

Room 5

Romanesque Enthroned Madonna 12th century

Mary is shown as "Theotokos" (Mother of God) or "Sedes Sapientiae" (the Seat of Wisdom).

Wearing a fine red gown, elaborate belt and brooch, along with a blue mantle, she is seated on a high-backed throne. Made of limewood, the throne is decorated with flowers and geometric motifs.



Many of these madonnas were made to stand on altars and plinths. They were also designed for mobility, often carried in processions and used in liturgical dramas, such as Epiphany plays.

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German Art Trail

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Fáilte, Welcome, Willkommen... TO THE German Art Trail IN LIMERICK

To mark Ireland's 2026 Presidency of the Council of the European Union, each of Ireland's 26 counties has been paired with a specific EU Member State. Inspired by Limerick's pairing with Germany, the Art Trail invites you to explore the rich range of German artworks and works inspired by German-Irish connections found in museums, galleries, colleges, universities, and cathedrals across the city.

This brochure highlights the depth of these connections. It was initiated by the Centre for Irish-German Studies at UL, and was made possible through excellent collaboration with partners including LC&CC, the Hunt Museum, LCGA, MIC, UL and Studio GBM among many others.

Limerick's links with Germany are extensive and multifaceted, stretching back several centuries. In 1709, German-speaking refugees known as the Irish Palatines settled in County Limerick. Fleeing war and famine, they established vibrant farming communities that left a lasting mark on Irish agricultural life and culture. Since then, cultural and economic ties between Germany and Limerick have continued to flourish across engineering and industry, art, literature and music, business, and academia.

The German Art Trail offers a chance to discover some of the fascinating and beautiful results of these connections and we hope you enjoy the journey.

In addition to the Art Trail, scan the QR code to find a full programme of events taking place across Limerick City and County and links to brochures of individual institutions.



Centre for
Irish-German Studies
Zentrum für
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Uachtaránacht na hÉireann ar
Chomhairle an Aontais Eorpaigh 2026
Irish Presidency of the Council of
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Cover Image: Apollo as the Genius of the Arts

German Connections

Gertrude Hunt (1902-1994)

Gertrude Hunt (née Hartmann), co-founder of the Hunt Museum was born in Mannheim, Germany in 1903. She spent her early life in the city, working for and later marrying a local antiques dealer. She moved to London in her twenties following the end of her marriage and it was there she met John Hunt (1900-1976), marrying him in 1933. Gertrude and John, or 'Putzel' and 'Jack' to their friends, traveled across Europe collecting the antiques, artefacts and works of art that would later form one of Ireland's most remarkable private collections. The Hunt Museum, is located in Limerick's 18th-century Palladian-style Customs House, is open to the public.

German highlight objects in the Hunt Collection:

1. Statue of Apollo (cover object image)
2. Meissen Tureen
3. Meissen Pieta
4. Figure of Christ
5. Romanesque Enthroned Madonna



German Art Trail



Room 1: Level 1 Apollo as the Genius of the Arts 17th century

Apollo, the Classical god of light, poetry, music, healing and prophecy was often used to represent the trades, arts and professions. Here, he is the traders' protector. Many of the crafts are displayed on his lower body with music given pride of place in the centre. Instruments such as a drum and a harp are visible. In his right hand, he carries a serpent and pestle which are symbols of the art of healing. In his left hand, he holds a pomegranate, a symbol of fertility. Here, it may indicate the multitude of activities presided over by a single deity.

Augsburg, where the figure originated, was one of the most prominent centres of Renaissance wood and stone sculpture in Europe. The city's masters were renowned for their exquisite polychrome (multi-coloured and gilded) finishes on limewood.

Look out for other German objects in this room including a 15th century drinking horn and an equine aquamanile (a term applied to vessels from which water was poured for hand-washing in both domestic and liturgical contexts).

Room 2: Captains' Room, Level 1 Meissen Tureen (one of a pair) 18th century

This oval porcelain tureen has a Japanese Kakiemon design. This is an overglazing of enamel. The technique originated in 1616 in Arita, a town near Nagasaki. The Meissen factory was the first in Europe to be able to faithfully reproduce this design. It has two handles and a lid with a prominent central knob. The lid is decorated with flowers, trees and birds. The handles are fluted and with scrolled ends, at the base of each handle there is a female head. It was produced in Germany in the 18th century.

One of the tureens shows an "X" with four dots at the angles. This is the personal mark of one of Meissen's lesser-known figures, an accomplished potter by the name of Schiefer, who was employed there from before 1728 and into the 1730s.

Room 3: First Floor Meissen Pietà 18th century

Crafted from white porcelain, this Pietà was made in the Meissen factory near Dresden by Kändler. The piece shows Mary holding her dead son in her arms and across her lap. Part of the arms of Christ and one of His feet are missing. The quality of the modelling in the Pietà suggests that it may be the work of J. J. Kändler, the outstanding Meissen modeller.



Room 4: Treasury, Garden Level Figure of Christ 16th-17th century

Made in southern Germany, this chalice is carved from wood. The figure of Christ is shown emerging from the chalice. Only the upper part of the body is visible, the rest is covered by the chalice. The foot and base of the bowl are decorated with embossed curvilinear motifs.



Christ is depicted as the Man of Sorrows. He wears a crown of thorns and has his arms crossed at the wrist. Wounds from the crucifixion are visible on His hands and side. The decision to portray Him emerging from the cup is striking as it reinforces the significance of the wine turning into Christ's blood during the Eucharist.