



Art in public utility buildings – an example of a collection in an international juridical institution

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Abstract

The article tries to highlight the phenomenon of integrating art collections into public buildings, focusing on the example of an international juridical institution exhibiting art from different countries. The motivation for collecting art in such spaces is often to improve the aesthetics of the building, to promote diverse perspectives and reflections through art. The creation of this unique collection in the late 1960s was a pioneering initiative undertaken 50 years ago by the European Court of Justice based in Luxembourg and has since been adopted by other international European institutions. The exhibition of art in public buildings can be considered from the perspective of social capital or the dimension of the sociology of art. The motives are not always obvious and the social influences remain unspecified, there is also an aspect of the historical context of the selection of artists and their works and diplomacy through art.

Keywords:

[art](#), [social capital](#), [sociology of art](#), [public utility buildings](#), [international juridical institution](#).

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Introduction

Art is an important element of social life, providing a means of expression and reflection. It is associated with galleries and museums and can also be found in public buildings, where it is attributed a role in shaping collective identity, treated as a source of inspiration and contemplation and can even be seen as a social system (Luhmann & Habermas, 1971).

Juridical buildings are often perceived as overwhelming and intimidating spaces where emotional pressure accumulates (Maas et al., 2000, p. 675). The presence of art however could have a calming effect, providing a visual alternative and softening attitudes (Law, Karulkar & Broadbent, 2021, p. 12). This article describes an example of a collection assembled in a building of an international legal institution. This specific collection has evolved over time and has been influenced by various actors and decision-makers. Today, the collection is visited by a wide range of people, including litigants, party representatives, government officials, law students and doctoral candidates as well as the general public¹.

Why this topic

The inspiration for this article came from a unique location – the Court of Justice of the European Union (also known as the Tribunal²) in Luxembourg, which now houses an art collection. The author is privileged to be directly involved in this project. This setting offers therefore a compelling sociological opportunity for theoretical inquiry. Legal institutions are not typical venues for exhibiting contemporary art. The artworks presented in these

spaces were intended to provide an opportunity to learn about different perspectives and to attempt to understand and communicate the values and ideas of the institution. The purpose of this article is to explore the long-term impact of the art collection at the Court of Justice of the European Union on the institution itself and the wider community over the last 50 years.

This article will examine specific aspects of the collection and its inspiring influence on other institutions. Additionally, the article will also provide a brief overview of the audiences that visit the collection. The objective is to ascertain the art collection at the Court of Justice of the European Union functions similarly to traditional art institutions, and to identify areas where it diverges from such norms. It would be also interesting to consider whether this unique collection, housed within an international judicial institution, has a potential to transform a space of legal proceedings into one of cultural diplomacy, reflection, and public engagement.

While museums, galleries, and private collections present art as aesthetic or historical narratives, the Court's collection tries to represent a distinct approach that merges cultural symbolism with the institution's values of peace, justice, unity, and impartiality. However, whereas museums and galleries function primarily as destinations for art appreciation, the Court's art serves a multi-faceted role, potentially operating as an integration of national identities within the framework of European unity. This collection prompts further questions about its purpose: Does this public access and display resonate with the functions of art patronage throughout history? Does the Court's collection help establish a new model where art becomes both a functional and symbolic part of an institution, accessible yet deeply intertwined with its setting?

The context

Many European institutions are based in Belgium (Brussels), while the European Parliament (EP) has three different locations across three countries: Brussels, Strasbourg and Luxembourg. The Court of Justice, established in 1952, has been located exclusively in Luxembourg, although its location was considered provisional for the first four decades of its existence. It was only during the European Council meeting held in December 1992 in Edinburgh that it was decided to officially designate Luxembourg as its permanent seat³. The Luxembourgish government has consistently advocated for retaining the Court's presence in its capital, donating a large, representative building, that was conceived from the beginning to house an art collection dedicated to the themes of peace and justice. The Luxembourgish government also financed the project from inception to completion. Tracing this decision, it becomes apparent that other European institutions have followed a similar trend and have also begun to consider art exhibitions or internal collections to be presented temporarily or on a long-term basis.

The construction of the new *Palais de Justice* began in the late 1960s and was officially inaugurated in January 1973. Prior to the project's completion, it was suggested to decorate the new building with works by artists representing the six founding Member States (CJUE 2015). The Court's premises are decorated with a combination of both permanent and temporary art collections, including periodic art exhibitions. As the European Union expanded, the architectural complex grew as well⁴. The

French architect Dominique Perrault led the most recent conceptual effort for the Court complex, dividing it into two distinct zones – the *sacrum* and the *profanum*. In the former, work is carried out under security surveillance, while the latter is accessible to the public. The building serves both as a work of art and as a venue for exhibiting art⁵. In collaboration with Perrault, light designer Gaëlle Lauriot-Prévost, crafted the magnificent golden baldachin in the Great Courtroom. The material employed for this “golden crown” of light is an economically modest industrial substance (Champenois, 2016, p. 161), typically used to prevent stones from rolling down along motorways in northern Italy. The artwork transforms this non-obvious, seemingly mundane material into an elegant curtain, separating the glass corridors from the courtroom.

Brief literature review

Social capital and sociology of art

The sociology of art encompasses several key elements, including the work of art and its reception, the artist and their creative process, the recipients, and the institutional and social frameworks of art. This interdisciplinary nature of the sociology of art draws on a number of different fields, including semiotics, hermeneutics, symbolic interactionism, and ethnology. It emphasises the importance of understanding art within its social context and the role of sociologists in analysing social

1 The access to the building is open but registered (due to the security measures). Annually there are around 20.000 visitors: https://curia.europa.eu/jcms/jcms/Jo2_7019/en/ (27.10.2024).

2 Another used name is the European Court of Justice (ECJ).

3 Conclusions of the Presidency – Edinburgh, December 12, 1992 https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/20492/1992_december_-_edinburgh__eng_.pdf [accessed: 10.10.2024].

4 In 1988 there were three more buildings added to the Court complex – called *Erasmus*, *Thomas More*

and *Themis*, the Luxembourg architects Paul Fritsch, along with the architect Bohdan Paczowski, designed it. Paczowski was born in 1930 in Warsaw, he died in 2017 in Luxembourg, and he was associated with the Parisian “Kultura” circles and was a long-time friend of Witold Gombrowicz.

5 See also: Rao Sarita, *Architectural Icon: European Court of Justice*, 06/10/2023, “Luxembourg Times”, <https://www.luxtimes.lu/yourluxembourg/luxembourgguide/architectural-icon-european-court-of-justice/1334100.html> [accessed: 10.10.2024].

actions related to artistic production and reception (Wejbert-Wąsiewicz, Porczyński & Rozalska, 2021).

The starting point for this research was the concept of social capital, based on the ideas of Robert D. Putnam. In his book *Bowling Alone: Revised and Updated: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*, Putnam and his research team looked for indicators of increased social capital that are not obvious (Chapter 24), such as the presence of art in public spaces (Putnam, 2008, pp. 669–670). According to Putnam, these spaces attract various social groups, which in turn increases their involvement in social and political life. Art in public spaces can act as a catalyst for creating positive interpersonal relationships and increasing the sense of belonging to society. Putnam further argues that art in public spaces can contribute to the creation of more attractive and liveable cities. He also suggests that art in public spaces can facilitate the formation of social bonds and unity (Putnam, 2008, p. 670).

Jeremy Rifkin emphasises in his research the importance of volunteering for the arts (Rifkin 2009: 363). He underlines that art is a crucial element of our culture that can inspire, educate, and mobilise society as well as promote and preserve cultural heritage. The authors discuss the concept of social capital at a high level of abstraction, without providing many empirical examples of art in public facilities or legal institutions. Nevertheless, the enhancement of social capital has positive effects on social dynamics, particularly in relation to economic stability, openness to cultural diversity, and inclusiveness – an aspect well justified in the prevailing academic discourse. Cultural capital is a component of the broader defined concept of social capital, hence having more institutions that promote art could only benefit and strengthen the general trend of spreading empathy and understanding through the

exposure of different perspectives. However, a fundamental question arises as to whether this claim is fully supported.

Patronage

Prior to WWII, Stanisław Ossowski developed a new discipline of sociology focused on art, looking from the perspective of artworks (Ossowski, 1966, pp. 359–360). Throughout history, works of art have often been commissioned by wealthy and powerful individuals, especially during the Renaissance period. Analysing the significant contributions of Meyer Schapiro (Schapiro, 2015) and Ernst Gombrich (Gombrich, 1987) facilitates an investigation of the role of patrons in the arts. In the case of collections initiated by European institutions, it may be appropriate to refer to the tradition of art patronage, which is collected and displayed in their buildings.

The institutions in question aspire to support social integration and cohesion, and the art collections serve both as a means of documentation and for historical consolidation. Reflections on various artistic techniques align with contemporary trends, strengthening this trajectory. Goffman's theories present the dilemma of how objects acquire and convey meaning and how they influence our behaviour as cultural markers and interaction frameworks (Goffman, 1971). Objects acquired by institutions are assigned, according to Goffman, to have a cultural significance, and it is possible that institutions wish to be identified with them.

The special role of the artist

In her book, Nathalie Heinich examines the history of French society and argues that a new elite emerged after the Revolution, when aristocratic privileges were abolished. This new group, designated as "artists" (Heinich, 2018), lacked noble birth, wealth and power, yet their prestige rose to such a degree that

enabled them to rival the most esteemed figures. Simultaneously, a concept emerged that combined these professions into one category, encompassing writers, painters, sculptors, and musicians. This collective identity was epitomised by the term "bohemia", characterised by eccentricity and a status outside of society's rigid norms.

This paradoxical scenario finds a partial explanation in the institutional, economic, demographic, legal and semantic landscape of artistic activities, reconstructed by the author through research, including press articles, stories, and correspondence. Heinich notes that without the recognition of the fundamental values, which include the pursuit for equality, the recognition of perfection and the primacy of merit, it would be difficult to understand how this phenomenon was created.

Nevertheless, she acknowledges the validity of the fundamental beliefs of Pierre Bourdieu (Bourdieu, 1996) that the official institutions of the so-called high culture often serve an elitist function and have an exclusionary effect, hindering rather than promoting access to culture (Heinich, 2004). This is attributable to social stratification, heritage, and the possession of cultural capital by certain individuals and groups.

Can collections only be exhibited in museums?

Understanding the concept of an art collection in a courthouse through the lens of the sociology of art is not an obvious task. Analogies can be drawn with the theoretical underpinnings of art in the public sphere and art outside of official galleries and museums. It is possible that the creation of art collections in public buildings is a manifestation of the desire to strengthen institutional prestige. From this perspective, institutions assume the role previously attributed to patrons of art. As

Lauren Dean notes, "buildings play a role in social processes by physically constraining and creating opportunities and also through the meanings attached to material form. Buildings contribute to society both through how they are used and how they are seen" (Dean, 2017, p. 144). This suggests that this desire to be perceived positively may be a key motivating factor in the search for models of the building's function that give it importance, sublimity and a kind of splendour associated with art.

The institutions that house artworks, provide often exclusive access to their collections only to selected groups of visitors. Bourdieu conducted his research in France, and many of his conclusions were considered globally significant. He pointed out that access to cultural institutions had exclusionary effects, but other Western researchers who conducted research in socialist countries, such as Davin Craven, stated that participation and access to cultural institutions were organised differently, resulting in higher levels of participation and opposite perceptions of social inequalities (Craven, 2017, p. 346). In his research, Craven observed that access to art was easier in Cuba and South America due to differences in the education system, ticket price regulations, central subsidies, and a culture of participation. This suggests that it is feasible to provide access to cultural goods without high costs of participation for individuals. Some researchers also argue that exhibiting and investing in art, as well as displaying it in public spaces, can have economic benefits (Freyer, 2002, p. 96). The author also emphasises that government support for the arts can strengthen direct democracy (idem, pp. 128–129). Freyer states that places with visually attractive art investments will attract more visitors than those without, deriving his argument from the theory of consumer behaviour. In the late 1990s, a number of art experts suggested that the concept of a traditional museum required

reforms to adapt to modern times. They argued that art should extend beyond the museum walls (Crimp, 1997, p. 201).

Art in public spaces

The placement of art objects in public buildings has been a gradual process, influenced by cultural shifts, historical developments, and evolving perceptions of art and its role in public spaces. The integration of art in public buildings gained significant momentum in the 20th century, particularly as a part of broader movements such as modernism (Palermo, 2014). Some researchers claim that architecture reflects various ideological currents, shaping urban spaces according to diverse values and ideologies, highlighting that architecture reflects evolving societal needs and aspirations (Jałowicki, 2009). In the early 20th century, modernist architects and artists advocated for the integration of art into architectural designs, considering it an integral component of the built environment (Beardsley, 1981). The aim was to create a harmonious relationship between art, architecture, and public spaces, emphasising their cultural and aesthetic dimensions. In the past, valuable and impressive objects were confined in the palaces and homes of the wealthy. During the postmodern era, there was an increased recognition of the social and symbolic significance of art in public spaces (Nicolai, 2023).

Former industrial spaces, once used for factories and manufacturing plants, are experiencing an extraordinary renaissance. This is often due to the high costs of demolition, leading to an increased interest in repurposing them as art spaces. They are now being used for cultural events, exhibitions, performances or fashion collection shows or even theatre, providing ample opportunities for creativity (Hawkes, 2021, p. 25). This trend is occurring as art collections are becoming more accessible,

no longer confined to being displayed only in museums. This coincides with the trend of exhibiting art in public venues, aimed to foster a sense of cultural identity, create meaningful environments, and enhance the human experience within these spaces. The walls of the buildings of art institutions (Heinich, 2010, p. 91 quoting Urfalino, 1990) frame our perception of works of art.

Examining the historical role of art institutions, as it has been conceptualized in Bourdieu's sociological approach, it becomes obvious that they have historically fulfilled distinct social functions, shaping and often limiting public access, while consolidating cultural capital in the domain of elite social groups. The Court of Justice, although not a traditional art institution, is an example of an alternative model of patronage, emphasising differently defined accessibility and common ownership of its collection. Of course, one cannot claim that access here is free from selection and more 'inviting' than the large cultural institutions stigmatized by Bourdieu, which only at a declarative level guarantee equal access to culture, in reality reproducing elitism and setting prohibitive, invisible thresholds for the consumption of culture, requiring cultural capital. By definition, the Court operates on a differently selected sample of visitors, not entering into dialogue with institutions that are supposed to attract and be open to 'everyone'. This divergence means that the Court is a space where art becomes a leitmotif of relationships for its distinctive audience, rather than simply an aesthetic experience. By offering a shared space for viewing and reflecting on art, the Collection provides opportunities for both visitors and legal practitioners to engage with different European perspectives, which is particularly important given the Court's judicial role in harmonising EU law and fostering intercultural dialogue.

Methodology

The approach used in this article closely resembles that of the case study method. The empirical material, which is a specific example of an observation made in the workplace and with knowledge of the context in which the phenomenon occurs, serves as a starting point for a deeper exploration of the topic. Two selected objects (with a concise list of other objects to provide an overview) will be analysed by incorporating a historical and biographical context. Additionally, the potential impact of this collection on other European institutions will be discussed in the context of other similar ideas, including the rationale behind its creation. Qualitative research has many branches and has developed in many fields of science. Huberman and Miles cited the division of social research distinguished by Harry F. Wolcott; in this scheme, a case study is included as part of research belonging to the branch of participant observation (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 72). The case study method is commonly

used in areas such as law, medicine, education, sociology, and philosophy, as described by Bent Flyvbjerg (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, p. 301). According to the sociological dictionary, a case study is a detailed, relatively complete and exhaustive scientific analysis of a particular phenomenon, object or situation. Based on a single case study, generalisations should not be made on a broader scale. As in the case of monographic methods and field research, a case study is based on extensive empirical research, knowledge of a given community and often includes participating observation. The article will focus on the method described above, with an emphasis on the historical and political context, the development of ideas, the specific content of this collection and the artists.

Case Study: Art Collection at the European Court of Justice

The inclusion of art into the architectural fabric of public buildings, exemplified by those of





European institutions, represents an intriguing social phenomenon. The collection assembled in Luxembourg⁶ is comprised of three sections: a permanent display, long-term loans, and temporary exhibitions. The collection consists of various works of art, including tapestries, sculptures, posters, calligraphy and paintings⁷. Furthermore, the European Court of Justice has a spectacular main courtroom that has already been used for various events, such as theatre performances, fashion shows (e.g., the awards ceremony for the art classes at the European School in Luxembourg) and even as a venue for a jazz concert broadcast on RTL Luxembourg. The collection includes objects from numerous European countries, however, due to the limited scope of this article, a comprehensive description will not be provided.

Instead, this section provides a summary of the collected objects and their country of origin, presented in the order they were added to the collection. It includes the names of the authors, dates of birth (and death, if applicable), and a brief description of the artwork type, along with its background and context, including the location, where the object is displayed.

From France:

The tapestry *La petite peur* (*The Little Fear*) by Jean Lurçat (1892–1966) is a large-format object creating using a traditional method from pure wool and natural pigments. It was hand-woven based on a project from 1952–1968, which included 7 tapestries under a common

⁶ https://curia.europa.eu/jcms/jcms/p1_3831939/en/ (accessed 27.10.2024). For those parts of the collection, for which the Court of Justice has concluded copyright agreements, the relevant photographic documentation can be accessed via the above-mentioned link.

⁷ Polish art is represented by sculpture from Centrum Rzeźby Polskiej w Orońsku, by work of Karol Gąsienica-Szostak "Akrobaci". <https://rzezba-oronsko.pl/dziela-z-kolekcji/akrobaci/> (accessed 12.10.2024).

title. This is characteristic of Lurçat's vision of a microcosm populated by animal and floral symbols. The tapestry is displayed in one of the deliberation rooms.

From Luxembourg:

The sculpture *La Croissance* (*The Growth*) by Lucien Wercollier (1908–2002) is a bronze object, reminiscent of organic systems in the recognisable style of the author, who created large non-figurative compositions intended for display in outdoor green spaces. *La Croissance* is located today in the park surrounding the Court of Justice complex.

From the Netherlands:

Joost Baljeu (1925–1991) created a synthetic construction, designated F7. The work is an example of post-cubism style, featuring a combination of geometric, purist and abstract elements in white and cobalt blue. It is located in the corridors connecting the General Court building.

From Belgium:

The large-format tapestry *Migration* by Mary Dambiermont (1832–1983) focuses on the concept of ecology and solidarity, depicting an impressionistic version of six migratory geese as a reference to the six founding countries of the European Coal and Steel Community. Dambiermont was not only a tapestry creator but also a poet, painter, and stained-glass window artist. The composition of the tapestry closely resembles that of stained-glass windows. This artwork is displayed in the canteen, which is used for coffee breaks.

From Germany:

The relief-woodcut *Areopagus* by Helmut Andreas Paul Grieshaber (1909–1981) makes a strong reference to Greek mythology, with nine panels representing the gods and a central panel for the goddess of justice. The

woodcut method refers to the German invention that revolutionised access to knowledge in Europe. It involves the use of Gutenberg stamps in the production of books. The panels are placed above the entrance to Courtroom number 3.

From Italy:

Giacomo Manzù (1908–1991) created a monumental bronze relief titled *Justice et Paix*, depicting a woman lifting her infant proudly to the sky in a form resembling cathedral doors. The sculpture represents Europe, peace, and justice and is mounted opposite the main courtroom.

From France:

The triptych *Justice et Paix* by André Hamburg (1909–1999) consists of six oil paintings that face each other in an allegorical representation of peace and justice. The panels are installed above the 8th floor, within the space beneath the roof windows.

From Germany:

The following piece is a sketch from a lecture *Organization für Direkte Demokratie* delivered by Joseph Beuys (1921–1986), a member of the mid-1960s an international avant-garde art group known as Fluxus. He is renowned for his “extended definition of art” and unconventional art teaching methods. The sketch is exhibited in a space connecting gallery with an ancient palace.

From Greece:

The sculpture *The Ephebe of Marathon* and three tables reproducing *The Gortyn Code* are copies of the original objects from 4th/5th century BCE. They have been offered to be displayed in the Court of Justice after an exhibition organised by the Government of Greece. The Tribunal has the largest juridical library in Europe, occupying three floors. The lower-level

features high ceilings allowing three boards to be prominently displayed due to their considerable dimensions.

From Denmark:

The calligraphic triptych *With love/Justice/United Europe* was created by Sven Dalsgaard (1914–1999). Initially influenced by his master, Paul Klee, Dalsgaard eventually developed his own style by combining diverse genres, including photography. He frequently references makes reference to red as the national colour and flag of Denmark. The courtroom named in his honour features the red floor and seats.

From Portugal:

The tapestry *The poetical space* by António Costa Pinheiro (1932–2015) is dedicated to Fernando Pessoa, the Portuguese national poet and writer known for his vibrant and unique writing style. The surreal element in the tapestry refers to Pessoaan literature. The tapestries were woven in the workshop that created the works of Jean Lurçat, which adds a symbolic touch. The objects are in a separate courtroom named after Pessoa.

From Ireland:

The oil painting *The sound of the Sea* by Gwen O'Down (born 1957) is a large-format object, using thickening materials and special waxes to create a spatial impression and the feeling of water waves in motion. The title refers to the phenomenon of synaesthesia, where an image evokes an impression of a sound. The painting hangs in a very prestigious location, next to the entrance of the main courtroom.

From Finland:

The sculpture *The seed* by Matti Peltokangas (born 1952) is carved from black plutonic volcanic rock, featuring a huge grain with a symmetrical rotational structure. The sculptor refers in his work to the relationship between people

and nature, while also creating an oversized and almost satirical giant grain. The sculpture is in the entrance to the reading room.

From Sweden:

The work *Two Couplets* by Karin Törnell (born in 1966) consists of two minimalistic objects made of raw cut glass nearly transparent, which, despite their weight, give the impression being extremely light. Their title refers to literature, with two couplets that serve as an announcement and a dialogue with the newly added part of the building where glass dominates. They are exhibited in a space that connects gallery with an ancient palace.

From Cyprus:

The object is a reproduction of anthropomorphic figure known as *Horned God from Enkomi*, dating back 12th Century B.C. The government of Cyprus, like that of Greece, organized an exhibition of archaeological artifacts from the Bronze Age. Casts made by experts and copies of the artifacts remained in the permanent exhibition, which is located in the Tribunal's Library.

From Denmark:

On display is also an oil painting *Maleri* by Jens Birkemose (1943–2022). The author is also a concert pianist, but during his time living in Paris, he created strong anti-war paintings dominated by red and black. The painting is often described as monumental and disturbing, in the foreground there is a figure resembling a monkey holding a gun. The artwork is located on a side wall in the space called *Salle des Pas Perdu*, which is the place where the public waits for the court's verdict.

From France:

The sculpture *Le Penseur (The Thinker)* by Auguste Rodin (1840–1917) is currently on display at the Tribunal, which has already

hosted several sculptures during its long-term collaboration with the Rodin Museum in Paris. The monumentality of the sculpture fits well into the gallery space that connects all the buildings and greets everyone entering the building.

From Luxembourg:

Two sculptures by Maggie Stein (1931–1999) called *Winged Genius – Daedalus and Icarus* were made from white Carrara marble and Grey-blue Bardiglio marble. Both sculptures are non-figurative and are placed in the dialog with each other. They are displayed on two different floors, in the Ancient Palais in front of the courtroom No 2 and No 4. Daedalus is one floor higher than Icarus – referring to the Greek myth of the son who fell, but both are visible at the same time due to a large spiral staircase. Stein is considered one of the best-known Lucien Wercollier's students.

From Luxembourg:

Two sculptures by Jean-Pierre Georg (1926–2004), the sculpture called *Aurora* is made of pink Portuguese marble and is in the cycle with a second sculpture called *Winged Night*, which is made of Black Portoro marble from Brazil, both these works are characterised by soft and gentle line, showing the gorgeousness of the chosen stone. They are displayed on two different floors, in the Ancient Palais in front of courtrooms No 1 and No 3. They are facing the two sculptures of Maggie Stein, who was Georg's best friend.

From Romania:

A sculpture *Archer at rest* was created by Ion Jalea (1887–1983), who is widely regarded as one of the most significant contemporary Romanian sculptors. Jalea created and left many of his works in Constanța, and this object is also part of his museum in the city.

The artwork in the Tribunal is located near Rodin's *Le Penseur*, creating an artistic dialogue between the sculptures. This is a metaphoric continuation of the real-world situation – Jalea, as a young student, completed an internship in Rodin's studio, and both figures share a similar aesthetic.

From Luxembourg:

A kinetic sculpture that is sound producing by Jerry Franz (born 1955), the sculpture is made from Corten steel. This big object can be heard on working days around 1 p.m. but the location of the sculpture is rather a remote corner of the building, far from the offices and closer to a canteen – this is since the sound produced by this sculpture is mostly described as unpleasant metallic and very loud, however, the rotation of the elements has a mesmerizing effect to watch.

From France:

A cycle of 12 large-format sculptures by François Stahly (1911–2006) who was French-German artist, his works are loaned from L'Annonciade Musée de Saint-Tropez – it is called a totemic calendar made from Iroko wood – each object has a different pattern on the black surface and resemblance to obelisk form – the cycle is located in the Thomas More building, which hosts 2 courtrooms of the General Court (Salle d'audience Bleu & Salle d'audience Verte).

From Spain:

The sculpture *Campana* by Antonio Tàpies (1923–2012) is a provocative decomposition of the old church bell, which can no longer “ring the alarm”. This becomes a starting point for discussion and is the author's contribution to the anti-war discourse. Tàpies had joint exhibitions with the Irish painter O'Down and many years later their works faced each other in the Tribunal.

From Croatia:

The poster “Empty suit” has been created by Milan Trenc (born 1962), who studied graphics and art in Zagreb, before moving to the United States during the Balkan conflict. He also worked as an illustrator for several newspapers, including the New York Times. His work refers to the political insult of the Empty Suit, which is a person who represent political views without necessarily holding those beliefs. The poster also contains an allusion to Alice in Wonderland. It hangs in the corridor next to the main courtroom, where lawyers change into their togas.

From Latvia:

The oil painting *Imigranti* by Daina Dagnija (1937–2019) depicts the day her family arrived in the USA as stateless people after spending over 10 years in refugee camps due to her parents' refusal to accept Soviet citizenship. Dagnija spent her youth in America, where she developed her artistic career, including painting and creating artistic textiles. She returned to Latvia for the last 20 years of her life, and the refugee motif is a recurring theme in her work. The painting hangs near the entrance to the main courtroom.

From Czechia:

The oil painting *Na cestě (On the road)* by Mila Doleželová (1922–1993), from the collection of the University of Prague, captures idyllic images of Roma-Sinti people wandering in the forest, as a farewell to the last nomadic culture of Europe. The artwork is displayed in the corridor adjacent to the main courtroom, where lawyers change into their togas.

From Slovenia:

A sculpture *Lipizzaner Horse* by Janez Boljka (1931–2013) was created in 1987 is on loan from the National Gallery of Slovenia. The

sculptor frequently incorporated animal motifs into his artistic work, including medals and coins. He is also the creator of the Slovenian version of the Euro coin. The sculpture stands on the stairs leading to the ancient palace.

From Slovenia:

The diptych *Poletje (Summer)* and *Zima (Winter)* by artist Tugo Šušnik (born 1948) combines materials and eclectic styles. The artist is one of the Slovenian painters, whose exhibitions have been shown in galleries in Europe and the United States. He is also involved as a scenographer in the Slovene avant-garde theatre. Paintings are displayed near the entrance to the court of first instance in the Themis building.

From Poland:

The sculpture *Akrobaci (Acrobats)* by Karol Gąsienica-Szostak (born 1963) recently joined the collection. Borrowed from the Centre of Polish Sculpture in Orońsko, it is one of a series of sculptures with the same title, the first of which was dedicated to an artistic personality of the city of Krakow – Piotr Skrzynecki. The sculpture stands in the *Salle des Pas Perdus*⁸.

The collection also included objects from Austria, Estonia, and Bulgaria, which were exhibited temporarily and had to be returned to the borrowing artistic entities. They are therefore not included in this article.

Analysis: the first two objects in the collection

The self-declared aim of this art collection is not only to aesthetically improve the

surroundings, but also to establish a dialogue between art and the law (Weinquin, 2015, p. 9). The art is intended to stimulate the imagination and encourage reflection on issues such as justice, equality, and freedom; to enrich and enhance the public space of the building and to create an inspiring and stimulating atmosphere in the multicultural heritage and convey the message (Weinquin, 2015, p. 10). Some of the artworks in the collection were created intentionally for the Court of Justice. This section concentrates on the first two pieces that started the collection: a tapestry from France created by Jean Lurçat, followed by a sculpture by the Luxemburgish artist Lucien Wercollier. These two artefacts are of particular interest for a more comprehensive presentation and are presented in the historical context of Europe's reconstruction after the Second World War, including some relevant biographical aspects of both authors.

Jean Lurçat and his work “La Petite Peur”

Jean Lurçat was born in 1892 in the town of Bruyères located in the Vosges Mountains in Lorraine. He began his academic career in medicine at the University of Nancy but changed his educational plans. A transformative stay in Switzerland and southern Germany, which eventually led him to Paris, where he moved at the age of 20, resulted in a reorientation towards artistic studies. He then discovered painters such as Pierre-Auguste Renoir, Henri Matisse and Paul Cézanne who shaped his curiosity about the artistic world. He also developed a deep friendship with Rainer Maria Rilke, who immersed him in the artistic environment. He studied at the *Académie Colarossi* but also in the workshop of the engraver Bernard Naudin. He continued his training with the famous fresco painter Jean-Paul Lafitte and also learnt ceramic techniques (Naffah-Bayle, Hermel & Bohl, 2016).

⁸ Salle des Pas Perdus exist in French language as description of a large vestibule or hall connecting with various offices and other rooms in a building open to the public: station, town hall, courthouse. This name was taken for the large hall around Main Courtroom – Grande Salle.

Together with young artists from Paris, he became involved in the initiative of publishing the art magazine *Les Feuilles de Mai*. Later, his formative journey took him to Italy, interrupted by the arrival of 1914. As a volunteer soldier, he fought in the First World War, fell seriously ill, convalesced, painted, tried lithography, was sent to the front again, suffered a serious injury and never returned to the trenches. His first exhibition was held immediately after the war and the following years were very successful until Black Tuesday. The stock market crash caused a creative crisis and he eventually abandoned painting and looked for new ways of expression (Chilvers & Graves-Smith, 2009). He created sets for ballet performances, designed stage costumes, and wove poetic motifs into his designs (Naffah-Bayle, Hermel & Bohl, 2016, p. 281).

His artistic work was presented from Buenos Aires to Sydney, but also in Moscow and Kiev in 1934 and after the Second World War in Wrocław and Warsaw in 1953 (Zychowicz, 2016). Lurçat's leftist leanings found an astonishing synergy with his deep friendship with Catholic intellectuals such as the French philosopher Emmanuel Mounier. After WWII, Mounier invited Lurçat to participate in a series of conferences entitled "La Petite Peur" – The Little Fear. He created a series of large-scale tapestries titled *Big Fear* and *Little Fear* (Levitt, 2020). One of the seven works from the *Little Fear* series was woven intentionally for the new building of the Court of Justice (Wagener, 2015). It is worth noting that Lurçat participated in events such as the II documenta'59 in Kassel⁹. Lurçat gained recognition as an artist, but also socially thanks to the legendary role of his tapestries (Naffah-Bayle, Hermel & Bohl, 2016) in the resistance movement during

the Nazi occupation and was asked to create a work commemorating the fallen members of the resistance movement.

The manual technique and the choice of naturally pigmented pure wool became a part of his very distinctive style. Later in his career, he was one of the founders of the Tapestry Biennale in Lausanne. Polish textile artists such as Magdalena Abakanowicz¹⁰ were also invited to these events (Junet and Eberhard-Cotton, 2023). Many positions in art history describing his style refer to the tremendous impact a visit to Angers had on him – and the cycle of 85 tapestries from the 14th century known as the *Apocalypse of St. John* (Naffah-Bayle, Hermel & Bohl, 2016). Based on these experiences, Lurçat settled the discourse between ancient craftsmanship and contemporary innovation, developing his very own interpretation of heritage under a new transformative artistic sovereignty (O'Mahony, 2016).

In 1957, once he began his monumental work "Chant du Monde", those medieval works served as his main encouragement and inspiration. His works have been interpreted as a "manifesto of hope" (Naffah-Bayle, Hermel & Bohl, 2016), with pacifist beliefs and faith in the human spirit. In dedicating his work to the newly established juridical institution, the author referred to biblical animal motifs such as the goat leaving the stage – a symbol of evil and guilt. Another animal enters the stage – a dignified large rooster, a symbol of a new era, surrounded by an owl symbolising wisdom, a chameleon – adaptation, and a caterpillar – transformation. The chosen technique of working with a weaving factory resulted in

the creation of several versions based on the Lurçat's design, so that the whole scope of the work can change completely when regarding the full cycle, the goat (symbol of evil) jumping and returning to the main plan. The title *Little Fear* becomes somewhat clearer, suggesting a constant level of alertness and vigilance in the newly emerging European structures. *Little Fear* is made of fine wool, dyed only with natural pigments and handmade. The plant and animal motifs bear the hallmarks of the author's characteristic style, which has become recognisable over the years, the entire background is an intense crimson colour, intensifying the impression of saturation of all the objects – and the title of the series refers us to a conference of an intellectual event reflecting on the future and the shape of international cooperation. His work has sometimes been described as fascinating art that is created slowly, using ancient techniques, to be admired by future generations (Eyes, 2005).

"La croissance" by Lucien Wercollier

Lucien Wercollier was born in 1908 in Luxembourg and came from an artistic family – his father was a sculptor and a graduate of the *Académie des Beaux-Arts* in Paris, Strasbourg, and Brussels, one of the founding members of the *Cercle artistique de Luxembourg*. Following in his father's educational footsteps at the same universities, Wercollier began to develop his career in the early 1930s. He exhibited his works in places such as the Luxembourg Pavilion at the 1937 World Exhibition in Paris (Wagener, 2015), collaborated with many different artists and held his position as an art professor. In 1939 Wercollier participated in the design of the pavilion for the New York World's Fair, where he created a nearly 4m high allegory of agriculture.

In 1941, when the Nazi occupation of Luxembourg began, he refused to join the *Reichskulturkammer* and to identify with Nazi

art policy. He also participated in the national strike, which led to his arrest and imprisonment in an old Prussian garrison called Neumünster Abbey. He was later exiled to various concentration camps, including one in Lublin. In the meantime, the punishment also had reached his family, his wife and children were sent to Silesia, and it was not until June 1945 that the family was reunited and returned to Luxembourg (Muller, 1976, pp. 7–12). His style changed after 1945, perhaps the search for abstract forms was his way of dealing with the traumatic experience of the war. Muller's analysis of his works suggests that 1946–48 were the years of intensive search for the harmonious forms that would allow him to express himself in the new mode (Muller, 1954). Later, he co-founded the group *Iconomaques* (1954–1959) and developed his recognisable non-figurative style, becoming a teacher and an important master of the modern school of sculpture (Muller, 1976).

From the 1950s onwards, his work has gained great recognition and is now exhibited in many countries also outside of Europe (Muller, 1976). His motifs have been compared to organic forms – he often designed his works to be part of the landscape and an integral part of the green space. The same applies to the sculpture called *The Growth*, which stands in front of the Tribunal, the artist himself decided not to have a pedestal, so that the sculpture, in accordance with his original concept, would somehow grow out of the bare earth. His works are supposed to be filled with optimism and faith in the victory of life, which he emphasised in this way (Wagener, 2015). Today, Neumünster Abbey is a cultural institution hosting exhibitions, concerts, and various artistic events – the place where he was imprisoned is named after him. In a private conversation with a Luxembourgish artist of Polish origin, I learned about Wercollier's legendary willingness to help young artists and

⁹ Ten artists whose works are shown by Tribunal in its collection were participants of the first editions of *documenta Kassel*.

¹⁰ The upcoming Polish Presidency of the European Union in 2025 has become a reason for intensified diplomatic activities aimed at borrowing one of Magdalena Abakanowicz's works from the vast collection of the National Museum in Wrocław, in order to strengthen the representation of Polish culture in the collection of the Court of Justice in Luxembourg.

his fond memories towards Poles, whom he helped for many decades, maintaining numerous artistic contacts, choosing stone suppliers from Poland, and emphasising that staying in the concentration camps was a terrible experience, but he learned a lot about the deepest Polish virtue – kind-heartednesses. Wercollier's works also decorate a space around the European Parliament in Brussels and in front of the Council of Europe in Strasbourg as well as in the collection of the European Investment Bank (Ufer, 2002, pp. 170–173). His last sculpture remained unfinished; he was still working on it when he was almost 90 years old.

His artistic output was almost mythical. Wercollier founded a school known today as the “organic” or “vitalist” sculptors, whose inspiration came from nature without necessarily reproducing it. Their rejection of historical time led them to become interested in various “primitive” artistic forms rather than the Western tradition of “classical” sculpture. Above all, they preferred smooth and polished forms in their works, which was supposed to release an inner energy that seemed to emanate from the inside to the outside. The forms are large, but always subtle and are described as pure, smooth, and harmonious. Maggy Stein and Jean-Pierre Georg are members of this movement, working with stone, marble, wood, and bronze. “Their creative approaches are guided by concern for a perfect work and, above all, by the emotion of searching for forms.” (Becker, 2021). Particularly Stein offers a form of art in which the mystery, myth and beauty of universal femininity are revealed, leaving behind works of exceptional purity, rare elegance, and extraordinary subtlety. Both Stein and Georg are also represented in the Tribunal's collection.

Wercollier and Lurçat – intertwining trajectories

Some researchers, when describing the features of art created by artists who led new trends, choose to refer not so much to the characteristics of the art itself, but to the attitudes represented by its creators (Porębski, 1988, pp. 236–242). Such attitudes, characteristic of avant-garde artists, were primarily considered to be their innovative and revolutionary attitude and intellectual approach to tradition. On the one hand, both authors draw on tradition; on the other hand, they consciously use the affirmation of life and positive elements to distance themselves uncompromisingly from the difficult experiences of the war.

Lurçat's life intersected not only with the First, but also with the Second World War and the explosion of the atomic bomb, exposing him to the consequences of colossal destruction. These turbulent times left an indelible mark on the creative landscape of the generation that survived them, strongly influencing the artistic attitudes of Lurçat and Wercollier. Two remarkable figures whose work reflected the changes in artistic expression over time. By delving into their biographies and examining their artistic evolution, we can gain an insight into how historical and social upheavals have shaped their perspectives and narratives.

Looking back at the pre-war period, when both had the opportunity to travel and participate in international events, their promising careers were halted by the uncertainty of whether they would ever resume their artistic paths. Unknown destiny, disruption of the chosen path of realising professional plans – combined with trauma and the need to regain creative inspiration, mental balance, and professional stability in the post-war years.

Jean Lurçat was deeply affected by the events of the Second World War. Several years

older than Wercollier, he had already served at the front in the First World War, but the experience of the war profoundly changed his artistic development. Having witnessed the devastation caused by the conflict, Lurçat became increasingly committed to using his art as a means of resistance and renewal. He saw the tapestry as a source to draw on the old French tradition as a powerful form of communication, creating works that conveyed a message of hope, rebellion and solidarity. One of his most famous works, “Le Chant du Monde” (The Song of the World), completed in 1957, is a monumental tapestry that embodies Lurçat's humanist vision amidst the chaos of war. Through intense colours and symbolic, almost apocalyptic visions, Lurçat insisted that it celebrated the resilience of the human spirit and the enduring beauty of life.

But Lucien Wercollier, born in 1908, experienced imprisonment in a concentration camp – he refused to join the Wehrmacht and was immediately arrested. He struggled with the existential uncertainty and psychological trauma of the period. His early works reflected the disorientation and anxiety prevailing during the war. However, over time, Wercollier's art underwent a subtle but profound transformation. He began to incorporate elements of introspection and self-reflection into his work, exploring themes of identity, memory, and the subconsciousness (Wercollier, 1955). Through memorable symbolism and enigmatic motifs, he invites the viewer to contemplate the complexity of human experience.

Both Lurçat and Wercollier navigated turbulent times of armed conflict with distinct artistic sensibilities, but their paths intersected in their commitment to exploring the human condition in the midst of adversity. While Lurçat's tapestries served as powerful symbols of resistance and resilience, and Wercollier's sculptures sought harmony, both artists

shared a common belief in the transformative power of art to transcend trauma and illuminate the path to renewal. Wercollier was the artist chosen to commemorate the political prisoners of the concentration camps and the post-war memorials, and Lurçat to commemorate the fallen friends of *La Résistance*.

Wercollier came from a family with artistic and Luxembourgish roots, his father was a sculptor and Lurçat's mother was the person who wove his first tapestry design. Finally, the fact remains that both artists were “local” in the geographical sense, coming from neighbouring regions. Both had similar educational backgrounds, both belonged to artistic groups and were associated with trends determined by the intellectual encounters of the environment they co-created. This decision to include their works at the Tribunal as representatives of the founding countries was probably also dictated by their attitude of courage, perseverance and steadfastness during the war. Despite the political situation, both remained open to artistic cooperation with the cultural world behind the Iron Curtain, which was not always welcome.

Moreover, they are also united by their search for their own path and style, and by their openness to new inspirations (nature, human destiny, harmony, coexistence). The affirmation of life as an artistic choice and a supportive attitude towards artists of the younger generation, the shaping of new post-war art, artistic narrative in a historical context, political commitment. In summary, their biographies provide valuable insights into the ways in which personal experiences intersected with larger geopolitical events to shape their artistic visions. Through their works, Lurçat and Wercollier encourage everyone to confront the complexity of human existence in turbulent times. They remind that there is art's enduring ability to inspire, provoke and comfort.

Discussion

Other collections – the Tribunal as a trendsetter

The European Court of Justice pioneered the concept of an art collection through collaboration with the Luxembourgish Government, prompted by the consolidation of the institution from various sites into a single spacious edifice. Today, in the oldest part of the building, there are reminiscences of the time when this legal cooperation was established. In front of the largest courtroom, there are spacious lobbies dominated by black steel elements, with exposed ventilation turbines emphasising the industrial look – a tribute to the European Coal and Steel Community, while glass walls convey transparency and unity with neighbouring buildings.

One of them is the European Investment Bank across the street. Another important building, the Konrad Adenauer, houses the translation services of the European Parliament. Behind this building is the European Court of Auditors, all the institutions are adjacent in one district. These institutions, inspired by the Tribunal's example, have curated their own art collections, albeit to different principles. The European Investment Bank's art collection includes nearly one thousand works, all created after 1958 and acquired from living artists, but also includes several works by old masters. The Bank's acquisition of new items for the collection is subject to a rigorous selection process led by the Art Committee and its experts. In addition to organising internal and external exhibitions, the Bank also lends its works also to other exhibitions in a professional manner – an expert investment in art (Ufer, 2002).

Inspired by the new vision of its first female President, Simone Veil, the European Parliament boasts a contemporary collection

of around 500 pieces gathered over three decades under the banner of *United in Diversity*. The dominant elements are paintings, but there are also installations, sculptures, and new media art. The European Court of Auditors has equipped its new building and the glass connections between the old and new buildings with the possibility of transforming them into galleries, hosting many temporary exhibitions. The building also has a small internal collection that is on permanent display.

The European Court of Justice is an exception in comparison to its neighbours because the collection was created much earlier, is not bought on the art market, it is not of an investment nature, its purpose is not to multiply the capital invested in art, it is much smaller, it has permanent loans or donations from Member States. The Tribunal does not have a team of art experts behind the investment's selection, but it does have a budget covering the art team dealing with visitors, guided tours, an insurance and restoration budget, and temporary exhibitions that are organised several times a year. It is also the only institution that offers free access to the building and the art collected by organising guided tours in several languages (French, English, German, Italian, Spanish, and Polish).

However, different organisations have adopted different strategies when it comes to the collections created by European institutions. However, the transparency of the process of deciding what to exhibit is not so clear. The location of a work of art is also decided behind closed doors. This is also an issue that Nathalie Heinich has taken up when writing about the cooperation of experts and those who have influence on the management of cultural policy, invisible at first glance. She points out that there are studies focusing on the network of people who operate in the cultural sector, not being artists, but managing process, e.g. preparation of exhibitions

(Heinich, 2010, p. 90). Through diplomatic channels, a shortlist is created from which an "author" is selected who will later become the artistic representative of their country. This decision-making process cannot be reproduced, and from the perspective of an art sociologist, it is an intriguing phenomenon. Finally, 70% of the works are by male artists, but this is something that reflects the situation of many European museums.

Ewa Grigar goes even further, suggesting that "institutions continue to hold strong control over the content and the context of displayed works of art, and most of the time they give a minimal chance for the audience to take part in their selection" (Grigar, 2021, p. 128). She echoes Zolberg's critique of American art museums that they were "never really designed to be 'democratic'; instead, their public mission used to be about legitimising support from public funds (Zolberg, 1984, p. 377)".

Additionally, there is no clear information about the impact of the Tribunal's collection on its audience. There has been no scientific evaluation of this phenomenon, and the personal experience of the author and her colleagues in interacting with the visitors remains subjective in this regard, still awaiting more in-depth evaluation. Although the Tribunal is not a cultural institution *sensu stricto*, the total number of visitors reaching now 20,000 per year, transforms it into a major player on the Luxembourg museum scene. In this context, Grigar, citing Hadley (2021) and Hewison (2014), rightly suggests a novel approach, in which the audience of exhibitions should be the focus of research interest for the sociologist of art (Grigar, 2021, p. 131).

The Court of Justice underlines that it wishes the selection of all works in the collection to be based on high artistic standards and the ability to engage guests and staff in a reflective dialogue. In this way, the art collection would become an educational tool

contributing to the building of a society with a more refined and mature artistic culture.

Art in the public realm requires a collaborative effort; it must resonate with the world of art: artists, curators, commissioning bodies and other stakeholders. This form of artistic expression can manifest itself in both internal and external environments. In the case of the example described above, biographical elements of the artists' lives played an important role as art was perceived in symbiosis with the post-war reality.

Conclusion

The aim of this article was to analyse the long-term impact of the art collection housed at the Court of Justice of the European Union on the institution itself, and the broader community over the past 50 years. It has been demonstrated that this idea has been copied by other major European institutions such as the European Parliament, the European Commission, the European Court of Auditors, or the European Investment Bank. Not all these mentioned collections are open to the public, but the one in the Tribunal building is an exception. Security measures are in place to allow up to 20,000 visitors a year.

The analysis in this article leads to the conclusion that the Court of Justice's collection offers an idiosyncratic model of art exhibition that combines traditional artistic patronage with the public accessibility associated with cultural institutions. Patronage has a national context and, to some extent, a certain diplomatic dimension is related to those artistic choices. Nevertheless, the history of the artist's choice – and his or her life attitudes – is not without significance. Unlike museums and galleries, which often follow selective themes and aesthetic missions, the Court's collection presents art through a unique lens that emphasizes diversity and reflects the inclusive nature of the European project. Timeless themes

such as the cyclical nature of life and history or the power of hope for better times, can be seen in its works, such as Jean Lurçat's "La Petite Peur" or Lucien Wercollier's "La croissance" – where symbols of resilience and justice are aligned with the Court's judicial mission. Here, the purpose of art goes beyond decoration to embody values, and the collection itself emerges as a cultural archive of a shared heritage. The Court's approach to curating the collection, through donations and national contributions rather than systematic acquisition, underlines its distinct position among other European institutions. It is a space where art fluctuates and is accessible to the general public. Moreover, thanks to its open doors for guided tours in many languages, it is one of the few institutions of its type that ensures public engagement with its art collection. This approach, which does not follow the standards of high selectivity or the elitist orientations of traditional museums, supports the idea of social capital through a differently programmed cultural engagement. Setting an example for other European institutions, the Court of Justice has become a pioneer in integrating art with its mission towards the public. Through its collection, the Court transforms the traditional model of judicial spaces, usually reserved for lawyers, into a bridge between art, law and European identity. By allowing almost 20,000 visitors a year to access the collection, the Court has redefined its role as both a legal institution and a cultural space that honours diverse traditions and heritages.

Over the last 50 years, the collection has been expanded, reflecting the historical growth of the European Union. For many years, the *Grande Salle* has been the place where newly appointed Commissioners and Members of the Court of Auditors are sworn in – before taking up their European duties. On the one hand, it embodies a conscious effort to weave artistic engagement into the fabric

of everyday life, transforming public spaces into works that reflect history and values. On the other hand, a once anonymous structure – just another large international institutional building blending into the landscape of the neighbourhood – could gain an entirely new meaning and identity. Carefully chosen materials and colours, architectural elements, and the collection inside become a storyteller of the history of integration and becoming an observer of social changes. 🗨️

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Sztuka w budynkach użyteczności publicznej – przykład kolekcji w międzynarodowej instytucji prawnej

W artykule staram się naświetlić zjawisko integracji kolekcji sztuki z budynkami publicznymi, koncentrując się na przykładzie międzynarodowej instytucji prawnej prezentującej sztukę z różnych krajów. Motywacją do gromadzenia sztuki w takich przestrzeniach jest często poprawa estetyki budynku, promowanie różnorodnych perspektyw i refleksji poprzez sztukę. Stworzenie tej wyjątkowej kolekcji pod koniec lat 60. było pionierską inicjatywą podjętą 50 lat temu przez Europejski Trybunał Sprawiedliwości z siedzibą w Luksemburgu i od tego czasu zostało przyjęte przez inne międzynarodowe instytucje europejskie. Ekspozycja sztuki w budynkach użyteczności publicznej może być rozpatrywana z perspektywy kapitału społecznego lub wymiaru socjologii sztuki. Motywy nie zawsze są oczywiste, a wpływy społeczne pozostają nieokreślone, istnieje również aspekt historycznego kontekstu wyboru artystów i ich dzieł oraz dyplomacji poprzez sztukę.

Słowa kluczowe: sztuka, kapitał społeczny, socjologia sztuki, budynek użyteczności publicznej, międzynarodowa instytucja prawna.