

## **Interview with Franziska Kunz, Global Head of Art, Deutsche Bank AG**

- 1) The DB collection is composed of several thousand works of art exhibited in 900 locations, when did this project start? And how has it developed throughout the years?**

**Franziska Kunz:** Deutsche Bank has been involved in art for more than thirty five years. During this time, my predecessor Friedhelm Huette and his team have built up one of the world's most important corporate collections. A close connection to the bank and the public was part of the concept from the very beginning. The bank opens up platforms in which employees, clients and the public can engage with art directly at their locations. Now we are continuing to develop our art activities. Since April 2016, we have been combining all of our art, culture and sports commitments in the new division of ACS. As one of the strategic priorities within ACS, we want to leverage Deutsche Bank's expertise, resources and networks in the cultural context even more to strengthen and build up client relationships. For example, Friedhelm Huette, Global Head of Art for many years, will set up and lead dedicated Art Consulting engagements worldwide and will also develop new projects.

- 2) Paper is the most dominant medium of the collection, is there a particular reason for that? Has it always been the case?**

**FK:** From day one, the Deutsche Bank Collection has been focused on contemporary drawings and photographs. The reason behind it is that contemporary art often anticipates developments before they are acknowledged by mainstream society. Art questions; it spawns new ideas for shaping our future. It inspires people, opens new perspectives, and thus enables them to embrace unusual and innovative solutions. Then the medium of paper comes in, as artists often capture an idea on paper—as a sketch, a concept, or a first draft. This “draft character” of art was an important impetus for the founding of the Deutsche Bank Collection. The vision was to create a collection with a focus on works on paper and photography that is entirely devoted to the present.

- 3) German art from the 60's represents a substantial part of the collection, would you say that its initial focus (namely to acquire works on paper by Post War artists working in German speaking countries) is still a defining theme of the collection?**

**FK:** Since the 90's, Deutsche Bank has continuously been developing into an international bank. Thus, the focus for expanding our collection has also changed. It has consequently become more international in the last few years. We are just as interested in young talent in Africa, Latin America or Asia, where our banking business is going from strength to strength. Of course, artists living and working in Germany are also included; they are just not the only ones, but always seen in the European and global context.

- 4) One of the great values of your collection is that you don't keep it hidden in a warehouse, on the contrary it is exhibited in your offices worldwide for staff and for clients. Has the collection proved to be useful in improving your staff's**

**interest in modern and contemporary art? Do you use the collection as a powerful background for your events?**

**FK:** Our employees' interest in surrounding themselves with contemporary art from our collection in offices or other locations of the bank remains high. At our Group Headquarters in Frankfurt, our employees even have the opportunity to periodically choose pieces of art for their own offices and take part in guided tours or artist talks. In general, we want to make our cultural activities even more accessible to the bank's clients than before. That's one of the main reasons why we have established our new division ACS: to offer more tailor-made art programs to clients and a broad public.

**5) Are there limitations in having to acquire and curate work which is destined to be shown mainly in a corporate environment?**

**FK:** The first purpose of our collection is to be displayed in a working and business environment. Given this background as well as different cultural circumstances, not every work of art is appropriate for our collection.

**6) Could you describe your acquisition procedure and structure? Do you have a budget? Does it vary from country to country?**

**FK:** Our team is based internationally. We monitor art magazines and attend international exhibitions and art fairs. We put artists who we believe are interesting on our internal 'watch list' for instance. Furthermore, we work with external experts such as Okwui Enwezor, who curated last year's Venice Biennale, or Victoria Noorthoorn from Buenos Aires. When it comes to acquisitions, mostly on a project base, the team makes a proposal and a committee composed of several executives of the bank makes the final decision.

**7) Can you sell your work?**

**FK:** A collection of this scope needs to "breathe" as we would call it. The reasons for selling singular works would be if they do not fit into our collection or they are print duplicates. At the same time this always makes way for works by promising new talents.

**8) Could you talk more about your partnerships with institutions?**

**FK:** This is a very important part of our art activities. We cooperate with museums such as Tate Modern in London and The Jewish Museum in New York. In 2004, we recognised the potential of the then still young Frieze Art Fair in London, and have been the main sponsor since its second year. In this environment we reach out to clients who are enthusiastic about art and collect it. This is what we of course aim to do within the wide range of our art program, such as international exhibitions from the collection, the Deutsche Bank KunstHalle in Berlin, as well as through educational programs. Since 2010, our "Artist of the Year" award sums up our philosophy. The most important part of this program is a solo exhibition at our KunstHalle in Berlin which then travels to other international venues. And a selection of the artist's works is acquired for the Deutsche Bank Collection. This

year the Egyptian artist Basim Magdy is honored with the award, for 2017 the South African artist Kemang Wa Lehulere was selected.

**9) How do you balance your increasing visibility within the art world? Do you wonder whether because of the richness of its collection and its network with institutions, art fairs, and direct contact with artists DB's presence within the Art World risks becoming somehow domineering?**

**FK:** No, we do not see it that way. Deutsche Bank pursues a clear concept with its cultural activities, which above all is angled towards the promotion of young talent and the exposure of their cultural activities to employees, clients and the general public. Within the new unit of ACS, we would like to focus on this concept even more in the future. For us, it's all about promoting contemporary art with a clear and transparent concept - and with a clear focus on our clients and the public.

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