

Deed of Foundation of the Städel Institute of Art

**included in the Last Will and Testament of Herr Johann Friedrich Städel,
local merchant and former member of the commendable College of
Burghers of 15 March 1815.**

In God's name!

After I, local citizen and merchant Johann Friedrich Städel, some time ago came to the decision to dedicate my considerable collection of paintings, engravings and art objects, in addition all the property I one day bequeath insofar as the latter does not suffer a reduction through special legacies, to the establishment of a special autonomous Institute of Art bearing my name for the benefit of this city and its citizens, also for the purposes of the provisions made earlier and specifically in my wills dated 26 January 1793 and 18 January 1812, the self-government of my beloved hometown being reinstated in the meantime following the abolition of French institutions and laws, and the benefit of the withdrawal of common and statutory rights that previously applied here; I have therefore decided, through the annulment and nullification of the above and all earlier testamentary provisions, in observance of the formalities of common law while, thank God!, still enjoying my full mental capacity, to hereby decree what is to happen to my temporal assets after my death.

I wish and decree the following:

Article 1

My collection of paintings, drawings by hand, engravings and art objects, together with associated books, are to form the basis of a Städel Institute of Art herewith being endowed by me for the benefit of my city and its citizens.

I hereby make this Städel Institute of Art the sole beneficiary of my entire future estate of movable and immovable assets in the most appropriate legal form, with the only exception being the legacies made in the addendum to this will for my relations, friends and other persons, or furthermore endowed in notes written and signed by me or even solely signed.

Article 2

As my intention regulated here is that the Städel Institute of Art endowed by me may embellish the local city and at the same time be of benefit to its citizens, I wish that my existing collection of paintings, hand drawings and engravings, in addition to books on the subject of art and also containing other art objects, not only increases from year to year – improved as and when opportunities arise by the exchange of poorer and mediocre pieces with better ones – but is also opened up to future artists and enthusiasts on certain days and at certain times with appropriate supervision for use and viewing quite freely and at no charge.

At the same, however, I decree that the children of parents without means living in this place, without distinction as to gender or religion, who wish to devote themselves to the arts and to building professions and learn the rudiments of drawing from skilled teachers or in the city's existing institute of drawing – and if their fortunate natu-

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ral abilities and skills are demonstrated in this first lesson and they have made themselves worthy of further support from other masters through their diligence and good performance, they will have free lessons in historical and landscape painting, all kinds of engraving, pure and applied mathematics, quite particularly though in architecture and those sciences associated with the subject of art – should receive the necessary support for this, even abroad, in accordance with the circumstances in which they find themselves and the demonstration in one or another individual of eminent abilities and good performance – in order to be educated to become valuable and useful citizens and artists.

Article 3

The entire establishment of this, my endowed Institute of Art; consequently also the appointment and dismissal of the necessary Foundation staff – the regulation of remuneration; the relocation of the Institute from my own house on Roßmarkt to another more spacious one purchased and newly built for this purpose – where then the former would be sold to the highest bidder; the disposal of property and furniture belonging to my estate; the administration of the entire endowment fund, the capital of which can be allotted to local and outside hypothecary credits, to all types of obligations in the name of the owners – in consortia, also on the transfer of obligations (whereby I in particular decree that promissory notes found after my death for no more than one year from the date of expiry, when otherwise no material propriety prevails, are extended at the discretion of the Foundation Administrators, but that afterwards and after expiry of this time, absolutely no loans may continue to be made on a simple bill of exchange without collateral); the annual increase of this my endowment fund from the portion of annual interest, that this may not be degraded in future by any losses that may be incurred, but in fact accumulate from time to time; the inclusion of active outstanding amounts; the selection of teachers who give young people instruction – the determination of the subjects that should enjoy support from the Institute. How many? And for how long? – the review of their morality and the penalty for immoral conduct; their immediate removal if, through improper behaviour, they, their parents or guardians are unworthy of the support received; all this, as well as the entire unlimited administration of the Institute and what is associated with this in any respect, and without having to consult the authorities or seek permission, remains at the absolute and sole discretion of the Foundation Administrators mandated by me below.

Namely I appoint

Article 4

as superintendents and administrators of this Städel Institute of Art endowed by me and instituted as my sole beneficiary, as well as executors of the last wishes contained in my will, in alphabetical order of their names the following friends who have most kindly agreed to do so – as namely

Herr Dr Juris Johann Georg Grambs,
 Herr geheimen Finanz-Rath Johann Gerhard Hoffmann,
 Herr Handelsmann Philipp Nicolaus Schmidt,
 Herr Handelsmann Johann Carl Städel, ¹⁾
 and Herr Doctor Juris Carl Friedrich Stark.

As I have full trust in them that they will administer this Institute of Art endowed by me, so I decree that immediately after my death they and their successors in future, if these names and the institution should subsequently change – have a legal duty to swear the oath on this my Deed of Foundation with the local Court of Lay Assessors and Court of Appeal – it is however my desire that these men should in no way be made responsible for the administration that they voluntarily take up.

The men I have named as administrators should, as the representatives of the Städel Institute of Art instituted by me as my sole beneficiary, jointly or severally apply to the authorities for instruction in the ownership of my estate and, after this is carried out, execute the particular legacies from the entire estate as named executors according to the instructions left by me in my will.

With the departure of one or other of the administrators, they should be supplemented by a worthy person from the local population by free selection and, if the votes are split, be assigned by ballot. With the formulation of such administrative decisions, the majority of votes shall decide and if important cases subsequently arise where the gentlemen administrators consider other advice to be beneficial and appropriate: so I wish that they thereupon primarily turn to the current Deputy Mayor and Director of the Court of the First Instance, Herr Johann Wilhelm Metzler, whose friendship and patriotic stance I fully anticipate and who I am convinced will willingly support them at all times with his good advice and fundamental insight and in the best interests of my Foundation.

(Articles 5 to 9 are not reproduced here)

Documentary evidence of this being signed by my own hand and sealed before the notary and seven specially required witnesses of this my Last Will and Testament.

Done in Frankfurt am Main on Wednesday the fifteenth of March in the year eighteen hundred and fifteen.

Opened and read at the Municipal Court on Tuesday 3 December 1816.

1. As Herr Joh. Carl Städel passed away after the founder's lifetime, Herr Carl Ferdinand Kellner was appointed administrator in his place.

Source:

Hubert Salden (ed.): Die Städelschule Frankfurt am Main von 1817 bis 1995, published by Hermann Schmidt, Mainz 1995, p192-195

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