



**Staatsbibliothek
zu Berlin**
Preußischer Kulturbesitz

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DIRECTOR GENERAL
PROF. DR. ACHIM BONTE

PRESS RELEASE

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Manfred Heiting Supports Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin in Advancing Photographic History Research

The Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin has received one of the most significant private donations in its recent history.

With a substantial contribution, internationally renowned collector and photo historian Manfred Heiting is enabling the acquisition of extensive primary sources on the photographic oeuvre of Dr. Paul Wolff, together with a multi-year program to advance research in the library's Center of Expertise in Photography and Images. In addition, he is donating valuable specialist literature on the subject.

The German-American graphic & book designer Manfred Heiting has, for decades, been among the most important contemporary collectors of images and photobooks from 1840 to 2000. He publishes widely in his field, curates and supports exhibitions, and has promoted young scholars and curatorial initiatives at cultural and academic institutions around the world.

One of Heiting's particular interests concerns the work of Dr. Paul Wolff, a pioneer of 35mm photography and arguably the most commercially successful German photographer of the 1920s and 1930s. Wolff's archive was partly destroyed during the Second World War. With Heiting's support, the Staatsbibliothek will now consolidate holdings from two major private collections into the world's most comprehensive archive of Wolff's original prints, and will make them digitally accessible for research. Summer schools and research fellowships will investigate Wolff's close ties to the flourishing illustrated press and to the rapidly expanding field of photo-illustrated advertising and corporate publications of the period, while also addressing broader questions in the history of photography. To this end, Heiting is also making his extensive working library available and is contributing to the technical equipment of the Archive's reading room at the Staatsbibliothek's Friedrichshagen site.

Manfred Heiting stated: "Paul Wolff's photographs and his role in advancing and marketing 35mm photography have always deeply impressed me. I highly appreciate that his legacy will now be studied and passed on to future generations in such a distinguished European memory institution as the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin." Professor Dr. Achim Bonte, Director General of the library, added: "Manfred Heiting's extraordinarily generous support provides us



with strong momentum in developing our Photography Collection. Our mission is to make it more accessible and relevant for research, while linking it more closely with our outstanding historical newspaper and periodical holdings. For the history of photography and the press in the 20th century, the newly formed department 'Press and Photography Collection' aims to establish itself as an internationally recognized center of expertise and scholarship. This includes the accelerated digitization of all holdings and regular initiatives for new research. A diverse program of events and fellowships, especially for early-career researchers, will play a vital role in this endeavor."

The association *Friends of the Staatsbibliothek* is also contributing to the "Center of Expertise in Photography and Images" project. Its chairman, former Federal Minister Peter Altmaier, expressed his appreciation for Manfred Heiting's exceptional generosity: "As the library's friends' association, we are committed to backing the future strategy of Germany's largest academic library to the best of our ability. I regard the new initiative in photography and press research as a particularly promising undertaking."

The acquisition of the Dr. Paul Wolff collection will be formally celebrated in spring 2026, in the presence of Wolff's granddaughters. The first Manfred Heiting Summer School will follow in late summer. The collection will also feature prominently at the conference of the *International League of Antiquarian Booksellers*, which will be held in Berlin in September 2026.

STAATSBIBLIOTHEK ZU BERLIN

The Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin is one of Europe's largest and most research-intensive libraries, with a strong focus on the humanities and social sciences. It develops knowledge resources of global significance and promotes international exchange and open access to information through advanced technologies. Founded in 1661, its often unique collections are characterized by exceptional cultural diversity, geographic breadth, and historical depth. As part of the *Stiftung Preußischer Kulturbesitz*, the Staatsbibliothek offers outstanding infrastructures for researchers as well as a rich program of cultural events for the Berlin public. Integral to the Staatsbibliothek is the Bildarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz (bpk), which is currently being transformed from a commercial image agency into a public-law Center of Expertise in Photography and Images.
