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# FORUM FÜR NACHLÄSSE VON KÜNSTLERINNEN UND KÜNSTLERN HAMBURG

*Dr. Gora Jain* In August 2003, the Forum für Nachlässe von Künstlerinnen und Künstlern e.V. (Forum for Artists' Estates) was founded in Hamburg (Germany) following a two-year preparatory phase. Presently operating out of the Künstlerhaus Sootbörn, the non-profit association is concerned with the professional care, documentation and preservation of artists' estates and aims to provide artists and their works with a forum for making their works accessible to the public.

It is difficult to get a handle on the number of estates in private hands and only rarely are the storage conditions for these artworks adequate from a conservation perspective. Many important estates are in poor condition and work complexes are often split up and scattered to the four winds, which makes accessibility difficult if not impossible.

The idea of setting up the forum brought together scholars, museum staff, curators and artists to tap into their experiences with estate research and appraisal, museums, exhibitions and archives as well as their own estate holdings. A volunteer executive board was formed and the forum has now grown to include over sixty members.

Financing for the project comes from member contributions, donations or project-related grants from companies, banks or private individuals. To guarantee the forum's long-term existence, it will be necessary to secure an annual budget for the work at hand, which goes far beyond the available volunteer capacities.

Such funding will make it possible to pursue such measures as the creation of a salaried position and the expansion of the storage facilities in the medium term. As the main goals of the forum's work, the maintenance of a core collection of holdings and the review and documentation of estates help establish a representative overview of the work of individual artists. This provides a basis that can be used for subsequent investigations by students, scholars and authors. The forum makes estate holdings available to museums, galleries and curators, which promotes exchange, generates project-based cooperation and facilitates extensive networking with other institutes. The project is unique in the way it unites the different fields of activity – museums, archives, exhibition halls and research centers – with such complexity and institutional professionalism. Despite the regional constraints of the association's activities, interest in the forum's activities extends beyond national boundaries. Operating as a pilot project, the forum is working to formulate the institutional requirements needed to achieve a professional approach to artists' estates. In the role of cooperation partner, this know-how can be shared with similar initiatives in other regions.

## **Eva Zwimpfer**

*„Ich habe nichts geplant, wahrscheinlich bleibt mein Werk in der Familie. Dieses Thema beschäftigt mich nicht gross“ antwortet Frau Eva Zwimpfer auf die Frage, wie sie die Fortbestandssicherung ihres Werkes gestaltet. Die 81-jährige Künstlerin aus Luzern hat schon einige Arbeiten an den Kanton, die Stadt und das Kunsthaus Luzern verkauft.*

*« Je n'ai rien prévu, mon œuvre restera probablement dans la famille. Cette question ne me préoccupe pas beaucoup », répond Madame Eva Zwimpfer lorsqu'on lui demande comment elle prévoit d'assurer la conservation de son œuvre. L'artiste lucernoise âgée de 81 ans a déjà vendu quelques travaux au canton, à la ville et au Kunsthaus de Lucerne.*

*“I have not planned anything; most probably my work will remain in the family. This topic does not concern me much,” replies Ms Eva Zwimpfer to the question of how she plans to secure the survival of her art work. The 81-year-old artist from Lucerne has already sold a few art works to the Canton, the City and the Art Museum of Lucerne.*