



PRESS RELEASE

## "The Idea and Practice of Kunstvereins" included into the Federal Register of Intangible Cultural Heritage of the German UNESCO Commission

*Berlin, 19<sup>th</sup> March 2021.* "The Idee und Praxis of Kunstvereins" was included into the Federal Register of Intangible Cultural Heritage of the German UNESCO Commission on March 19, 2021 by decision of the Conference of Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs. Intangible cultural heritage refers to living forms of cultural expression. They are to be preserved by their respective communities through the support of the States and UNESCO. The Nationwide Register is an inventory of all cultural traditions and forms of expression in Germany.

The expert committee of the German UNESCO Commission that was responsible for the selection pays tribute in their statement to the important function of Kunstvereins in supporting the public good through their role as practical facilitators of aesthetic and cultural education. Their diversity contributes significantly to the diversity of the art landscape and society. "Originally reserved only for the bourgeoisie, today Kunstvereins encourage public participation and bring art into broad segments of society. As a network of urban and modern actors, they participate in and drive the discourse of contemporary art. In doing so, they cultivate an understanding of democracy that is important for the preservation of a vibrant and diverse cultural heritage."

The first Kunstvereins were founded between 1792 and 1840 by the emergent bourgeoisie, who no longer wanted to leave authority over the fine arts and its facilitation to the clergy and the aristocracy. Today, the Arbeitsgemeinschaft Deutscher Kunstvereine (ADKV) consists of around three hundred Kunstvereins within the German-speaking countries. In 2019, the ADKV applied for inclusion into the Federal Register of Intangible Cultural Heritage. In celebration of the successful application, chairwoman Meike Behm said: "The ADKV is wholeheartedly thankful for the inclusion and is extremely pleased about the appreciation that this award shows to the work of our members."

The Arbeitsgemeinschaft Deutscher Kunstvereine e.V. (ADKV) is the umbrella organization of approximately 300 German Kunstvereins. Founded in 1980, its tasks include networking and advising its member organizations as well as providing a range of services. Furthermore, it also represents the interests of its members in cultural, media, and political spheres and carries out the overarching public relations work for the idea of the Kunstverein as an institution committed to the engagement of civil society in the German-speaking world.

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