

The Friedrich Family Collection

This is a letter to the British Government from a lady concerned that the post-war confiscation of her house would threaten the safe-keeping of a large collection of important paintings.

Ms Friedrich (1898-1977) was a violinist. Her great-grandfather was Caspar David Friedrich (1774-1840), generally considered to be the most important German artist of his generation. Her grandfather and father were also painters.

It is unlikely that her collection included any paintings by Caspar David Friedrich as she did not mention them. But she clearly owned a large number of other valuable paintings including many by her father and grandfather.

A photograph of the original letter may be found after this more legible version.

16. 12. 46

To the Minister Hynd, London

[from]

Annelise Friedrich
Hannover-Kleefeld
Senator-Bauerstr. 29

I am Caspar David Friedrich's last grand-grand-daughter. My large collection of paintings is in danger of being destroyed, as my house has been confiscated by Military Government and an accommodation for me and my collection, which consists of 140 partly very large pictures, cannot be procured in a town such as Hannover, 60% of which has been destroyed, in which numerous houses and flats have been confiscated by Mil. Gov., and which is overcrowded with expellees.

The family of Friedrich were painters in three generations. My great-grandfather was the world famous painter Caspar David Friedrich. His son, my grandfather Adolf Friedrich, was also a high-esteemed painter in Dresden, his wife Caroline Friedrich was a prominent painter of flowers. The son of the two, my father Harold Friedrich, was an ordinary professor at Hanover Technical School (architecture). For many years his pictures were the best sellers in Hannover. I myself have studied music, I have a great number of pupils.

In the course of the centuries, many beautiful works of art have been collected by an artists' family of that age and tradition. My father, who sold every new picture from the easel, was energetic enough to reserve a number of pictures for me in order to secure

my future in every respect. I own 140 partly very large pictures (catalogue at hand), portfolios of lovely paintings in water-colours from our beautiful journeys and an old Spanish masterwork by Escalante (size: 2. 40 x 1. 80 metres), which has been fixed to the wall of the staircase. All walls of my one-family-house containing five rooms the staircase and my three subtenants' rooms are covered by the pictures of my collection. Moreover, a great many pictures stand or hang on the loft of my house, which was especially constructed for this purpose, when the house was built 18 years ago. Therefore the collection has been stored and is absolutely safe from theft and damage in my house and so easy to survey that it may be inspected at any time, also for the purpose of sale.

Up till now, the Military Government has desisted from confiscating my house on account of this collection of paintings. I own a paper by Mil. Gov. clearly says the house must not be confiscated by British authorities on account of special circumstances. Nevertheless I am informed now that I had to look for a dwelling suitable for my purposes as my house had to be left by [?] of January. People had told me that neighbours had to leave their houses had decided to take some sort of action against my mother and me. The English seem to approve of that typically German attitude (since 1933) towards single and alone women, for the confiscating officer said he would have liked to spare us, but it would be unfair towards the neighbours, if we were if we might stay in the house on account of the collection of pictures. Is it not unfair towards us that many others, who have not to lose as much as we have, may stay in their houses, and that I with my large and precious collection become homeless? It is the matter of a collection, which is not only of the greatest artistic value but also of the greatest historical value.

The families of Hidebrandt, Berlin-Beck, Sanvoss, Wilke, Fiederling, Ley etc. are allowed to stay in their houses. Therefore, we should not have been the only inhabitants of that district. Professor Schuster has been permitted to stay in his house on account of his large library. So there are not there are enough precedents. It is easy to pack books into cases, but it is impossible to do so with 140 pictures.

Neither my father, nor my mother, nor I were members of the Nazi party or of any of its affiliations

My collection forms the fundament of my existence, therefore, I resolutely refuse to give the collection from my care into strange hands. I have lost my fortune by the war, which was invested in mortgages. I earn my living by letting my rooms and by giving music lessons. I was immediately authorized to do so (by Mil. Gov.), because I have clear records. If I had to leave my house, I would be ruined economically in every respect. For, according to my hitherto informations, there is no possibility for me including my collection of paintings, my teaching room, which contains my grand piano, piano, and music-cupboard (Size 2.00 x 1.50 metres), and my 70 years old mother to be accommodated.

Well whose merit is it that an old famous artist's family and the glorious tradition will be put such an end to?

Homeless!

So many works of art have been destroyed by the war in Germany that those still existing should and might be preserved, if there would be some good-will, insight and understanding.

[signed] Annalies Friedrich

[Postscript] A great part of houses are confiscated since 5 months and did not inhabitet. In one house are 4 lodgings vacant, each to 5 rooms. In another are 4 lodgings vacant each for 6 rooms and so on. It is place enough account for English families and no necessity to confiscate my house.

16.12.46

112c

Annelise Friedrich
Hannover-Kleefeld
Senator-Bauerstr. 29

To the
Minister Hynd
London

I am Caspar David Friedrich's
last grand-grand-daughter. My large collection of paintings
is in danger of being destroyed, as my house has been
confiscated by Military Government and an accomodation
for me and my collection, which consists of 140 partly
very large pictures, cannot be procured in a town such
as Hannover, 60% of which has been destroyed, in which
numerous houses and flats have been confiscated by Mil.
Gov. and which is overcrowded with expellees.

artist
The family of Friedrich were painters in three
generations. My great-grandfather was the world-famous
artist painter Caspar David Friedrich. His
son, my grandfather Adolf Friedrich, also was a high-
esteemed painter in Dresden, his wife Caroline Friedrich
was a prominent painter of flowers. The son of the two,
my father Harald Friedrich, was an ordinary professor
at Hannover Technical High School (architecture). For many
years his pictures were the best sellers in Hannover.
I myself have studied music, I have a great number of
pupils.

In the course of the centuries, many beautiful works
of art have been collected by an artists' family of that
age and tradition. My father, who sold every new picture
from the easel, was energetic enough to reserve a number
of pictures for me in order to secure my future in every
respect. I own 140 partly very large pictures (catalogue
at hand), portfolios full of lovely paintings in water-
colours from our beautiful journeys and an old Spanish
masterwork by Escalante (size: 2.40 x 1.80 metres), which
has been fixed to the wall of the staircase. All walls
of my one-family-house, containing five rooms, the stair-
case and my three subtenants' rooms are covered by the
pictures of my collection. Moreover, a great many pictures
stand or hang on the loft of my house, which was especially
constructed for this purpose, when the house was built
18 years ago. Therefore, the collection has been stored
and is absolutely safe from theft and damage in my house and
so easy to survey that it may be inspected at any time,
also for the purpose of sale.

Up till now, Military Government has desisted from
confiscating my house on account of this collection
of paintings. I own a paper by Mil. Gov. clearly saying
house must not be confiscated by British authorities
on account of special circumstances. Nevertheless
informed now that I had to look for a dwelling
for my purposes, as my house had to be left by
of January. People had told me that neighbours,
had to leave their houses, had decided to take some
of action against my mother and me. The English see

that neighbours are old Nazis. The behaviour is like this

