

**p r o v e n a n c e  
r e s e a r c h  
case 2**

Purchases from the  
London Antiquarian  
Ben Weinreb Ltd

Around 15% of the objects registered in the Bauhaus-Archiv's collection during the 1960s were acquired on the international art market. In 1964, 1965 and 1967 over 140 objects were bought just from the antiquarian Ben Weinreb in London. A large portion of these rare prints, drawings, bookbindings and works from the preliminary course were by artists of Jewish origin, including:

**Franz Singer** (1896, Vienna – 1954, Berlin)  
**Friedl Dicker-Brandeis** (1898, Vienna – 1944, Auschwitz-Birkenau)  
**Anny Wottitz-Möller** (1900, Budapest – 1945, Haifa, Israel)  
**Ruth Vallentin** (later Cidor-Citroën, 1906, Berlin – 2002, Jerusalem)  
**Naum Slutzky** (1894, Kiev – 1965, Stevenage, England)  
**Stefan Wolpe** (1902, Berlin – 1972, New York)  
**Margit Téry-Adler** (1892, Alba Iulia, Romania – 1977, Berlin)

Nr.	Zeit der Anschaffung			Stückzahl	Beschreibung der Gegenstände	Ankaufspreis		Bemerkungen	Katalog-Nummer
	Jahr	Monat	Tag			DM	PT		
✓ 679	1965	Dez	2	1	Friedl Dicker: Gebirgsstahl mit Fickens Stoffgezeichnet			Weinreb Ltd. London 24.12.64	
✓ 680	"	"	"	1	Friedl Dicker: abstrakt - i. brennen, Kollagezeichnung				
✓ 681	"	"	"	1	Friedl Dicker: abstrakt geg. F.D. Böttcherzeichnung				
✓ 682	"	"	"	1	Friedl Dicker: Sängerei, Kollen, Kreide u. Blei				
✓ 683	"	"	"	1	Friedl Dicker: Kollen = Kind, Blei u. Acker, Bleistift			Dickerbrandeis	
✓ 684	"	"	"	1	Friedl Dicker: in Blei u. Acker, Singer, Friedl Dicker, Agnelli				
✓ 685	"	"	"	1	Friedl Dicker: in Blei u. Acker, Singer, Friedl Dicker, Agnelli				
✓ 686	"	"	"	1	Friedl Dicker (3): Collagen, Franz Singer, für Gebirgsstahl			DB	
✓ 687	"	"	"	1	Wolpe, Stefan: 3 mensche Figuren / Figuren (3) Agnelli			Dickerbrandeis	
✓ 688	"	"	"	1	Ruth Vallentin (?) Sängerei (vgl. 682) geg. 1922 Kollen				
✓ 689	"	"	"	1	Ruth Vallentin (?) Apfel Kollagezeichnung				
✓ 690	"	"	"	1	Ruth Vallentin (?) Apfel Kollagezeichnung				
✓ 691	"	"	"	1	Wolpe (Stefan) Tälchen, Radierung			DB	
✓ 692	"	"	"	1	Franz Singer geg. F.S. abstrakt, Bleistiftgezeichnet				
✓ 693	"	"	"	1	Franz Singer geg. F.S. 20. 23.5 cm. Bleistiftgezeichnet Kollen				
✓ 694	"	"	"	1	Franz Singer abstrakte Kollagezeichnung				
✓ 695	"	"	"	1	F. Dicker (Landschaft?) 24,5 x 34 cm				F 2019 F 5321
✓ 696	"	"	"	1	Franz Singer 3 Akt mit Kette Kollagezeichnung				
✓ 697	"	"	"	1	Gerhard Schünke, Tiere in Landschaft Radierung				
✓ 698	"	"	"	1	Gerhard Schünke, Landschaft an der See Litho.				
✓ 699	"	"	"	1	Gerhard Schünke, Landschaft mit Baum Litho.				
✓ 700	"	"	"	1	Gerhard Schünke, Stillleben mit Tische, Litho				
✓ 701	"	"	"	1	Gerhard Schünke, Stillleben mit Tische, Litho				
✓ 702	"	"	"	1	Gerhard Schünke, Natzen, Vogel, Litho			Dickerbrandeis	
✓ 703	"	"	"	1	Gerhard Schünke, Akt Akt 1923				
✓ 704	"	"	"	1	Wolpe 3 Köpfe u. Figuren ... (aus einer Wachsmaße)				

The accessions register records numerous purchases from Ben Weinreb Ltd in London. However, it was not known who provided the works to the art dealer to sell.

In addition to their work at the Bauhaus or within its broader circle, these artists shared the fate of flight and persecution. Franz Singer, who had lived in London in addition to Vienna from 1930, was no longer able to travel to his homeland after Germany annexed Austria in March 1938. Anny Wottitz emigrated to Palestine by way of England and then died there in 1945. Ruth Cidor-Citroën also brought herself and her family to safety first in Switzerland and later in Jerusalem. Stefan Wolpe's escape route led to the US by way of Palestine. Naum and Hedwig Slutzky as well as Bruno Adler and his wife Margit Téry-Adler fled to England. Friedl Dicker-Brandeis was unable to flee. She was deported to Theresienstadt and then murdered in the gas chambers of Auschwitz in October 1944. Their fates are what makes it absolutely essential to examine the provenances of their works.

## The 1<sup>st</sup> Lead

A few of the objects and the packing materials in which they were stored contain indications of individual works' and groups of works' provenance, pointing to their former owners. For example, dedications had been added to several of the works on paper. These notes often indicate they were previously owned by Franz Singer and Friedl Dicker.

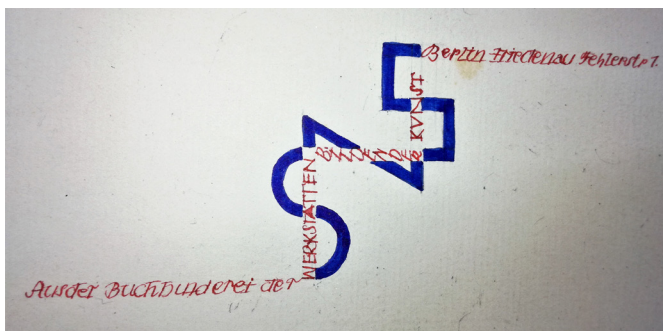


This collage by Friedl Dicker (inv. no. 686) acquired in 1965 was a birthday present for Franz Singer.



© Dani Singer

This charcoal drawing of a seated nude (inv. no. 1030) by Franz Singer is labelled »Besitzer F. Dicker« (Owner F. Dicker) at the bottom right. In addition to their professional relationship, Dicker and Singer were bound by a romantic relationship full of drama and conflict.



The bookbinding works purchased in 1964 include a copy of the »Chorus Mysticus: Alchemistische Transmutationsgeschichten aus Schmieders Geschichte der Alchemie« (Chorus Mysticus: Tales of Alchemical Transmutation from Schmieder's History of Alchemy, inv. no. 1754). This book was presumably bound by Anny Wottitz, and its final page features an ink-and-gouache version of the signet of the bookbinding workshop at the »Werkstätten Bildender Kunst« (Fine Art Workshops). Franz Singer and Friedl Dicker had founded this business in the Friedenau district of Berlin in 1923: they specialised in interior design and applied art while realising the fundamental ideas of the Bauhaus. Anny Wottitz also worked there for a brief period in 1923 – as did the goldsmith Naum Slutzky, who produced his extraordinary pieces of jewellery there.



# Biographical Digression

## Friedl Dicker (1898 – 1944) and Franz Singer (1896 – 1954)

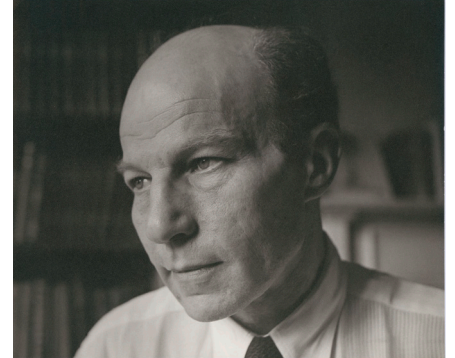
Both Friedl Dicker and Franz Singer began their artistic training at a very young age. Dicker was only 14 when she began her apprenticeship as a photographer and technician for photographic reproductions in Vienna. From 1915 she briefly attended the textile class at Vienna's school of applied art and simultaneously continued her education in evening classes at the Freies Lyceum, a girls' secondary school. That same year, Singer also began studying painting in Vienna, but his course was interrupted by his service as a soldier in the First World War.

Dicker and Singer first met after the war, at Johannes Itten's private art school, and this is also where they met Anny Wottitz and Margit Téry. In 1919 these students followed their teacher to the Bauhaus in Weimar. Together with their Viennese friends, they completed the preliminary course initiated by Itten. While still students at the Bauhaus, Dicker and Singer were already collaborating to develop stage sets and costumes for theatres in Dresden and Berlin. Whereas Singer worked primarily in the furniture workshop, Dicker never committed to a specific workshop.

In 1923 Singer and Dicker completed their studies and left the Bauhaus to move to the Berlin district of Friedenau. There they founded the »Werkstätten Bildender Kunst«, which would exist until 1926. By the end of 1923, Dicker had already returned to Vienna with Wottitz. In their shared studio, they produced upholstery textiles made of wool and bast, but also bags made of leather and leather cord. In 1925 Singer likewise moved to Vienna and opened a studio for architecture and interior design.

Towards the end of 1925, Singer and Dicker combined their studios. The »Atelier Singer-Dicker« designed and realised houses, flats, shops, day nurseries, furniture and home textiles. Furniture and interiors from the »Atelier Singer-Dicker« were in demand and a mark of good taste in the late 1920s. In 1930/31 their private and professional paths diverged for good, and they discontinued their joint studio.

Singer then ran a studio of his own. His projects increasingly began to lead him to London, and from 1934 he primarily lived there as well. His Vienna studio was closed in 1938, and Singer lived and worked in London until his death in 1954.



© The Lotte Meitner-Graf Archive

Portrait of Franz Singer, 1953  
Photo: Lotte Meitner-Graf,  
Bauhaus-Archiv, inv. no. 12001

Friedl Dicker also initially worked as a freelancer in Vienna. In addition, she became increasingly politically active. After being arrested for the first time in 1934, she emigrated to Czechoslovakia. In Prague she worked as a drawing instructor and interior designer. She remained politically active within the circle of German and Austrian emigrants. In 1936 she married her cousin Pavel Brandeis and in 1938 the two of them moved to Hronov, located in the Náchod District, between the Karkonosze and Orlické mountains. At least from the establishment of the »Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia« in March 1939, Hronov found herself in Nazi-controlled territory. Dicker and her husband were forced to go into hiding. This is also when Dicker turned down a visa for Palestine, because it would only have allowed her to emigrate and not her husband.

In 1942 Friedl Dicker-Brandeis and her husband were deported to Theresienstadt. In the ghetto there she provided drawing instruction to Jewish children, basing it on her personal experience of the Bauhaus preliminary course under Johannes Itten. Dicker was murdered in the gas chambers of Auschwitz on 6 October 1944. Her husband Pavel Brandeis survived the Holocaust.



© Cathy Beckmann

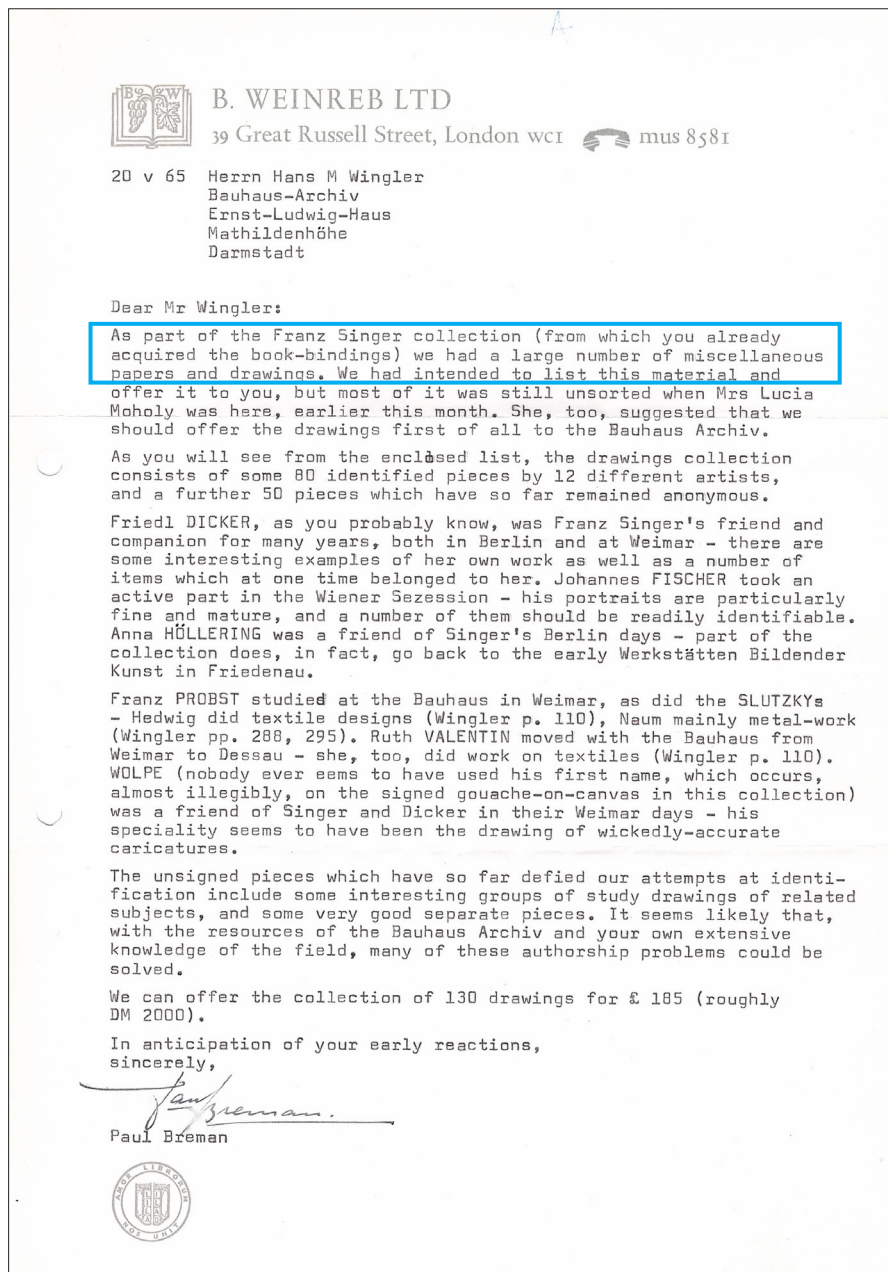
Portrait of Friedl Dicker-Brandeis, 1930s  
Photo: Hannes Beckmann,  
Bauhaus-Archiv, inv. no. F5573

## Question

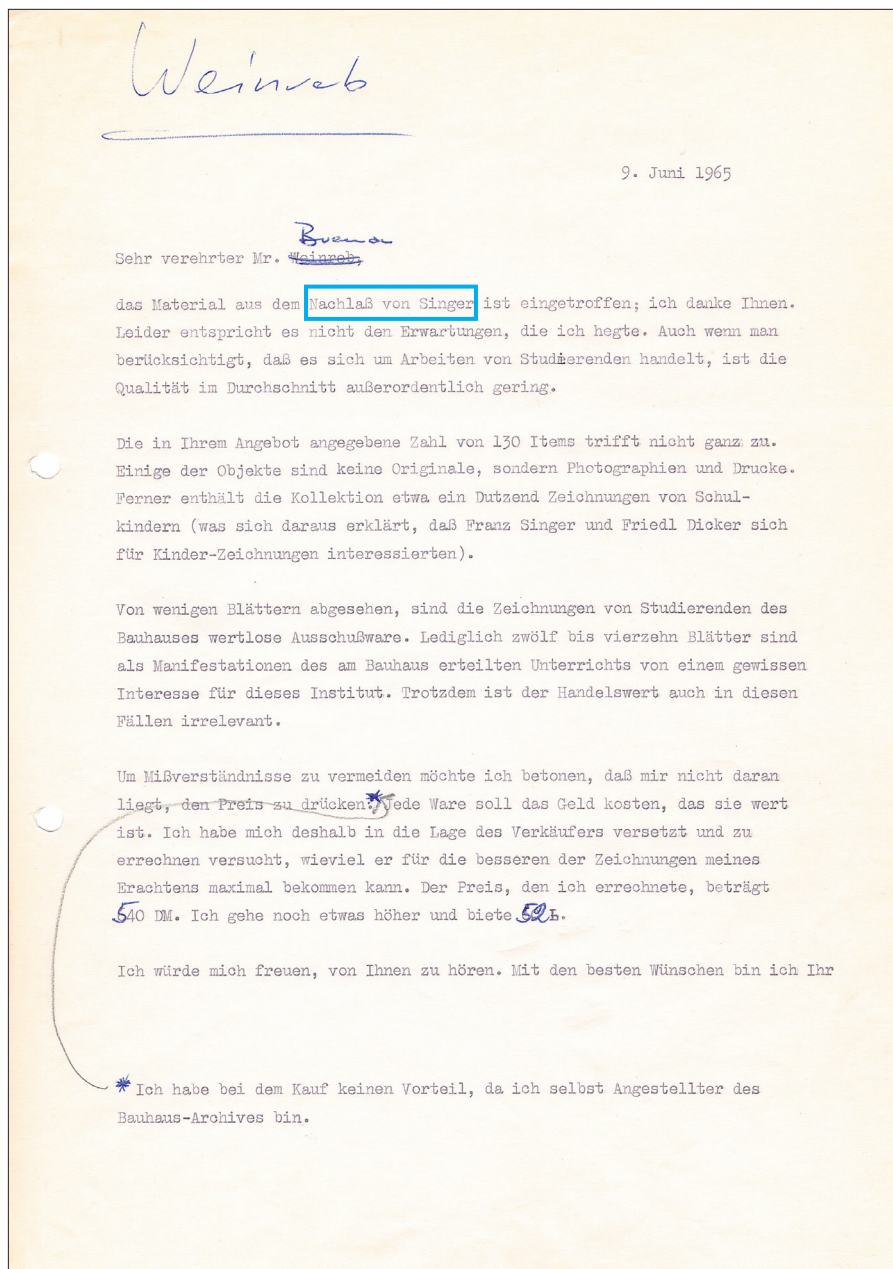
**So how did the works that had once belonged to Franz Singer and Friedl Dicker make their way on to the art market?**

# The 2<sup>nd</sup> Lead

On 20 May 1965 Hans Maria Wingler, Director of the Bauhaus-Archiv, received a letter from Paul Breman, an employee of the antiquarian and art dealer Ben Weinreb, offering to sell him 130 drawings by various Bauhaus artists. The very first sentence of the letter provides information about the provenance of not just these works on paper but also the works of bookbinding and the 26 drawings which had already been purchased by the Bauhaus-Archiv the previous year. The accessions register only lists the place of purchase for these two groups of acquisitions.



Thus the bookbinding works and the 26 drawings that Hans Maria Wingler had purchased the previous year as well as 130 drawings offered for sale here all came from the same source: the collection of Franz Singer. In the draft version of a response from 9 June 1965, the archive's director specifies that the source was the »Singer Estate«. Wingler was not entirely convinced by the quality of the works sent to Darmstadt in two shipments, and he ultimately purchased a selection of 40 works on paper – surely also due to a lack of funds.



»Singer Estate«



Paul Breman used two pieces of typing paper to list all the drawings available, not all of which could be attributed to individual artists with complete certainty. However, numerous sheets can be unambiguously paired with Bauhaus-Archiv accession numbers.

## B. WEINREB LTD

### Franz PROBST

coloured crayon drawing of four people at table, identified in Singer's hand  
large crayon drawing of a cow, identified in Singer's hand

### (Hedwig or Naum) SLUTZKY

fine stylized flower drawing in pencil, signed on verso

### Ruth VALENTIN

large pencil study of house-and-cart in movement, identified on verso and dated 1922  
2 charcoal sketches of monkeys, identified in Singer's hand

### WOLPE

very large, very fine and boldly stylized drawing in charcoal of a monkey  
small pen-and-ink cartoon, signed, dated 20  
photograph of a small caricature  
large gouache-on-canvas portrait-caricature, signed on verso, dated 20, dedicated to Friedl Dicker  
spirited gouache-on-cardboard sketch of three musicians, signed, dated 20  
2 large charcoal sketches for the same caricature, both drawn on music paper, identified in Singer's hand  
2 small charcoal sketches, unsigned, but closely similar to the preceding  
(it is thought that the two caricatures on black paper mentioned under Friedl Dicker may also be by Wolpe)

### UNIDENTIFIED

17 miscellaneous drawings (pen or pencil) and water-colours of various subjects and in various hands  
3 architectural studies in charcoal  
4 smaller landscape studies in pencil, probably by the same hand as the preceding  
3 children's drawings, in coloured pencil  
3 pencil-and-charcoal sketches of sculpture on grey paper  
5 large charcoal studies of a bird in increasing stylization  
15 pencil sketches of various objects (from a classroom sketchbook)

The list includes »two charcoal sketches of monkeys« under the name Ruth Vallentin. The winged monkey (inv. no. 690) is reminiscent of the fanciful creature invented by author L. Frank Baum for his children's novel »The Wonderful Wizard of OZ« (1900).



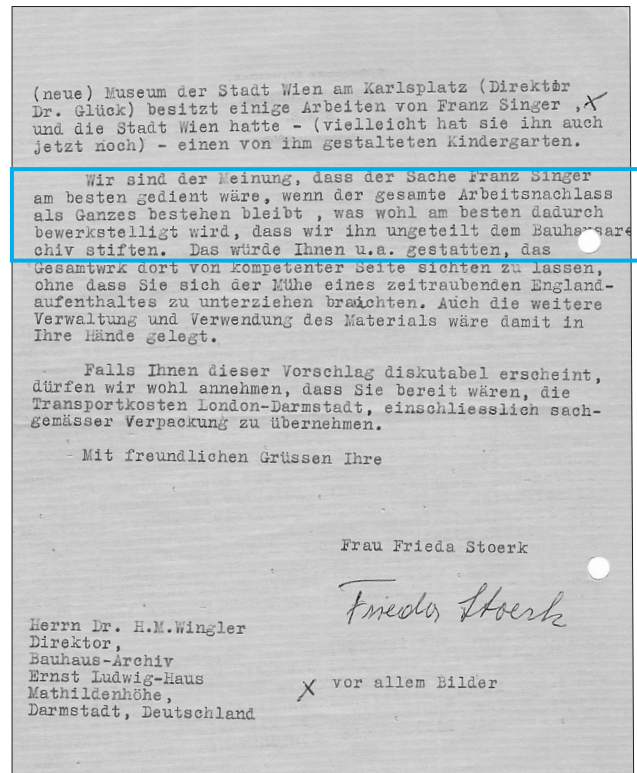
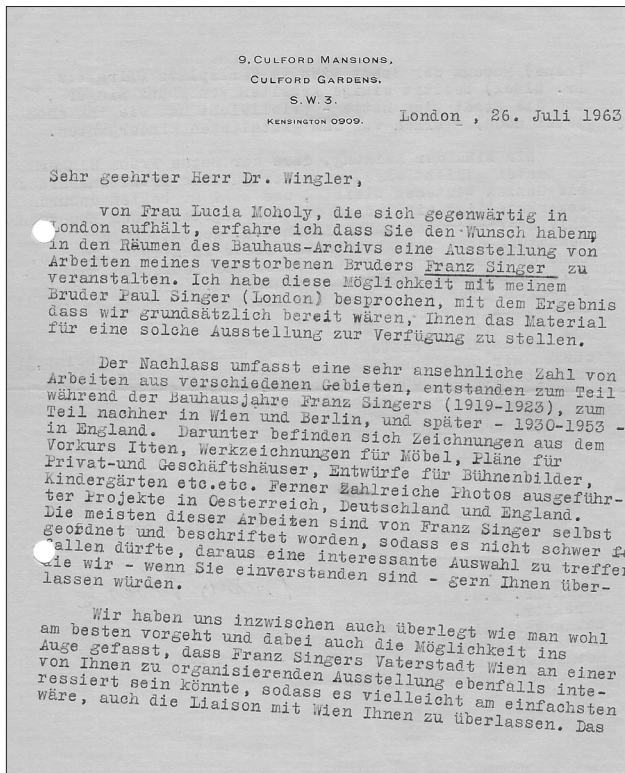
This sheet can also be clearly identified with a work on the list from Weinreb: as the »fine stylized flower drawing in pencil« (inv. no. 708), it is by either Hedwig or Naum Slutzky. It still remains impossible to further specify this attribution.

## Question

**Franz Singer died in 1954 during a trip to Berlin. It was not until almost ten years after his death that parts of his estate were offered for sale on the art market. Who was the seller?**

# The 3<sup>rd</sup> Lead

Hans Maria Wingler had already received a letter in July 1963 from Frieda Stoerk and Paul Singer – Franz Singer's siblings and heirs. This letter also dealt with the estate of the artist. Franz Singer's only son, Michael, who was known as Bibi, had died at the age of just about nine. Stoerk wrote that Lucia Moholy had told her about the Bauhaus-Archiv's plans for an exhibition about Franz Singer. Stoerk and her brother wished to support this exhibition by donating Franz Singer's estate of works to the Bauhaus-Archiv.

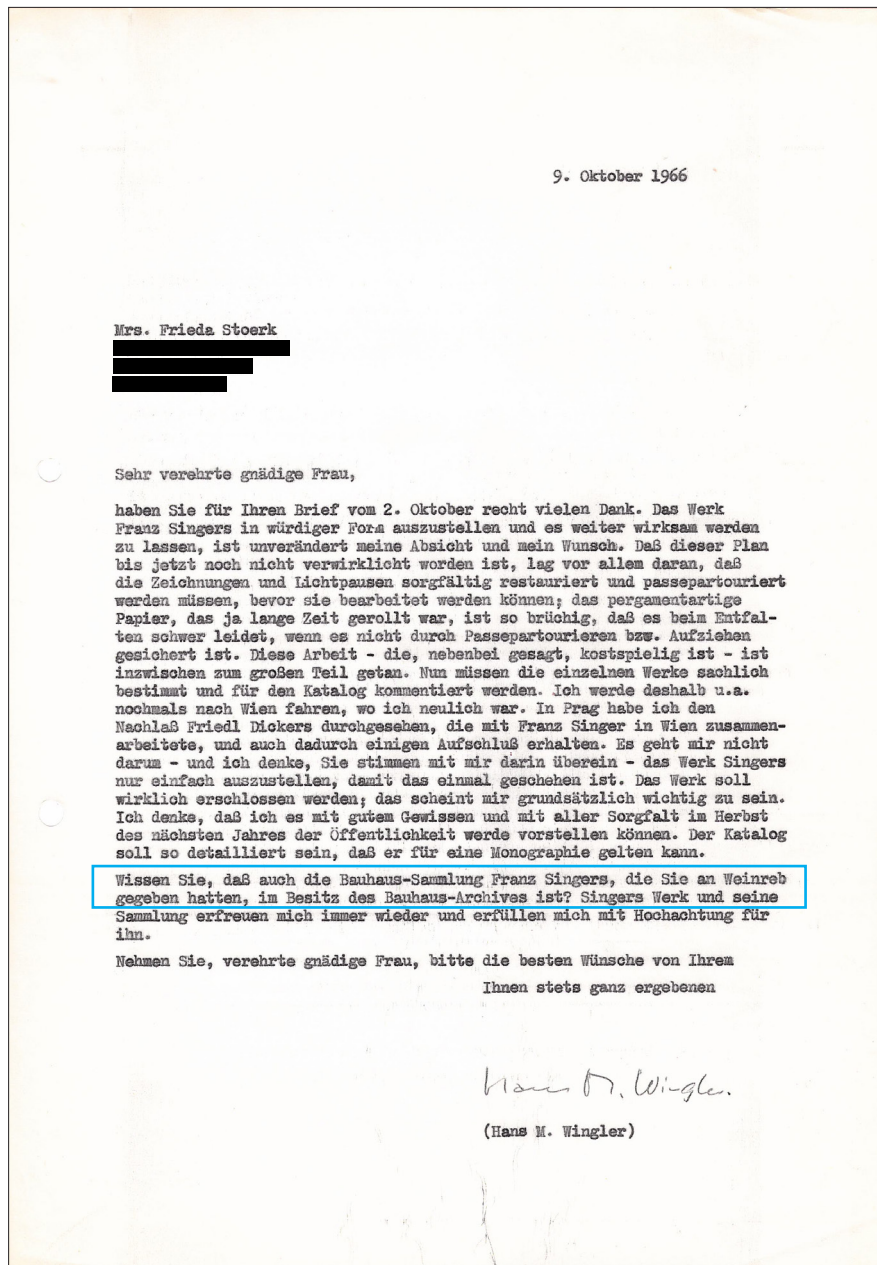


»It is our opinion that, in the matter of Franz Singer, it would be best if the estate of works remained together as a whole, which would surely be best accomplished by donating it in its entirety to the Bauhausarchiv [sic].«



The works from Franz Singer's estate, which consist primarily of architectural drawings on thin tracing paper, reached the Bauhaus-Archiv in Darmstadt in March 1964, following negotiations about their shipment.

Frieda Stoerk first asked about when the planned exhibition would finally take place in October 1966. The letter Hans Maria Wingler wrote in response contains the answer to the question about the identity of the seller behind the offer from Ben Weinreb Ltd.



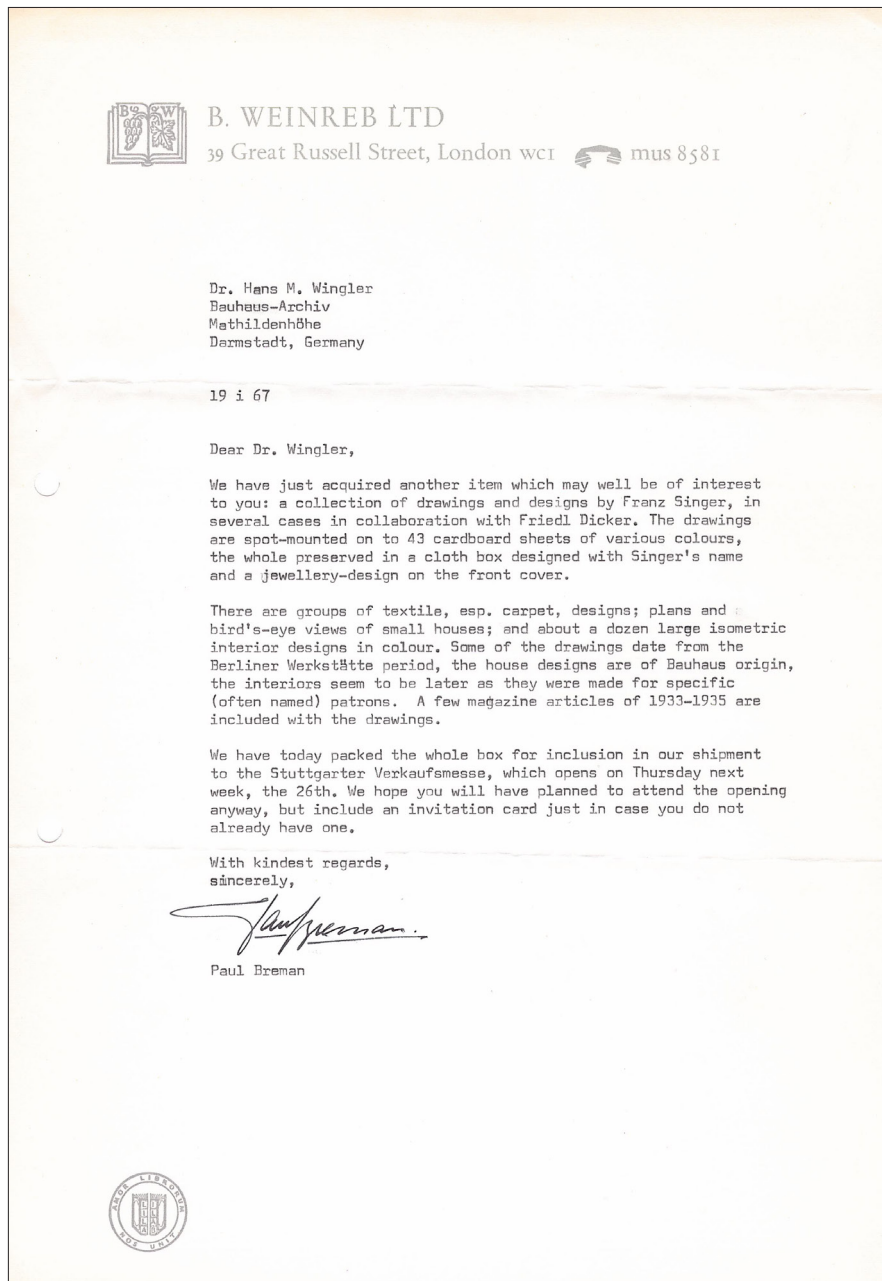
»Do you know that Franz Singer's Bauhaus collection, which you had turned over to Weinreb, is also in the possession of the Bauhaus-Archiv?«



Franz Singer's siblings – Frieda Stoerk and Paul Singer – split his estate into a Singer »collection« and an »estate of works«. While they donated the »estate of works« to the Bauhaus-Archiv, they sold the »collection«, which they considered to be of greater artistic value, through Ben Weinreb.

Stoerk's wish for an exhibition of her brother's work would have to wait until January 1970, and the show would recognise the achievements of Singer and Dicker. As the preface of the catalogue explains, the drawings and blueprints from Singer's estate of works were not exhibited due to conservation issues.

## No 4<sup>th</sup> Lead



On 19 January 1967 Weinreb Ltd once again offered the Bauhaus-Archiv a group of works created by Friedl Dicker and Franz Singer. Unfortunately, the letter does not mention a word about the source of the lined case with the designs and photos on coloured cardboard.

# Summary

A loss as a result of Nazi persecution can be almost completely ruled out for the Weinreb purchases from 1964 and 1965. Franz Singer owned works by many other Bauhaus artists because they had been his companions, sometimes over the course of many years. He even knew Friedl Dicker, Anny Wottitz and Margit Téry before his time at the Bauhaus. The sheets by Singer which are labelled as the property of Dicker may be testaments to an unhappy romantic relationship, perhaps gifts that were returned. Their unlawful possession seems highly unlikely.

Regarding the purchase from 1967, the Bauhaus-Archiv has no documents of any kind that could shed light on the provenance of the group of architectural drawings by Singer and Dicker. However, their storage in a cloth-lined box featuring a photo of a piece of jewellery by Naum Slutzky on the front and Franz Singer's name on the side might offer one clue. The very personal, elaborate and distinguished manner in which they were stored and the case's labelling with the name »Franz Singer« suggest that this group of works also came from the estate of Franz Singer. However, there is not yet any further evidence for this.



This cardboard case was specifically made for storing Franz Singer's architectural drawings. It formerly contained 43 sheets of coloured cardboard with drawings or, in some cases, photos mounted on them. Today the photos are stored separately for conservation reasons. Many of the drawings were created during Singer's collaboration with Dicker.