

Anna Cassel's paintings are on the verge of being transferred to the Anthroposophical Society with the support of anthroposophical members of the Hilma af Klint Foundation.

Dear board members of the Hilma af Klint Foundation and the board of the Anthroposophical Society in Sweden!

I write to you today as you collectively bear the responsibility for the management of the assets of the Hilma af Klint Foundation (hereafter referred to as the Foundation). It is with great concern that I have followed recent developments, particularly the disloyal actions of the Foundation's anthroposophical board members.

I have received confirmed information from both a board member of the Foundation and the Society, stating that you together plan to transfer some of the Foundation's assets to the Society—specifically the paintings and sketches of Anna Cassel—even though I have pointed out that the ownership of these works is unclear and must be resolved. The fact that I was not informed of this directly is highly alarming. I have raised concerns about Anna Cassel's works with the Foundation's members, but they refuse to respond. The Society, too, has chosen not to hold an open discussion on the matter.

It is extremely troubling that you, as anthroposophists and board members of both the Foundation and the Society, are condoning actions that go against the principles of your founder. Rudolf Steiner did not believe in the commercialization of art, nor did he support the idea that art should be displayed carelessly. What has transpired within the Foundation runs counter to the core of Rudolf Steiner's ideas ([ref 1](#)). Furthermore, your actions are in direct violation of the Foundation's bylaws, demonstrating disloyalty to the Foundation itself. Transferring Anna Cassel's paintings without clear ownership could lead to charges of embezzlement.

The Foundation. In 2023, the Anthroposophical Society appointed three of the Foundation's five board members, giving you a majority. Four of the five board members are also members of the Society, making it crucial that you ensure they adhere to the Foundation's bylaws, Swedish law, and the values of your founder, Rudolf Steiner.

I have repeatedly asked the Society to replace the current members of the Foundation due to their disloyalty. For example, the Foundation's agreements with the publishing house Stolpe are not only disloyal, but they also violate the bylaws, with no compensation going to the Foundation ([ref 2](#)). Moreover, a statement from former Court of Appeal judge Henning Isoz has made it clear that both the agreements and the museum operations violate the bylaws ([ref 3](#)). According to the bylaws, the assets are to be displayed to spiritual seekers, not to the general public. This means that museum operations, books, and commercial products like merchandise are against the bylaws. The four anthroposophical board members have ignored all of this. Additionally, they are preparing to sell some of the Foundation's assets. As chairman, I must protest each of these steps, all of which are disloyal to the Foundation. Each individual is responsible for their actions, but the Anthroposophical Society holds special responsibility, as it appointed the board members. You must seriously consider whether these individuals represent Anthroposophy with integrity. What would Rudolf Steiner say?

Rudolf Steiner had very clear views on how art should be treated. He believed that "true art" is inseparable from the spiritual realm and should not be created for worldly admiration or financial gain. He warned that exhibitions and the commercialization of artworks undermine art's spiritual purpose and its connection to the divine. Hilma af Klint and Steiner were close friends, and she donated several of her works to the Goetheanum.

Steiner's views on art are clearly expressed in his lecture "Geist und Ungeist in der Malerei" (GA no. 276) ([ref 1](#)), where he speaks about art's eternal connection to the spiritual and condemns exhibitions that place artworks without context, thereby diminishing their purpose.

"Art is eternal, but its forms change. And if you understand that there is always a connection to the spiritual through art, you will see that art is something that places us, both as creators and as appreciators, in the spiritual world.."

"...In contrast, creating art for exhibitions seems almost meaningless, where works are placed side by side without any connection, diminishing their purpose. The shift from creating art for sacred spaces to creating for home environments already loses much of its original meaning. Exhibitions are even worse. A time that sees value in exhibitions has lost its connection to true art."

Steiner's words confirm that "true art" is inseparable from the spiritual realm and is not created for worldly admiration or commercial gain. He warned that degrading art through exhibitions diminishes its true purpose and connection to the divine. Creating art solely for human approval or financial gain desecrates it and strips it of its spiritual value.

I share Rudolf Steiner's views and his perspective on Hilma af Klint's work. Rudolf Steiner's beliefs are also clearly reflected in the Foundation's bylaws. Both Steiner's and my views are shared by former Court of Appeal judge Henning Isoz ([ref 3](#)); the works are not meant for the general public, but specifically for spiritual seekers. The previous board's sale of NFTs and other actions are examples of what Steiner warned against, yet the current anthroposophical board supports agreements and others. By failing to act, the Society's board is also supporting this behavior, which goes against Steiner, the Foundation's bylaws, and the founder's wishes. Unfortunately, this is far from the only example, there are more.

Anna Cassel entrusted her symbolic paintings to Hilma af Klint for safekeeping. When Hilma af Klint passed away, Anna Cassel's works were passed down to my grandfather, Erik af Klint. He attempted to donate Hilma af Klint's works to both the Moderna Museet and the Anthroposophical Society in Finland and Sweden, but all offers were declined.

Since the Foundation was established, Anna Cassel's paintings have been stored in its archives. There is no deed of gift or other formal document proving that the paintings were transferred to the Society. Rather, the Foundation has covered all costs for storage, insurance, framing, and management of the works, and has granted the rights to the images. The use of images of Anna Cassel's paintings for the book *Anna Cassel – The Saga of the Rose* was agreed upon with the Hilma af Klint Foundation ([ref 4](#)), not with the Society.

There is no evidence to suggest that Anna Cassel's works do not belong to the Foundation. Therefore, no uncertainties about ownership can be considered valid.

Transferring Anna Cassel's works to the Society without a formal board decision from the Foundation can only be seen as embezzlement of the Foundation's property. It is hard to view this as anything other than repayment for the favor of being appointed as a board member of the Foundation by the Society.

The information I have shared is serious and troubling. There is still an opportunity to make things right. I urge you, as true anthroposophists, to act. Justice must take precedence over greed. These actions dishonor not only Anthroposophy today but also the memory of Rudolf Steiner.

I am available to assist in resolving these matters.

Sincerely,
Erik af Klint
Chairman,
Hilma af Klint Foundation
2024.10.17

References

1. Rudolf Steiner's lecture "Geist und Ungeist in der Malerei," June 9, 1923, in Dornach. See the original German text and English translation below.
2. Unfair agreements regarding the Foundation's assets, which are allocated without compensation to the Foundation, in violation of the bylaws. These agreements are upheld by the anthroposophical board members of the Foundation. It is remarkable that the Society's board has not acted on this matter. [CR](#) (2019.03.31), [VR/AR](#) (2021.07.09), [Anna Cassel](#) (2022.06.07), [NFT](#) (2022.10.07)
3. Former Court of Appeal judge Henning Isoz's statement on the Foundation's bylaws, which clarify that the works are not for the general public but for spiritual seekers. Henning Isoz helped draft the current Foundation Act and has written commentaries on it. He is considered Sweden's leading expert on foundations. See the end of this document.
4. The Anna Cassel agreement between the Foundation and the publishing house Stolpe, which clearly indicates that the image rights belong to the Foundation. [Anna Cassel](#) (2022.06.07).

Ref 1

Excerpt from Rudolf Steiner's lecture 'Spirit and Unspirit in Painting', June 9, 1923, in Dornach.

First a translation in English, followed by the German text.

"Art is eternal; its forms change. And when you take this into account—that everywhere there is a connection to the spiritual from the artistic—you will understand that the artistic is something through which both the creator and the appreciator place themselves into the spiritual world. A true artist can create their work in a lonely desert. It matters little to them who among earthly beings views the work, or if anyone at all views it, for they have created in another community, they have created in the spiritual-divine community. Gods have looked over their shoulders. They have created in the company of gods. What does the true artist care whether any person admires their work or not? Therefore, one can be an artist in complete solitude. But on the other hand, one cannot be an artist without truly placing their own creation into the world that they then also view in its spirituality, so that it lives within it. The creation must live in the spirituality of the world into which it is inserted. If one forgets this spiritual connection, then art also changes, but it changes more or less into unart. You see, it is really only possible to create artistically if the artwork is placed in the context of the world. Those ancient artists were aware of this, who for example painted their images on church walls, for there these images were guides for the believers, for the confessors; there the artists knew that this stands within earthly life, inasmuch as this earthly life is permeated by the spiritual. One can hardly imagine anything worse than creating, instead of for something like this, for exhibitions. In essence, it is the most terrible thing to walk through an art exhibition, for example, or a sculpture exhibition, where all sorts of things hang together or stand next to each other, which do not belong together at all, where it is actually senseless that one is next to the other. By the time painting has made the transition from painting for the church to painting for the home, even there, I would say, it loses its true meaning. If one paints something within a frame, one can at least still imagine that they are looking out through a window, and what they see is outside, but it is already nothing more. But now to paint for exhibitions! One cannot speak further on this. Is it not true that a time that sees value in exhibitions, that sees something possible in them, has indeed lost the connection to true art? And you simply see from all that must happen in spiritual culture to find the way back to the spiritual-artistic. The exhibition, for example, must be overcome. Certainly, among individual artists, there exists a disdain for exhibitions, but we live today in a time where the individual cannot do much unless the judgment of the individual is immersed in a worldview that again permeates people in their freedom, in full freedom, just as in once less free times worldviews permeated people and led to the emergence of real cultures,

while today we have no real cultures. In the construction of real cultures and thus also in the construction of what is truly artistic, a spiritual worldview must work, which must have the highest interest in this."

"Die Kunst ist ewig, ihre Formen wandeln sich. Und wenn Sie dies nehmen, daß überall eine Beziehung zum Geistigen vom Künstlerischen aus da ist, werden Sie verstehen, daß das Künstlerische doch etwas ist, wodurch man sich sowohl schaffend wie genießend mit in die Geisteswelt hineinstellt. Wer ein wirklicher Künstler ist, kann in einsamer Wüste sein Bild schaffen. Einerlei ist es ihm, wer von den Erdenmenschen das Bild anschaut, ob es überhaupt jemand anschaut, denn er hat in einer anderen Gemeinschaft geschaffen, er hat in der geist-göttlichen Gemeinschaft geschaffen. Götter haben ihm über die Schultern geblickt. Er hat in der Gesellschaft von Göttern geschaffen. Was liegt dem wahren Künstler daran, ob sein Bild irgendein Mensch bewundert oder nicht. Deshalb kann man Künstler sein in voller Einsamkeit. Aber auf der anderen Seite kann man nicht Künstler sein, ohne in die Welt, die man dann auch ihrer Geistigkeit nach betrachtet, das eigene Geschöpf wirklich hineinzustellen, so daß es darinnen lebt. In der Geistigkeit der Welt muß es leben, das Geschöpf, das man in sie hineinstellt. Vergißt man diesen geistigen Zusammenhang, dann wandelt sich auch die Kunst, aber sie wandelt sich mehr oder weniger in Unkunst. Sehen Sie, es läßt sich eigentlich künstlerisch nur schaffen, wenn man das Kunstwerk im Weltzusammenhang darinnen hat. Dessen waren sich jene alten Künstler bewußt, die zum Beispiel ihre Bilder an die Kirchenwände gemalt haben, denn da waren diese Bilder die Führer für die Gläubigen, für die Bekenner, da wußten die Künstler, das steht darinnen in dem Erdenleben, insoweit dieses Erdenleben von dem Geistigen durchsetzt ist. Man kann sich kaum etwas Schlimmeres denken, als wenn man, statt für so etwas, nun für Ausstellungen schafft. Im Grunde genommen ist es ja das Schrecklichste, durch eine Bilderausstellung zum Beispiel oder eine Skulpturausstellung zu gehen, wo alles mögliche durcheinander hängt oder nebeneinander steht, was gar nicht zusammengehört, wo es eigentlich sinnlos ist, daß das eine neben dem andern ist. Indem das Malen den Übergang gefunden hat vom Malen für die Kirche zum Bilde für das Haus, schon da, möchte ich sagen, verliert es den richtigen Sinn. Wenn man in den Rahmen hinein etwas malt, kann man sich wenigstens noch vorstellen, man schaut durch ein Fenster heraus, und das, was man sieht, das ist draußen, aber es ist schon nichts mehr. Aber nun gar für Ausstellungen malen! Man kann nicht weiter darüber reden. Nicht wahr, eine Zeit, die überhaupt in Ausstellungen etwas sieht, etwas Mögliches sieht, hat eben den Zusammenhang mit der Kunst verloren. Und Sie sehen einfach an dem, was alles an geistiger Kultur zu geschehen hat, um wiederum den Weg zum Geistig-Künstlerischen zurückzufinden. Die Ausstellung zum Beispiel ist durchaus zu überwinden. Gewiß, bei einzelnen Künstlern ist der Abscheu vor der Ausstellung vorhanden, aber wir leben heute in einer Zeit, wo der einzelne nicht viel vermag, wenn nicht das Urteil des einzelnen in eine Weltanschauung eingetaucht wird, die wiederum die Menschen so in ihrer Freiheit, in voller Freiheit durchsetzt, wie einstmals in unfreieren Zeiten Weltanschauungen die Menschen durchsetzt haben und dazu geführt haben, daß wirkliche Kulturen entstanden, während wir heute keine wirklichen Kulturen haben. An dem Aufbau von wirklichen Kulturen und damit auch an dem Aufbau von wirklich Künstlerischem muß aber eine geistige Weltanschauung arbeiten, daran das höchste Interesse haben."

Ref 3

LEGAL OPINION

Regarding the Hilma af Klint Foundation

A. BACKGROUND

1. The Hilma af Klint Foundation (hereinafter referred to as "the Foundation") was established in 1972 by Vice Admiral Erik af Klint (hereinafter referred to as "the Founder").
2. In connection with the establishment of the Foundation, the Founder established the Foundation's statutes—see Appendix 1.
3. According to the statutes of the Foundation (see § 2, first paragraph, third sentence), the head of the af Klint family, or the person of the family designated by the head of the family af Klint, is to serve as the ex officio chairman of the Foundation's board.
4. Erik af Klint, who is the grandson of the Founder, became the head of the af Klint family in 2010, and since 2023, he has served as the chairman of the Foundation's board for a second term.

B. THE ASSIGNMENT

5. Erik af Klint has inquired:
 - a. To whom may the works be shown?
 - b. Which paintings, if any, may be disposed of, and for what purpose?

C. RESPONSE TO THE QUESTIONS

C 1. To Whom May the Works Be Shown?

6. § 4 of the statutes provides the following:

“The board shall make the works available to those seeking spiritual knowledge or to those who can contribute to ensuring that the works fulfill the mission that Hilma af Klint’s spiritual guides intended. The board shall take care to ensure that the works are made available only to persons who have a sympathetic attitude towards the Foundation’s purpose and for whom misuse can be ruled out.”

7. As indicated by the wording of the first sentence of § 4, the board must make the works available to those either seeking spiritual knowledge or who can contribute to the works fulfilling the mission intended by Hilma af Klint’s spiritual guides. Additionally, the second sentence of § 4 imposes further requirements on those to whom the board may make the works available.

8. In my assessment, the provisions in both sentences of § 4 imply that the board, with all members present, must conduct a thorough interview with any individual wishing to view the works. Without such an interview, the board cannot determine whether the individual meets the criteria set out in § 4. Therefore, the works should not be made available to anyone unless the board has conducted an interview and is convinced that the individual both seeks spiritual knowledge or can contribute to the fulfillment of the mission intended by Hilma af Klint’s spiritual guides and has such a sympathetic attitude towards the Foundation’s purpose that misuse can be ruled out.

The board is responsible for the management of the works according to § 1. Section 3, last sentence, of the statutes specifies that this responsibility includes the supervision and care of the works. This responsibility naturally applies when the works are made available to someone under § 4.

9. I must emphasize that the provisions of § 4 remain applicable and must be adhered to in the management of the Foundation (see Chapter 2, Section 1 of the Swedish Foundations Act). This means that the works cannot be displayed to the public, whether temporarily through loans to various exhibitions or permanently in a museum. This would violate the provisions of § 4. The

same applies to both digital and physical displays and the sale of reproductions of Hilma af Klint's paintings.

C 2. Which Paintings May Be Disposed of, and for What Purpose?

10. According to § 1 of the statutes, the Foundation's purpose is to preserve and manage the works. This provision includes a prohibition against the disposal of the works.

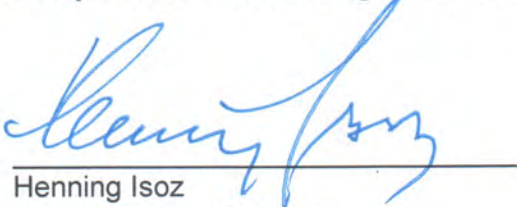
11. Regarding the paintings numbered 1-193 (created before 1916), this prohibition is further emphasized in the first paragraph of § 5.

12. However, the second paragraph of § 5 includes an exception to the prohibition against disposal as stated in § 1. This exception applies to "the later part of the works" or paintings created after 1915, numbered 194-1193.

13. The third sentence of the second paragraph of § 5 reads as follows: "Individual paintings [...] may, if deemed appropriate, be disposed of and thereby made available to the public to raise funds to facilitate the care and maintenance of the remaining parts of the works."

14. The provision in the third sentence of § 5's second paragraph indicates that individual paintings from the later part of the works may be disposed of to raise funds to facilitate the care and maintenance of the remaining parts of the works. This provision should be read in conjunction with § 1. The application of the exception should therefore be restrictive. In my opinion, when this exception is invoked, the underlying motive must primarily be to raise funds to ensure the care of the remaining works. It should be noted that individual paintings intended for disposal under this exception must, of course, be displayed to the public prior to their disposal, notwithstanding the provisions of § 4.

Saltsjöbaden, Sweden, August 29, 2024



Henning Isoz
Former Judge of Appeal