

August 9, 2021

The Städtische Galerie im Lenbachhaus und Kunstbau is pleased to be the beneficiary of a bequest formalized by the establishment of a new foundation.

The Eva Margarete Lückenhause-Stiftung was incorporated on September 30, 2020, and going forward will support the Lenbachhaus in its efforts to acquire works of art, design and implement art education programs, and produce exhibitions.

The first work of art acquired using funds from the Eva Margarete Lückenhause-Stiftung:

Elisabeth Ivanovna Epstein

Zhytomyr, Ukraine, Russian Empire, 1879–Geneva, Switzerland, 1956

worked in Moscow, Munich, Paris, Geneva

Waldphantasie (Forest Fantasy), 1928

Oil on cardboard, 40.5 x 32.7 cm

Eva Margarete Lückenhause passed away in Berlin on June 5, 2016. She lived in Munich and Berlin and was an avid art collector and loyal friend of Munich's art museums. She was especially fond of the Lenbachhaus's collections and exhibitions. That is why, to our great delight, in drawing up her will, she chose to appoint the State Capital of Munich as one of her heirs, on the sole condition that the assets bequeathed to the city would be used exclusively to benefit the Städtische Galerie im Lenbachhaus.

The purpose of the Eva Margarete Lückenhause-Stiftung encompasses the acquisition of works of art and the realization of exhibition projects, art education programs, and publications in three divisions of the collections: the art of the nineteenth century, the New Objectivity, and classical modernism.

We are profound honored by and most grateful for Eva Margarete Lückenhause's dedication to our museum, which testifies to the deep affection local audiences have for the programming and collections of the Lenbachhaus. The establishment of her foundation also illustrates that Munich's citizens can entrust the State Capital of Munich as the fiduciary of their bequests. At this time of ever-tighter public budgets, Lückenhause's generosity will help us remain flexible in our work. We also regard the establishment of her foundation as an outstanding contemporary example of the longstanding and admirable tradition of civic engagement for the Lenbachhaus.

We will always remember the late Eva Margarete Lückenhause with profound gratitude and honor her memory.

Immediately upon incorporation, the foundation completed its first acquisition: the painting *Waldphantasie* (*Forest Fantasy*, 1928) by Elisabeth Epstein.

Elisabeth Epstein was one of the few women artists whose works were shown in the legendary First Blue Rider Exhibition in 1911–12. Although she was a major figure in the Blue Rider's orbit, her oeuvre has remained fairly obscure. The primary reason is that the current whereabouts of her works from the Blue Rider period are largely unknown. The Lenbachhaus has two self-portraits from 1911, likely the only known extant works from this seminal phase in her oeuvre. They were recently located in New York and acquired by the Lenbachhaus and the Gabriele Münter and Johannes Eichner Foundation in 2019. They are currently on view in the exhibition *Group Dynamics—The Blue Rider*.

Even today, few people are aware of the central role that Epstein played for the Blue Rider with her contacts and her own paintings. After studying art in Moscow for two years, she spent the period from 1898 until 1904 in Munich, where she made Kandinsky's acquaintance. Epstein then settled in Paris, and for the next decade, she was a key intermediary for Kandinsky's connections into the French art scene. It was also she who recommended him to the artists' association Les Tendances in 1904. Taking classes at the Académie de la Palette, Epstein met her colleague Sonia Terk, a fellow native of Ukraine, who introduced her to the circle of artists around Wilhelm Uhde's gallery, and from 1910 onward, she was a regular at the Sunday meetings of Sonia Delaunay-Terk's Mouvement franco-russe. In 1911, Epstein put Kandinsky in touch with Robert Delaunay, initiating a relationship that made art history: the painter in Munich invited his French colleague to participate in the First Blue Rider Exhibition and to contribute to the almanac *Der Blaue Reiter*. Franz Marc, too, cherished Epstein's work and commended the painter to Herwarth Walden's gallery Der Sturm in Berlin, where her two pictures *Portrait* and *Portrait of a Young Girl* were included in the First German Autumn Salon. In 1912 and 1913, Epstein's essays "Bildentstehung" ("Genesis of the Picture") and "Das Lächerlichsein" ("Ridiculousness") appeared in issues of the magazine *Der Sturm*. The photographs of Elisabeth Epstein in Gabriele Münter's personal archive attest to the warm friendship between them. The extant letters between Epstein and Kandinsky and/or Münter show them engaged in intense discussions of questions in the theory of painting and other advanced ideas of the time. From 1929 until her death, Epstein lived in Geneva. She and Kandinsky were still in regular contact in the 1930s; they often met when she visited Paris, where he lived after leaving Germany in late 1933.

In *Forest Fantasy*, the Lenbachhaus now has a painting from the interwar years that is recognizably informed by Epstein's study of the "synthetic" art of members of the New Munich Artists' Association (NKVM) like Alexej von Jawlensky, Gabriele Münter, Adolf Erbslöh, and Alexander Kanoldt.

Epstein's works evince a specific form of representationalism that Kandinsky and others held in high regard; in his system, he ranged it under the antagonism of "great realism" and "great abstraction." It was Kandinsky who acquired Epstein's self-portrait from the First Blue Rider Exhibition for his private collection. The painting is now thought to have been lost.

Thomas Mann immortalized Elisabeth Epstein in his novella *Tonio Kröger*, written between 1900 and 1902. The character of the smart and witty painter Lisaweta Iwanowna was inspired by Mann's acquaintance with Elisabeth Ivanovna Epstein.