

Asian art collection

Heartfield first became interested in Asian art when he was in exile in London. The collections at the British Museum and contact with private collectors in north London encouraged him to begin his own collection, using his modest financial resources. His trip to China in 1957 gave him the opportunity to buy many art objects there, including sculptures and ceramics, and above all many colourful paper-cuts and popular prints.

Heartfield was an enthusiastic collector of ceramic tableware, and he gradually built a considerable collection, which is now part of the art collection at the Akademie der Künste. Speaking in 1977, his landlord in London, Otto Manasse, recalled Heartfield's passion for collecting: 'He bought art objects on credit and was known and loved by antique dealers. It would sometimes take him twelve months to pay for an object and he would then come home beaming, with a package under his coat. [...] It might be a rare old Persian plate or two eggs or a baby rabbit; at times like that, they were all equally important to him'.