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The political background of an idea that went wrong. The Peter Ludwig Collection in Bulgaria

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Abstract

This paper discusses the political background of the rejection of Peter Ludwig's donation and the refusal of Bulgarian authorities to participate in the creation of a Peter Ludwig Collection of Contemporary Art in Bulgaria. Bulgaria was one of Ludwig's destinations in the 1980s, when he visited artists' studios and established relations with the political elite. As a result, Bulgarian art from his collection was shown in numerous exhibitions throughout Europe. Given his commitment to Bulgarian art he expressed the wish to donate a significant collection of contemporary art to the Bulgarian state. The response to the idea was a proposal for the inauguration of the first of a kind institution to promote contemporary art in Bulgaria. As it was conceived in the wake of major political changes before 1989, however, it relied upon structures from the communist past, and could not be realized in the years that followed. The project sank into oblivion and was never made public or discussed afterwards.

Keywords: Bulgarian art, collections, museum for contemporary art, Peter Ludwig, gallery

Introduction

The study is a continuation of a recently interrupted project that I started in 2017 in collaboration with Svetlin Rusev, one of the main protagonists in that pursuit. The project then seemed to ponder a misleading question: Should Bulgarian culture and Bulgarian research preserve and revisit the problematic memory of Peter Ludwig's museum in Bulgaria that was never realized? The result of it would have been a publication and a documentary exhibition with reproductions of works and originals and was planned to be a poetic and artistic reminiscence of a grand intention that had failed. In 2018, I had the chance to work with the archives owned both by Svetlin Rusev and the "St. Cyril and St. Methodius" International Foundation in Sofia. It allowed me to trace the affair back to its main protagonists and decision-makers, and it revealed selection mechanisms, as well as other practices of cultural policies in times of dramatic political change. Meanwhile, I am quite convinced in the duty of a researcher to objectively register the facts. Research does not saddle historical facts with emotional connotations. One of the first questions researchers might ask is – what are the dimensions of the failure to carry out the project and whether that uneasy reminiscence was not in fact entirely subjective? Therefore, the present exposition raises questions about this event from the recent past, because there are only few details about it known to the Bulgarian public, and because there is a cloud of misunderstandings, speculations and ambiguities surrounding it.

The defining factor of what had happened was the political change in 1989. Due to the conservative infrastructure and economic difficulties that hindered normal museum life after that, the pattern of that occurrence seems to be resonating to this day. Although there is an extensive network of art galleries

and museums in Bulgaria, the lack of a museum for contemporary art is one of the ever-present topics in public discourse. Another issue indirectly addressed here is the one about private collections and their socialization. Part of a new worrying phenomenon is the large collectors' arrays of unclear origin seeking institutional legitimacy (Lozanov 2019). The existing problems, of course, are not typically Bulgarian, but our capabilities to deal with them are probably embedded in processes and events whose processing and reflection is yet to come. Therefore, this study is a glimpse behind the scenes of how museums in Bulgaria operated during the time of transition from communism to democracy.

Bulgarian art in the dynamics of defrosting

The long period of stagnation of socialist realism in culture, marked by the confrontation of propaganda and ideology with the aesthetic principles of Bulgarian modernism, was counterproductive in many ways. The Communist Party rapidly matured to realize that the pattern of using visual arts to impose a Marxist-Leninist worldview on the population had not been successful, and in the 1960s it began to change its attitude towards culture and its creators. The process of defrosting after the April 1956 platform promising freedom of expression and diversity of artistic styles marked the abandonment of the educational-didactic model of socialist realism¹. Socialist realism was modified into expressive historicism without a defined stylistic framework (Avramov 1994, 16). Expanding privileges, especially for free travel, friendly creative conditions for the creatives and available career opportunities, directly or indirectly, attracted the majority of the progressive young generation of artists to the party. However, a veritable U-turn in cultural policies in terms of liberalisation came after dictator Todor Zhivkov's daughter Lyudmila entered the political life of the country in the 1970s.

Lyudmila Zhivkova (1942-1981) studied history in Sofia and Oxford, and art history in Moscow. Her presence in Bulgarian culture was brief, but powerful. In 1971, she became Vice-Chair of the Committee on Friendship and External Relations, and in 1975 was elected Chair of the Committee on Culture and Chair of the Council of Creative Unions. With the start of her political career, the composition of the senior party leadership was significantly renewed, including young and erudite professionals with a broad and western outlook. At the same time, the country was stabilizing economically and this was a factor for growing subsidies for fine arts. Lyudmila Zhivkova and her followers and closest co-workers - bright members of the creative intelligentsia - were fully supported by Todor Zhivkov and the party apparatus (Aleksandrov 1995, 34). Her leadership in the cultural field was a period of active, official contacts beyond the Iron Curtain which benefited artists a lot. Through various official, often mutually exclusive channels, most Bulgarian painters and sculptors gained access to the world market and participated in international exhibitions, invariably promoting socialist art abroad.

Alexander Lilov (1932-2013) was one of the main representatives of the new generation in politics and a leader of the progressive cohort, as well as an advocate of the men of art before the party leadership. He rose to a particularly high position at the age of 38 as head of the Party's Arts and Culture department at the Party's Central Committee after completing a degree in Bulgarian philology and going for postgraduate studies in Moscow. Lilov had gained experience in the organization of communist youth and the Agency for Propaganda. He was especially needed in the team of Lyudmila Zhivkova and played a central his role in her political rise.

Svetlin Rusev (1933-2018) was the leading figure in the process of defrosting in arts during the 1960ies following the April Plenum. He received the highest state honors as a very young artist and in 1973 he took over the leadership of the Union of Bulgarian Artists. From 1976 to 1988 he was a member of the Central Committee of the Bulgarian Communist Party and from 1985 to 1988 he was director of the National Art Gallery. He was a unique figure in Bulgarian art, outstandingly active as an artist, art connoisseur, curator, and art collector for a long period of time. Due to the high position he

occupied in the party hierarchy, during his leadership (1973-1985) the Union of Artists functioned as an independent economic unit without almost any state interference and restrictions².

In 1975, a Cultural Heritage Service was established at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. One of the main tasks of this institution was the search for materials and documents related to the history of the country on the eve of the 1300th anniversary of Bulgaria's founding, which was scheduled to be celebrated in 1981. These works were included into the collection of the Committee of Culture, and formed the basis of the future Gallery of Foreign Art. Bogomil Raynov, Svetlin Rusev and Vladimir Goev had been involved in this activity and had managed to collect a handsome body of artworks in just few years. In 1978, the new acquisitions were exhibited at Boyana Residence of head of state Todor Zhivkov in order to receive the approval by the Politburo members (Raynov 2003, 112-114)³.

After the death of Ludmila Zhivkova, Todor Zhivkov's attitude towards her close associates changed dramatically. Alexander Lilov, long considered the second person in power next to Zhivkov, was removed from politics and appointed director of a research institute (Yahiel 1997, 290). This happened when the party members found out that he was supported by most of the intelligentsia and that he had a strategic vision for the future development of the relationship between party and artistic organizations. As a result of the growing criticism among the intelligentsia, restrictive measures were introduced. Generally, the 1980s were marked by more or less successful attempts by the authorities to halt cultural liberalization. Another example of the change in attitude towards Lyudmila's circle, as well as of Todor Zhivkov's aspiration to introduce centralized control over creative unions, was the criticism directed to Svetlin Rusev. Highly appreciated until the death of Zhivkov's daughter for his work as chairman of one of the largest creative unions, the Union of Bulgarian Artists, now Todor Zhivkov accused him of promoting concepts foreign to socialist realism art and of putting painters and sculptors in a particularly privileged position over other creative associations. The most serious accusation against him was the fact that he had established monopoly in the administration of the Union and showed disregard for party control. Svetlin Rusev's convincing self-defense against these accusations was accepted with enthusiasm by the artists (Kalinova 2011, 405) and he retained his position in the Committee for Culture by finding support from its new chairman Georgi Yordanov and also from Alexander Lilov⁴. Initially this created a feeling of hope that Lyudmila Zhivkova's line towards liberalization and democracy would continue. At the same time, accusations of monopoly resonated with this section of members of the creative union who had felt marginalized. Svetlin Rusev was dismissed from the Committee for Culture in 1984, and in the following 1985 from his post of Union of Bulgarian Artists chairman.

The party's attempts to reform the cultural sphere were an expression of a hectic search for a way out of the deepening socio-economic and cultural crisis that swept the entire Soviet Bloc in the second half of the 1980s. Added to this were internal political tensions. Besides, the death of Lyudmila Zhivkova resulted in setting up of an international foundation in her name, which focused predominantly on the relations that had been built with Western Europe so far. The International Foundation "Lyudmila Zhivkova" was established on October 20, 1982 in Sofia with 140 founders from all over the world. Created as an accomplishment of Georgi Yordanov, Zhivkova's successor at the Committee for Culture, as the first philanthropic, private foundation for culture, the Foundation had the primary task of cooperating with the Western world and was the only structure of this kind throughout the Eastern Bloc (Fischer-Appelt 2017, 4). Particularly important for the foundation's activities was the German Circle of Friends.

In September 1985, the Council of Ministers officially authorized the Foundation to run the new National Gallery for Foreign Art in the name of Lyudmila Zhivkova, in which state-owned collections, as well as its own donated collection would be on display. The Gallery's building, funding, and artistic management were managed mostly by Svetlin Rusev (Fischer-Appelt 2009, 33). The gallery was subordinate to the Ministry of Culture, but the Foundation as was its founder, godfather and patron. The works of foreign art kept at the National Gallery's collection were taken away and together with

the significant number of new acquisitions stored on the foundation's premises, they formed the archives of the newly established National Gallery of Foreign Art. The new housing place for a permanent exhibition of foreign art was in the renovated building of the former Print House. It featured all 9500 works by foreign artists owned by the state, including those purchased in the second half of the 1970s by Bogomil Raynov and Svetlin Rusev at the initiative of the Committee of Culture. Part of the initial concept was to gradually enrich the collection with works by other artists from Bulgaria and abroad. The new gallery with its exhibition area of 4000 sq. m impressed with luxurious performance against the background of the difficult economic situation in the country, and the fact that almost no funds were allocated for repair and reconstruction of the National Gallery. Individual exhibitions were formed of Goa Christian art, Japanese engraving, African plastic art, European art from the 19th to 20th centuries. Contributions from Spanish contemporary artists came, Syrian citizens donated art from Burma, Siam and Thailand, and a large collection of Western European art was donated by Bulgarians living abroad⁵. The diversity of collections formed a non-dogmatic multifaceted presentation of art objects for "recreating and juxtaposing different artistic patterns within a single museum" (Mutafchieva and Vladimirova 2008, 10).

The founding of this second largest museum in the country was conducted against the backdrop of an already politically unstable society and growing public discontent. What happened in the USSR in the 1980s had strong influence on the liberalizing intellectual strata, and in 1988 the first dissident organizations appeared in Bulgaria. The ecological crisis in the town of Rousse, near the Danube, prompted the awakening of civil conscience⁶. Following the spontaneously organized by the local artists first exhibition devoted to ecological and environmental issues, Svetlin Rusev, at that time an MP from the Rousse region, sided with the protesting mothers in Rousse with an open petition. The document "A cry for Rousse" was publicized and signed by most members of creative organizations. This civic act greatly disrupted the party leadership, and unions of artists all over the country were forced to convene meetings to which members were called upon to express their loyalty to the party. However, the government only partly achieved the expected effect, because most of the statements were supportive of the initiators of the "A cry for Ruse". The first dissident organization was formed and the artistic intelligentsia entered the political scene for the first time. This gave reason to Todor Zhivkov's reading to the Politburo his Official Opinion in March 1988. The main target of the party's fury and a personification of the emancipated intelligentsia was Svetlin Rusev, who, although he no longer held the chairmanship of the Union of Bulgarian Artists, was accused of manipulating society, behind-the-scenes actions, monopoly, etc., and removed by the Central Committee of the party. (Kalinova 2011, 439)

The collector and *Kunstpolitiker* Peter Ludwig

Peter Ludwig's collecting work and his quest to shake the established Western European museum narrative sparked serious debate in Germany in the 1980s (Staeck 1994). His eclectic collecting activities exemplify the belief that the art world is an indivisible unity and that the collector is on a mission to challenge common prejudice. Following the successful promotion of US pop-art in Germany and *Die neuen Wilden*, in the early 1980ies Peter and Irene Ludwig turned their attention to Eastern European art production that was virtually unknown in the West. Research had been devoted to the art of the USSR and the GDR, the Ludwig family made wholesale purchases of paintings, sculptures, and graphics. Acquired artworks participated in exhibition tours in Western countries and numerous catalogues and publications were printed. In the 1980s, the GDR Institute of Art in Oberhausen (Ludwig Institut für Kunst der DDR) and the "Ludwig-Stiftung für Kunst und internationale Verständigung" in Aachen acted as a bridge over the Iron Curtain. Exhibitions organized in the countries of the Soviet Bloc with works from the Ludwig collection also provided a rare opportunity for an otherwise fully encapsulated society to become acquainted with Western European art. In this way, Peter Ludwig became a propagandist for socialism, and this did not conflict with the politics of the socialist countries.

Peter Ludwig's collection of Bulgarian art was created in the 80's and was selected almost entirely by Svetlin Rusev, so it represented a specific selection of artists, all born between the 30's and 40's. Works by younger were added later. The first catalog was published in 1984 and the second supplemented edition in 1987 (Becker and Mayr 1984, 1987). Simultaneously with this collection another German collection of Bulgarian graphic art was compiled by Ludwig's close advisor Wolfgang Schreiner. It is housed in the Grafikmuseum Stiftung Schreiner⁷ and had also been shown repeatedly in exhibitions (Henning et al. 1994, 6). For their extensive collecting activities, in 1985 Irene and Peter Ludwig were awarded the honorary doctorate of the Academy of Art in Sofia and over the years received considerable recognition, although among a narrow circle of society⁸.

Transition - 1989

The decade after 1989 was marked by political and social instability (Ludzhev 2008). Until 1994, six governments were replaced. This was a period of absolute stagnation for state galleries and museums in the country. For a long time, funding for buying and completing collections stopped abruptly. Museums were obliged to undergo a number of transformations and their priorities shifted towards a change in the regulatory framework, the creation of new national information mechanisms and more. Directors were faced with the need for restructuring museum facilities and for searching for new sources of revenue, which has long ceased any activity in the galleries. On the other hand, the gray market was booming with large private galleries, whose trade affairs had not yet been explored.

Following the transition in 1989, four audition orders, including one initiated by a parliamentary investigation committee, demanded the Foundation's closure (Fischer-Appelt 2017, 34). In 1990 it was renamed to "Cyril and Methodius" Foundation⁹. The name of the gallery was also the subject of confrontation. Known as the Foundation Gallery, it was briefly called the "Cyril and Methodius Foreign Art Gallery", but eventually the reference to the Foundation was removed. Its new director affiliated with the Democratic Forces Party in 1994 was Georgi Lipovansky.

In 1988 Svetlin Rusev was dismissed as director of the National Art Gallery, a position he had held for two years, and his membership of the Central Committee of the Bulgarian Communist Party was suspended as well. After November 10, 1989, his name was included in the newly formed Union of Democratic Forces party, but he demanded that it be removed from the list immediately. Already in his reply to Todor Zhivkov's Official Opinion in 1988 he had insisted that he was *"red, I emphasize, red and I do not intend to repaint myself"* (Antonova and Kamenova 2008, 215-220). He never changed his political beliefs and remained a critical supporter of the communist party through its democratic transformations.

Peter Ludwig Donation Project

Part 1

In 1989, Peter Ludwig made two formal proposals to the Bulgarian state after talks initiated by Svetlin Rusev and Hans Mayer began in the first half of the 1980s. The first proposal was for the collector to make available for loan works of his collection to be exhibited in a permanent exposition. For their display, two halls of 320 sq. m should have been provided in the then called Gallery of the International Foundation "Ludmila Zhivkova". The exposition would be replaced every two years and thus the Bulgarian public would be provided with access to the new trends in art. The second proposal was to establish a brand new institution - a Museum of Contemporary Art, which would present international art from the last 30 years together with works by Bulgarian artists. It was suggested that the premises of the new gallery should be located in that part of the building occupied then by the Technical University¹⁰. According to the terms of the draft agreement that Ludwig accepted, more than half of the works had to be Bulgarian, with the other half being foreign art from the East and the West.

Ludwig offered 250-300 works of Bulgarian art to complement 100-150 of works of his collection. He indicated willingness to provide artworks worth 30 million German marks, as well as to pay 50,000 annually for the needs of the museum. The only requirement on the part of the donor was to name the museum after him.

Part 2

Negotiations were resumed in October 1992 following a letter from Peter Ludwig to Fischer-Appelt, the new director of the Cyril and Methodius International Foundation¹¹. The motive for the extraordinary commitment he put into this initiative was that the Foundation was the most appropriate intermediary between the Bulgarian institutions and the collector. Finally, the negotiations were terminated because the request of the donor to participate with DM 500,000 for the construction of a new building would not cover the costs and the state did not have the necessary resources. Besides, the anticipated period of 10 months was insufficient. In April 1993, the Minister of Education, Science and Culture appointed a Board of Directors to the Gallery of Foreign Art with representatives of the Ministry of Culture, the Gallery, and the Cyril and Methodius Foundation, which aimed to speed up negotiations with the donor. In January 1994, Peter Ludwig visited Bulgaria again and was presented with a framework concept proposed by Svetlin Rusev and Georgi Lipovansky. These meetings set a deadline of March 1994 for the opening of the new gallery, which was later extended to the second half of 1995. Peter Ludwig met President Zhelyu Zhelev and the Minister of Foreign Affairs and left the country satisfied with the progress of the process (Bulgarian News Agency 1994, 10).

Part 3

Following a request by the Minister to specify the collection to be received by Bulgaria, in October 1993, Peter Ludwig sent a map of reproductions with a list of the works he intended to donate. Shortly afterwards, the Minister of Culture convened a committee, headed by Svetlin Rusev, to develop a detailed concept for the gallery exhibition. This concept was based on Peter Ludwig's understanding of the "unity and indivisibility of the art world". This famous collector's credo took a more concrete dimension in private correspondence with the director of the Foundation Fischer-Appelt, in which he explained his understanding of the museum as a non-conventional institute - a *Sammelsurium* without a system and suggested the future blending of the entire collection of various objects in the Gallery of Foreign Art with works from contemporary Bulgarian and Western art¹². In addition to mounting the Ludwig Collection on the third floor of the existing gallery, the concept offered ideas for optimizing the entire gallery infrastructure. Its vision was to set up a Union of Collectors and to provide an opportunity for private collectors to contribute to the museum's program. Art auctions in the manner of large auction houses in Europe and other activities were also envisaged. The project included the installation of two plaques at the entrance of the gallery - on the left column the one of the Gallery for Foreign Art of the International Cyril and Methodius Foundation, and on the right - one with a "Ludwig Museum" inscription. The donor was also ready to raise the sum of DM100,000 for the renovation of the halls. Apparently, Peter Ludwig's visit to Bulgaria in January 1994 was the third and final round of donation negotiations. The approved schedule foresaw the opening of the museum in the second half of 1995. At the end of May 1994, the issue of Peter Ludwig's donation to Bulgaria was debated in Parliament. The debate introduced the facts and dispelled the many misunderstandings about the donation (Minutes from the parliament hearing, German translation, Archive "Cyril and Methodius" International Foundation). The critical situation of the National Gallery - the major art museum, was discussed in the context of the economic crisis - it did not have adequate storehouses, its buildings were insufficient and needed urgent repairs. On the other side, the unclear provisions in the draft donation to the Gallery of Foreign Art contract were emphasized and it was pointed out that out of the 113 works only one third would be a genuine donation, and it was not known which works it included.

Peter Ludwig's next visit was scheduled to be in mid-June 1994. An exhibition featuring a model of the Ludwig Museum, designed by Svetlin Rusev, was planned to be opened during the exhibition. Subsequently, Peter Ludwig canceled his trip and delegated his representative Wolfgang Schreiner. The ministry was planning talks with the donor to update the selection of works. Peter Ludwig's letters to P. Fischer-Appelt shed light on the impossible dialogue between the negotiating parties. He expressed the bewilderment of the Ludwig family that Bulgarians did not understand that it was not about the works themselves, but about attracting large collectors from all over the world to Bulgaria. According to the donor, the act of donation would be a cultural and political move with a much longer-term perspective that would bring prestige to the country and that it was far more important for the country than for the collectors' family. It would also promote future collaboration with other Ludwig institutes around the world and would contribute to the country's significant presence on the international stage. *"We want to show the Bulgarian art in the context of foreign art. We see it as a constant discussion forum."* (Losanov 1992).

The conclusion of the Ministry expressed by the minister of culture in Parliament was that the donor's proposal was untenable and contained several points of conflict. The most important of these was that it involved the operation of state funds by non-governmental and non-Bulgarian organizations. The ratio between the donated works and the available museum archives did not imply a change of name for the whole institution. Complementing the Ludwig collection with works by Bulgarian artists is also problematic, because the result of it would only mean perpetuating a narrow circle of artists in the institution (representatives of socialist art), and also because the acquisition of these works would have to be funded by the state. The mediation of the foundation was also described as unnecessary, and the collector was not willing to negotiate directly with the Ministry.

Thereafter

"Only in unfree societies is suffering and spiritual art created," the collector said, adding that his next temptation was China." (Gumnerova 1994)

An important museum foundation initiated by Irene and Peter Ludwig took place in November 1996 with the establishment of the "Ludwig Museum for International Art Beijing". The new structure was incorporated into "China National Museum of Fine Arts", which is the largest art museum in China¹³. The museum establishment was based on an agreement between the Ministry of Culture of the People's Republic of China, the Chinese National Museum and the collectors Irene and Peter Ludwig. Peter Ludwig initiated the contract shortly before his death. The collectors Irene and Peter Ludwig donated 117 of works of international contemporary art from Eastern and Western Europe to the museum. That was the most important donation the museum had ever received and resulted in the foundation of the "Ludwig Museum of International Art" within the museum's premises (Lin 2017). In November 1996 the museum opened in the presence of Irene Ludwig only. Her husband had died just two months after initiating the agreement with the museum. The museum was fundamentally renovated and extended. Since December 1999, the artworks from the donation to the "Ludwig Museum for International Art" in the Chinese National Museum have been touring through various provinces in China. In 2017, the exhibition *Eternal Warmth* featuring also artworks by Bulgarian authors took place.

The vicissitudes of Peter Ludwig's donation to Bulgaria are an example of dysfunctional communication between the East and West in the turbulence of political change. The Foundation's mediation did not turn out favorably in the aftermath of 1989 because it had lost its position and could no longer play the decisive role it had previously held as a main representative of the "third sector" (Fischer-Appelt 2017, 4). Its involvement in the Ludwig donation project was perceived as an attempt for revisionism. In the early 1990s, Svetlin Rusev's figure did not enjoy the support of the artist's guild anymore which was crucial for the negotiations with the Ministry. In 1996-1997, a new political crisis

occurred in Bulgaria, leading the population to mass protest rallies. The accompanying financial crisis leads to hyperinflation, bankruptcies and unemployment. Thus, art museums did not receive public attention for a long period of time and this is something we ought to compensate for today.

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¹ The plenum precedes the so-called "April Line" of the party. In the framework of the campaign against the "cult of personality" (similar to the fight against the cult of Stalin in the USSR), changes in the leadership of the party and the state with new officials are made.

² In the 1970ies the act of signing a cooperation agreement between the Union of Bulgarian Artists and the Künstlerhaus in Vienna, represented by Hans Mayer was in no way not supervised by the state.

³ The Ludwig Galerie Schloss Oberhausen handed over his GDR collection to the Leipzig Art Museum in 2009

⁴ That happened at the 4th Congress of Bulgarian Culture May 1983

⁵ Such is the case with the collection of Kostadin and Claudia Deltcheff, which is one of the most significant donations in the National Gallery for Foreign Art and was donated in 1986. It includes works of Eugène Delacroix, Auguste Renoir, Henri Matisse, Paul Signac, André Derain, Jacques Villon, Jules Pascin, Bernard Buffet, etc. The works of the collection are part of the permanent exhibition of the Gallery.

⁶ The reason for the protest movement was air pollution caused by an industrial chemical complex in Giurgiu, on the Romanian side of the Danube River, just across Ruse.

⁷ The museum is located in Bad Steben. <http://www.grafikmuseum-schreiner.de/>

⁸ The Aspekte Bulgarischer Kunst heute exhibition was displayed in 1984 Sammlund Ludwig, Aachen; Kuenstlerhaus, Wien, Neue Galerie Sammlung Ludwig, Aachen; Galerie der Stadt Esslingen am Neckar - Villa Merkel; Sta'edtische Galerie Schloss Oberhausen; Zitadella Spandau - Palas, Berlin.

⁹ In 1989 the Foundation became a member of the European Foundation Center and transfers its initiatives into the field of education

¹⁰ The actual expansion of the gallery's premises happened in 2012-2014. In 2015 the National Gallery was merged with the Gallery for Foreign art and today the building of the Gallery for Foreign art houses a representative exhibition curated by Svetlin Rusev in 2015. Merging both collections his aim was to create an unconventional exposition "where the development of Bulgarian art and the collection of the Gallery for Foreign Art will retain their authenticity to inhabit the space in a way that enhances the Bulgaria's classical, modern and contemporary art alike." (Rusev 2015, 15)

¹¹ Peter Fischer-Appelt Dr. theol., Professor, was the President of the University of Hamburg, Germany, from 1970 to 1991. Representing his university the assisted in establishing a broad co-operation with "St. Kliment Ohridski" University, Sofia in 1978. He is also a co-founder of the Foundation.

¹² Letter to P. Fischer-Appelt from the 4th of February 1994

¹³ Ludwig Museum for International Art. n.d. "Ludwig Museum for International Art." Accessed October 2019.
<https://www.ludwigmuseum.hu/en/beijing>.