fontaine (eds.), exh. cat. Paris, Centre Pompidou, Paris, 1984, pp. 106, 113, and 119.

25 Dr G. F. Hartlaub, "II. Enquête sur la Peinture Française en Allemagne," in *Cahiers d'Art* 1, 1929, p. 52.

that of Germany.²⁶ The protest took place before the Great War and was triggered by Pauli's 1911 acquisition of *Champ de coquelicots* (1889) by Vincent van Gogh for 30 000 Reichsmarks. Pauli was held equally responsible for having purchased Claude Monet's *Femme en robe verte* (1866) for about the same price a few years earlier. A two-hundred-page pamphlet was published in response to the protest, which included comments by forty-seven artists, twenty-eight art critics, and several dealers and gallery owners who defended Pauli and supported other German museum directors' acquisitions of French art.²⁷ Zervos deliberately overlooked the controversy and complaints raised by German artists and the State, once again spotlighting German interest in French art.

Resistance toward the policies of progressive museum directors in Germany were not uncommon. The case of Hugo von Tschudi was the most frequently quoted example of resistance to the conservatism of artistic and political institutions. Tschudi started his museum career as assistant to Wilhelm von Bode. From 1896 to 1908, he served as director of the Nationalgalerie of the Prussian capital.²⁸ His policies contradicted the political interests of Emperor Wilhelm II, and he was forced to resign in 1909. He was replaced by Justi, who, in fact, successfully continued his precursor's program. Tschudi is better known for having purchased the first works by Manet (*Au conservatoire*, 1879) and Cézanne (*Le Moulin sur la Coulevre à Pointoise*, 1881) to enter a public collection (fig. 6). Both works were purchased in Paris at the gallery Durand-Ruel for 22 000 French francs (FF) and 3 000 FF, respectively. Tschudi later became director of the Neue Pinakothek in Munich, where he continued enriching its modern collection with support from the private sector. Tschudi himself donated important works from his own collection to the Pinakothek, including a landscape by Monet (*La Seine à Argenteuil*, 1874), a self-portrait by Cézanne (1881–1882), a still life by Van Gogh *La Seine à Argenteuil (Tournesols*, 1888), and Paul Gauguin's *Te tamari no atua (The Birth*, 1896), which triggered his conflict with the Emperor and cost him his post at the Berlin Nationalgalerie.²⁹

26 *Ein Protest deutscher Künstler mit Einleitung von Carl Vinnen*, Jena, 1911. The pamphlet includes comments by 140 German artists condemning art market speculation and the French intrusion into German museums.

27 *Im Kampf um die Kunst: Die Antwort auf den "Protest deutscher Künstler"*, Munich, 1911.

28 See also Birgit Verwiebe and Angelika Wesenberg (eds.), *Die Gründung der Nationalgalerie in Berlin: Der Stifter Wagoner und seine Bilder. Für die Nationalgalerie—Staatliche Museen zu Berlin*, Cologne/Weimar/Vienna, 2013.

29 See also Peter Paret, "The Tschudi Affair," in *Journal of Modern History* 53/4, December, 1981, pp. 589–618; Françoise Fortser-Hahn, "Shrine of Art or Signature of a New Nation? The National Gallery(ies) in Berlin, 1848–1968," in *Studies in the History of Art* 47, Symposium Papers XXVII: The Formation of National Collections of Art and Archaeology, 1996, pp. 78–99; Jesús Pedro Lorente, *Museums of Contemporary Art: Notion and Development*, Ashgate, 2013, p. 110; and Bruce Altshuler (ed.), *Collecting the New: Museums and Contemporary Art*, Princeton, 2013, pp. 1–13.



6 Paul Cézanne, *The Mill by the Coulevre in Pontoise*, 1881, Alte Nationalgalerie, Berlin

Already before the Great War, several German museums had amassed important collections of modern French art. It is not surprising that German museums were the prime points of entry for French modernism, as Lorente has accurately argued, “because the ideal of heeding the entire range of cultural trends is very close to one of the basic principles of art historians, and the German-speaking universities had pioneered the development of the History of Art as a subject....In contrast to the predominant provincialism of other countries,” the scientific stature and reputation of the museum directors in Germany weakened confrontational criticisms and turned German museums into “public displays of the most advanced international art.”³⁰

Cahiers d'Art published reports and surveys on French art in German museums as well as interviews with their directors, which were very likely arranged by Flechtheim.

³⁰ Lorente, 2013, (note 29), pp. 108–109.

The review began viewing private-public partnership, which was presented as the sole path toward institutionalization—a position that became dominant beginning in 1929. It presented the French collection of Frankfurt's Städel museum, commenting on the decision of its director, Georg Swarzenski, to bring together modern French artworks with works by Rembrandt, Hans Holbein, Titian, and Tintoretto. Apart from Impressionist and Post-Impressionist works, the Städel owned works by living artists, such as Matisse, Picasso, Braque, Rouault, Chagall, and Maillol. Swarzenski confided to the review that modern French painters were as important as their ancestors, for they approached the universal signification of art.³¹

In 1929, Zervos paid close attention to the reorganization of the Louvre and the Luxemburg museums, responding with optimism to the transfer of works by Paul Seurat, Gauguin, and Henri Rousseau to the Louvre two years earlier. His advocacy of the creation of a new independent Parisian museum for contemporary art with private funding was possibly part of his strategy to influence the French officials' decision-making process in hopes of meeting the public demand for a new museum more quickly. Some placed faith in Charles Masson, who became the director of the Musée du Luxembourg after Bénédite's passing, for the reorganization of its outdated collection. Adopting pragmatic rhetoric, in 1930, Zervos directed his polemic against the French State and its unwillingness to acquisition works by contemporary artists when their prices were low and later complaining that they had been too expensive for the museums' approved budgets. In the meantime, foreign museums were enriching their public collections with French masterpieces at low prices thanks to better timing.³² It is interesting here that the early institution of French modern art in Germany was the main cause of rising prices, which equally affected institutional acquisitions. Tschudi had, in fact, purchased his first work by Cézanne in 1897 for 3 000 FF and, in 1904, paid 10 000 FF for a smaller still life by the same artist; four years later, in 1908, he paid Paul Cassirer 20 000 FF for a medium-sized oil painting. In 1905, he paid about 300 FF to Ambroise Vollard to buy small sculptures by Maillol, and three years later, 1 000 FF for a medium-sized terracotta purchased directly from the sculptor.³³ It is evident that museum acquisitions boosted the commercial value of these artists, a fact that renders Zervos's argument relatively pointless.

31 P. Le Grand de Reulandt, "Collection d'art français en Allemagne: Œuvres des XIXe et XXe siècles : le Musée de Francfort," in *Cahiers d'Art* 4, 1929, pp. 159–161.

32 Christian Zervos, "Pour la création à Paris d'un Musée des Artistes Vivants," in *Cahiers d'Art* 7/6, 1930, p. 338.

33 See *Manet bis Van Gogh: Hugo von Tschudi und der Kampf um die Moderne*, in Johann Georg Prinz von Hohenzollern and Peter-Klaus Schuster (eds.), exh.cat., Berlin, Nationalgalerie/Munich, Neue Pinakothek, Munich, 1996; and Barbara Paul, *Hugo von Tschudi und die moderne französische Kunst im Deutschen Kaiserreich*, Mainz, 2001.

The *Cahiers d'Art* article series dedicated to German museums possibly resulted from Zervos's personal conversations, or rather debates, with Flechtheim. Unlike the general content of the review, which was highly instructive toward its readers, this series offered valuable insights to Zervos, who, on several occasions, appears to be, if not misinformed, unknowledgeable about the market for French art abroad, especially in the period preceding the publication of his review. Furthermore, some of these commentaries contain information that is hard to confirm elsewhere, such as Hans Secker's role as an advisor to Wilhelm Uhde, as mentioned in the article on the history of the collections of the Wallraf Richartz Museum in Cologne. The article stressed the important role played by the art historian Alfred Hagemann, who served as its director since 1910—his appointment coinciding with the formation of the most important private collections of modern painting and sculpture in Germany. Hagemann's connections with collectors were vital, as many of them subsequently donated works to State museums. The text referred to Karl Ernst Osthaus's donations to the Museum Folkwang in Hagen; Max Meiwesky's and Hermann Tietz's donations to the Wallraf Richartz Museum in Cologne; and the important collections of Flechtheim and Gottlieb Friedrich Reber, which were created around that period. The question of who would succeed Hagemann after his death in 1915 was a perilous one for the museum, as Secker's late appointment in 1921 and the inflation of the German market rendered the task of bridging the gap left by the previous director impossible. Secker left Cologne in 1927. The commentator placed hope in his successor, Ernst Buchner, a Munich native familiar with the Tschudi collection, although Buchner eventually joined the Nazi party and got involved in looting activities.³⁴

In 1931, *Cahiers d'Art* published the architectural plans for a new museum by Le Corbusier and Pierre Jeanneret. As mentioned in the editorial note, the project would require the minimum possible funding from the 'patron' who would undertake its realization.³⁵ Despite his constant claims of impartiality and non-commercial interest, Zervos did not raise the question of speculation in the art market, as he had earlier in his letter to Justi, nor did he call attention to the dangers that the commercial administration of a private museum entailed. His interest in German museums, however, persisted. That same year, he launched a survey on abstract art and published a response by Alexander Dorner, who had served as director of the Landesmuseum Hannover since 1925. Dorner affirmed that abstract painting was a historically necessary phenomenon of great importance, which was why a room was reserved for it in the museum. In 1927, Dorner, widely known for his innovative museological methods and the reorganization of the collections of the Landesmuseum in Hannover, commissioned El Lissitzky to create a proto-installation atmosphere room for abstract art—the first one in Germany. *Cahiers d'Art* presented the museum's small collection of abstract art as the result of its director's pluralist

34 Anon., "La Peinture Française en Allemagne III - Le Musée de Cologne," in *Cahiers d'Art* 3, 1930, p. 156.

35 N.D.L.R., "Pour la Création à Paris d'un Musée des Artistes Vivants (II)," in *Cahiers d'Art* 1, 1931, p. 5.

approach to historical evolution. Dorner contested the idea of a historical museum and its utopian doctrine of eternal values. However, contrary to the projects published by *Cahiers d'Art*, he acknowledged that a museum uniquely reduced to the display of modern art production could be nothing more than a simple exhibition: “An exhibition of this sort can persuade, but will not convince ... that is because it is lacking the warrants that these new productions are the necessary outcome of anterior historical evolution.” The museum derives its value, Dorner confirmed, from the display of links connecting the achievements of the past to the present—the same position Zervos eventually espoused.³⁶

Flechtheim vs. Zervos: Conflict of Interest

“You cannot understand in what situation we find ourselves in Germany—no business, no money, no hope that this will change. Impossible to renew my advertising. You cannot imagine how much I regret it, but alas, what do you expect? Perhaps in a few months things will get better.”³⁷—Alfred Flechtheim

The role played by German dealers and collectors was pivotal in gaining currency for modern French art abroad. The first initiatives dated back to 1912, when, for the first time, the third Sonderbund exhibition in Cologne displayed a significant number of modern French artworks in Germany. The first two exhibitions took place in Düsseldorf between 1910 and 1911. The idea of grouping together progressive German works with French modern art was first put into practice by a group of Düsseldorf artists seeking to revive Düsseldorf’s contacts with contemporary art. The exhibitions were commercial, and the outcome of this grouping, which became typical of Flechtheim’s gallery strategy, proved successful for the sales of Düsseldorf artists. This is a very brief account of the history behind the foundation of the Sonderbund, which was managed by a group of museum directors, art collectors, artists, dealers and art historians.³⁸ The third exhibition of 1912 is perhaps most significant, as it displayed more than a hundred works by van Gogh and many others by Cézanne, Rousseau, Matisse, Derain, Braque, and Léger as well as many Picassos from the period between 1905 and 1912 from the Flechtheim collection in

36 Alexander Dorner, “La Raison d’être Actuelle des Musées d’Art,” in *Cahiers d’Art* 8–10, 1932, pp. 365–366.

37 “Vous ne pouvez pas comprendre dans quelle situation nous nous trouvons en Allemagne, ni affaires, ni argent, ni espoir que ça se changera. Impossible de renouveler ma publicité. Vous ne comprendrez pas combien je le regrette, mais hélas, que voulez-vous? Peut-être d’ici quelques mois ça ira mieux.”: Flechtheim, letter to Zervos, 7 September 1931. Fonds Cahiers d’Art, CAPROV 26, Bibliothèque Kandinsky, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris.

38 For a comprehensive discussion, see Julia Drost and Markus A. Castor, “Eine Erfindung der Moderne: Die Ausstellungen des ‘Sonderbundes’ im Rheinland und der Kanon der Kunst,” in *Études Germaniques* 4/256, 2009, pp. 997–1020.

Germany for the first time. It was, in fact, that exhibition that inspired Flechtheim to become an art dealer.

The survey “La Peinture Française en Allemagne” presented material destined to be published in a volume titled *L’Art français dans les collections allemandes*. Flechtheim initially planned an illustrated volume with a hundred reproductions of works from his own collection, a French introduction by Tériade, and a short note by Walter Cohen, early member of the Sonderbund board of directors and curator at the Städtische Kunstsammlung Düsseldorf. Zervos thought that including both private and public collections would give a full account of Germany’s admiration for French art. Both the interviews with German museum directors and the photographs from their collections presented in the *Cahiers d’Art* survey were provided by Flechtheim, who was enthusiastic about the volume but could not proceed with its publication due to the indifference with which this costly edition was met by German sponsors.³⁹ By this time, Zervos was obviously better informed about the reception of French modern art in Germany. A letter that he addressed to Grohmann in 1931 reveals that his views had significantly changed.⁴⁰ His earlier persistence in promoting a group of relatively unknown Parisian artists, advising Flechtheim to invest in their works, had not been crowned with success. The case of the Spanish Ismael de la Serna is perhaps the most striking, as Zervos had persuaded the dealer to buy his works and organize a show in Germany, which was celebrated in Paris as a sold-out exhibition. Flechtheim’s letter provides different information, including the fact that the dealer had complained about unsold works in his stock while criticizing Zervos’s “éternelles répétitions” of Parisian masters and promotion of the “jeunes disparus un an après.”⁴¹ Their rich correspondence eloquently brings to light some of the major points of their disagreement, namely Flechtheim’s loss of interest in French art and Zervos’s lack of excitement about that of Germany.⁴²

39 Isgard Kracht, “Un Livre [...] sur ma Collection – Alfred Flechtheims Etablierungsversuche auf dem französischen Kunstmarkt,” in Andrea Bambi and Axel Drecol (eds.), *Alfred Flechtheim: Raubkunst und Restitution*, Berlin, 2015, pp. 57–67.

40 “Il y a quelques jours le journal de Huit Heures de Berlin, m’avait demandé ce que je pensais sur le rapprochement artistique franco-allemand. J’avais répondu entre autres choses que l’art français était très connu en Allemagne mais que, par contre, l’art allemand était presque inconnu chez nous.”: Zervos, letter to Grohmann, 14 October 1931. Grohmann Archive, Stuttgart. I am indebted to Malcolm Gee for communicating the content of this letter to me.

41 Flechtheim, letter to Zervos, 16 February 1932. Fonds Cahiers d’Art, CAPROV 26, Bibliothèque Kandinsky, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris.

42 “Vous me dites que vous avez publié deux fois des articles sur Belling. Mais combien de fois est-ce que vous avez publié des articles sur des médiocrités comme Laurens, Lipchitz et Arp? Vous avez fait énormément de réclame pour des jeunes Espagnols et combien de fois est-ce que vous avez publié Hofer et Grosz?... Qu’est-ce que vous avez reproduit de Lehmbruck et Kolbe, etc.? Notre sculpture allemande est supérieure à celle de Paris qui ne possède que Maillol; votre Despiau est moins intéressant que notre Kolbe. Je vais vous dire quelque chose: j’ai acheté sur votre conseil beaucoup de Serna et je vous en enverrai.... Je veux vous dire que nos éternels articles sur les fauves, sur Picasso, sur Braque, sur

By 1931, their relationship had deteriorated, and Flechtheim's outstanding debt to Zervos, from publicity costs and several *Cahiers d'Art* editions the dealer had purchased, was growing. To liquidate his debt, Flechtheim sent two drawings by Picasso and one by Matisse to Zervos, but Zervos was not pleased and asked for paintings from the dealer's collection.⁴³ Although the background of their collaboration in the mid-1920s had been the revival of the connections between the two countries interrupted by the war, in the early 1930s, one witnessed a resurgence of the rivalries nurtured by wartime hostilities, the flames of which were further stoked by the financial insecurity caused by inflation. Zervos's lengthy response to the dealer epitomizes the end of their collaboration:

“You have the nerve to accuse me of never having done anything for your German artists. This accusation is unfounded or, as I want to believe, you wrote this letter under the influence of the political events there, in order to please the nationalist spirit of certain people. You forget that you were one of the first and the most fervent champions of the School of Paris. You have forgotten that your best exhibitions were French and that the paintings you sold in times of prosperity were French. How can you say that I did nothing for your gallery ...? Was it not I, who, during my stay in Berlin, told you that we must, nevertheless, support German art, to which you responded that it disgusted you? Was it not I who reproached you for not supporting Klee, who was equal to many of our best painters? Was it not I who organized the exhibition of sculpture at Bernheim where we invited all your sculptors? Was it not I who published the works of Belling on two occasions.⁴⁴ What you write to me is so absurd—because I cannot believe that you no longer recall the publication of the works of Lehmbruck, Fiori, Sintenis, Haller etc. alongside the best French sculptors— that I am convinced that you wrote your letter to exculpate yourself in the eyes of I know not whom, and I do not hold it against you. Still, I am proud to have been the first to have sought to bring the artists of the two countries closer in a magazine that appears in Paris and one as important as *Cahiers d'Art*,

Léger etc. commencent à ne plus étonner.”: Flechtheim, letter to Zervos, 7 January 1932. Fonds Cahiers d'Art, CAPROV 26, Bibliothèque Kandinsky, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, published in Christian Derouet (ed.), in *Cahiers d'Art: Musée Zervos à Vézelay*, Paris: Hazan, 2006, p. 81.

43 Flechtheim, letter to Zervos, 18 December 1931, and Zervos, letter to Flechtheim, 22 December 1931. Fonds Cahiers d'Art, CAPROV 26, Bibliothèque Kandinsky, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris.

44 See E.C.P., “Les Fontaines de Rudolf Belling,” in *Cahiers d'Art* 3, 1928, pp. 132–134; Christian Zervos, “Notes sur la sculpture contemporaine: A propos de la récente Exposition Internationale de Sculpture. Galerie Georges Bernheim, Paris,” in *Cahiers d'Art* 10, 1929, pp. 465–472.

despite the recriminations of your friends such as Mr Reber and Einstein... I just found out that Georges Kolbe, out of gratitude for what I have done for him, has just unsubscribed. Well...."⁴⁵

Flechtheim admitted his admiration for *Cahiers d'Art* but acknowledged that everything had changed. And with the great masters of his age, French art, with very few rather uninteresting exceptions, had lost the splendor that had initially attracted his attention.⁴⁶ Due to his financial situation, Zervos refused to give up on his Parisian protégés, desperately placing his hopes on their material support of his review, such as holding auctions of their works for its benefit. To, in return, promote them, Flechtheim's strategy was applied in *Cahiers d'Art*, and works by young artists were presented together with illustrated commentaries on, among others, Picasso and Matisse. There is no indication that Zervos had any contact with Flechtheim after 1933—when he fled to Paris as his Düsseldorf gallery was aryanized—though he kept collaborating closely with Valentin in the years that followed. Despite Zervos's overt support for the German artists persecuted by the Nazi regime, there is no reference to Flechtheim's persecution and tragic fate in any published or unpublished documents associated with Zervos or his review. There is little doubt that Flechtheim had played a central role in the promotion of French modern art in Germany before the war. It was precisely this favorable reception of French art by German dealers, museums, and collectors that Zervos sought to revive after the war in his *Cahiers d'Art*. The French State was held responsible for failing in its duty to safeguard its

45 "Vous avez l'humour de me reprocher de n'avoir jamais rien fait pour vos artistes allemands. Or, c'est un reproche qui ne tient pas ou, comme je veux le croire, vous avez écrit cette lettre sous l'influence des événements politiques chez vous et pour faire plaisir à l'esprit nationaliste de certaines personnes. Vous oubliez que vous avez été un des premiers et des plus fervents défenseurs de l'École de Paris, vous avez oublié que les meilleures expositions que vous avez faites étaient françaises et que les tableaux que vous avez vendus au temps de la prospérité étaient français. Comment pouvez-vous dire que je n'ai rien fait pour votre Galerie, est-ce que je n'ai pas soutenu les peintres dont vous vendiez les œuvres ? Est-ce que ce n'est pas moi, qui lors de mon séjour à Berlin, je vous avais dit qu'il fallait tout de même soutenir l'art allemand et que vous m'aviez répondu qu'il vous dégoûtait? Ce n'est pas moi qui vous avais reproché de ne pas soutenir Klee qui valait plusieurs de nos meilleurs peintres. N'est-ce pas moi qui ai organisé l'exposition de sculpture chez Bernheim où nous avions invité tous vos sculpteurs. N'est-ce pas moi qui à deux reprises ai publié des œuvres de Belling. C'est tellement flagrant de contresens ce que vous m'écrivez, car je ne peux pas croire que vous ne vous souvenez plus de la publication des œuvres de Lehbruck, de Fiori, de Sintenis, de Haller etc. en face des meilleurs sculpteurs français, que je suis persuadé que vous avez écrit votre lettre pour vous excuser je ne sais auprès de qui et je vous en tiens pas rigueur. Toujours est-il que je suis fier d'avoir été le premier qui, dans une revue paraissant à Paris et de l'importance des Cahiers d'Art, ait cherché à rapprocher les artistes des deux pays, malgré les récriminations de vos amis comme MM. Reber et Einstein....Je viens de m'apercevoir que Georges Kolbe en remerciement de ce que j'ai fait pour lui, vient de se désabonner. Enfin...": Zervos, letter to Flechtheim, 5 January 1932. Fonds Cahiers d'Art, CAPROV 26, Bibliothèque Kandinsky, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris.

46 Flechtheim, letter to Zervos, 2 March 1932. Fonds Cahiers d'Art, CAPROV 26, Bibliothèque Kandinsky, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris.

national cultural heritage against foreign erosion. There are, however, significant differences between the pre- and postwar situations. Zervos was active in the mid-1920s, but the backdrop of the enthusiasm for French modern art is rooted in the prewar period. This was also what had motivated Flechtheim's engagement in the first place and what had fed Zervos's aspiration to find an audience for his publications in Germany. But what they were all negotiating, in different ways, were the changing artistic, economic, and, to some extent, political circumstances of the postwar era.

Frontispiece page 52: Paul Cézanne, *The Mill by the Coulevre in Pontoise*, 1881, Alte Nationalgalerie, Berlin (detail, see page 66, fig. 6)