



## The Scharf Collection

On 15 January 2026, the WiB art group had the pleasure of being personally guided by René Scharf through his collection at the Alte Nationalgalerie. For the first time, the collection is being presented there on a substantial scale. It ranks among the most important private art collections in Germany, encompassing works from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries with a particular focus on French art, alongside contemporary international works. Around 150 exhibits are on display, including a selection from the complete and fully preserved body of graphic prints by Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, as well as outstanding works by Auguste Renoir, Pierre Bonnard, Edgar Degas, Claude Monet and Francisco de Goya.

War, despite heavy wartime losses. The grandsons, Walther and Dieter Scharf, each built their own collections on the basis of the works bequeathed to them: Dieter Scharf focused on Surrealism (the Scharf-Gerstenberg Collection in Berlin-Charlottenburg), while Walther Scharf and his wife Eve – together with their son René – further developed the French emphasis. They acquired works by Claude Monet, Paul Cézanne, Pierre Bonnard, Henri Matisse and Pablo Picasso. Today, René Scharf and his wife Christiane have turned their attention to contemporary art, with a particular interest in the expansion of the medium of painting and in the relationship between figurative and abstract pictorial worlds. Against this backdrop, René and Christiane Scharf are carrying the family tradition into the present with works by Sam Francis, Sean Scully, Daniel Richter and Katharina Grosse.



The collector René Scharf in the Alte Nationalgalerie, standing before a work from his collection

Marthe as young and beautiful – even when she was already approaching seventy years of age. *TEXT Ulla Braumann*



▲ *The Large Bath*, painting by Pierre Bonnard

### BERLIN PRIVATE COLLECTORS

René Scharf is continuing the collection now in its fourth generation. It stands in direct succession to the renowned Berlin private collection of the entrepreneur Otto Gerstenberg (1848–1935), Director General of the Berlin Victoria Insurance Company. His daughter Margarethe Scharf succeeded in preserving the greater part of the collection through the Second World

### PIERRE BONNARD

Ranging from Goya and French Realism through the French Impressionists and Cubists to contemporary art, René Scharf explained the works and their stories, including that of the celebrated painting *The Large Bath* (1937–1939) by Pierre Bonnard. The painted bathtub is in reality far smaller than one might expect, and Bonnard consistently portrayed his wife

Photo 1 © Katharina von Aretin, Photo 2 © Ursula Braumann

## A Suitcase Full of Good Wishes | On the WiB New Year's Reception

The New Year's Reception is a cherished tradition at WiB. On 21 January 2026, the Diplomats' Club invited its members and guests to an evening of exquisite cuisine, fine wines and live music at the Grand Hyatt Hotel on Potsdamer Platz. Club President Karla Steinert-Thys and General Manager Jan Peter van der Ree welcomed the many guests –

among them numerous ambassadors – at the cosy Vox restaurant.

One by one, members of the Presidium placed their good wishes for 2026 into a suitcase they had brought with them: peace, new beginnings, strength, reason, love and hope. The gesture was intended to nurture trust, respect, solidarity and a shared sense of re-

sponsibility for our future, and to convey the reassuring feeling of being supported by the community even in challenging times.

The evening unfolded into a lively exchange, accompanied by live music, excellent food and carefully selected drinks, with conversations ranging widely – including reflections on the year ahead for the Club. *TEXT Ulla Braumann*



From left: Katharina von Aretin, Christine Hatakka, Olivia Nickel, Gladys Abankwa-Meier-Klodt, Ulla Braumann, Nita Isnaeni-Waerber



From left: Christine Hatakka, Nita Isnaeni-Waerber, Ulla Braumann, Karla Steinert-Thys, Olivia Nickel, Gladys Abankwa-Meier-Klodt, Katharina von Aretin

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