

Jochen Kienzle of the Kienzle Art Foundation

Jochen Kienzle jokes that the first generation builds a company, the second generation manages it, and the third generation studies art history.

Kienzle's family founded one of Germany's oldest clock- and watchmakers [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kienzle_Uhren]. It then expanded into parking and taximeters. They even launched a computer. However, Jochen Kienzle is passionate about contemporary art.

Kienzle showed *impactmania* at the Kienzle Art Foundation [<http://kienzleartfoundation.de/>] in Charlottenburg, Berlin, and some of his collection can be viewed on loan at cavuspace [<http://cavuspace.com/>], a (maybe say storefront instead of physical) physical space in Schöneberg, Berlin, both spaces serve ~~that serves~~ as platforms presenting alternative thinkers and makers in the art realm.

Why the Kienzle Art Foundation?

I grew up with a lot of classic and modern art and was confronted with these paintings as we discussed them in the family.

So I was studying art history and perception psychology in Munich and was always asking, how can I mediate the ideas and philosophy behind the paintings, what kind of art beside the mainstream exist. Why are some painters so successful and others not. ~~I grew up with a lot of classic and modern art and was confronted with these paintings as we discussed them in the family.~~

With the foundation, I want to show people things they're not used to seeing. I focus on interesting artists who are lesser known or who have been forgotten. We are living in a very fast paced, quickly passing time and sometimes we forget or don't manage to discover the works of so many good artists. I see the foundation as a contrapuntal institution.

People believe ~~when they think about~~ that museum exhibitions are a proven tool for measuring the quality of art. The art works are determined to be historically accepted. But the commercial aspect also plays an important role in the museum "system". The value of an artwork is not a only commercial one, but the prices are also regarded in our society as a measurement of value and success. High prices are sensational and sexy. People love sensations. Sensation brings more visitors to the museums. What happens is that these museums show popular, entertaining shows. Therefore museum shows are looking nearly the same worldwide.

Do you think museums' successes are measured incorrectly?

Yes, the problem is that German museums are State- financed. The measure of a good museum is ... reaching some quotas... how many people came to the show. This system of funding is absurd. The quantity of visitors does not say anything about quality of an exhibition. Museum shows should be more discursive and courageous in the sense of their expectations of visitors' understanding and thinking about art.

Jochen, you meant the expectartions of the museums and not the visitors, right?

Museums posses artwork in the view of art history, old and already discussed themes. For the artistry, it's not interesting. It doesn't push us forward. In the eyes of the politicians and the directors of the museums, it's a big success. I think that's the problem — because the museums are not independent of the money.

In the U.S., the system is even harder. There the collectors have a very big influence. They usually have a certain intention. Some collectors bring their collection to the museums because when it appears in a catalog, the value of the thing goes up — regardless of the quality.

What are the main misconceptions in art?

I think the public is consuming art. People have no feeling anymore for art. They have no time to think about it. They're used to having a show, which is already explained, where there is no discussion and no contradiction.

For example the "Painting 2.0" Exhibition in Munich: I think it's an example of how the market is pushing themes, which in historical view is not right. They're leaving facts out ; they don't speak about other themes in art history — they show examples of artwork of artists who didn't touch the problem of painting in the contents of the Exhibition.

I think what happened is that art has lost her freedom. The market is elevating certain art and people... When a painting is very expensive, it must be good one.

What can a person do about this?

You only have to be aware of that problem. We need a critical analysis and reflection. It's very important that we come back to art, in the sense that we begin to discuss and that we can see the social themes.

A true will of communication of our culture.

I regard the mediation work very important, and not only to answers or solutions to a certain artwork. The answer must be given by the artwork itself. I volunteer in offering possibilities of reading paintings.

I only try to open eyes and make the people sensitive to certain problems in painting society, as it were.

In our society, everything is entertainment. We are losing views on problems and solutions we have.

Do you have advice for people who'd like to start collecting art?

My advice: Look critically at paintings; go to museums, foundations, galleries — look at all the shows. As I said before I never have a general explanation for an artwork but questions

When I have students who come to the foundation, I always ask them, what are they seeing? What is wrong? What's happened? Why is there something that is out of the ordinary? I think you have to train your eye. This is important for collectors but also for artists. Look with your eyes and not with your ears, that means don't listen to much to art critics and ranging lists.

Some artists tend to serve the market or their career. That is the reason, why a lot of artists make their works bigger and bigger, glamorous, and overwhelming. But when you scratch the surface, there is no substance.

What is your legacy with this collection that you are building?

This is to show to people, that's all, to add something, and to elevate. Not elevate in the sense of money, elevating in the sense of contents, without consumerism and capitalization.

For some time, we had a visitor who seemed to be very interested in our shows. He came for years, but he was always very shy. He comes in, looks around, and suddenly leaves — very fast.

One day — I think it was in the fifth year — he came and finally spoke to me. He said, “Mr. Kienzle, I don't understand that you're doing.”

I was shocked, because he'd been coming for five years looking at work.

“Okay. That's a pity,” I said, “because I want people to understand art.” Then, he said, “Yes, I don't understand anything, but when I'm going home, I'm thinking about it.” He discovered something new. He felt it.

This was the reason I gave up the gallery [I used to own]; it doesn't make sense to follow a commercial objective. It's not only money that counts; you have another value, too, a moral value. That is what drives me because we have to debate and we have to make clear that culture is part of our life. It shows where you are coming from. It's a very essential part in our life.

More about Kienzle Art Foundation

<http://kienzleartfoundation.de/>

Cavuspace

<http://cavuspace.com/>