

Painting and Sculpture Collections

In several galleries of the Kaiser-Friedrich-Museum, Wilhelm Bode combined sculpture and painting, thereby drawing attention to the similarities between them. Despite the conservatism ascribed to Bode, he was one of the earliest art historians to conceive his museum installations above all from the point of view of their effect on visitors. Photographs of the Florentine Quattrocento cabinet perfectly illustrate Bode's method. The arrangement is strictly symmetrical. In the middle of each wall is the most important work



Quattrocento Cabinet in the Kaiser-Friedrich-Museum, ca. 1917, SMB-ZA, V/Fotoslg. 2.4./8115
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of art. On the left wall hangs Filippo Lippi's fabled *Adoration of the Child*; on the middle wall Fra Angelico's triptych with the *Last Judgment*. The Lippi is flanked by busts. The room included several sculptures by Donatello and paintings by Masaccio. The installation thus combined works by the very best painters and sculptors of Florence. What is being communicated about a culture is done through masterpieces in both media.

After the war, the joint presentation of sculpture and painting was continued in the Bode Museum in East Berlin. In Dahlem in West Berlin, the collections were exhibited separately, but still under one roof. As early as 1990, the majority of museum directors in East and West Berlin advocated a return of the Gemäldegalerie to Museum Island. However, Director General Wolf-Dieter Dube pushed through his plans, which predated the fall of the Berlin Wall, for a new Paintings Gallery at the Kulturforum. That building opened in 1998.

Only one year later, Peter-Klaus Schuster, the newly appointed Director General, formulated the goal of returning the Paintings Gallery to Museum Island. Together with the sculptures, the paintings of the Old Masters would then be presented in the Bode Museum and in a planned extension. The Prussian Cultural Heritage Foundation and the Berlin State Museums officially adopted this concept. In 2012, the Budget Committee of the German Bundestag approved 10 million Euros for the conversion of the Paintings Gallery at the Kulturforum into a museum of the 20th century, thus committing itself to the long-standing plans for the reorganization of the Berlin Museums.

A bitter debate ensued over the reunification of the painting and sculpture collections. Opponents called the joint presentation out of date and feared that until an extension building was erected across from the Bode Museum, large parts of the two collections would remain in storage for years. By contrast, directors of the preeminent European and American museums pointed out the benefits of this presentation for a better understanding of European cultural history and strongly advocated the merger of the collections. In 2014 it was decided to build a separate museum at the Kulturforum for the 20th-century collections. Without the need for space for the modern collections in the Paintings Gallery, there was little incentive to erect a new building opposite Museum Island. Currently, both the Bode Museum and the Paintings Gallery include example of the other medium in their presentation. Meanwhile, in newly refurbished galleries at the Metropolitan Museum in New York, the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam, the Prado in Madrid, and the Louvre satellite museum in Lens (Northern France), painting and sculpture are shown together.