

The Graphic Collection of the Department of Art History at the University of Trier

The Graphic Collection of the Department of Art History at the University of Trier was established in 1982. Its holdings span chronologically from the early 16th century prints to contemporary art.

Since 1990, the university has developed distinctive areas of focus, particularly following a generous donation that included a collection of portrait prints. A notable component of this collection comprises Japanese woodblock prints from the 18th and 19th centuries, acquired by the university from private holdings in 1991.

Additionally, the collection has been supplemented by two generous long-term loans since 2013 and 2018. The first comprises over 100 artists' books and portfolios from the 20th and 21st centuries, and the second is the significant collection of prints from 1600 to 1900, courtesy of the Wolfgang Johannes Hönle Foundation within the German Chemical Society (GDCh).

Curriculum-integrated courses familiarise students of art history with the institution's graphic holdings. Here, they are introduced to essential historical knowledge and learn about the specific requirements of working with artworks on paper.

Preparing more than thirty exhibitions together with accompanying publications has been particularly fruitful and goal-oriented, enabling students to gain valuable practical experience. Such exhibition projects will continue to be an integral part of the department's teaching offerings in the upcoming semesters, utilising the long-term loan holdings.



Johann Adam Klein: New Year's Greeting for the Year 1829, 1828, Graphic Collection of the University of Trier



Cornelius Cort after Maarten van Heemskerck: The cycle of the vicissitudes of human affairs (sheet 1 from the series The Cycle of Human Life), 1564, Graphic Collection of the University of Trier

Do you have questions about the Wolfgang Johannes Hönle Foundation?

Dr. Wolfgang Johannes Hönle

[For questions about the founder and his motivations]

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Foundation Homepage

[For questions about the statutes, publications, online funding applications]

<https://www.gdch.de/gdch/stiftungen/wolfgang-j-hoenle-stiftung.html>



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The long-term loan of the
Wolfgang Johannes Hönle Foundation

Art and Chemistry

in the Graphic Collection of the
Department of Art History at the
University of Trier



Christian Bernhard Rode: Cleopatra and her servants rescue the wounded Marc Antony, 1776. Graphic Collection of the University of Trier

The Founder

Dr. Wolfgang Johannes Hönle, the founder, was born in 1947 and worked in the fields of inorganic chemistry and solid-state research. He was involved with the Max Planck Society in solid-state research for several decades and was also engaged in the planning, construction and operation of research institutes in the chemical-physical section.

Wolfgang Johannes Hönle Foundation Art and Chemistry

The foundation was established in Dezember 2016 as a non-independent, non-profit foundation under the German Chemical Society (GDCh). The idea behind the initiative is to enrich the relationship between art and chemistry. Consequently, the founder,

Dr. Wolfgang Johannes Hönle, entrusted the GDCh with fiduciary management of the foundation. The idea is that art and chemistry should inspire and enrich one another. The founder, Dr. Wolfgang J. Hönle, therefore considers the GDCh as the perfect trustee. Inspired by Wilhelm Ostwald's interdisciplinary bridge-building approach, the foundation aims to promote collaboration and understanding between art and chemistry as well as science and research by funding a variety of projects. The founder places great importance on making quick, unbureaucratic decisions about funding. Decisions are made by the foundation council. Projects that are highly interdisciplinary are especially encouraged.

Art Collection and Capital Assets

The Foundation has been endowed with a significant art collection and capital assets. Consisting of around 6,500 graphic works, the art collection was brought together within 40 years. This collection has been transferred step-by-step to the foundation and is on permanent loan to the University of Trier. The foundation's capital primarily comes from the inheritance of the founder's mother, Edith Hönle (1923–2009), who selflessly preserved and passed on the family estate. This legacy also enabled the establishment of the art collection.



Heinrich Pfenniger after Salomon Gessner: Arcadian Waterfall, 1780–1810. Graphic Collection of the University of Trier



Christian Bernhard Rode: The Childhood of Mahler Art (The Invention of Drawing), 1790. Graphic Collection of the University of Trier

Goals of the Foundation

The foundation's statutes enshrine its goal of promoting interdisciplinary projects from the fields of art and chemistry. The level of funding and number of funded projects are limited by the restricted returns on the capital stock. The foundation's unique feature is its support of projects covering at least two disciplines and the absence of awards, in contrast to other foundations within the GDCh that regularly grant prizes named after their founders.

Another objective is to promote and train young art scholars by exploring themes arising from the foundation's art collection. The University of Trier can also apply for projects that align with the foundation's statutes.

