

Press Release

8 May 2023

The Akademie der Künste Acquires the Partial Estate of Actress Tilla Durieux

Selected estate documents and photos are on view in the exhibition *Tilla Durieux. Eine Jahrhundertzeugin und ihre Rollen* at the Georg Kolbe Museum, Berlin.

Opening: 12 May 2023

Introduction to the estate acquisition on 6 July 2023 at the Georg Kolbe Museum

Through the generous support of the Kulturstiftung der Länder (German Federal Cultural Foundation), the Akademie der Künste has acquired previously unknown items in actress Tilla Durieux's (1880–1971) estate, which remained in Yugoslavia after her exile there. Purchases from auction houses in Berlin and Vienna now enhance Berlin's Tilla Durieux holding at the Akademie der Künste. Exhibits from both sections of the estate can be seen in *Tilla Durieux. Eine Jahrhundertzeugin und ihre Rollen* (Tilla Durieux: A Witness to a Century and Her Roles) at Berlin's Georg Kolbe Museum, a show which it took over from the Leopold Museum in Vienna. The exhibition opens on 12 May 2023. The partial estate will be introduced to the public in a special event on 6 July 2023 at the Georg Kolbe Museum.

The new acquisition chiefly contains letters, manuscripts and photographs before 1945. These objects reveal how strongly Durieux was connected with the artistic avant-garde of her times. Ernst Barlach, Alfred Döblin, Walter Hasenclever, Gerhart Hauptmann, Heinrich Mann and Franz Werfel were among her correspondents. The manuscript for Durieux's memoirs, *Eine Tür steht offen*, which strongly deviates from the print version, is especially significant. The same can be said of the rich content in Else Lasker-Schüler's letters, which include a poem about the actress. Among the photographs is a picture from 1914 showing the painter Auguste Renoir looking at a portrait of Tilla Durieux that he painted. The Durieux Archive already housed at the Akademie der Künste, filling 3.3 shelf metres, has been catalogued and is available for [online research](#).

Tilla Durieux (1880–1971) is one of the German-speaking world's most important 20th-century stage and screen personalities. She performed under the direction of Max Reinhardt, Leopold Jessner and Erwin Piscator, among others. Parallel to her acting career, she also supported the arts and artists with her second husband, the publisher and art dealer Paul Cassirer. And with her third husband, the brewery director Ludwig Katzenellenbogen, Durieux supported theatre in Berlin. Her extraordinary impact is also reflected in the visual arts. Barlach, Corinth, Kokoschka, Renoir and Slevogt portrayed her. Forced into emigration by the National Socialists, Tilla Durieux settled in Zagreb, now Croatia, where she worked as a costume designer for a puppet theatre during the German occupation.

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Durieux returned to Germany in 1952, where, at 72, she began a sensational second career in West Berlin and the Federal Republic of Germany.

Tilla Durieux became a member of the Akademie der Künste (in West Berlin) in 1961. The Akademie der Künste continues to manage a piece of Tilla Durieux's jewellery – a necklace with 34 zirconia stones set in platinum. Following the wishes of the actress, every ten years it is to be passed down from an "outstanding female representative of the German performing arts" to the next in line.

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Exhibition

Tilla Durieux. Eine Jahrhundertzeugin und ihre Rollen

Opening: 12 May 2023, 6 pm

13 May – 20 August 2023, Wed–Mon, 11 am–6 pm

Georg Kolbe Museum, Sensburger Allee 25, 14055 Berlin, Tel +49 (0)30 3042144

Special Event

“Kunst und Recht”. Der jugoslawische Teilnachlass von Tilla Durieux

(“Art and Law”. Tilla Durieux's Yugoslavian Partial Estate; in German)

Thursday, 6 July 2023, 6 pm

Georg Kolbe Museum, Sensburger Allee 25, 14055 Berlin, Tel +49 (0)30 3042144

Welcome: Dr Kathleen Reinhardt, director of the Georg Kolbe Museum

Dr Stephanie Tasch, head of funding, Kulturstiftung der Länder

Lecture: Antonija Mlikota, cultural historian, University of Zadar, Croatia

Discussion: Jutta Braun, Leibniz Centre for Contemporary History Potsdam (ZZF),

Ruth Lecher, lawyer, and Werner Heegewaldt, Director of the Archives at the

Akademie der Künste