

Lentos Kunstmuseum

Cool

Collection Erwin Hauser

18.06. to 05.10.25

Erwin Hauser, Vice President of the Lentos Friends Association, donated his art collection of around 3,000 works to the City of Linz and the Lentos Kunstmuseum in 2024. To mark this occasion, the Lentos is now presenting a first “best of,” showcasing key highlights of this outstanding collection with a focus on Austrian artists.

The Erwin Hauser Collection is one of Austria’s most important private collections. It comprises paintings, sculptures, photographs, and graphic works by around 770 Austrian artists from the 19th century to the present day. With Cool. The Erwin Hauser Collection, the Lentos offers, for the first time, an in-depth look into this extraordinary trove of works, assembled by the Linz-based entrepreneur over a period of 25 years with trained discernment and great passion. Approximately 200 works from the collection, which comprises 2,994 objects in total and was entrusted to the City of Linz and the Lentos, are on display.

Masterpieces from the 19th Century to Classical Modernism

A specially designed studiolo showcases spectacular landscapes, portraits, and genre scenes from the 19th century, including masterpieces of Biedermeier painting by Friedrich von Amerling, Ferdinand Georg Waldmüller, and Johann Baptist Reiter, alongside atmospheric Impressionist works by Tina Blau, Emil Jakob Schindler, and Marie Egner. Key figures of early modernism such as Anton Romako, Karl Mediz, Emilie Mediz-Pelikan, Carl Moll, and Karl Wilhelm Diefenbach are also represented.

Interwar Period and Fantastic Realism

The Lentos exhibition brings together the stylistically diverse painting of the interwar years – including works by Klemens Brosch, Albin Egger-Lienz, and Helene Funke – with the visionary dream worlds of the Viennese Fantastic Realists such as Ernst Fuchs, Arik Brauer, Anton Lehmden, and Rudolf Hausner.

Abstraction and “Neue Wilde”

Monumental canvases of abstract painting – with artists like Martha Jungwirth, Wolfgang Holleggha, and Hans Staudacher – stand alongside key works of the Neue Wilde (New Wild Ones), a core focus of the Hauser Collection. Featured artists include Siegfried Anzinger, Gunter Damisch, and Hubert Schmalix.

Realities

In contrast to the dominant abstract painters of the time, artists such as Robert Zepl-Sperl, Peter Pongratz, Hermann Herzig, and Franz Ringel are seen as representatives of a realism laced with satire and social critique. Their works often explore erotic, psychological, or caricatured themes. Though not united by a

common aesthetic program, these artists – close friends and part of the revolutionary spirit of 1968 – frequently exhibited together with bold, large-format works until around 1975.

Sculptural Diversity

A specially staged sculpture wall showcases a broad stylistic spectrum – from early expressionist pieces to contemporary objects and humorous collages. Alongside established names like Stefan Balkenhol, Alfred Hrdlicka, and Karl Prantl, younger voices such as Alfred Haberpointner, Hans Kupelwieser, and Christian Eisenberger are also present. In the museum foyer, visitors are welcomed by Protosaurus, a sculpture made of brass instruments by Constantin Luser.

Viennese Actionism and Performance Art

A dedicated room focuses on Viennese Actionism and performance art, featuring works by Günter Brus, VALIE EXPORT, Hermann Nitsch, Klaus Rinke, and Rudolf Schwarzkogler. A special highlight: early, lesser-known works by Gottfried Helnwein.

Contemporary Art

Erwin Hauser acquired contemporary works with precision, often directly from artists' studios or at auctions. The Lentos exhibition includes light-based works by Brigitte Kowanz and figurative reinterpretations by Elke Krystufek, Martin Schnur, and Christian Eisenberger – a testament to the collection's openness toward new artistic expressions.

A Space for Contemporary Women Artists

A dedicated gallery space highlights the stylistic and thematic diversity of female perspectives in contemporary art. Geometric abstraction, delicate drawings, political sharpness, and media experimentation stand side by side. Featured artists include Xenia Hausner, Johanna Kandler, Zenita Komad, Ulrike Lienbacher, and Eva Schlegel. In total, the collection includes works by around 80 women artists, whose contributions will feature more prominently in the planned reinstallation of the Lentos permanent exhibition starting in 2026.

A Milestone for the Lentos

In 2024, Erwin Hauser – a successful entrepreneur in the field of innovative cooling technologies – donated the majority of his private art collection to the City of Linz, partly as a permanent loan and partly as a bequest upon his death. The City of Linz has entrusted the collection, valued at approximately €16.5 million, to the Lentos. This marks the most significant expansion in the museum's history – and in that of its predecessor, the Neue Galerie – since the 1953 acquisition of 109 works from the Wolfgang Gurlitt Collection. The Hauser Collection currently remains in its original depot, now leased by the City of Linz.

What makes the collection particularly remarkable is its breadth: it offers not only an extensive overview of Austrian art history, but also multiple phases of individual artists' careers. Moreover, the entire Hauser Collection is accessible online via the museum's website.

A Gift for the Future

With the exhibition Cool. The Erwin Hauser Collection, the Lentos pays tribute to one of Austria's most distinguished private collections and to the extraordinary dedication of a collector who chose to share his passion for art with the public – as a gift to the City of Linz and as a lasting contribution to the Lentos' future. The exhibition runs through October 5 at the Lentos Kunstmuseum Linz.

Press Statements

“The ‘Erwin Hauser Collection’ is a gift to all art lovers and to the future of the Lentos. It fills important gaps – in Austrian Biedermeier painting, atmospheric Impressionism, the Wirklichkeiten group, and Fantastic Realism – and strengthens key areas of our holdings, especially informal painting.”

– Hemma Schmutz, Director of Lentos

“Erwin Hauser's donation is another milestone for the cultural city of Linz. This significant expansion of the Lentos Kunstmuseum's collection sustainably enhances Linz's international standing as a city of art and culture. I thank Erwin Hauser for his trust in the City of Linz.”

– Dietmar Prammer, Mayor of Linz

“The Hauser Collection is a major asset for Linz and the Lentos. It adds important positions in Austrian art from the 19th century to the present – both in terms of quality and content. It brings art to life for the people of Linz and for visitors from near and far.”

– Doris Lang-Mayerhofer, City Councillor for Culture, Tourism and Creative Industries

“Erwin Hauser is not only a successful entrepreneur and collector. He has also been an active and dedicated member of the Lentos Friends for decades and currently serves as Vice President of the association. Raiffeisenlandesbank Upper Austria is proud to sponsor this exhibition, which symbolizes the fruitful interplay of economic prosperity and rich cultural development.”

– Michaela Keplinger-Mitterlehner, Deputy CEO of Raiffeisenlandesbank OÖ, President of the Lentos Friends

“Collecting art is like an addiction I could never quite shake. I began putting together this collection as a student, driven by a deep love for Austrian art history. Most of it, however, I acquired in more recent years. I'm from Linz. I grew up here, founded my company here, made my money here, and paid my taxes here. That's why the collection should stay here.”

– Erwin Hauser, Collector and Entrepreneur

“He is a passionate, multifaceted collector who places great value on craftsmanship in art. Building a major collection takes time, dedication, and a keen eye for the exceptional – all qualities Erwin Hauser has demonstrated in assembling his private collection.”

– Elisabeth Nowak-Thaller, Curator

Artists in the exhibition

Edmund Adler
Marc Adrian
Friedrich von Amerling
Fritz Aigner
Franz J. Altenburg
Irene Andessner
Siegfried Anzinger
Joannis Avramidis
Stephan Balkenhol
Franz Barbarini
Josef Bauer
Alexander von Bensa
Werner Berg
Peter Bischof
Eugen von Blaas
Tina Blau
Herbert Boeckl
Erwin Bohatsch
Herbert Brandl
Arik Brauer
Klemens Brosch
Hellmut Bruch
Günter Brus
Sevda Chkoutova
Gunter Damisch
Franz von Defregger
Inge Dick
Karl Wilhelm Diefenbach
Gerhild Diesner
Jean Egger
Albin Egger-Lienz
Marie Egner
Christian Eisenberger
Lorenz Estermann
VALIE EXPORT
Josef Feid
Josef Fischnaller
Greta Freist
Padhi Frieberger
Camilla Friedländer
Fritz Fröhlich
Ernst Fuchs
Helene Funke
Friedrich Gauermann

August Gerasch
Olga Georgieva
Bruno Gironcoli
Lena Göbel
Roland Goeschl
Franz Grabmayr
Helmuth Gsöllpointner
Alfred Haberpointner
Remigius Adrianus van Haanen
Ilse Haider
Ludwig Halauska
Hans Hamza
Johann Hamza
Anton Hanak
Wolfgang Hanghofer
Anton Hansch
Franz Emanuel Haunold
Carry Hauser
Rudolf Hausner
Xenia Hausner
Gottfried Helnwein
Wolfgang Herzig
Anton Hlavacek
Theodor von Hörmann
Karen Holländer
Karl Hofer
Wolfgang Hollegga
Alfred Hrdlicka
Friedensreich Hundertwasser
Wolfgang Hutter
Jörg Immendorff
Johann Jascha
Eugen Jettel
Georg Jung
Martha Jungwirth
Birgit Jürgenssen
Johanna Kandl
Franco Kappl
Karl Karner
Carl Alfred Klinkan
Peter Klitsch
Ronald Kodritsch
Kiki Kogelnik
Anton Kolig

Zenita Komad
Brigitte Kowanz
Johann Victor Krämer
Peter Krawagna
Suse Krawagna
Auguste Kronheim
Elke Krystufek
Guido Maria Kucsko
Hans Kupelwieser
Gabriele Kutschera
Oskar Laske
Maria Lassnig
Helmut Leherb
Anton Lehmden
Klaus Liedl
Ulrike Lienbacher
Constantin Luser
Franziska Maderthaner
Edmund Mahlknecht
Karl Mediz
Emilie Mediz-Pelikan
Josef Mikl
Carl Moll
Alois Mosbacher
Gerhardt Moswitzer
Otto Muehl
Leopold Munsch
Hermann Nitsch
Adolf Obermüllner
Hermann Painitz
August von Pettenkofen
Helga Philipp
Josef Pillhofer
Hans Robert Pippal
Elisabeth Plank
Peter Pongratz
Karl Prantl
Lotte Profohs
Peter Proksch
Ignaz Raffalt
Arnulf Rainer
Johann Matthias Ranftl
Gustav Ranzoni
Man Ray

Kurt Regschek
Carl Reichert
Erwin Reiter
Johann Baptist Reiter
Rudolf Ribarz
Annerose Riedl
Giovanni Rindler
Klaus Rinke
Albert Ritzberger
Gerwald Rockenschaub
Anton Romako
Robert Russ
Robert Schaberl
Hubert Scheibl
Roman Scheidl
Emil Jakob Schindler

Eva Schlegel
Walter Schmögner
Hubert Schmalix
Ramona Schnekenburger
Martin Schnur
Oktavia Schreiner
Ludwig Schwarzer
Rudolf Schwarzkogler
Rosa Schweninger
Max Schödl
Franz Sedlacek
Daniel Spoerri
Esther Stocker
Hans Staudacher
Curt Stenvert
Johann Friedrich Tremel

Gabi Trinkaus
Manfred Wakolbinger
Ferdinand Georg Waldmüller
Max Weiler
Lois Weinberger
Franz West
Erwin Wurm
Natalia Załuska
Herbert Zangs
Othmar Zechyr
Robert Zeppel-Sperl
Otto Zitko
Heimo Zobernig
Franz von Zülów

Lentos Kunstmuseum

Hard Facts Collection Erwin Hauser

Total works: 2,994

Paintings: 1,414

Objects: 189

Graphics: 1,305

Photographs: 86

Chronological classification of the works:

19th century: 311

20th century: 1,891

21st century: 663

Undated: 129

Contemporary women artists from 1950 onwards:

80

First work to be purchased:

Erwin Reiter, *Archangel Michael*, 1965, sculpture, h. 91 cm, purchased in 1966

Last purchase that was donated:

Gabriele Kutschera, *Knäuelstele hoch*, 2012, sculpture, h. 240 cm, d. 65 cm, purchased 2022

A highlight for Erwin Hauser:

Franz Sedlacek, *Diablerie*, 1920, oil on cardboard, 96 × 124 cm, purchased 2021

“The painting by Franz Sedlacek is a special work for me. The work from 1920 is listed as the first object in his book and its content is something very special in my collection.” (Erwin Hauser)

Biography Erwin Hauser

Dr. Erwin Hauser (born 1941, Linz) worked in his father's company from 1964 after graduating from the technical college for mechanical engineering in Linz and completing his doctorate at the University of World Trade in Vienna. His father Rudolf, who specialized in refrigeration technology at the Linz brewery, ventured into self-employment in 1946 and from then on devoted himself to repairing refrigerators. An avid collector, Erwin Hauser discovered his passion for art during his student days.

After an inspiring trip to Sweden to visit Husqvarna and several internships abroad, Dr. Erwin Hauser decided in 1965 to manufacture metal refrigeration units for the food trade. In 1981, he took over full management of the company and transformed his father's business into a successful company throughout Europe with locations in Germany, the Czech Republic, Slovenia, Slovakia, Hungary, Poland, England, France, Romania, Switzerland and Bulgaria. HAUSER currently employs around 1,200 people.

Dr. Erwin Hauser transferred the management of the company to an experienced management team several years ago. He is currently mainly dedicated to the development of real estate projects. An avid collector, he has steadily expanded his art collection over the past 15 years.

Programe

Private special tour

Exclusive guided tour of the exhibition at Lentos with a second stop at the Hauser Collection art depot (Linz Land). There you will have the unique opportunity to visit the depot and gain an insight into the world of this special art collection. Further highlights of Dr. Erwin Hauser's donation of around 3000 works to the City of Linz (Lentos Art Museum) will be on display.

Duration: 3 hours (incl. 30 min. individual journey between Lentos and the depot)

Cost: € 480 per group, max. 20 people

Bookable during the exhibition period on selected dates (Tue-Sun).

Send your request (with preferred and alternative dates) to info@lentos.at

Linz AG Sunday

"Two for One" admission discount every Sunday: the first (higher-priced) admission must be paid, the second person is free. Children up to 13 years have free admission.

For everyone over 65

Every Tuesday from 15.00, people aged 65 and over have free admission.

Events

Opening

Thu 12.06. 19.00

Welcome: Hemma Schmutz, Director Lentos Kunstmuseum Linz, Introduction: Elisabeth Nowak-Thaller, Curator, Opening: Doris Lang-Mayerhofer, City Councillor for Culture of the City of Linz

Does collecting make you happy?

Talk and guided tour

Sun 31.8. 10.00-13.00

Talk with the collector and industrialist Erwin Hauser, the curator Elisabeth Nowak-Thaller, the art historians Monika Leisch-Kiesl and Lothar Schultes. Afterwards, Elisabeth Nowak-Thaller and Lothar Schultes will give a guided tour of the exhibition.

Costs: Museum ticket (plus € 4 for the guided tour)

Please register at +43 732 7070 3614 or online at lentos.at

Guided Tours

Public guided tour

Thu 18.00

Sun 16.00

Tue 16.00

(Tuesdays incl. guided tour of the collection)

Guided tour ticket € 4 plus admission, duration 1 hour

Baby tour

Tue 1.7. 10.30-11.30

A relaxed tour of the exhibition, tailored to the needs of visitors with babies. Cost: museum admission only

The Making-of

Thu 10.7. 19.00-20.00

Curator Elisabeth Nowak-Thaller leads through the exhibition.

Cost: € 4 plus admission

Registration requested*


Guided tour with sign language interpreter

Sat 12.7. 16.00-17.00

Free admission for deaf people

***Registration/information: +43 732 7070 3614 or online at lentos.at**

Factsheet

Exhibition title	Cool Collection Erwin Hauser
Exhibition periode	13.06. to 05.10.25 Note: The start of the exhibition has been postponed due to the tragic events in Graz, original start 13.06.
Venue	Erwin Hauser Saal (Upper floor)
Credits	Exhibition concept/curator: Elisabeth Nowak-Thaller Exhibition design: Magnus Hofmüller
Publication	The exhibition is accompanied by a catalog with a foreword by Hemma Schmutz and texts by Gerda Ridler, Angela Stief, Elisabeth Nowak-Thaller, Sandra Eichinger, Otto Hans Ressler, Lothar Schultes and Franz Smola. 304 pages, € 38 This and other publications are available in the Lentos Shop or online (store.museenderstadtlinz.at).
Supported by	Raiffeisenlandesbank  Oberösterreich
Opening hours	Tue-Sun 10am-6pm, Thu 10am-8pm Mon closed, special opening hours can be found at www.lentos.at
Press contact	Clarissa Ujvari-Hanten M: +43 650 48 49 706 T: +43 (0)732 7070-3603 clarissa.ujvari-hanten@lentos.at Ernst-Koref-Promenade 1 4020 Linz
Web & Social Media	www.lentos.at facebook.com/lentoslinz instagram.com/lentoslinz

Images

Press images and exhibition views are available for download on our website at <https://www.lentos.at/museum/presse/cool-sammlung-erwin-hauser-13-06-bis-05-10-25> for the duration of the exhibition. License-free use is only permitted in the context of current reporting on the exhibition, provided the image credits are given.