

50 YEARS SENGER BAMBERG KUNSTHANDEL

Bamberg fifty years ago: drawing on long traditions, a self-confident citizenry and economic success, the picturesque town on the Regnitz River developed a cultural charisma far beyond the Upper Franconian region. The symphony orchestra was famous, the theatre renowned and the old town centre, which remained undamaged during the war, attracted art enthusiasts from near and far. In addition, the so-called „Franconian Rome“ was well on its way to becoming a centre of the art and antiques trade.

On 15 July 1970 Marianne and Walter Senger took over the old-established Bamberg antique shop “Haramus-Lorenz”. A courageous step - Walter Senger was just 25 years old and had to support a young family with two children - but by no



Marianne and Walter Senger in the 1970s:
A knack for very special objects right from the start.

means a rash or unprepared decision. Born in Bamberg, he was familiar with historical pieces from a young age. The family's upholstery and interior design company had been based in the cathedral city since the 19th century. Walter Senger had received a profound training in his father's workshop, which he himself complemented by his intense pre-occupation with history and art.

“25 years ago I first came into contact with Senger Bamberg, already then known for the highest artistic quality of medieval sculpture. Since then, every visit to Senger, whether in Bamberg or at one of the renowned art fairs in Germany and abroad, has been enriching. There were always interesting, unique works to see; always far more than a museum curator was able to buy. The fifty-year old jubilarian now not only occupies an immovable and long-established position, but also a top rank in the German art trade dedicated to old master works. Senger is one of its grand names. Congratulations!”

Dr. Frank Matthias Kammel
Director General of the
Bayerisches National Museum Munich

Art trade in the 1970s and 1980s - this implied great demand from a growing clientele for representative furniture, beautiful sculptures and expressive pictures. With energy, diligence and discipline, the couple seized the momentum of these „golden times“. Walter Senger was the youngest art dealer to exhibit at the Munich Antiques Fair in 1975, and from then on was regularly attending the major fairs in Cologne, Düsseldorf, Frankfurt and Berlin. Here he made essential contacts with customers, museum curators and other dealers. Soon Senger Bamberg was a well-known name in the German art trade, well beyond the Bavarian region.

This success was only possible because for Marianne and Walter Senger their profession was always a vocation that encompassed all areas of life. And they were fortunate to be able to pass this passion on to their children, who naturally grew up amidst antiques, sculptures and paintings. Already at the age of 21, daughter Silvia Senger was determined to join the family business, and shortly afterwards her later husband Thomas Herzog also entered the company.

With the entry of the younger generation, a new chapter in the firm's history was opened. Senger Bamberg in 1991 also made its debut at The European Fine Art Fair TEFAF in Maastricht, the internationally most influential art fair, which has set new standards in quality and authenticity since its foundation. A jury of 175 art professionals examines every single exhibit shown there in order to guarantee the museum quality of the objects.

In retrospect, Thomas Herzog judges that this „education towards quality“ set the benchmark for the further progress of the company. The high thresholds of the TEFAF were an incentive. They encouraged the Senger-Herzog family to concentrate on exclusive pieces of outstanding value.

That this was the right strategy became evident in 1995, following the acquisition of the Hermann Schwartz Collection, Mönchengladbach, the most significant private collection of Late Medieval sculptures in post-war Germany.

Walter Senger describes this stroke of luck today as „an entrepreneurial quantum leap that brought us into the focus of international collectors and large museums for the first time. In the following years, we were able to sell fantastic sculptures to such institutions as the Louvre, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Germanisches National Museum Nürnberg, the Suermondt-Ludwig-Museum Aachen, the sculpture collection of the National Museums in Berlin and many other German museums.“

Since then Senger Bamberg is one of the leading addresses in the special field of Late Gothic sculpture.



Master of the Legend of St. Barbara, Triptych “The Holy Family”
Brussels, circa 1500
Sold to the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts in 2015.

„Bamberg - and what is Bamberg in the art world without Walter Senger - has the highest density of qualified art dealers, except perhaps the Carré Rive Gauche in Paris. Located regionally and operating internationally, the fifty-year-old family business overcomes all the fashions and dangers of the art trade. Walter Senger's solid artisan training provides the founder of the company, as is clearly evident, with the sure eye and judgement that inspire confidence.

The secret of the success of the jubilarian lies in calm conversation, in the exchange of knowledge and insights and thus mediates between collectors, museums and lovers of special pieces, the customers are found as if by magic. He succeeds in going long distances and yet remains in his hometown. Art dealing also means experiencing and discussing works of art in the best companionship.“

Prof. Dr. Hans Ottomeyer, Director General (retired).
of the German Historical Museum, Berlin

Also at home in Bamberg the year 1995 brought many positive innovations. Silvia Senger and Thomas Herzog opened their own gallery, the H.S. Gemädegalerie, directly adjacent to the family's shop.

Walter Senger, together with the porcelain specialist Istvan Csonth, initiated the first Bamberg Art and Antiques Weeks, which have become a major annual event of the German art world.

Last but not least, the 25th anniversary of Senger Bamberg Kunsthandel was a reason to celebrate. An extensive commemorative publication reviewed the company's history and presented the highlights of the current offer in a scientifically edited catalogue section.



Walter Senger in 1995:
Portrait for the 25th anniversary in front of the company's headquarters at Karolinenstraße 8. In the background the Altes Rathaus (old town hall) of Bamberg.

The celebrations marked the beginning of a new era. The adult children began to actively steer the course of the company. Silvia and Thomas Herzog reunited their own gallery with the main shop, in which meanwhile also the youngest daughter Simone Kundmüller, née Senger, worked.



Erasmus Quellinus II (1607 – Antwerp – 1678)
Adoration of the Shepherds, dated 1669
Sold to the Smith College Museum Northampton/ USA in 2006.

Walter Senger was able to pass on his life's work with confidence, and officially handed over the management of the company to his son-in-law in 2015. Thomas Herzog learned the profession of art dealer from scratch, and in the course of almost thirty years of experience has become an expert in the assessment of both old and modern art. With his unmistakable sense of style, his aesthetic sensitivity and his intuitive understanding of design and decoration, he also distinguishes himself as a designer of impressive exhibition stands and showrooms.

Over the last 25 years, the new media and forms of communication have also taken hold of the art market. A change that has many advantages, as Simone Kundmüller explains: „The preparations for the important antique fairs, or the production of our annual catalogues, have become increasingly time-consuming and professional. The high quality of the objects, the careful scientific research and the traceable provenance of the artworks are crucial today. This is very positive, because only this transparency can maintain the trust between customer and dealer in today's internationalized art market. Our participation in the great European art fairs, above all TEFAF, brings us into contact with wonderful people from all over the world. We have met many outstanding collectors from the USA, Europe, Russia and even Japan. Great personalities who dedicate themselves to art with passion and amazing expertise. Thanks to the uncomplicated e-mail communication and our well-maintained homepage, it is possible to establish and constantly intensify trusting customer relationships despite the distance.“

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1945	1960s	1970	1973	1973	Mid 1970er	1985	1990	1991	
Walter Senger is born on 4th January 1945	Walter Senger is trained as an interior decorator and upholsterer in his father's workshop. First commercial experience in the trade with antique collector's pieces.	Walter and Marianne Senger establish the art and antiques gallery Senger, after taking over the old-established antique shop „Haramus-Lorenz“ in Karolinenstraße 10 and 14.	Membership in the Association of Bavarian Art and Antiques Dealers.	Introduction of the company name „Senger Bamberg Kunsthandel“. First participation in the German Art and Antiques Fair in Munich, where Walter Senger is one of the youngest dealers.	By participation in the art fairs in Cologne and Düsseldorf, as well as in Frankfurt and Berlin, Senger Bamberg becomes increasingly known among art lovers beyond Bamberg.	Acquisition and restoration of the listed gothic town house Karolinenstraße 8, the current headquarters of the company.	Daughter Silvia Senger (born 3rd October 1969) starts working in her parents' business.	Thomas Herzog (born 25th January 1968), the partner and later husband of daughter Silvia, begins working for the company.	First participation in TEFAF Maastricht



"Peacock Feather Chest" for the Prince-Electors of the County Palatine of the Rhine, created by the court ébéniste Franz Zeller (1697-1780)
Sold to a renowned private collection, USA.

"For a long time now I have had a cordial relationship with Senger Bamberg as a customer. On the occasion of various purchases, detailed and trusting conversations were held. There were always surprising discoveries that greatly enriched my collection. I appreciate the personal contact with the company very much and I visit Bamberg several times a year, especially during the Bayreuth Festival."

Christian Thielemann
Chief Conductor of the Staatskapelle Dresden
and Music Director of the Bayreuth Festival



Lucas Cranach the Elder (Kronach 1472 – 1553 Weimar)
The Virgin and Child with the Infant St. John, circa 1540
Sold to an important private collection, Russia, in 2011.

This is why the Senger-Herzog family is relaxed about the transformations on the art market. A new generation of collectors has changing interests - but at Senger Bamberg it has always been the principle to respond to the specific wishes of each individual customer.

Thomas Herzog emphasizes: „Regardless of fixed genres or fashions, we support the development of a collection that matches the personality of the buyer. Collecting is a matter of the heart - the chemistry must be right. And often enough we have made the experience: the work of art finds the customer, not the other way around".

Renowned as a leading specialist for Gothic sculpture and Old Master paintings - including rare works by Lucas Cranach - Senger Bamberg Kunsthandel additionally offers a hand-picked selection of inspiring modern art. Silvia and Thomas Herzog are deeply convinced that the skilful symbiosis of works from different epochs can open up amazing new perspectives.

According to Silvia Herzog, the only decisive factor is the quality of the objects: „Artistic genius is just as evident today as it was five hundred years ago. Looking at contemporary art with an open mind can be very enriching."

Foundation of the „H. S. Gemäldegalerie“
by Thomas Herzog and Silvia Senger.

Acquisition of the highly significant
sculpture collection Hermann Schwartz,
Mönchengladbach.

1st Bamberg Art and Antiques Weeks,
initiated by Walter Senger and the
Bamberg porcelain expert Istvan Csonth.

25th anniversary of Senger Bamberg
Kunsthandel

Daughter Simone Kundmüller, née
Senger (born 11th December 1975)
joins the family business.



Unique Writing Cabinet with Prayer Desk
Franconia, circa 1755
Sold to the Bayerisches National Museum in 2008.

It is important for Senger Bamberg to be on the pulse of time and to support art enthusiasts individually and comprehensively as a strong partner when building up a collection or acquiring a unique collector's item.

„With all our innovative spirit, the unalterable human values are at the heart of our company philosophy.“, Thomas Herzog underlines. „As much as our working environment has changed over the last 50 years, the essence of the art trade has remained the same for us. Trust, sympathy and close, personal customer contact are just as relevant to us today as they were in 1970. Customers are friends, not just buyers.“

This basic attitude, characterized by Franconian warmth and naturalness, also includes the employees who have often been loyal to the family business for decades: the in-house conservators Manuel Nagel and Claus Friedmann-Michler, the art historian Elisabeth Hofmann, Annette Raith in administration, Christian Herzog and Harald Graser in the fair and stand building team, and Birgit Reinwald in shop management on site in Bamberg. They all regard themselves as part of the large Senger family and work hand in hand to pass on the fascination of high-quality art to people worldwide.

Fusion of the art gallery of Thomas and
Silvia Herzog (née Senger) with Senger
Bamberg Kunsthandel.

Official handover of the management
from Walter Senger to his son-in-law
Thomas Herzog.
Walter Senger continues to support the
company in word and deed with his
many years of experience and expertise.

„My 45 years of acquaintance with Walter Senger has given me another anniversary, so to speak. In 1975 I took up my first job after graduating from university at Ruef Art Auctions. At that time almost all art dealers frequented the auction house. Walter Senger was one of them. Since then our paths have crossed again and again. A real friendship has long since grown from this.
Walter Senger happily combines Franconian pragmatism and international cosmopolitanism. His art gallery has long since grown into a family business with many members, which maintains a satisfied regular clientele far beyond the borders of Europe. Thanks to the next generation, modern and contemporary art has been added to the classic program. „Crossover“ has long since become established. At Senger in Bamberg, you can experience how harmoniously the old, the traditional and the new come together when the quality standards are set equally high for all objects. Walter Senger can look back gratefully and happily on his life's work and at the same time be curious about the future.
I congratulate warmly!“

Dr. Gloria Ehret, Editor of Weltkunst



Emperor's Goblet of the Coronation Ceremony of the Holy Roman Emperor Maximilian II, made in 1561/62 by the masters Christoff Ritter, Nuremberg, and Philipp Bonhöffer, Schwäbisch Hall
Sold to the Museum Würth through the agency of Senger Bamberg in 2014.

After more than a year of extensive renovation under the direction of Thomas Herzog, opening of the new showrooms in the listed baroque business building at Geyerswörthplatz 1, directly opposite the company's headquarters.



The three generations of the Senger, Herzog and Kundmüller families in the anniversary year 2020 ↑

The new branch Geyerswörthplatz 1,
opened in 2018 →

The famous gothic sculpture cellar
in the parent gallery Karolinenstraße 8 ↓

Fair stand at TEFAF Maastricht ↕



1995

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