

The Exhibition

Welcome to the German Ivory Museum at the Erbach Castle!

1 Let's follow the chronological tour from the lobby into the black box, which should give us an impression of who Franz I was.

2 Selected books demonstrate Franz I's universal interest: here we can get a feel for the enlightened, educated spirit of this man.

3 In the large room of display cabinets are a number of caddies crafted by the Count himself in approximately 1783 and 1812, which bear witness to his artistry and craftsmanship.

4 Erbach's boom as an important ivory carving hub began in the 19th century with its specialisation in jewellery. Here, you can see a selection of noteworthy Erbach brooches of hunting scenes, hands and roses, crafted by Ernst Kehrer, Otto Stegmüller and Philipp Willmann.

5 The treasure chamber brings together in twelve display cases all the splendour and diversity of the art of ivory carving in Erbach and Germany from the 18th to the 20th century. The pieces displayed here are predominantly influenced by the movements of historicism, art nouveau and art deco, as well as naturalistic depictions from the 20th century.

6 Next, in the figure cabinet are Venus and Amor, elves and nudes dating predominantly from around 1900, produced by Otto Glenz – one of Erbach's most prominent artists.

7 The room also houses nudes and female dancers by Ferdinand Preiss and Ludwig Walther from the first half of the 20th century.

8 From the same period date a selection of female statuettes by Emil Straub and Oswald Ammersbach. They are close to expressionism as well as the new objectivity movement.

9 With the help of the animal representations by Otto Glenz, Emil Straub and other artists, the different and tended artistic perceptions of art in the 20th century become clear.

10 The two ivory carvers Jan Holschuh and...

11 Wilhelm Wegel are representative of modern ivory carving unlike any other craftsmen from Erbach. Their work dates from the period 1956 to 1979 and can be found in the last two display cases.

12 What you now see is the pure raw material from which ivory art is originated. Since the entry into force of the Washington Conventions on the Protection of Species, the trade in ivory has been banned.

13 Along with photographs and archival material, twelve relief carvings of the expressionist artist are presented in the Karl Schmidt-Rottluff-Cabinet.

Karl Schmidt-Rottluff-Cabinet

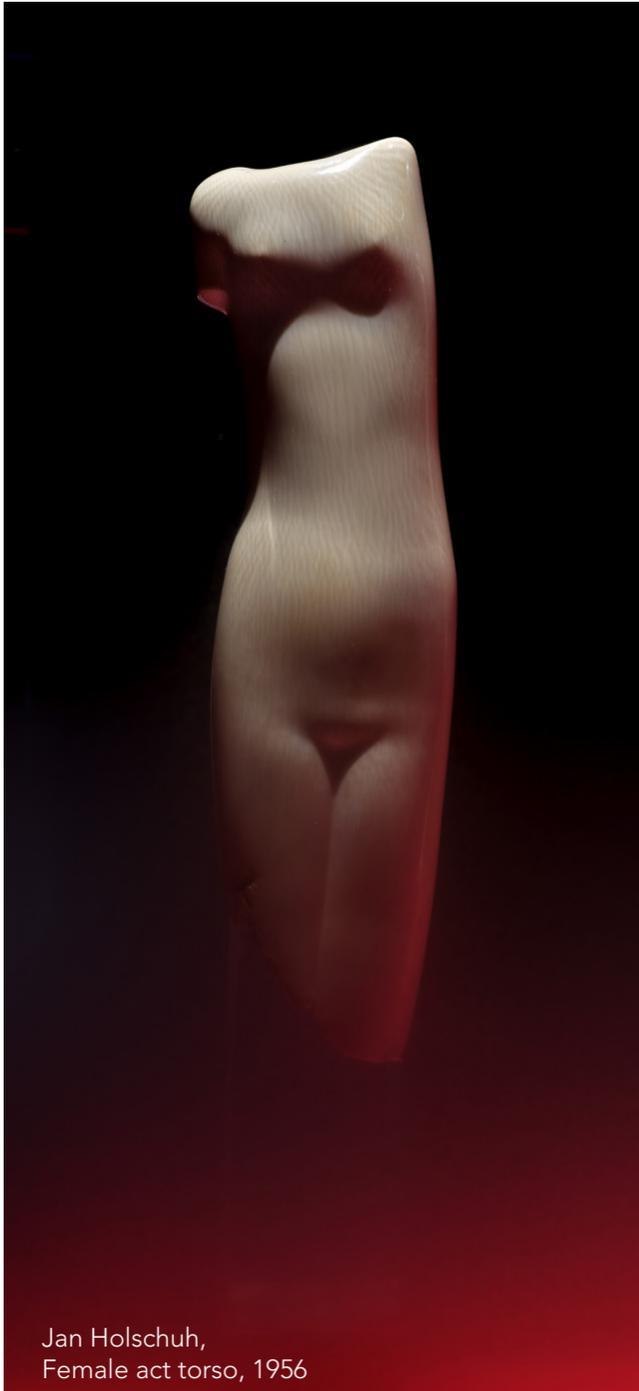
„...I know of myself that I have no program, only the inexplicable longing to grasp what I see and feel to find the purest expression for it.”

Karl Schmidt-Rottluff, 1914

Karl Schmidt-Rottluff (1884-1976) is one of the founding members of the in 1905 initiated artists association "Die Brücke". In addition to colour intensive paintings and expressive graphics, Karl Schmidt-Rottluff also created an important number of plastic and handicraft works. About 40 of by his own hand crafted bone carvings are documented today. Twelve of these carvings are part of the German Ivory Museum's inventory. These, produced between 1943 and 1961, were probably created, among other carvings, in the period of his occupational ban. Some of his works, together with works by Jan Holschuh and Wilhelm Wegel, could be seen in 1960 in exhibitions in Switzerland, Darmstadt and later also in Erbach. Now this museum dedicates to this significant expressionist artist an own Cabinet.



Bone relief with kneeling female nude, 1943-1961



Jan Holschuh,
Female act torso, 1956

Count Franz I of Erbach-Erbach (1754-1823)

At the end of the 18th century Count Franz I of Erbach-Erbach established the tradition of the ivory carving handicraft in the local region. Thus, the ivory, also known as the white gold, came to the Odenwald. During his six-year grand tour across Europe Count Franz I of Erbach-Erbach discovered collections of valuable ivory works and probably the fine art of carving ivory as well. When he returned to Erbach, he had a workshop installed and, under the guidance of a horn turner, he crafted his first ivory objects.

Count Franz I supported his economic experiment by means of his leading role as an artist, the foundation of the ivory turner guild in 1783, the acquisition of material and the reduction of tariff barriers. His extensive education provided the requirements for this purpose.

With the rise of the hunting brooches, the first economic successes began around 1840. The so-called "Erbacher Rose" received a distinction at the Vienna World's Fair in 1873. Overnight, Erbach became known around the world. The Erbacher Rose was a bestseller for many years and it could be found in various forms of brooches, necklaces and as decoration.

With the foundation of the College of Ivory Carving in 1892, artistic education came into focus.

Erbach advanced to the centre of ivory art in Europe.

Since the entry into force of the Washington Conventions on the Protection of Species, the trade in ivory has been banned. Only some remainder of stocks, which were legally stored before 1989, will be processed in Erbach today. The main alternative materials used now are fossilised mammoth ivory, tagua nut and bone (cattle bones).

Before the Second World War a further industry for the region grew out of ivory carving: Bernhard Koziol, a skilled ivory carver, began industrial production of synthetic decorative motifs in 1935. His company name is renowned worldwide today.

And so, the spirit and character of Franz I - the catalyst for social and economic reforms in his county - remain to this day through the history and tradition of Odenwald's ivory carving.



Brooches display case

The Museum

Starting with Franz I and by his own hand carved ivory works, the German Ivory Museum shows a chronological tour from the beginning of the ivory art in Erbach to the modern age. Quasi pending in the air, the exhibits emerge from the darkness into the light. The unique experience together with the joy over the aesthetics of each and every single one of the carved works build the centre of this modern and award-winning exhibition.

The first initiatives to the foundation of an ivory museum go back to the year 1910. From 1933, the Count House of Erbach provided a larger "room next to the chapel of the castle" for the increasingly growing collection.

From 1966 to 2015 the museum was accommodated in the municipal festival hall. In 2016 the German Ivory Museum returned to the Erbach Castle, to its museums and spiritual place of origin.

Immerse yourself in Franz I's vision that found expression in Erbach's ivory and that pervades the whole museum. All in one place that, together with the palace's collections from generations of Counts, is unique throughout the world. We wish you a stimulating visit to our museum!

DEUTSCHES ELFENBEIN MUSEUM SCHLOSS ERBACH

Schlosshof (Alter Bau) | Marktplatz 7
64711 Erbach im Odenwald
Tel: 06062-809360 | Fax: 06062-8093615
E-Mail: info@schloss-erbach.de
Internet: www.elfenbeinmuseum.de
Fotos: © Michael Leukel

Opening Hours (as of 02/2021)

March to January 6th: Daily 11 - 16
Closed 24, 25 and 26 December

Guided visits are possible outside the opening hours according to previous arrangement.

