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Munich as Kunststadt, 1900–1937: Art, Architecture, and Civic Identity

Douglas Klahr

Munich as Kunststadt, 1900–1937: Art, Architecture, and Civic Identity

Douglas Klahr

Introduction

On 1 December 2010, the international online edition of the German news magazine *Der Spiegel* published an article entitled 'Taking on Berlin's Art Dominance: Hamburg Struggles to get Its Groove Back'. The article chronicled how, since reunification of the nation in 1990, Hamburg and other formerly West German cities that had established themselves as centres of art and theatre during the Cold War were losing ground to Berlin. Although drawing historical parallels is always a risky business, portions of the article – with minor changes – could have been written a century ago, when unification of German states into a nation had occurred a scant generation earlier:

> In the good old days of pre-unification West Germany, where the focus was very much on federalism, including in relation to the arts, several cities were attractive as cultural centers. But now that phenomenon is gradually disappearing as Berlin increasingly becomes the focus of the country's cultural life. . . . Every city in West Germany seemed to have its own special role: Cologne was the city of fine arts, Munich was the city of high culture, and West Berlin was for those who wanted to drop out. And then there was Hamburg, perhaps the wildest city of all. . . Cologne was the first city to lose its standing after German reunification. Art Cologne, once one of the world's leading art fairs, dwindled into a minor event. The galleries left the city, as did the artists.[1]

One hundred years ago, although the cast of players was somewhat different than today, the issue was the same: the centripetal effect of concentrating art venues in Berlin following the processes of unification in 1871 and reunification in 1990. In fin-de-siècle Germany, Hamburg and Cologne were minor players in the art scene, whereas Dresden and Munich were historically the leading centres, both in terms of art education and the quality of their museum collections. This essay examines how in the decades after German unification, Munich, which was unquestionably the nation's pre-eminent Kunststadt or art-city, began losing this crucial component of its civic identity to Berlin. It concludes with Adolf Hitler's attempt to re-establish Munich's status via decree.

In essence, the presence of Berlin forced the citizens of Munich – and others as well – to reassess to what degree and in what manner the city embodied the notion of a Kunststadt. Throughout the second half of the nineteenth century, Berlin was the foil against which Munich identified itself, and without this tension, any examination of Munich's identity during the period in question falls flat. Political and economic contexts framed the so-called Kunststadt Debatte of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries regarding whether Munich was still Germany's foremost Kunststadt or had been eclipsed in rank by Berlin. The debate reached its height during the 1880s and 1890s but by 1901 it essentially was over, with Berlin firmly in the lead.

1. Philipp Oehmke and Martin Wolf, 'Taking on Berlin's Art Dominance: Hamburg Struggles to Get Its Groove Back', trans. Paul Cohen, *Spiegel Online International*, <http://www.spiegel.de/international/germany/0,1518,731214,00.html>.

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The true time span of this shift, of course, spanned more than two decades, with Munich beginning to fret about Berlin's explosive growth as early as the 1850s and the city attempting to stem its losses until the First World War.

The period of the Kunstdebatte in Munich regarding art was paradoxical, for components that initially might appear to bolster the city's Kunststadt status were also elements that contributed to its decline. The city ranked with Paris regarding the education of painters. In his foreword to the book *Kandinsky in Munich*, Carl Schorske notes that in addition to outstanding German artists of the 1870s and 1880s of historical, landscape, and portrait painting such as Franz Lenbach, Hans Makart, and Wilhelm Liebl, major American realists of the late nineteenth century such as William Merritt Chase, Frank Deveneck, and Toby Rosenthal also studied in Munich.[2] Yet the great success of these painters spawned a far greater number of second-rank artists to study and work in Munich, creating in essence an industry of painters who by the early 1890s appeared to many observers as practitioners of sentimental, cloying historicism. Scholar Maria Makela provides some context regarding the scope of this:

> Statistics, rough and scanty though they may be, nevertheless indicate the magnitude of this phenomenon. By 1895 around 1,180 painters and sculptors – over 13 percent of the total number in Germany – lived in Munich. That same year there were only 1,159 painters and sculptors working in Berlin, which was by then more than four times as populous as the Bavarian capital and was the only German city whose artist community approached the size of that in Munich. The next largest was that in Düsseldorf, where 335 painters and sculptors practiced their profession. Dresden followed, with 314 resident artists, and Hamburg, Frankfurt, and Hannover came next, with only 280, 142, and 88 painters and sculptors respectively.[3]

In 1892, Munich's Secessionist movement erupted as a response by artists who were frustrated with the stagnation they felt had settled into the city. Massive production of art was matched by a well-oiled industry of art marketing in which Munich was a pioneer, and Secessionist members focused much of their discontent upon Munich's Künstlergenossenschaft or Society of Artists, which was responsible for selecting the art that went into the city's internationally renowned annual exhibitions. The jolt of energy and innovation that the Secession gave to Munich, however, was short lived, and the confrontational atmosphere both within the city and within the movement ultimately hastened Munich's loss of status. Abandoning a career in law, Vasily Kandinksy arrived to study art in Munich in 1896, the same year that the journals *Jugend* and *Simplicissimus* were founded in the city. Avant-garde theatre was represented not only in the work of playwrights Frank Wedekind and Ludwig Thoma, but also within the venue of Elf Scharfrichter, the most famous cabaret of political satire in Germany.

The Jugendstil movement flowered with its brightest intensity in Munich: Hermann Obrist, August Endell, Richard Riemerschmid, Bernhard Pankok, Bruno Paul, and Peter Behrens were its leaders before many of them left Munich as the city's atmosphere began to change in the 1890s. The intense artistic, literary, and theatrical ferment produced a conservative political backlash, and by 1903 the Jugendstil movement was past its prime. Peter Jelavich's comments about this are not only pertinent but also will serve as a segue to the architectural focus of this essay. He wrote: 'The areas of bourgeois expansion in Munich around 1900 – Schwabing, the Prinzregentenstrasse and the land along and beyond the Isar river – all display striking examples of Jugendstil architecture, but the number of buildings designed in the older

2. Carl Schorske, foreword, *Kandinsky in Munich, 1896–1914* (The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum: New York, 1982), p. 18.

3. Maria Makela, *The Munich Secession: Art and Artists in Turn-of-the-Century Munich* (Princeton University Press: Princeton, 1990), pp. 14–15.

historical styles is still greater. . . . By 1903 many of Munich's major Jugendstil artists – Peter Behrens, Bernard Pankok, Otto Eckmann, August Endell – had left the city to continue their careers in more promising and lucrative environments'. Jelavich continued, noting that by 1909 even Kandinksy complained that Munich had become a sort of Cockaigne, a medieval mythical land of plenty that resulted in a complacent and somnolent populace.[4]

With regard to this mélange of artistic, economic, and political contexts, architecture offers an especially suitable entrée for examining Munich's decline as Kunststadt around the turn of the century and Adolf Hitler's attempt to resurrect it several decades later. First, architecture is the ultimate collaborative artistic endeavour, for any initial creative vision on the part of an individual is sublimated to the complex reality of bringing a building to fruition. The process, therefore, is often as revealing as the finished object, especially with regard to political and economic contexts. Secondly, the permanent nature of architecture offers the historian a paradox not found to the same degree in other art forms: the collaborative nature of the endeavour is permanently and publicly frozen in stone – or whatever building material – ostensibly for a long period of time. Thus, the most collaborative and often confrontational process of artistic creation coalesces into an object that is not easily modified. It is this very real, inescapable tectonic rigidity that functions in this essay as the metaphorical counterpoint to the often ethereal claims that Munich's residents – and others as well – put forth regarding the city's Kunststadt status. In a 1930 letter from Kandinsky to Paul Westheim, the artist recounts an exchange between two people that exemplifies the spiritual side of this contrast:

> 'What is Schwabing?', a Berliner once asked in Munich. 'It is the northern part of the city', said a Münchner. 'Not a bit', said another, 'it is a spiritual state.' Which was more correct. Schwabing was a spiritual island in the great world, in Germany, mostly in Munich itself. There I lived for many years. There I painted the first abstract picture. There I concerned myself with thoughts about 'pure' painting, pure art.[5]

It is against this spirituality that architecture will serve as a foil in this essay. Two museums and a Kunsthalle, a building specifically designed for temporary art exhibitions, are analysed as urban markers of local, regional, and national identity: the Bavarian National Museum of 1900, the Schack-Galerie of 1909, and the House of German Art of 1937. While the architecture of these buildings comes into consideration, the programmes for their creation take centre stage, revealing not only the political agendas behind these structures, but also how these agendas were intertwined with Munich's identity as a Kunststadt. In accordance with this Berlin–Munich competition vis-à-vis Kunststadt status, Munich's famous Glyptothek, Alte Pinakothek, and Neue Pinakothek are not examined, since their construction occurred before Berlin began to seriously challenge Munich in the 1870s.

Munich as a Kunststadt

In 1907 E. W. Bredt published a slim book entitled *München als Kunststadt*. Bredt made several important observations about Munich, one of them being that in comparison with other German cities that had substantial heavy industry components, Munich's manufacture of crafts and furniture did not distort the physiognomy of the city.[6] In other words, the pre-Industrial Revolution urban fabric of Munich remained largely intact, since such industries could

4. Peter Jelavich, 'Munich as Cultural Center: Politics and the Arts', in *Kandinsky in Munich*, p. 23.

5. *Kandinsky in Munich,* p. 27.

6. E. W. Bredt, *München als Kunststadt* (Marquardt & Co.: Berlin, 1907), p. 4.

be accommodated in existing buildings. The connection between the city's architecture and the art world was twofold: an urban landscape largely unmarred by large factories not only continued to serve as visual inspiration for the artists who worked in Munich, but also permitted civic boosters to feel justified in claiming that their city truly was a Gesamtkunstwerk or total work of art.

Bredt was cognisant of the potential pitfall that resided in such a claim; the logical inference that such a perfectly preserved city might be little more than a museum and therefore unable to innovate in the fine arts. He attempted to pre-empt such criticism by declaring that Munich's residents had a kinship to the earth that precluded them from producing either art or architecture that was based on empty academism. He noted that residents regarded a judgment of bodenständig or earthiness as the highest of praise regarding their Baroque architecture.[7]

In her 1994 study, *München als Kunststadt*, an encyclopaedic compilation of sources about the topic ranging from 1781 to 1945, Kirsten Gabriele Schrick documents how poets and writers disseminated Munich's reputation of artists enjoying widespread societal support by frequently attributing this situation to a special connection between the citizenry and the countryside. She then notes how this relationship was often counterpoised against the industrial growth – and its oft-cited evils – of other cities, especially Berlin. She writes: 'The charisma of a fairytale city was tightly connected with the picture of countryside origins'.[8]

Schrick's linkage between a fairytale city and the countryside was apparently crucial in differentiating Munich not only from industrial powerhouses, but also from cities that resembled precious museum pieces, such as Dresden. Nineteenth- and early twentieth-century German museum director Alfred Lichtwark, whose career was based in Hamburg, commented upon this in his 1898 book *Deutsche Königsstädte*: 'The word "Berlin" affects the nerves like the blast of a trumpet and "Dresden" calls forth fairytale visions, but eyes light up when the name of the Bavarian capital is mentioned'.[9] It was clear that within the familiar categorisation of Munich as 'heart' and Berlin as 'head' or 'brain', Lichtwark felt that Munich had received the more favourable appellation while avoiding the fate of Dresden as a city-as-museum.

E. W. Bredt stated that it was the integration of the artist within Munich's society that made the city unique. He wrote: 'In no other city in the world is the artist so connected with all circles of society or is art so unpretentiously, unobtrusively or quietly involved in general economic activity as Munich. One perhaps likes to discover an equal number of artists within Berlin's address book, but they are lost within the city face of Berlin. Here [in Munich] the artist often is well-nigh the foil to society; everywhere else it is understandably vice-versa'.[10] Makela provides an indication of the societal integration about which Bredt wrote. She quotes from the memoirs of art and theatre critic Theodor Goering, who relocated from Berlin to Munich and compared the high status of painters in Munich with that enjoyed by the officer class in Berlin. Goering noted that a composer or musician was not accorded the same status: 'regardless if he is the most gifted virtuoso, his talent is not nearly as highly regarded as the painter's'. He then proceeded to describe how such status integrated the painter into a wide swathe of Munich's society. Goering wrote:

7. Bredt, *München als Kunststadt*, p. 19.

8. Kirsten Gabriele Schrick, *München als Kunststadt. Dokumentationen einer kulturhistorischen Debatte von 1781 bis 1945* (Verlag Holzhausen: Vienna, 1994), pp. 67–8.

9. Alfred Lichtwark, quoted in Ulrich Bischoff and Anna Greve, 'The Rome of the North – Athens on the Spree – Florence on the Elbe: Munich, Berlin and Dresden as Centres of European Painting in the Nineteenth Century', in *Views on Europe: Europe and German Painting in the Nineteenth Century*, eds. Nina Schlief and Karin Beth (Hatje Cantz Verlag; Ostfildern, Germany, 2007), p. 67.

10. Bredt, *München als Kunststadt*, pp. 13–14. In contemporary German, the word 'Folie' is used solely in a technical sense to describe a film, foil, membrane, or laminate. Bredt, however, used the word in an older sense, as described in a 1903 dictionary: 'to serve as a foil to (or as a pretext for) a thing'. H. Baumann, *Muret-Sanders Encyclopädisches englisch-deutches und deutsch-englisches Wörterbuch, Hand- und Schulausgabe, Zweiter Teil: Deutsch-englisch* (Langenscheidtsche Verlagsbuchhandlung: Berlin, 1903), p. 276.

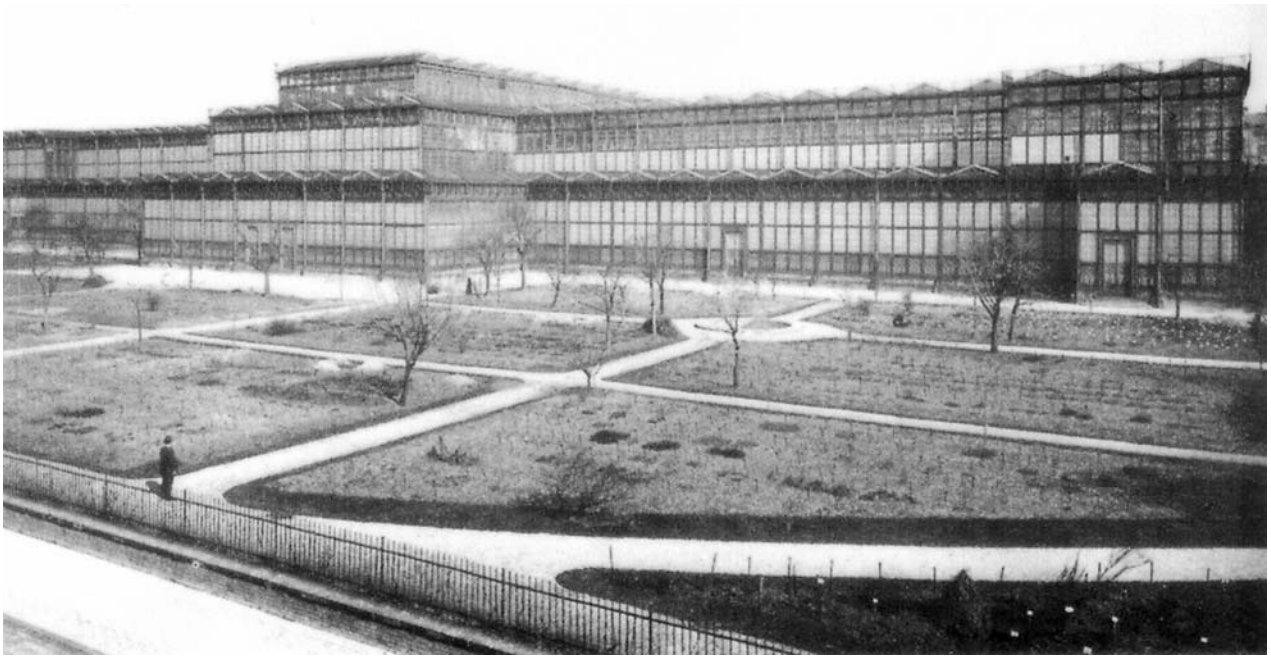

Fig. 1. Glaspalast, Munich, ca. 1860 (Wikipedia Commons).

> The latter [the painter] is invited to the summer villas of the aristocracy, where he is regarded as a companion, a chum, as it were. Here he makes sketches, which is almost as respectable an occupation as the hunting or racing of the cavaliers with whom he shares the same social status. . . . The Kunstverein, where the newest works of many artists are shown in weekly exhibitions, is regularly visited by all classes of the populace. Everyone takes a lively interest in the more important manifestations of this genre; art criticism (or more correctly, art reportage) has with the theater and music reviews a regular column in the daily press, much more so than in other cities.[11]

Munich's height of fame as a Kunststadt in the second half of the nineteenth century had a crucial yet sharply ironic subtext directly connected with architecture: so many of its artists were able to be financially successful because Munich was an early pioneer in how it marketed its painters' canvases. The opening of the Art Exhibition Building or Kunstausstellungsgebäude in 1845 provided an exhibition space for industrial and artistic products, an unprecedented endeavour in Europe that occurred six years before London's Crystal Palace. In 1854, Munich's Glass Palace or Glaspalast opened, an iron and glass structure that took its cues from the London pavilion, and yearly art exhibitions on a truly massive scale once again led the way in terms of business practices (Fig.1). Scholars of the early twentieth century acknowledged that this utilitarian aspect was a factor in the city's success as a Kunststadt. In the 1912 second edition of *Deutsche Königsstädte*, Lichtwark recounted this history, noting that 'with the opening of the modern essence of exhibitions with the first international exhibition in 1851, Munich found itself amongst all large German cities in a fortuitous position to have an existing exhibition palace'.[12] Lichtwark notes that Berlin and Dresden did not have such essential venues until their exhibition halls opened in 1886 and 1898, respectively.

The Glaspalast, with its capacity for massive art exhibitions, was symbiotically intertwined with Munich's physiognomy and reverence for painters in securing the city's identity as a Kunststadt. Lichtwark

11. Theodor Goering, *Dreissig Jahre München. Kultur- und kunstgeschichtliche Betrachtungen* (C. H. Beck'sche Verlag: Munich, 1904), pp. 112, 57. Quoted in Makela, *The Munich Secession*, p. 16.

12. Alfred Lichtwark, *Deutsche Königsstädte*, 2nd edn (Bruno Cassirer: Berlin, 1912), p. 114. When Lichtwark wrote this in 1912, he had been the director of Hamburg's Kunsthalle since 1886, singlehandedly building its collection. It was with some sadness that he then placed Hamburg within the context of Munich's leadership regarding art exhibitions held in massive halls suitable also for industrial wares, writing: 'Hamburg, which needs a Glaspalast as much as all other cities excepting Munich and Berlin, today still has not come as far as Munich was fifty years ago' (p. 114).

acknowledged this, noting that 'the astounding development of Munich's artists as a societal segment was most tightly linked with the favourable relationship between exhibition space and sales. In no other German city, yea perhaps in no modern city, Paris not excluded, has the artist class in our century so energetically brought its interests to such prestige and played such a leading role as in Munich. The writer, composer and scientist trail far behind him in influence and popularity'.[13] Yet, concerns about the impact of the Glaspalast's exhibitions were expressed at the same time by other observers. Writing in 1907, Bredt commented that this usage 'undoubtedly' constituted a Kunstkrankheit, or illness of art. He went further, deftly inverting the history of the building's innovative glass and iron structure to issue a sharp commentary: 'Originally ridiculed as un-solid, it is for us invariably too solid, for its demolition would be only beneficial to art'.[14]

The massive Munich art market resulted in a complex picture that Makela recounts in her book *The Munich Secession*, for the Glaspalast exhibitions featured not merely paintings by Munich artists, but an international selection. She writes: 'Collectors and dealers not resident in Munich thus visited the Bavarian capital regularly, for only in the Glaspalast and Kunstausstellungsgebäude could they get a broad overview of contemporary German and foreign art. . . . Nevertheless, statistics seem to indicate that collectors placed a higher premium on art produced in Munich than other work'. Makela notes that, during the 1880s, 75% of the buyers were not residents of Munich: 42% were foreigners, with Americans accounting for 31% of sales in 1883.[15]

As interesting as these figures are, they do little to indicate the true scale and scope of Munich's annual art exhibitions in the Glaspalast, especially regarding time span. Franz von Stuck's poster for the 1897 International Art Exhibition will serve as one example: that year the exhibition opened on the first of June and closed at the end of October, a span of five months.[16] It is impossible to imagine any twenty-first century city devoting such time and resources to marketing art. In essence, for almost a half-year, Munich's identity as a Kunststadt second only to Paris was literally on display, the industrial architecture of the Glaspalast serving as a vitrine of urban dimensions to exhibit works of art rather than products of manufacture – an ironic subtext that belied civic boosters' claims of Munich as a Gesamtkunstwerk. Munich's painters often drew inspiration from the city's magnificent architecture and society's enthusiastic engagement with their work, but the Glaspalast exhibitions were the bedrock of their financial success. Munich may not have had the sprawling factories of Berlin, but the continent's first massive iron and glass structure – the quintessence of nineteenth-century factory architecture – was what permitted the city to preen about its pre-eminence as a Kunststadt.

Munich's success as a destination for an international buying public cast this paradox into high relief, for the unabashed commercialism that defined its success undermined the lofty odes to its singular artistic soul. Kirsten Schrick comments upon this aspect: 'In the face of the Munich's development into a large city, critics nursed the image of the cosy city of princes that was unacquainted with the hustle of world cities and excessive mercantilism'.[17] The notion that Munich had become a Großstadt or large city was problematic for many of its citizens, for akin to mercantilism, it could not be reconciled with Munich's self-identity as a Kunststadt. This cognitive dissonance was partially responsible for Munich losing ground to Berlin even during the supposedly halcyon days of the city's supremacy in the 1880s.

13. Lichtwark, *Deutsche Königsstädte*, p. 115.
14. Bredt, *München als Kunststadt*, 135.
15. Makela, *The Munich Secession*, p. 17.
16. *Kandinsky in Munich*, p. 84.
17. Schrick, *München als Kunststadt*, p. 68.

Another aspect enters the picture: Munich's citizens may have held painters in high esteem, but the city's failure to develop as an industrial powerhouse meant that outside of royal Wittelsbach patronage, Munich was bereft of a sizable class of affluent collectors. A relatively broad swath of its citizenry may have been engaged with art from the standpoint of gazing in dealers' windows and attending exhibitions, but they lacked the financial means to establish numerous private collections. The explosive growth of an art-collecting Großbürgertum or haute bourgeoisie in Berlin was precisely what Munich needed, but champions of the city mocked Berliners as lacking true Kunstsinn or feeling for art, as Alfred Lichtwark wrote in 1912: 'The bourgeoisie has all the allure of parvenus. . . . All the material conditions for great artistic achievement exist at present. There is always talent, but its development is dependent upon the surroundings in which it is creative. . . . As long as the bourgeoisie does not possess its own deep culture and artistic education, it will be the legacy of princes to maintain [a suitable environment]'.[18] By the time Lichtwark wrote those words, Berlin had unquestionably seized primary Kunststadt status from Munich. Recognition of Munich's decline had been discussed within the city's highest political circles for a generation.

It was at this time that a series of debates within the Bavarian State Parliament about Munich's declining status as a Kunststadt occurred. In 1888, Dr Baller, a delegate, put forth the matter succinctly, focusing upon the rise of Berlin:

> . . . since the [eighteen-] seventies, furtherance for art has shifted elsewhere, especially in Berlin, where an effort has been underway to rectify omissions with enormous sums of money. In this regard, my colleagues, were we to proceed in the same manner, in a short time our finances would be disastrous: we do not have such wealth to proceed in the same manner toward the task at hand, since for several years only Prussia has been able to advance toward this goal.[19]

Dr Baller identified the engine, so to speak, that was driving Berlin's progress towards achieving Kunststadt supremacy: the unparalleled financial resources available to the Prussian state to upgrade its collections. It was noted during a debate in 1890 that yearly expenditures on art in Prussia almost equalled those of France: 805,000 marks compared with the French equivalent of 880,000 marks. This meteoric rise in Prussia's status rankled the Bavarian delegates, for shortly after delivering these figures at a parliamentary session, delegate Eugen Jäger reminded his colleagues of Munich's precarious situation: 'Munich is a city of art of the first rank: the Munich school [of art] is unquestionably the foremost in the world after that of Paris. . . . If we, over the course of our political development, had to destroy some political rights in the interest of the common good, at least we do not let ourselves be driven from the domain of art'.[20] In German, Jäger's placement of Munich's art status above that of political liberty resonates with more sharpness and urgency than in English, for he utilises the most forceful verbs possible: vernichten – to exterminate or annihilate – with regard to political rights, and verdrängen – to drive out – with regard to the threat posed to Munich's ability to compete.

The growth in industry, finance, and governmental bureaucracy that spurred Berlin's expansion made it Europe's third largest city at the end of the nineteenth century, ranking after London and Paris. By 1910, metropolitan Berlin's population of over 3,700,000 dwarfed that of metropolitan Munich, which registered at 600,000. Berlin had not only become a Großstadt, but also achieved Weltstadt – world city – status. With such a discrepancy

18. Lichtwark, *Deutsche Königsstädte*, pp. 29–30.

19. Horst Ludwig, *Kunst,Geld und Politik um 1900 in München. Formen und Ziele der Kunstfinanzierung und Kunstpolitik während der Prinzregentenzeit* (Gebr. Mann Verlag: Berlin, 1986), pp. 24–5.

20. Horst Ludwig, *Kunst,Geld und Politik*, p. 39.

between the two cities, it is interesting to observe how Bavarians manipulated the notion of Großstadt status to accommodate it to Munich's heritage as a Kunststadt in this new age of Prussian hegemony. During the first half of the nineteenth century, both Berlin and Munich had promoted themselves as enlightened cultural centres by advancing the monikers of Spree-Athens and Isar-Athens, combining notions of ancient Greek refinement with the appellations of their respective rivers.

However, by the turn of the century, Berlin began to refer to itself as Spree-Chikago, in reference to the city viewed by Berliners as the quintessential example of modernity and American industrial might. The paradigm had shifted: secure in their city's position as a major cultural centre, Berliners cast their competitive sights beyond European cities to the economic colossus on the other side of the Atlantic. The nickname of Spree-Chikago was often used in a pejorative sense – even by Berliners – to describe the frenetic, American-style pace of development in their city. Friedrich Prinz identifies how this new Berlin moniker was used by many to bolster the reputation of Munich in comparison, contrasting the live-and-let-live, easygoing atmosphere of Munich's famed Gemütlichkeit with the parvenu-driven, commercial Americanism that Walter Rathenau recognised as the essence of the new world city of Berlin. He observed: 'The positive large-city consciousness of Berlin, the pride related to Spree-Chikago, differentiated itself clearly from the determination of many Munich citizens to avert their glances from the obvious, inescapable circumstances of large-city emergence. . . . How then to rectify the tension between Munich's desire to reclaim its art city primacy yet avoid Berlin's adoption of frenzied, American-style practices of art acquisition and museum-building?'[21] There thus was an acceptance of large-city status in Berlin that did not exist to the same measure in Munich.

By the time the Munich Secession arose in 1892, Berlin had been overtaking Munich as Germany's leading Kunststadt for over a decade. The pioneering movement of the Secession was largely a response to local conditions and not competition from Berlin, but it nevertheless injected a much-needed jolt of energy and an innovation into the Munich art scene. However, the Secession also played a role in accelerating the city's decline. In a groundbreaking article of 1901, entitled 'Munich's Decline as an Art-City', Berlin critic Hans Rosenhagen linked the confrontational stance of the Secession to the Künstlergenossenschaft, the entrenched artistic establishment, as well as dissention within the movement, as reasons for this decline. Contemporary scholars Ulrich Bischoff and Anna Greve continue the story:

> . . . the Künstlergenossenschaft, fearing foreign competition, fiercely promoted the interests of local artists by organizing vast annual shows of its members' work. The Secessionists, by contrast, favoured small displays of carefully selected items. The Bavarian Parliament endorsed the Secessionists' claims to be able to sell work to the state and to maintain their own exhibition venue. . . . Yet disputes within the Secession caused more and more groups to leave the organization, and many artists to leave Munich itself. Convinced of its standing as a leading artistic centre, the city did next to nothing to halt this trend . . . the Berlin newspaper Der Tag printed an article by Hans Rosenhagen challenging Munich's artistic reputation now that Lovis Corinth, Max Liebermann and Ludwig Trübner had departed.[22]

Increasing censorship in the 1890s concerning the subject matter of paintings and plays also played a role in the city's decline. Conservative forces, especially those of the Catholic Church, used the opportunity of artistic

21. Friedrich Prinz, 'Annäherung an München. Postmoderne Rückblicke auf die Geburt einer Großstadt,' in *München – Musenstadt mit Hinterhöfen. Die Prinzregentenzeit, 1886-1912*, ed. Friedrich Prinz and Marita Krauss (C. H. Beck; Munich, 1988), pp. 10, 22.

22. Bischoff and Greve, *The Rome of the North*, p. 72.

discord to promulgate stronger enforcement of obscenity statutes. As Makela writes, 'the atmosphere in Munich at the turn of the century was considerably more repressive than in the previous decades . . . The change was keenly felt by everyone involved in the arts'.[23] David Clay Large noted that increasing censorship and decreasing art funding during the 1890s were manifestations of the city's reactionary side, writing: 'The atmosphere became so oppressive that Simplicissimus ran a cartoon showing two searchlights mounted on the twin towers of the Frauenkirche, Munich's Gothic cathedral'.[24]

In 1902, Thomas Mann published a short story entitled 'Gladius Dei', which opened with the sentence: 'Munich was luminous'.[25] Mann proceeded to describe a city that delivered an illusion of artistic and architectural vigour, yet one that in truth had declined in art-city status to become a parody of its former self. In writing his short story, Mann consulted the 1901 article by Hans Rosenhagen. The newspaper critic had argued that Munich was a shadow of its former innovative self, a place where 'imitation, reactionary historicism, sleazy commercialism, and scandal-mongering were the dominant concerns'. Berlin, the critic predicted, would soon supplant Munich as Germany's true capital of the avant-garde.[26] The frequency of such self-congratulatory proclamations penned by members of the Berlin press did not go unnoticed in Munich. Speaking within the Bavarian State Parliament in 1906, delegate Konrad Fischer castigated the sensationalism of Berlin journalists regarding Munich's decline, yet he sadly concluded that years of decreasing art expenditures appropriated by the municipal government had brought about such a decline.[27]

Mann's verdict, however, has more nuance than either one of these assessments, for he finds a certain degree of artfulness in the bravado and panache with which Munich presented itself. The historian Peter-Klaus Schuster identifies the nexus about which Mann's critical yet affectionate observations pivoted. Schuster writes: 'Only the Baroque churches are really Baroque. Otherwise, Munich appears to be a costumed festival of styles in the most attractive double sense of the word "Kunststadt"'.[28] Schuster is commenting on the thin line between what is artistic and what is artificial. Just as the two words share a common stem in English – 'art' – so they do in German, künsterlerisch for artistic and künstlich for artificial. Although a 'Kunststadt' traditionally designated an art city, Mann acknowledged the porous border between artistic verity and skilful artifice, implying that perhaps Munich's metamorphosis into a consummate player of the latter characteristic was not entirely without merit.

The dynamic tension between art and artifice, towards which Thomas Mann alluded, found a corollary three decades later, when Mann examined the conundrum of whether Munich was merely a Großstadt or a Weltstadt. Writing in 1932, he once again examined the grey area of demarcation between abstract concepts, as he reflected upon Munich:

> It can be or can become the place through which Germany best and most happily likes to bind and reconcile itself to the world – a world city in another sense than Berlin, a world-German city, world-German as Goethe was and as Weimar once was through him. Munich as a refuge of every freedom and merriment, which in such words art asserts itself against the sick fanaticism and parched character of the times, Munich as home of a German-European Classicism – is this a dream? Not a dream totally devoid of feeling, I should state, and whoever places hopes upon Munich must place these hopes in such a direction, I believe.[29]

23. Makela, *The Munich Secession*, p. 110.

24. Large, *Where Ghosts Walked: Munich's Road to the Third Reich* (W. W. Norton & Company: New York, 1997), p. 37.

25. Thomas Mann, 'Gladius Dei', in *Death in Venice and Other Tales*, trans. Joachim Neugroschel (Viking: New York, 1998), p. 83.

26. Quoted in Large, *Where Ghosts Walked*, p. 36.

27. Ludwig, *Kunst, Geld und Politik um 1900 in München*, p. 73.

28. Peter-Klaus Schuster, 'München – die Kunststadt', in *München – Musenstadt mit Hinterhöfen*, p. 231.

29. Prinz, *Annäherung an München*, p. 9.

Thomas Mann's musings upon Munich's potential to be a world-German city is another permutation of a long discourse in recent German history about the tension between home-grown German Kultur and foreign-imported Zivilisation, in which a host of German cities were often cited by social critics as bulwarks against the rootless cosmopolitanism of Berlin. Mann departs from his predecessors, however, in his bringing together of German-ness and worldliness, and in doing so, he subverts the notion of Munich's second-city status, at least within the parameters used to measure world-city membership. Munich as a world-German city would outrank Berlin, yet Mann does not define how Munich of the early 1930s would become a modern version of Goethe's Weimar. Nevertheless, Mann's musings about world-city status provide a broader context in which to place Munich's primary identification of art-city significance. He was one of the many writers during the half-century preceding the Second World War who addressed Munich's long heritage and decline as a Kunststadt. Eighty years before Mann wrote those words in 1932, the first glimmers of Munich gazing warily at the Prussian upstart became manifest in plans for a museum whose concept affirmed the city's – and Bavaria's – identity while indicating a level of anxiety that undermined it.

The Bavarian National Museum

In the early 1850s, as painters in Munich began to coalesce into a Munich school of painting, Prussia commenced its extraordinarily rapid process of industrialisation. The resultant economic clout enabled Berlin's rulers to energetically expand the royal art collections, and it was at this time that the notion of a Bavarian National Museum came into being. The royal archivist, Karl von Aretin, first suggested its establishment to King Maximilian II in late 1853. In her study *Das Ältere Bayerische Nationalmuseum*, Cornelia Harrer examines the idea behind the museum, noting that in contrast to the Germanic National Museum that already existed in Nuremberg, which was established by private initiative, the Bavarian National Museum was a dynastic venture. What originally was conceived as a democratisation of the royal house's collections – clearly a response to the 1848 uprisings that had forced Maximilian's predecessor from the throne – evolved into a notion of a repository for all fine art, folk art, and industrial art produced within the Bavarian realm.

Throughout 1854 and 1855, the concept was refined in a series of three plans, each broadening the scope of the project. The monarch himself stated the role he envisioned the museum would play: 'The museum should serve toward the elevation of national feeling, the cementing of love of homeland, and the revival of piety and patriotism'.[30] This evolution can be seen in the selection of a name for the institution: what had been proposed in February 1855 to be a Wittelsbach museum metamorphosed by June to become the Bavarian National Museum, as announced in a hand-written note of the monarch.[31]

The need to create a so-called Bavarian national museum prompts several questions. To what degree was the need defined not by any sense of cohesive identity, but rather by a communal opposition to the territorial, financial, and military power of Prussia? Moreover, was the need to create a national museum truly a local need, a desire of the sovereign to reinforce a sense of Bavarian identity through such an endeavour? And to what extent was the perceived urgency a response to the rapid spate of museum-building and art

30. Cornelia Andrea Harrer, *Das Ältere Bayerische Nationalmuseum an der Maximilianstraße in München* (Tuduv: Munich, 1993), p. 23.

31. *Museen in München. Ein Führer durch 43 öffentliche Museen, Galerien und Sammlungen*, ed. Monika Goedl (Prestel-Verlag: Munich, 1983), p. 50.

acquisition in Berlin that commenced in the early 1850s and only gained steam as the century progressed? It is interesting to note that amongst the four German kingdoms incorporated into the Reich of 1871, only Munich possessed a museum that purported to embody the nationhood of a kingdom. The dynasties and parliaments of Berlin, Dresden, and Stuttgart never felt the need to create such a museum.

Completed in 1853 and expanded in 1867, the first incarnation of the Bavarian National Museum proved unable to accommodate the growth in its collections, and in 1892, the Bavarian Interior Minister advocated that a new building be constructed along the capital's newest locus of development, Prinzregentenstrasse, named in honour of the Prince Regent who had come to power. This boulevard, however, differed from monumental Maximilianstrasse where the first two incarnations of the museum were located. In comparison to Maximilianstrasse, a manifestation of monarchic will imposed upon the city during the early and mid-nineteenth century, the genesis of Prinzregentenstrasse was different. Friedrich Prinz writes: 'The monarchical name of the new traffic artery should not be permitted to conceal the fact that its materialization was to a large degree a matter of the city of Munich, and that its planning was very strongly influenced by private business interests. . .'. [32] Topographically, the site anchored the new edifice firmly within this forward-looking urban development. Prinzregentenstrasse would remain the preferred building location for prestigious buildings of state until the Second World War.

After the building site had been chosen, a public discourse regarding the design selection process for the Bavarian National Museum's third home ensued, and a commission was formed, whose members included politicians, museum administrators, painters, and sculptors. Three Munich architects – Gabriel Seidl, Georg Hauberrisser, and Leonhard Romeis – were invited to submit design proposals, which the commission received in October 1893. After a strenuous debate, a decision in favour of Seidl's design was reached in September 1894, and the building opened to the public on 28 September 1900.

Architecturally, the building was conceived as a multifaceted conglomeration of different phases of South German architecture. The central entrance portion was modelled in an early Baroque manner, with proportions following those of a town hall in the Bavarian city of Augsburg. The eastern wing assumed a Romanesque character, with a section modelled upon a house in Nuremberg. Another section of the east wing segued into Gothic style, once again using buildings in Nuremberg as examples. The visitor to the museum's west wing encountered several variations of German Renaissance architecture that looked towards the buildings of Bavarian electors, and the southwest corner once again repeated the Baroque motif of the central section (Fig. 2).

A modern-day assessment of such an amalgam is that the museum is 'a typical agglomeration-building with the temporal atmosphere of the late Historicism of around 1900', as voiced in 1982 by the historian Georg Himmelheber.[33] Yet, an appraisal delivered by the architectural magazine *Deutsche Bauzeitung* in the year of the museum's opening offers some reasons as to why such a design was selected. The author, Albert Hofmann, placed the eclectic design within the recent architectural history of Munich, a history that was dominated by two monarchs: Ludwig I during the 1820s and Maximilian I during the 1850s. Each monarch had sought to appropriate an older architectural style and promote it as uniquely suited to represent Bavarian national identity: Ludwig, through his architect Leo von Klenze, advocated that of ancient Greece, whereas Maximilian looked towards Romanesque architecture of the

32. Friedrich Prinz, *Annäherung an München*, p. 19.

33. Quoted in Goedl, *Museen in München*, p. 47.

Fig. 2. Bavarian National Museum, Munich, ca. 1900. (Postcard, collection of author.)

medieval era. Writing in 1900 upon the opening of the National Museum's new building, Albert Hofmann commented upon this past:

> The new museum is one of the most distinguished representatives of German national consciousness. . . . What this means is readily recognizable when one recalls Klenze's claim that there was only one true art and that was Greek. Max II later believed that there was only one true art and that was Romanesque. Both overlooked that the German spirit and German art were not confirmed within a single direction, but rather their character exists within the full freedom of their activity, in the full independence from foreign influences, in the depth and poetry of feeling, and in the truth of natural living conditions. . . . It is individualism translated into stone . . . [34]

By casting a critical glance upon the earlier building styles advocated by Munich's sovereigns, the author was also making a veiled barb at Berlin's hallowed tradition of using Greek architectural motifs for its major state buildings during the first half of the nineteenth century. The legacy of Karl Friedrich Schinkel and his disciples held particular sway within Berlin's famed Museum Island, where the four museums existing in 1900 were all based upon Greek – and some Roman – architectural motifs. As the Bavarian National Museum was being constructed, the fifth and final museum on Museum Island was being erected in a controversial neo-Baroque style. To the citizens of Munich, such a whole-scale appropriation of a single building style must have appeared heavy-handed next to their new national museum's proclamation of the individualism of the German character through an assemblage of different building styles. Even the Viennese journal Wiener Bauindustrie-Zeitung acknowledged the groundbreaking achievement in Munich, noting: 'Prior to this, a museum was a large, four-cornered chest, in which the emblematic elements of individual epochs were densely packed as if within a series of drawers'. [35]

As Schuster recounts, Mann identified another component within the milieu of art and architecture that was felt to distinguish Munich from Berlin. Writing about the Bavarian National Museum's architect, Mann noted that 'the most important thing is that a real artistic genius arose in an old, true manner

34. Albert Hofmann, 'Neure Kunst- und Gewerbe Museen. Das neue Gebäude des Bayerischen National-Museums in München', *Deutsche Bauzeitung*, vol. 34, no. 88, 1900, p. 538.

35. Ludwig Abels, 'Das neue Münchener National-Museum', *Wiener Bauindustrie-Zeitung*, vol. 18, no. 10, 1900, p. 79.

from within the bourgeoisie and remains fused with it. . .'.[36] The notion that a home-grown bourgeoisie provided a long-standing tradition of artistic endeavour was seen as a counterpoint to the cosmopolitan environments of Vienna and Berlin, redolent with large immigrant populations, including non-local artists and architects. Schuster summarises this: 'Through their recollection of South German Augsburger and Nuremberger Renaissance as well as Baroque building forms, Gabriel and Emmanuel von Seidl sought to promote a local, South German tone in the Munich cityscape, in opposition to the Gründerzeit historicism in Vienna or Berlin'.[37]

Yet, Schuster notes that the conceit of a home-grown bourgeois artistic tradition also raises the possibility of Munich having become a cultural backwater, particularly in an age of world cities such as Berlin, London, Vienna, and Paris. The reality was complex, for, in spite of Munich's inward-looking tendencies, Schuster notes that in 1897 Picasso recommended Munich – not Paris or Barcelona – as the place to commence one's study of art. Schuster also reminds the reader that artists such as Kandinsky, Duchamp, de Chirico, and Gabo found artistic inspiration in Munich. The impact of the Munich Secession also attests to an artistic environment that departed from the pattern of long-standing bourgeois artistic temperament, yet the short-lived nature of the Secession – with many artists decamping to Berlin – bespeaks of the city's ambivalent relationship with art outside its own traditions.

The situation in 1900, therefore, was laden with nuances, where the citizens of Munich grappled with notions of Großstadt status, the advent of avant-garde art, and competition with Berlin as a Kunststadt. The design of the Bavarian National Museum can be seen as a rebuke not only to the neo-Greek and neo-Baroque museums of Berlin, but also to Munich's own earlier appropriations of Greek and Romanesque styles. Munich had made a strong claim regarding German Kunstsinn or feeling for art, thereby conflating Bavarian nationalism with German nationalism. The conflation itself was not new, but the venue in which it was expressed was: the architectural embodiment of German Kunstsinn could be found in Munich. Contrasted with the notoriety of Secessionist artists, the edifice on Prinzregentenstrasse must have seemed reassuring to many. Although Mann would not give expression to his notion of a world-German city for another three decades, the Bavarian National Museum presages such a concept in its attempt to reclaim premier Kunststadt status for Munich by emphasising German-ness in contrast to cosmopolitanism. It is as though Gabriel von Seidl gazed beyond any routine Weltstadt competition towards Mann's future vision.

36. Schuster, *München – die Kunststadt*, p. 228.

37. Schuster, *München – die Kunststadt*, p. 231.

The Schack-Galerie

The Schack-Galerie was an important collection of nineteenth-century German paintings that was assembled by Count Adolf Friedrich von Schack. Born in the northern German city of Schwerin in 1815, Schack left a legal career in the early 1850s to travel and pursue linguistic, literary, and artistic interests. In 1854 he received an invitation from Maximilian II of Bavaria to relocate to Munich, which Schack shortly thereafter did, becoming a prominent collector of contemporary German artists, particularly those practicing in Munich. Schack gradually devoted more space in his villa towards housing his rapidly growing collection, and in 1865 the first visitors were admitted. He viewed his promoting of regional artists as a mission: 'Regarding the concept of the collection, I was led particularly by one intention: to snatch from

their undignified status artists who were on the edge of downfall and bring them deserved recognition. These artists had been neglected to an unprecedented extent, due to the disfavor of the public'.[38]

From 1867 to 1874, by acquiring three adjacent houses, Schack was able to greatly expand the space, and the architect Lorenz Gedon unified the row of residences by creating a façade in the style of the late German Renaissance. In 1894, Schack died, bequeathing his extensive art collection not to Munich or the Bavarian state, but instead directly to Wilhelm II, German Emperor and King of Prussia. It was clear that Schack had communicated this decision discretely to Wilhelm II's grandfather, Wilhelm I, sometime during the latter's reign as the German Emperor (1871–1888). In his guide to the Schack-Galerie, Ludwig Justi explains the reason for Schack's decision:

> Schack, the north German nobleman, greeted the creation of the German Empire with jubilation and wanted his collection to be housed permanently in Berlin after his death. In recognition for this decision, he was elevated to the noble rank of count by the old emperor [Wilhelm I] upon intercession by the then Crown Prince [Friedrich III]. Schack chose for fulfillment of his intent the form of a bequest to the German Emperor and King of Prussia, and thereupon to his successors in the government.[39]

Upon Schack's death, Wilhelm II, in a rare instance of political sensitivity, determined that the collection was to remain in Munich, rather than be moved to Berlin. The decision was made extraordinarily quickly: eleven days after Schack's death on 14 April 1894, the Kaiser notified the mayor of Munich, paying tribute to Munich's artists and citizens. It was clear that there was political mileage to be gained from such a manoeuvre, yet as is often found within such gestures by Wilhelm II, he could not resist turning the focus back towards himself. The Kaiser wrote: 'Just as I take joy in ownership of a house in your beautiful city as an imperial symbol, I would like this to be seen as new proof of my imperial graciousness and my interest in the welfare [of the populace], that every follower of art will be welcome within these halls'. Wilhelm clearly indicated that his words were not to remain solely within the correspondence between him and Munich's mayor, and within three weeks, a marble plaque inscribed with a somewhat lengthier version of the Kaiser's remarks was installed within the halls of the Schack-Galerie.[40]

By 1906, an agenda was in place in Berlin to merge the need for new Prussian legation quarters in Munich with the desirability of creating an edifice specifically designed to house the Schack-Galerie. The attractions of such a political–cultural symbiosis were evident: while elevating the architectural representative of the Prussian state to a more visible level within the urban landscape of Munich, the Prussian state would also be seen as giving to the populace a grand new edifice for one of Munich's cultural treasures. Such a dual-purpose structure would remind the citizenry that a Prussian king owned the collection, yet it would do so within the guise of a gracious gift. The message to be communicated was complex, and both the design process and the final result embodied this balancing act. The Kaiser selected the Munich-based architect Max Heilmann of the firm Heilmann & Littmann to design the building, yet Wilhelm had substantial input regarding the design, a common practice of his regarding not only architecture but also most artistic endeavours that fell under his royal patronage.

Wilhelm II considered the building important enough to be included as an example of Kronbauten – crown-building projects – within the lavish book of 1907 that celebrated his involvement with the arts, *Der Kaiser und die Kunst*. Even though the Schack-Galerie was still two years from completion,

38. Eberard Ruhmer, 'Schack und seine Sammlung', in *Schack-Galerie*, ed. Eberhard Ruhmer, Roel Gollek, Christoph Heilmann, Hermann Kühn and Regina Löwe (Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen: Munich, 1969), p. 10.

39. Ludwig Justi, *Verzeichnis der Schack-Galerie. Mit Erläuterungen ihres Begründers und Äusserungen der Künstler* (G. Hirth's Verlag AG: Munich, 1925), p. 16.

40. Quoted in E. Schröder, *Zwanzig Jahre Regierungszeit. Ein Tagebuch Kaiser Wilhelms II. Vom Antritt der Regierung, 15. Juni 1888 bis zum 15. Juni 1908 nach Hof- und anderen Berichten, Band 1* (Verlag Deutscher Zeitschriften: Berlin, 1909), p. 171.

it was accorded an entry in the massive tome, including an elevation of the façade. Royal Prussian ownership of the Schack-Galerie was made manifest by the fact the largest room in the gallery – the Lenbach salon – was directly connected to the legation's two major receptions rooms, the music salon and the dining room. The intent behind this design was announced forthrightly in *Der Kaiser und die Kunst*:

> The Kaiser ordered that the gallery building be erected next to the legation and thereby would be placed in connection with the reception rooms of the legation, so that the connecting doors could be opened for great celebrations and the main rooms of the gallery could be used as rooms of state for the legation. The construction was undertaken by Munich architects Heilmann and Littmann after the Kaiser had his special dispositions for the façade met and the building designs examined and approved.[41]

The building occupies a corner site on Prinzregentenstrasse and Reitmanstrasse, one block from the Bavarian National Museum of several years prior (Figs 3 and 4). It consists of two sections: the Prussian legation section and the gallery portion. The building was constructed as an L-shape, with the legation occupying the wing to the left and the gallery comprising the wing on the right, wrapping around the corner, as seen in Fig. 3. It straddles the Bavarian–Prussian dual-identity with finesse, and its design is balanced with surgical precision: the longer wing houses the art collection and is punctuated by pavilions at each end. However, only a small part of the gallery portion fronts along prestigious Prinzregentenstrasse, while the majority of the wing is relegated to the minor side street. The Prussian legation section not only has the majority of linear footage along Prinzregentenstrasse but also topographically inserts itself between the gallery portion and the Bavarian National Museum, as though it was announcing that one now was entering Prussian territory.

Prussian ownership of the complex is reinforced by the large Hohenzollern coat-of-arms contained within the tympanum of the gallery's pediment along Prinzregentenstrasse, yet this is somewhat softened by the inscription below, redolent with diplomatic praise for the host city: 'Kaiser Wilhelm II in commemoration of the city of Munich for the augmentation of its glory and great artists'.[42] As had occurred fifteen years earlier, when Wilhelm was bequeathed the Schack-Galerie, a plaque repeating his words of welcome was installed within the new building. Surmounting the plaque inside was a depiction of the great chain of the Order of the Black Eagle, Prussia's highest honour, whereas beneath the plaque were the city shields of Munich. This sense of territoriality expressed in a hierarchical manner is manifested in one further exterior detail, which is visible upon high magnification of Figs 3 and 4: tall, double cast-iron standards that rise to the height of the pediment are positioned along the sidewalk in front of the gallery section. Each standard is topped first with a laurel wreath that surrounds a 'W' for Wilhelm and then with a Hohenzollern eagle wearing the distinctive Prussian crown. The precision of this manoeuvre was noteworthy: it was not the Prussian State that owned the art collection, but rather Wilhelm II, which dictated the positioning of these standards in front of the gallery and not the legation portion of the structure. By placing these standards with their hefty circular bases adjacent to the path of pedestrians, Wilhelm ensured that although one might never look up to see the sculpture and inscription of the pediment, one was reminded of who owned the art treasures within.

The Schack-Galerie of 1909 offers a singular architectural manifestation not only of Bavarian–Prussian tensions, but also of the awkward configuration of

41. *Der Kaiser und die Kunst*, ed. Paul Seidel (Reichsdruckerei: Berlin, 1907), p. 146.

42. 'Das Neue Preußische Gesandtschaft-Gebäude und die Schack-Galerie in München', *Deutsche Bauzeitung*, vol. 43, no. 81, 1909, p. 551.

Fig. 3. Schack-Galerie, Munich. (Postcard, collection of author.)

Fig. 4. Schack-Galerie, Munich. (Postcard, collection of author.)

the Kaiserreich, particularly with regard to the dual offices that Wilhelm II held. In the textual programme of the building, Wilhelm announces his position as an elected official, the German Emperor, an office in existence for only thirty-eight years at the time of the building's dedication. Yet, in the sculptural programme of the Hohenzollern eagle and the Black Eagle Order, he proclaims his status as King of Prussia, a hereditary position of true royal lineage and prestige in existence since 1701. It was Wilhelm's position as King of Prussia that he held in greater esteem, as did his fellow monarchs within the Reich. Augmented by these elements, the building provides a potent architectural form in which these permutations of identity are embodied.

Topographically, Wilhelm's purchase of the building site on Prinzregentenstrasse also resonates with semantic richness. By placing this dual Prussian governmental/dynastic edifice into the cityscape of

Prinzregentenstrasse, Wilhelm inserted a monumental Hohenzollern presence into the signature urban development scheme of the Prinzregentenzeit (1886–1912). He may have accorded the site more Wittelsbach dynastic identity than actually existed, for the boulevard was more a realisation of municipal and private economic enterprise than of sheer monarchic will, but the symbolic intrusion the Kaiser's Prussian legation-cum-art gallery certainly existed.

Yet, by keeping the Reich's major collection of modern German artists within Munich, did the Kaiser inadvertently enable Munich to circumvent any Großstadt or Weltstadt rivalry with Berlin and thereby reinforce its claim of being the nation's primary Kunststadt for German art? This would appear to be the case when considered within the context of concurrent disagreements occurring in Berlin concerning the raison d'être of that city's National Gallery, particularly with regard to whether its mission of collecting contemporary art was nationally or internationally oriented. Nationalistic agendas collided in Berlin with the Weltstadt requisite of cosmopolitanism, and the presence of the Schack-Galerie in Munich underscored this tension. In the final analysis, Wilhelm II's decision to keep the collection in Munich and his initiative behind the new structure of 1909 was an unintended and unrecognised step towards the notion of a world-German city, occurring a generation before Mann penned his words in 1932.

The House of German Art

Five years after Mann mused about a world-German city, on 27 January 1937 Adolf Hitler designated Munich as both the capital of the Nazi movement and the capital of German art: Hauptstadt der Bewegung und Hauptstadt der Kunst. Munich regained its status as the German art city without equal, at least on paper in the Denkschrift issued on that day.[43] Hitler's attachment to the city as the birthplace of the Nazi movement was historically logical, and his strong dislike of the two great Germanic metropolises – Berlin and Vienna – was based on the cities' cosmopolitan Weltstadt demographics. Hitler expressed his feeling about Munich, comparing it with his earlier years spent in Vienna: 'A heartfelt love seized me for this city . . . almost from the first hour of my sojourn there. A German city! I grew sick to my stomach when I even thought back on this Babylon of races . . . If today I am more attached to this city than any other spot on earth in this world, it is partly due to the fact that it is and remains inseparably bound up with the development of my own life'.[44]

Yet, Hitler's affection for Munich was not initially reciprocated by many of its citizens. The most determined resistance within Germany against the imposition of Nazi rule emanating from Berlin took place in Munich. A standoff occurred between the Bavarian state government and Nazi functionaries who were endeavouring to enforce Hitler's so-called Enabling Act, issued on 28 February 1933. Heavily armed Bavarian state Police guarded key government buildings in Munich while the two sides negotiated. Late in the evening on 9 March 1933, power finally was transferred to the Nazi regime, ending Bavarian aspirations for special status within the Third Reich.[45] In light of this, Hitler's designation of Munich as the capital of German art was, to some degree, a compensatory gesture, as Large notes:

> Ironically, Munich's cultural elevation came at a time when the city's actual power was diminishing. Munich remained the headquarters of the Nazi Party and the SA, but

43. *München und seine Bauten nach 1912*, Bayerischen Architekten- und Ingenieur-Verband e.V. (Bruckmann: Munich, 1984), p. 41.

44. Quoted in Large, *Where Ghosts Walked,* p. 38.

45. Jeffrey Garnett, *Lion, Eagle and Swastika* (Garland: New York, 1991), pp. 319–21.

Fig. 5. Altes Museum, Berlin, 1991. (Wikipedia Commons.)

> Berlin was the undisputed capital of the Nazi Reich, a Reich that was more centrally controlled than its Weimar and imperial predecessors. The emphasis on Munich's cultural prowess and importance to party history served partly as compensation for a lack of political influence in the Nazi system.[46]

Concentration of political power notwithstanding, there was a concerted effort on the part of the Nazi government to discourage the notion of so-called second cities within the Reich. Hitler himself stated that each major German city should be thought of as a capital: Berlin as the capital of the Reich, Hamburg and Bremen as capitals of shipping, Leipzig and Cologne as capitals of German commerce, and Essen and Chemnitz as capitals of German industry. To bolster this devaluation of first-city status, in 1936 the Nazi party newspaper *Völkischer Beobachter* declared that the old rivalry between Munich and Berlin was now a thing of the past.[47]

Almost immediately after assuming power, Hitler directed architect Paul Troost to design a Haus der Deutschen Kunst (House of German Art) for Munich that would replace the Glaspalast, which had been lost to fire in 1931. A model of Hitler's proposed replacement was publicly displayed in Munich on 22 July 1933, less than six months after Hitler had become chancellor, an indication of the priority he placed upon the project. He also personally selected the building site. In a grand ceremony, the cornerstone was laid on 16 October 1933, and the dedication occurred on 18 July 1937.[48]

Hitler's House of German Art was ostensibly designed to cement Munich's art city status within the Reich, yet the principal façade of the building deliberately – even provocatively – referred to the earliest and greatest of all Prussian museums, Karl Friedrich Schinkel's Altes Museum in Berlin (Figs 5 and 6). The result was both an updating and reduction of Schinkel's façade to its most elemental forms, yet other aspects of the building radically departed from the Schinkel prototype. The Altes Museum in Berlin functioned superbly within its urban landscape as a foil to the Royal Palace opposite the Lustgarten, and it also broke new ground programmatically. Its

46. Large, *Where Ghosts Walked*, p. 232.

47. Large, *Where Ghosts Walked*, pp. 259–60.

48. One day later, the famous exhibition Entartete Kunst or Degenerate Art opened several blocks away from the Haus der Deutschen Kunst. Over 650 paintings, sculptures, prints, and books of confiscated art that the Nazi regime considered to be 'degenerate' were displayed as a pedagogical venue to the German public. Open for four months, the exhibit attracted over 2,000,000 visitors, more than three and a half times the number that attended the Haus der Deutschen Kunst's inaugural exhibition.

Fig. 6. Haus der Deutschen Kunst, Munich, 1953. (Wikipedia Commons.)

monumental colonnade was raised high above the street level atop a massive, full-width flight of stairs, thereby providing a singular viewing platform of great majesty, a space that hovered tantalisingly between earth/sky and interiority/exteriority. The museum's famous staircase just behind the screen of columns afforded visitors a spectacular view of the surrounding cityscape, reinforcing a dialogue between building and site. Moreover, in an innovative design, the museum's sequence of galleries was organised around a central rotunda.

In contrast, Troost's House of German Art featured a colonnade only slightly higher than the street, which was perhaps appropriate, since it faced no edifice of distinction on the other side of Prinzregentenstrasse. Likewise, since the building was designed not as a museum but as a Kunsthalle, a large, undivided, rectilinear exhibition space dominated the interior. Finally, the House of German Art communicated with the surrounding city in an opposite manner than that of the Altes Museum by largely turning its back on the cityscape. Instead, a massive 700-seat restaurant along the rear of the building faced not the sprawl of the city, but rather Munich's retreat from urbanism, the pastoral Englischer Garten.

Despite the programmatic differences between the two buildings, the significance of Troost's full-width colonnade à la Schinkel cannot be denied: it was the salient architectural feature of the House of German Art. At first glance, the political implications of such an appropriation seem overt. By alluding so strongly to Berlin's Altes Museum, Hitler was reinforcing the primacy of political might over cultural status, underscoring the fact Berlin was imbued with a greater consolidation of political power than ever before in German history. Considering that Bavarian resistance to direct Nazi rule was vanquished a mere four months before Hitler unveiled Troost's design to the citizenry of Munich, it is not surprising that rather than solicit funds from the public, the Bavarian State Minister Adolf Wagner instituted a donation campaign targeted at German major industry. So-called 'cornerstone donors', such as Siemens, Opel, and Bosch, contributed from

100,000 to 400,000 marks apiece and for its part, the German railroad provided shipment of materials and machines for the building's construction free of freight charges.[49] The spectre of Bavarian particularism apparently suggested that a public fundraising appeal to construct a building redolent with allusions to Prussian hegemony might not have been successful.

There are further indications that the Berlin government was sensitive about the new building being seen as a mere appropriation of Schinkel's edifice. A 1933 book called *Der Markstein* endeavoured to elucidate the achievement in the design of Munich's proposed House of German Art: 'Classicism without imitated Hellenism . . . a cheap, archaic stylization is avoided here . . . this temple to German art resides far removed from the cold intellect of engineer-created buildings . . . it will be a milestone in the art of a new Germany'.[50] The allusion to industrial-looking architecture is twofold: it reflects a general disapproval by Hitler of such architecture for buildings of state while constituting a veiled attack upon Munich's industrial-looking Glas Palast, whose loss two years earlier was still much lamented by the local citizenry. The House of German Art therefore was presented not only as a healthy antidote to industrial architecture but also as a bona fide successor to the use of Hellenic style pioneered by Schinkel in Berlin 130 years earlier.

Despite the regime's efforts to rationalise the severe Neoclassical style of the building, the message was at odds with Hitler's proclamation of the city as the Reich's centre of art. Kirsten Schrick observes that Nazi coupling of 'heart' and 'art' in propaganda about Munich was, in a sense, a resurrection of the hagiography about the city's Kunststadt status in the nineteenth century. She writes:

> The equation of heart and art permits an insight into the art appreciation of the new ruler that distanced pure emotional bonding from every intellectuality. Only one city that nourished the emotional was in the final analysis competent for the care of true German art. Once again the circle appeared closed: appointed by Ludwig I [Munich's monarch of the early nineteenth century] as an art-city, the new decree of the Führer countervailed against the ever more massive challenge regarding this status since 1901 [the date of Hans Rosenhagen's groundbreaking article about Munich's decline].[51]

Yet, Nazi propaganda could not reconcile the dissonance between this message and the building that Hitler erected to symbolise Munich's reappointed status as the Reich's cultural ambassador: the Haus der Deutschen Kunst only heightened the disconnect between what was printed and what was wrought out of steel and stone. It could not conceal the Berlin predecessor upon which it was modelled, and given the long history of Munich–Berlin rivalry regarding Kunststadt status, it is not surprising that Munich's citizens quickly created an arsenal of nicknames for the edifice, as Large notes: 'White Sausage Palace, Greek Railway Station, and House of German Tarts (because of all the nudes inside). But there could be no mistaking its solemnity or ideological thrust. Engraved over its central entry was a slogan coined by Hitler himself: "Art is a noble mission, demanding fanatic devotion"'.[52] Munich might have been designated as the capital of German art, but Hitler sent a message on this plaque to the citizenry of the city. The message was clear: Berlin's political will was to be obeyed, even within the realm of art.

49. Gabriele Schickel, 'Kultur, Sport und Freizeit', in *Bauen im Nationalsozialismus. Bayern 1933–1945,* ed. Winfried Nerdinger (Architekturmuseum der Technischen Universität München: Munich, 1993), p. 350.

50. Quoted in Dieter Bartetzko, *Zwischen Zucht und Ekstase. Zur Theatrlik von NS-Architektur* (Gebr. Mann: Berlin, 1985), p. 91.

51. Schrick, *München als* Kunststadt, p. 207.

52. Large, Where Ghosts Walked, p. 262.

Conclusions

High-profile public buildings are tempting targets for analysis, but they also pose a potential peril for the historian. Facile, superficial assessments often arise, because they are based more on analysis of the finished object than on the process that brought the edifice into being. In this essay, a balance between process and object has been attempted, using three buildings as manifestations of the political and economic contexts that defined Munich's Kunststadt identity over four decades. The Bavarian National Museum of 1900 manifested not merely architectural notions of Bavarian national identity, but also positioned such identity as profoundly German. Unresolved, of course, was the question of what constituted 'national'. The Schack-Galerie was the equivalent of a delicate surgical operation rendered in architectural form, deftly combining two functions with conflicting functional and political agendas, especially regarding its site on a major boulevard. Finally, the House of German Art offered perhaps the sharpest commentary architecturally regarding the Berlin–Munich axis of competition. Ironically, this supremely uninspired example of architecture receives a degree of poignancy on account of Munich's Pyrrhic victory regarding its Kunststadt status. Hitler's proclamation of it as the Hauptstadt der Kunst on a meaningless piece of paper could not disguise the political hegemony of Berlin, and the House of German Art's design reminded residents of Munich of this every time they passed the edifice. The Berlin–Munich axis of competition was, for all purposes, a dead issue during the Third Reich – one that would be revived only after the Second World War, when a geopolitically divided nation would once again offer Munich the lead in Kunststadt identity.

All three buildings survived wartime damage and function more or less today as originally intended, albeit with two exceptions. Since the Prussian state was dissolved by the Allied Powers in 1947, there no longer is a need for a Prussian legation in Munich, so the Schack-Galerie now occupies the entire structure, undergoing an extensive renovation that was completed in 2009. The exhibition hall on Prinzregentenstrasse today is simply called Haus der Kunst, relieved of Nazi racist associations that had tainted its original name. As the capital of Germany's largest and wealthiest state, Munich's art and cultural scene is generously funded not only from municipal but also from state coffers. This gives it a financial cushion that a city-state such as Hamburg does not have, as well as distinguishing it from Berlin, which has faced municipal bankruptcy since reunification yet can draw upon massive federal funds.

As to which city today is the nation's leading Kunststadt, the issue is perhaps less conclusive than it was a century ago. Munich boasts a substantial industrial base; yet, the most important component of its identity is still that of a Kunststadt or, perhaps more accurately, a Kulturstadt. Berlin never recovered its industrial base after the Second World War, but it boasts an unparalleled array of artistic and cultural venues. Yet, its identity is still in flux: it is an increasing political heavyweight and cultural powerhouse anxious to reclaim its Weltstadt status. The Kunstdebatte therefore is still an open question, but it differs in tenor to that of a century ago, vibrating softly beneath the surface of public discourse.

Notes for Contributors

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Acknowledgements: if you wish to make an acknowledgement or to state that the article is based on a conference paper etc., place this at the end of the main text, before the notes.

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Captions: follow this pattern: Fig. 1. Jacques-Louis David, The Oath of the Horatii, 1784–5, oil on canvas, 200 × 300 cm. Musée du Louvre, Paris. (Photo: Réunion des Musées Nationaux.)

References in notes:

Articles: John Smith, 'Afterthoughts on Manet's *Olympia*', *Oxford Art Journal*, vol. 33, no. 2, October 2010, pp. 89–99.

N.B. for volume numbers, use arabic numerals, not roman (20 not XX). For page numbers use pp. 70–7, not pp. 70–77, but note: 10–11, 16–18 etc., for the group of 10–19 in each hundred. Leave a space between p./pp. and numbers, also after vol. and no.

Books: John Smith, *Manet: New Documents* (Utopia Press: London, 2010).

Edited Works: John Smith (ed.), *Manet*, 2 vols (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 2010).

Exhibitions: Cézanne: The Late Work, Grand Palais, Paris, 1980.

French Titles: La Couleur éloquente, not *La Couleur Éloquente*. However, when adjective precedes first noun, it goes into capitals: *Petit Dictionnaire critique et anecdotique des enseignes de Paris*.

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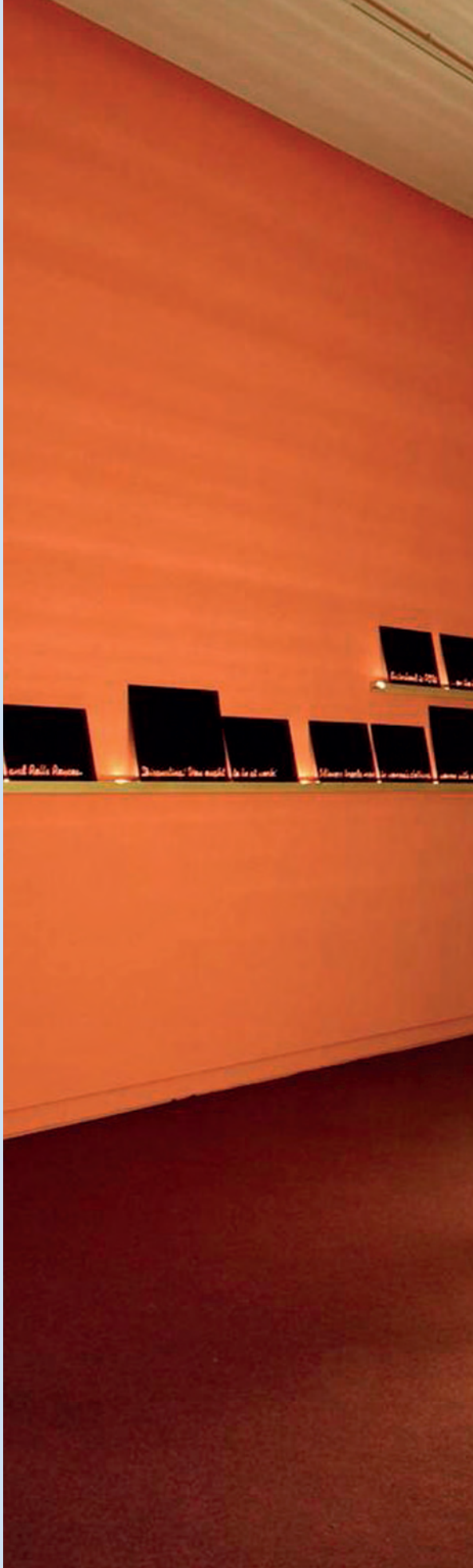

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