

**BUNDESKUNSTHALLE**



**GURLITT: STATUS REPORT**  
**Nazi Art Theft and its Consequences**  
3 November 2017 to 11 March 2018

**Media Conference: Thursday, 2 November 2017, 2 p.m.**

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## Exhibition Dates

Exhibition	3 November 2017 to 11 March 2018
Director	Rein Wolfs
Managing Director	Bernhard Spies
Curators	Rein Wolfs Agnieszka Lulińska
Assistant Curator	Lukas Bächer
Member of the scientific working group of the exhibition	Andrea Baresel-Brand, Art historian and head of the project “Provenienzrecherche Gurlitt”  Meike Hopp, Art historian and provenance researcher at the Zentralinstitut für Kunstgeschichte Munich  Birgit Schwarz, Art historian and provenance researcher at the Germanisches Nationalmuseum Nuremberg
Patrons of the exhibition	Minister of State Monika Grütters, Member of the German Bundestag and Federal Government Commissioner for Culture and the Media, Federal Republic of Germany  Federal Councillor Alain Berset, Head of the Federal Department of Home Affairs (EDI), Switzerland
Head of Corporate Communications / Press Officer	Sven Bergmann
Catalogue / Press Copy	€ 29.90 / € 15
Opening Hours	Tuesday and Wednesday: 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. Thursday to Sunday: 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. Public Holidays: 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. Closed on Mondays



Admission standard / reduced / family ticket	€ 6 / € 3.90 / € 9.60
Happy Hour-Ticket	€ 7 Tuesday and Wednesday: 7 to 9 p.m. Thursday to Sunday: 5 to 7 p.m. (for individuals only)
Audio Guide and Media Guide	German and English, Easy Language, Audio description for the visually impaired, German Sign Language € 4 / reduced € 3 Free for disabled visitors (on presentation of a Disabled Identification Card), accompanying carer € 3. Also available as a free audio guide App in German at the AppStore or through Google Play. Creative concept and production: Linon Medien
Public Guided Tours	Wednesday, 6 p.m., Friday, 2 p.m., Sundays and public holidays, 11 a.m., € 3 / reduced € 1.50, plus admission
Guided Tours for Children	Sundays and public holidays, 11 a.m. Free, tickets available at the ticket desk on the day.
Guided Group Tours information and registration	T +49 228 9171–243 F +49 228 9171–244 kunstvermittlung@bundeskunsthalle.de
Public Transport	Underground lines 16, 63, 66 and bus lines 610, 611 and 630 to Heussallee / Museumsmeile Deutsche Bahn / UN-Campus: Lines RB 26 (MittelrheinBahn), RB 30 (Rhein-Ahr- Bahn) and RB 48 (Rhein-Wupper-Bahn)
Parking	There is a car and coach park on Emil- Nolde-Straße behind the Bundeskunsthalle. Navigation: Emil- Nolde-Straße 11, 53113 Bonn

Press Information (German / English) [www.bundeskunsthalle.de](http://www.bundeskunsthalle.de)  
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Kunstmuseum Bern  
**GURLITT: STATUS REPORT**  
"Degenerate Art" – Confiscated and sold  
2 November 2017 to 4 März 2018



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## Information on the Exhibition

*Gurlitt Status Report* is the title of two concurrent exhibitions with different thematic focuses. The Bundeskunsthalle and the Kunstmuseum Bern present works from the estate of Cornelius Gurlitt, the son of the Third Reich art dealer Hildebrand Gurlitt. The two closely correlated exhibitions shed light on the wider historical background and reflect the latest research into the 'Gurlitt trove'. With a selection of some 200 works, the presentation in Bern focuses on the Nazi campaign against 'degenerate' art. The exhibition in Bonn, on the other hand, is devoted to works that were directly affected by the Nazi looting of art and to the fate of the persecuted artists, collectors and art dealers, most of whom were Jewish.

The Bundeskunsthalle shows a selection of some 250 works, most of which were expropriated during the Third Reich and whose provenance, in many cases, has not yet been fully established. A timeline with significant historical dates links the individual chapters of the exhibition and forms a chronological framework and backdrop for the events. The presentation sheds light on the mounting disenfranchisement of – mostly Jewish – artists collectors and art dealers. Their fate is illustrated by a series of biographical case studies.

'It is extremely important that this chapter of the German – and consequently European – history is never forgotten. The Nazi art theft is still far from being resolved conclusively, and it absolutely has to be seen within its overall historical context, which includes the persecution, disfranchisement and dispossession perpetrated by the Nazi regime and, ultimately, the Holocaust,' explains Rein Wolfs, director of the Bundeskunsthalle.

The exhibition at the Bundeskunsthalle is subdivided into five closely related chapters that shed light on the complex mechanisms of Nazi cultural policies and on the strategically organised Nazi art theft. At the same time, they trace Hildebrand Gurlitt's ambivalent career and juxtapose it with biographies of victims of the Nazi regime. Several in-depth case studies of important individuals, whose lives are illustrated by works of art, texts, photographs and archival material, form stand-out units within the exhibition.

Thematically the five chapters focus on different periods of history. The time before the First World War and the Weimar Republic, Germany after Hitler's rise to power in 1933, especially the situation after 1938 when the *Führervorbehalt* created the foundation for the unprecedented and systematically organised theft of art. During the Second World War (1939–1945), the focus is primarily on the activities in the German-occupied territories (especially on France) that had come under the sway of the *Führervorbehalt* in 1940.

At the end of the exhibition, we look at the immediate post-war period, how questions of restitution and responsibility are being handled, the role of institutionalised provenance research and our general awareness of the extreme



complexity of this area. A special room in the exhibition is devoted to an ongoing discourse. Professionals and specialists in the field discuss the problems of the Gurlitt trove and the wider subject of looted art.



## Wall quotations

### **Status Report Gurlitt**

*Status Report Gurlitt* is the title of two exhibitions shown concurrently at Bundeskunsthalle and the Kunstmuseum Bern. They are the first to present a selection of works from the estate of Cornelius Gurlitt to a wider audience. The two exhibitions examine different aspects of the story behind the Gurlitt cache. In Bern, the focus is on the Nazi campaign against 'degenerate' art. The presentation in Bonn, on the other hand, sheds light on the criminal machinations of Nazi cultural politics and the problematic role of the art trade during that period.

The Gurlitt cache was amassed by Hildebrand Gurlitt, Cornelius Gurlitt's father, a passionate champion of Modernism in the early years of his career who went on to become one of the leading art dealers in Nazi Germany. Parallel to Hildebrand Gurlitt's ambiguous biography, the exhibition looks at the lives of some of his contemporaries, focusing in particular on the fate of Jewish artists, collectors and art dealers who fell victim to the Nazi regime.

Despite painstaking research, it remains unclear how most of the approximately 250 works shown here came to be in Hildebrand Gurlitt's possession. The detailed provenances that accompany the works summarise the current state of research.

### **Cornelius Gurlitt**

Rolf Nikolaus Cornelius Gurlitt was born in Hamburg on 28 December 1932, the son of the art historian and art dealer Hildebrand Gurlitt and his wife Helene. He grew up in Hamburg and Dresden with his sister Benita (1935–2012). After the firebombing of Dresden in 1945, the family found refuge in Aschbach in Upper Franconia. From 1946, Cornelius attended the Odenwaldschule, a progressive private boarding school in Hesse, and after his parents' move to Düsseldorf, he continued his education at the Max Planck Gymnasium in Düsseldorf, graduating in 1953.

He studied history of art at the university of Cologne, but dropped out, and trained as a picture restorer in Düsseldorf. After the death of his parents, he lived quietly in Munich and Salzburg, meeting expenses by selling some of the works he had inherited. That the inheritance of these works and their problematic provenance was a lifelong burden for Cornelius and his sister is borne out by a letter Benita wrote to her brother in 1964: 'Do you occasionally take pleasure in what you have? [...] It sometimes seems to me that his most personal and valuable bequest has become the darkest burden for us.'

At the beginning of 2012, the Public Prosecutor's office in Augsburg investigated Cornelius Gurlitt for possible tax evasion and seized the works stored in the Munich flat. The story broke in 2013 and caused a major media frenzy. Gurlitt



found himself hounded by the press and the victim of sensationalist reporting. He died in May 2014.

### **(...) or What is Provenance?**

We can usually tell the motif and technique of a work of art at first glance, but to really understand the work, we often need additional information about the artist and the context in which it was created. Equally important is the provenance (from Latin *provenire* 'to come from'). The seemingly prosaic list of particulars that accompanies each of the works shown in this exhibition – and that ideally provides an unbroken record of ownership from the artist's studio to today – conveys not only information about the history of the object but also about the people who owned it.

This history of changing ownership leaves traces, for example on the reverse of pictures, in old exhibition and sale catalogues and in archives. But the record is often fragmentary; information can get lost over the course of decades or even centuries. These gaps in the provenance are marked with an ellipsis in parentheses.

Because of these gaps, it cannot be ruled out that a great many of the works found in the Gurlitt trove were acquired unlawfully. It is for this reason that they have been entered into the public online database of the German Lost Art Foundation ([LostArt.de](http://LostArt.de), see link in the captions), where further information on the individual objects and their history can be found.

The credit line complementing the display or illustration of works provides information about the current ownership.

### **Identified as Nazi-looted Art**

A tiny hole at chest level, which had been closed by a restorer, suggested that the female portrait shown here had been looted during the Nazi period. A handwritten note on a list recording the losses of the Mandel collection mentions precisely this damage to an otherwise unspecified female portrait by Thomas Couture.

As the French minister of the interior, Georges Mandel (1885–1944), born Louis Georges Rothschild, vehemently opposed the armistice with Nazi Germany in 1940. After a brief arrest in Bordeaux in June, he was rearrested in Morocco on 8 August 1940. He was accused of being a warmonger and of seeking to promote pro-Jewish interests. His Paris apartment was searched by the Special Command Künsberg in August 1940, and the collaborationist right-wing party *Rassemblement National Populaire* used the apartment as a backdrop for propaganda photos. Until his murder by the paramilitary *Milice* in July 1944, Georges Mandel was held prisoner in France and as a political prisoner at the Buchenwald concentration camp.



### **Female Portraits in the Gurlitt Cache**

The Gurlitt cache should be regarded as the wide-ranging and uneven stock of an art dealer who tried to meet the tastes of a diverse customer base. Consisting of approximately 1500 works – paintings, sculptures and, above all, works on paper – the Gurlitt inventory is stronger in some areas than in others. Well represented are German Expressionism, the estates of Louis and Cornelia Gurlitt and French eighteenth and nineteenth-century art, while numerous individual works of different styles, genres and eras are more indicative of the dealer's strategy of diversification and stockpiling.

Among these more disparate works are several female portraits. The selection shown here ranges from the eighteenth to the twentieth century and from an intimate pastel of an unidentified woman by a follower of the famous Venetian pastellist Rosalba Carriera to a Biedermeier portrait by Ferdinand Georg Waldmüller, whose work Hitler greatly admired, and, finally, to Gustave Courbet's deftly painted *Village Girl with Goat*. They epitomise the classic bourgeois interior of the first half of the twentieth century and bear witness to the changing construct of femininity.

### **Focus on Modernism: Art and Politics**

With the foundation of the artists' group *Brücke* in 1905, Dresden became the birthplace of Expressionism. In January 1919, after the First World War and the November Revolution, a second generation of Expressionists around Otto Dix and Conrad Felixmüller founded the Dresden Secession. For the first time in Dresden, modern art met with official recognition: The Dresden Art Academy appointed the Austrian painter Oskar Kokoschka – still the youngest professor ever appointed in the history of the academy. Hans Posse, director of the Dresden Picture Gallery and a friend of Kokoschka, bought works by avant-garde artists and even presented them as the official German contribution to the Venice Biennales of 1922 and 1930.

The Fides Gallery of Contemporary Art, founded by Rudolf Probst in 1923, presented highly acclaimed exhibitions which were reviewed by the young Hildebrand Gurlitt. In June 1925, Gurlitt became director of the König Albert Museum in Zwickau. His ambitious exhibition programme of contemporary art and supporting events introduced Zwickau audiences to Modernism. Gurlitt presented not only his recent acquisitions but also works loaned by artists, the Dresden museums, gallerists and private collectors, such as Fritz Salo Glaser.

However, Gurlitt's policies made him highly unpopular with reactionary forces like the Militant League for German Culture. Despite broad support from renowned colleagues and an intervention from the German Museum Association, his contract was not renewed when it ran out on 30 March 1930.



## Expressionism in Dresden

In 1905, Fritz Bleyl, Erich Heckel, Ernst Ludwig Kirchner and Karl Schmidt-Rottluff, who were studying architecture at the Dresden Technical University, founded the artists' group *Die Brücke*. Breaking with the Naturalism of the nineteenth century, they collectively developed a new concept of painting that foregrounded the free handling of form and colour as the primary means of expression. Redolent of a reaction against 'civilised' society and moral taboos, Expressionism presented a new image of humanity that met with public incomprehension and rejection.

In the autumn of 1917, the Arnold Gallery introduced Dresden to the works of a second generation of Expressionists. Its leading light, Conrad Felixmüller, held regular 'Expressionist soirées' in his studio, which were attended by Hildebrand Gurlitt.

## Socio-critical Art

The First World War and the subsequent November Revolution politicised society and artists alike. The Dresden Secession, founded in 1919, was seen as politically radical because several of its adherents, among them Conrad Felixmüller, Otto Griebel and Wilhelm Lachnit, were members of the Communist Party of Germany. Following the lead of Berlin Dadaism and George Grosz, artists like Otto Dix and Otto Griebel produced works that showed people on the margins of society – war invalids, homeless derelicts, prostitutes – and that sharply criticised the decay of German society.

Moving in the circles of the Dresden Secession, Hildebrand Gurlitt was exposed to current socio-critical art and actively promoted it in his writings and publications. His speech at the opening of the *Die neue Sachlichkeit* (New Objectivity) exhibition in Dresden in the autumn of 1925 identifies him as a sympathiser with the left wing of the movement that sought to put art at the service of revolutionary ideas.

## Cornelia Gurlitt

With very few exceptions, Expressionist artists' groups like *Brücke* were a distinctly male phenomenon. Among the marginalised female artists was Cornelia Gurlitt (1890–1919), about whom the art critic Paul Fechter wrote 'For this woman, whose name and achievement is known only to a small circle of people, was perhaps one of the greatest talents of the younger Expressionist generation [...], her drawings, lithographs and paintings of the time are among the most powerfully expressive works of those years.'

Cornelia Gurlitt, Hildebrand Gurlitt's elder sister, spent the First World War (1914-1918) working as a field nurse in Vilnius. Her works from this artistically intensely fruitful period capture the multicultural atmosphere of the city, including scenes of everyday life in the Jewish quarter. Under the influence of



Marc Chagall, Cornelia Gurlitt set down a highly personal vision of Jewish life in the Lithuanian capital, a world that most Germans would not have been familiar with. Before her suicide, she appointed her brother Hildebrand as her executor.

### **Fritz Salo Glaser (1876–1956)**

Private collectors like the lawyer Fritz Salo Glaser played an important role in the history of the Dresden avant-garde. Glaser's home was open to artists and writers, and among his many guests was Hildebrand Gurlitt – twenty years younger than Glaser – who admired the collector's works by artists such as Otto Dix, Max Beckmann and Lyonel Feininger. As a Jew, Glaser was excluded from the legal professional association in 1933 and barred from practicing law in 1936. He was forced to sell many works of his collection. In February 1945, he narrowly escaped deportation to the Theresienstadt concentration camp. After the war, he worked as a lawyer in East Germany.

Inscriptions on the reverse identify three of the works shown here as having once been part of Glaser's collection. Wilhelm Lachnit's watercolour *Girl at a Table* was exhibited in 1929 with that provenance. When and under what circumstances it came into Gurlitt's possession remains unclear.

### **Ismar Littmann**

Until his suicide in 1934, the Breslau-based Jewish lawyer and art patron Ismar Littmann (1878–1934) had supported contemporary artists such as Otto Dix, Erich Heckel, Käthe Kollwitz, Otto Mueller and Max Pechstein and put together a substantial art collection. Anti-Semitic laws passed in April 1933 to curtail 'Jewish activity' in the legal profession robbed him of his livelihood. After his death, his widow consigned 156 works to the Jewish-owned Max Perl auction house in Berlin. Two days before the auction, 64 works, among them 14 from the Littmann collection, were seized as 'typical art-Bolshevik depictions of a pornographic character' by the National Socialist Culture Community (the successor organisation of the Militant League for German Culture) and the Gestapo and handed to the National Gallery in Berlin, where, with few exceptions, they were destroyed in March 1936. The two works by Otto Dix shown here, whose provenance could not be established conclusively, may have been part of the Littmann collection.

### **Otto Griebel und Wilhelm Lachnit**

In the years after the First World War, several members of the Dresden Secession abandoned Expressionism in favour of a gritty socio-critical realism, often referred to as Verism. Some of the Secessionists joined the Communist Party, among them Otto Griebel (1919) and Wilhelm Lachnit (1925). Both belonged to a group of artists whose work Hildebrand Gurlitt actively promoted. Gurlitt, who had become director of the König Albert Museum in Zwickau in 1925,



acquired their works and included them in well-received exhibitions, for example *Young Dresden* shown at the museum in 1926.

While neither Wilhelm Lachnit nor his friend Otto Griebel were shy about investing their work with their political convictions, both artists also devoted themselves to a wider range of motifs and subjects. Central to their practice was the human figure. In addition to private portraits, they produced numerous paintings of common types that would have been familiar to them and their audience.

### **Lucrative Deals**

Three years after his dismissal from Zwickau, Gurlitt, now director of the Hamburg Kunstverein, came under fire again. Conservative critics attacked his programme of exhibitions, which focused on avant-garde art. In the summer of 1933 he was forced to resign and decided to establish himself as an art dealer, opening the 'Kunstkabinett Dr. H. Gurlitt' in 1935. The Reich Citizenship Laws, promulgated as part of the Nuremberg Laws on 14 November 1935, classified Gurlitt, whose grandmother was Jewish, as being of mixed race or 'quarter Jewish'. To safeguard his business, Gurlitt made it over to his wife Helene.

Thanks to his excellent contacts with artists, gallerists and collectors Gurlitt quickly became very successful. But Nazi state intervention in the art market was mounting: Membership in the Reich Chamber of Fine Art, made compulsory in 1935, systematically pushed Jewish dealers out of the market. The growing stigmatisation and disenfranchisement of artists, dealers and collectors all around him did not stop Hildebrand Gurlitt from exploiting the situation to his advantage. By 1938 he was buying works from collectors who were classified as Jewish by the Nazi race ideology and who were forced to sell their possessions because they had lost their livelihoods and had to pay discriminatory levies, for example the 'Jewish Property Tax' and the 'Reich Flight Tax'.

### **Edvard Munch**

The very first solo exhibition of the Norwegian artist Edvard Munch (1863–1944) at the Berlin Kunstverein in 1892 caused a resounding scandal. The bourgeois audience was shocked by the unsparing depiction of fundamental human sensations such as eroticism and death, longing and mourning, loneliness and hope. Munch eventually had his breakthrough in Germany in the wake of Expressionism. The artists of Die Brücke found inspiration in his expressive form and psychological depth. But Munch was also co-opted by ideologists seeking to promote ideas about Nordic and Germanic supremacy. On the occasion of Munch's 70th birthday, Goebbels celebrated the artist as a 'forceful, single-minded spirit – an heir to Nordic nature.' Four years later, the situation had changed: a total of 82 works by Munch were seized as 'degenerate' from German museums.



## Max Beckmann

For Max Beckmann (1884–1950), the traumatic events of the First World War were a turning point that prompted him to reconsider his work. During the initial period of reorientation, he turned to printmaking to work out the complex and varied characters and scenes that defined his personal view of the world as a stage. His portfolio *Gesichter* ('Faces') shows the artist as a keen-eyed chronicler of his time, unsparing in his observations of post-war metropolitan life and the topsy-turvy world of the Weimar Republic.

The painting *Quai Wall* can be seen as a harbinger of the turbulent times that lay ahead. In 1936, it was shown at the Hamburg Kunstverein as part of an exhibition that was closed ahead of schedule for political reasons. Beckmann left Germany for Amsterdam the day after Hitler opened the *Große Deutsche Kunstausstellung* ('Great German Art Exhibition'), which was intended as an edifying contrast to the condemned modern art on display in the concurrent Degenerate Art Exhibition. Some 28 paintings and more than 500 works on paper by Beckmann were seized from German museums. His last pre-war exhibition in Germany was presented in Hildebrand Gurlitt's Hamburg gallery in 1936.

## The Commission for the Exploitation of Degenerate Art

In October 1938, Hildebrand Gurlitt applied to the Ministry of Public Enlightenment and Propaganda for permission to assist in the disposal of what had come to be regarded as degenerate art. Works thus classified did not conform to the proclaimed Aryan values of Hitler's Germany or had been created by Jewish or politically subversive artists. Beginning in July 1937, a wave of confiscations 'cleansed' German museums of degeneracy. The same month saw the opening of the notorious defamatory Degenerate Art exhibition in Munich.

In the years from 1937 to 1939, some twenty thousand works were seized from more than a hundred museums. The Commission for the Exploitation of Degenerate Art, among its members the art dealer Karl Haberstock, appointed four gallerists – Bernhard A. Böhmer, Karl Buchholz, Ferdinand Möller and Hildebrand Gurlitt – to market confiscated works abroad for foreign currency. Why Gurlitt chose to serve the Nazi regime and its cultural policies that already cost him his job not just once, but twice, remains a matter of conjecture and speculation.

## Louis Gurlitt

Some thirty paintings and sixty drawings by Heinrich Louis Theodor Gurlitt (1812–1897) were found in the collection of his great-grandson Cornelius. As a student at the academy in Copenhagen, he specialised in harmonious landscape compositions. Typical of his work are his panoramic landscapes, which capture the sights of his travels through Scandinavia, Italy, Spain and Greece.



As a result of the Nazi defamation of Modernism, German nineteenth-century art – and, with it, Louis Gurlitt – enjoyed a resurgence of popularity. Taking advantage of the changing tastes, Hildebrand Gurlitt sold works by his grandfather to the Nazi elite and traded them to museums in exchange for works by the ostracised avant-garde.

### **Wolffson Collection**

The photograph of the so-called Menzel wall – thirty-six drawings by Adolph von Menzel (1815–1905) – shows the centrepiece of the collection put together by the Hamburg lawyer and art patron Albert Martin Wolffson. After his death, the valuable drawings passed to his children, Ernst Julius Wolffson and Elsa Helene Cohen. The Protestant family – stigmatised as Jewish by the Nuremberg race laws of 1935 – fell victim to Nazi persecution. While Ernst Julius remained in Hamburg, Elsa Helene fled Germany for the United States with her son's family in 1941. It is likely that the Menzel drawings were sold at the end of 1938 to finance the impending emigration.

Gurlitt acquired a total of 23 Menzel drawings, which he knew to be of museum quality. In 1939, he exhibited them at his Hamburg gallery and offered them at a considerable mark-up to museums and private collectors. After the war, he denied all knowledge of the whereabouts of the works from the Wolffson collection. The drawing *Interior of a Gothic Church* found in the Gurlitt cache was restituted to the representatives of the heirs of Elsa Helene Cohen, née Wolffson in 2017.

### ***Kunstkabinett Dr. H. Gurlitt***

The “Kunstkabinett Dr. H. Gurlitt” can be described as a family business in which Helene Gurlitt played an important role. An enterprising woman, she encouraged her husband to register a business in their home in 1933. She dealt in arts and crafts, while Hildebrand still toyed with the idea of academia.

By 1935, this modest nucleus had blossomed into the *Kunstkabinett*, but its intimate character remained unchanged. Even after the move to Hamburg-Rotherbaum, the couple chose not to have a separate business address. Anyone who wanted to gain access to the rooms, in which Gurlitt curated a richly varied programme of exhibitions, had to ring the bell. This extremely discreet presence chimed with Hildebrand Gurlitt's preference for winning customers in a private and personal setting, but in view of the Nuremberg Race Laws, it also constituted an important safety measure, as did the transfer of the business to Helene Gurlitt in 1937.

### **Circular Exchanges**

Working for the ›Commission for the Exploitation of Degenerate Art‹, Hildebrand Gurlitt not only bought and sold Modernist works from German



museums, he also exchanged them for Old Master paintings. An example of this practice is a complex circular deal that involved six works by Edvard Munch and the transactional services of the Norske Creditbank in Oslo. The Städtische Kunstsammlungen Düsseldorf had already attempted to dispose of Munch's painting *The Way Home* (estimated value of 6000 Reichsmark) in 1937 and eventually exchanged it for the *Portrait of a Seven-year-old Boy* by Samuel Hofmann (1591-1648) from the Rheinisches Landesmuseum Bonn. In compensation, the latter received a painting by Anton Mirou (1578-1621/27) valued at 5500 Reichsmark. The difference was made up by the 'exchange' of two paintings by Robert Pudlich (1905-1962). Taken on their own, neither Gurlitt's account books nor those of the two museums allow for the reconstruction of the transaction in its entirety. It is not until these sources are cross-referenced that the deal becomes clear.

### **Marine Painting**

Marines are a form of landscape painting. Seascapes and marines emerged as a genre in its own right in the sixteenth century and reached a first high point in the Netherlands in the seventeenth century. More often than not, marines are charged with symbolism. Thus the ships in Ludolf Bakhuizen's painting represent the economic power of the Netherlands, whose fleet dominated the Seven Seas during the Dutch Golden Age.

Similarly, Eduard Hildebrandt's exotic *Coastal landscape; Entrance to the Port of Rio de Janeiro* bespeaks Europe's global expansionism. The adage that pride goes before a fall is borne out by Bartholomäus Diätterlin's *Ships in Rough Seas*, which shows man powerless in the face of the forces of nature. The two ships in Edouard Manet's painting seem lost and vulnerable. Sailing across the infinite expanse of the sea, they are the mercy of the impending storm.

### **Old Masters**

The term 'Old Masters' is a collective term coined in the nineteenth century to describe those artists of the preceding periods that were regarded as worthy of emulation. Having lost their erstwhile canonical status in the wake of Modernism, they were once again promoted as role models under the Nazis.

Gurlitt's estate yielded classical religious paintings as well as a number of mythological and secular prints. Among the most important of these are Albrecht Dürer's engraving *Knight, Death and the Devil* and Hans Holbein the Younger's woodcut *The Emperor* from the *Dance of Death* cycle. The two celebrated artists, who had paved the way for the Renaissance in Germany, were co-opted by the Nazis for propagandistic ends. By the same token, Dutch art of the Golden Age was held in similarly high esteem.



## Henri Hinrichsen

Hildebrand Gurlitt's accounts show that he acquired two paintings and two drawings from the Leipzig music publisher Henri Hinrichsen (1868–1942) at the beginning of January 1940. Among them was Carl Spitzweg's drawing *Playing the Piano*, which was recovered as part of the Schwabing 'art trove' in 2012. Hinrichsen's renowned music publishing business C.F. Peters had been 'Aryanised' in 1938, and Hinrichsen appears to have sold the drawing to Gurlitt's Hamburg gallery for 300 Reichsmark after a brief period of incarceration. Hinrichsen and his wife Martha fled Germany for Brussels in 1938, hoping to obtain visas for Britain or the United States. Martha died in Belgium in 1941; Henri Hinrichsen was arrested and deported to Auschwitz, where he was killed on 17 September 1942. When they were asked about the whereabouts of the drawing by the authorities and the Hinrichsen descendants after 1945, both Hildebrand Gurlitt and his wife Helene repeatedly denied that they were still in possession of the work.

## Nazi Art Theft and the 'Special Commission Linz'

After the annexation of Austria in March 1938, the Gestapo seized numerous Jewish art collections, most prominent among them the legendary Rothschild collection. The *Führervorbehalt*, promulgated on 18 June 1938, legitimated Hitler's claim to first access to all looted art. He planned to distribute the works among the museums of the *Ostmark*, the formerly independent Federal State of Austria. Particularly dear to Hitler's heart was the idea of the *Führermuseum*, which he planned to open in Linz on the Danube. In June 1939, he charged Hans Posse, director of the Dresden Picture Gallery, with putting together a collection for the planned museum. This ambitious museum project was never realised.

Hitler gradually extended the *Führervorbehalt* over the entire area of the German Reich and the occupied territories, granting Posse access to vast holdings of 'museum-worthy' looted art. Casting his net even wider, in 1940 Posse began acquiring works seized from their legal owners from fiscal and financial authorities, Nazi organisations involved in systematic looting of art and from the European art trade.

After Hans Posse's death in December 1942, Hermann Voss succeeded him as Special Commissioner. Because Voss took office after the decisive events of Stalingrad and had to consider the very real possibility that the Nazi regime might come to an end, he changed strategy. This reinforced the long-held idea that the principal *raison d'être* of the "Special Commission Linz" was the acquisition of works for the *Führermuseum* and glossed over the fact that the Commission was also responsible for the distribution of looted art to museums in the Reich.

### **Chief Buyer Hildebrand Gurlitt**

By the summer of 1943, Gurlitt was working in an official capacity for the “Special Commission Linz”, buying works in France, Belgium and the Netherlands. According to the Commission’s accounts, in the period between May 1941 and October 1944, he supplied his superiors – and, with them, Adolf Hitler – with at least 300 paintings, drawings, sculptures and tapestries valued at almost 9.8 million Reichsmark. Over the course of that time, the primary focus of Gurlitt’s private and official acquisitions gradually shifted towards prints. High-quality paintings were increasingly hard to come by, and prints were easier and less conspicuous to transport.

The vast majority of objects for the planned Führer Museum, however, came from different sources. Hitler was particularly interested in the Baroque artist Peter Paul Rubens. The Rubens painting shown here originated in the collection of King Frederick II of Prussia, whom Hitler revered enormously. Another favourite artist was Hans Makart, who was profoundly influenced by Rubens, and the Munich genre painter Carl Spitzweg. Irrespective of the obvious differences in their creative practices, for Hitler these three artists represented the very pinnacle of German art and German genius.

### **The Taste in Art of the Nazi Elites**

After 1933, Expressionism as a supposedly ‘Nordic’ and ‘Germanic’ form of art stood a very good chance of establishing itself as the national style. Leading cultural policymakers, among them Propaganda Minister Joseph Goebbels, were in favour of this possibility. However, by 1937, when the defamatory Degenerate Art exhibition was opened to publicly denounce avant-garde art, Goebbels had submitted to Hitler’s anti-modern stance.

For Hitler, true art was closely linked with nature and artistic tradition. He was particularly impressed with the life and work of the Austrian painter Hans Makart, who had risen from a humble background to become a *fêted Malerfürst*, a ‘prince of painters’, celebrated as the ‘Rubens of the nineteenth century’.

Hitler also sought to influence and shape the taste of his leading men with choice presents: Hermann Göring, a passionate huntsman and falconer, was given Makart’s painting *The Falconer* for his birthday in 1938.

### **Frans Francken’s *Sermon on the Mount or the Greed of the Masses***

The works of art acquired for the Special Commission Linz were initially kept in Dresden. As the war drew closer, they were moved to the so-called *Führerbau* (‘the Führer’s building’) in Munich, where they were stored in an underground air raid shelter until they could be taken to the salt mines of Altausee in Upper Austria.

Just before American troops entered Munich, in the night of 29/30 April 1945, the *Führerbau* was plundered by the citizens of Munich. Several hundred paintings



are still missing. One of the works stolen in 1945 is Frans Francken's *Sermon on the Mount*, which Gurlitt had acquired for the Special Commission Linz, probably in Paris, and which resurfaced in 2009 in the TV programme *Kunst & Krempel* (a German version of the *Antiques Roadshow*). It is currently in private ownership. To this day the supposed provenance of the painting from the collection Valerie Honig seized in Vienna in 1938 could not be verified.

### **The Albums of the *Gemäldegalerie Linz***

In the summer of 1940, Hitler's Special Commissioner Hans Posse compiled the first inventory of the planned Führer Museum in Linz. Because the paintings were stored at different sites, the *Sonderauftrag Linz* commissioned photo albums that allowed them to present the current holdings to Hitler.

Every year, on his birthday and at Christmas, Hitler was presented with the latest set of albums. On 21 April 1942, the holdings of the Linz Gallery amounted to a thousand paintings and were thus judged complete for the time being.

A total of 31 albums was compiled. Hitler kept them in the library at Berghof, his holiday home near Berchtesgaden in the Bavarian Alps. The house was plundered in 1945, and only 20 albums have come down to us. The property of the Federal Office for Central Services and Unresolved Property Issues, they are on permanent loan to the German Historical Museum in Berlin.

### **Disenfranchised – Dispossessed – Murdered**

The art theft perpetrated by Nazi Germany may have had historical precedents, but its scale and consequences exceeded anything that had gone before. It was part of a strategically planned programme of extermination directed against the Jews of Europe and underpinned by racial fanaticism and greed. Jews were systematically stripped of their rights, their property and, finally, murdered in their millions.

The anti-Semitic laws, regulations and decrees exemplify the spuriously legitimised mass robbery and murder committed by the Nazi regime. And it was not just the state and its henchmen that profited from this crime against large parts of the population. The photograph of an auction of 'abandoned' household goods, held in Lörrach in 1940, shows that people from all sections of society – the much-touted German *Volksgemeinschaft* – enriched themselves at their former neighbours' expense. Few asked what fate awaited them after their deportation. The reality of concentration camps, mass extermination and 'death factories' like Auschwitz was wilfully ignored and left no discernible mark on the collective consciousness.

The Nazi looting of the occupied territories in Europe is inextricably linked to the Holocaust. The murder of millions of people precludes any 'reparation' in the true sense of the word. Today, more than seventy years after the end of the war,



the stolen assets can and should be returned to their legitimate owners or their heirs. The shameful history of dispossession, deprivation and displacement is forever inscribed in the works.

### **Dutch Painting of the “Golden Age”**

In the seventeenth century, the rise of the Netherlands as the world’s leading economic power fostered a dynamic art market that inspired artists and engendered a veritable flood of paintings. Ranging from dramatic marines and atmospheric landscapes, which often formed the backdrop for biblical subjects, to closely observed genre scenes and detailed interiors, Dutch Golden Age paintings provide a multifaceted picture of a momentous period.

This unparalleled wealth and diversity of seventeenth-century Dutch painting is reflected in the collection put together by Frederick II of Prussia, which set the tone for the acquisition policy of Berlin museums and influenced the tastes of private collectors. Alongside the Italian Renaissance, Dutch art was one of the favourite styles of bourgeois Wilhelmine Germany, and it dominated the Berlin art trade for decades. The enforced sale of numerous Jewish private collections after 1933 offered public institutions and private buyers an opportunity to round out their holdings with high-quality works.

### **French Drawings**

As an art collector, Adolf Hitler sought to emulate King Frederick II of Prussia, whom he admired inordinately. Frederick II was a great connoisseur of French Rococo painting and had bought numerous important works for his picture gallery at Sanssouci near Potsdam. In 1938, Hitler helped himself to choice works from the collections of Alphonse and Louis Rothschild, which had been confiscated in Vienna and which were particularly strong in French eighteenth-century painting.

Thus Hitler was able to augment his museum collection with a series of outstanding paintings. Hildebrand Gurlitt, who was retained by the Special Commission Linz, complemented these holdings with drawings by renowned French artists such as François Boucher, Jean-Honoré Fragonard and Jean-Baptiste Huet. The drawings from the Dresden collection of prints and drawings shown here also went through Gurlitt’s hands. Their provenance has not yet been established, but it is likely that Gurlitt acquired them on the Paris art market – together with numerous other works on paper that he kept for himself.

### **Trade Hub Paris**

By November 1940, Hildebrand Gurlitt was trading on the French, Belgian and Dutch art markets which flourished under German occupation. Here too, victims of the Nazi regime were forced to sell their possessions, which kept the market awash with goods. High-ranking Nazi officials competed with German



museums, art dealers and collectors for outstanding works, profiting from favourable exchange rates and coercive trade deals. The competing taskforces, agencies and buyers from the highest party echelons drove prices to astronomical heights.

Once again, Gurlitt benefited from his good connections. He could travel freely in the occupied territories, raise foreign currency and obtain the papers necessary to take works out of the country. In Paris, he developed a close-knit network of dealers, experts and middlemen, among them Theo Hermesen jr., Jean Lenthal and Raphaël Gerard. Between May 1941 and October 1944, Gurlitt sold at least 300 paintings, sculptures, drawings and tapestries – sourced primarily in occupied France and valued at nearly 9.8 million Reichsmark – to the “Special Commission Linz”.

The contacts he had made with the Rhenish museums as one of the dealers appointed by the ‘Commission for the Exploitation of Degenerate Art’ also proved lucrative. In October 1941 alone he sold several French works to the Wallraf-Richartz Museum in Cologne for 255,000 Reichsmark.

### **French History Painting**

Purging German museums of ‘degenerate art’ left gaping holes in many collections that needed to be filled with new acquisitions. Of particular interest in this respect was ‘classic’ French art of the eighteenth and early nineteenth century.

The Gurlitt cache includes a small group of works by Eugène Delacroix whose history paintings focus on the emotional heft of the event depicted. His fascination with the Orient, its colour and exoticism comes to the fore in his preoccupation with the subject of the *Fantasia*, a traditional Arab military game played on horseback, in which colour and movement converge into a dynamic whole. The studies shown here were produced in this context.

Horace Vernet’s battle scenes, which fuse realism and idealisation, exemplify a different approach. The painting presented here shows the Polish prince Józef Poniatowski (1763–1813), an ally of Napoleon, who drowned in the river Elster near Leipzig during the retreat of the defeated French army after the Battle of the Nations in 1813.

### **Hans (Jean) Lenthal**

According to his business records, Hildebrand Gurlitt acquired forty-two works of art from Jean Lenthal (born Hans Löwenthal, 1914–1983) in 1942. Because he did not bother to describe them in detail, it is impossible to say with any degree of certainty whether or not these works were among those found in Schwabing.



The Parisian art dealer Jean Lenthal was of Jewish descent and was deported in 1944. One of the few survivors of the Auschwitz and Sachsenhausen concentration camps, he returned to Paris after the war and re-established contact with Hildebrand Gurlitt. The surviving correspondence between the two men in the Gurlitt estate shows that Hildebrand's business records are not a reliable source of information. The letters prove that the sales of 1942 were a sham, and that Lenthal had issued fake sales receipts for works he never sold or owned to allow Gurlitt to obtain an export licence.

### **Roger Delapalme**

In the summer of 1942, Hildebrand Gurlitt acquired a group of 38 works from the collection of Roger Delapalme. As deputy director of an insurance company specialising in exhibitions and art shipping, Delapalme (1892–1969), the scion of an upper-class Parisian family, had excellent contacts in the art world and furnished his grand flat with prestigious works of art. Documents show that he acquired a total of 58 paintings and drawings between 1920 and the mid-1930s. His collection, though relatively small, featured practically every key Italian and French Rococo artist with idyllic garden landscapes, picturesque architectural views as well as bourgeois and aristocratic portraits.

The reason for the sale of the collection in 1942 is not known. However, in view of the fact that Delapalme was prosperous, successful and arch-Catholic, a persecution-related loss or forced sale can most likely be ruled out.

### **The Barbizon School**

The fact that the hamlet of Barbizon on the edge of the forest of Fontainebleau became a popular destination for painters and the model for many later artists' colonies is a direct result of the expansion of the French railway network in the 1820' and 30s. The ease with which Barbizon could be reached from Paris made the idyllic village attractive to artists and day trippers.

The works of the Barbizon artists, most of them executed outdoors rather than in a studio, bear witness to the painters' close observation of nature and the store they set by the realistic treatment of colour and light. The idealisation of country life reflects the artists' longing for an existence seen as more authentic than the metropolitan hustle and bustle. Years later, already eclipsed by Impressionism, these pioneering landscape painters came to be called the Barbizon School. Works by the school's key artists – Théodore Rousseau, Jean-François Millet and Jean-Baptiste-Camille Corot – were found in the Gurlitt cache.

### **Impressionism and Post-Impressionism**

The Gurlitt cache also has to be seen as the stock of an art dealer who was more interested in pursuing the ever-shifting art market than in putting together a collection that answered to an overarching curatorial concept. It is this concern



with commercial viability that accounts for the presence of works – for example French Impressionist paintings –which the Nazis denounced as ‘degenerate’, but which were highly sought after on the German art market.

Claude Monet’s work is celebrated as the epitome of Impressionism. The artist was able to capture the magic of the fleeting moment and the transitory effects of light and colour. Fascinated by the way the light and the fog transformed the look of the Thames over the course of a day, he painted a whole series of the motif, working on several canvases at the same time.

Dancers were one of Degas’ favourite motifs. In their spatial conception and composition, the sketches shown here are reminiscent of photographic snapshots. The small sculpted figure has not previously been recorded and could date from the last years of the artist’s life, when his failing eyesight prompted him to work in clay and other plastic media.

One generation younger, Paul Signac launched a new style of painting. Instead of working with smooth colour transitions, he experimented with unmediated dots of pure colour, intended to combine and blend not on the canvas but in the viewer’s eye.

### **Japanese Colour Woodcuts and the Graphic Work of Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec**

‘When I said that Japonism was in the process of revolutionising the vision of the European peoples, I meant that Japonism brought to Europe a new sense of colour, a new decorative system, and, if you like, a poetic imagination in the invention of the *objet d’art*,’ observed the French writer Edmond de Goncourt in 1884. Japanese colour woodcuts had been finding their way into Europe since the second half of the nineteenth century. Artists, collectors and art dealers in France and elsewhere were particularly fascinated by Ukiyo-e woodcuts, the ‘pictures of the floating world’, which are distinguished by striking compositions, sinuous lines, flat perspectives and unmodulated colours.

Equally captivating was their subject matter, which chimed with the modern European artists’ penchant for scenes set in the metropolitan demimonde of amusement quarters and theatres. Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec adopted elements of Japonism in his lithographs and developed an unmistakable style of his own. Like no other artist, he succeeded in translating reality into a new pictorial language that culminated in the depiction of the dancer *Loïe Fuller* in a dynamic swirl of form and colour.

### **Armand Dorville**

The Parisian notary and lawyer Armand Dorville (1875–1941) was a passionate collector and patron of the arts. A member of the board of the Musée des Arts Décoratifs, he was one of the most important supporters of the museum and left it a generous bequest in his will of 1939. The drawing of a *Lady on Horseback* by



Constantin Guys shown here was meant to be part of that bequest. After the German occupation of Paris, the Jewish collector sought refuge at his estate in the Dordogne, where he died in July 1941. His extensive collection was released for compulsory court auction by the pro-German Vichy government.

The sale took place in Nice in June 1942. The outstanding quality of the works – among them the two female portraits by Jean-Louis Forain – and the high prices achieved attracted attention far beyond the confines of the south of France. How and when the three works shown here came into Hildebrand Gurlitt's possession is not known.

### **André Schoeller**

Hildebrand Gurlitt's papers yielded a total of 140 certificates of authenticity signed by André Schoeller (1879–1955). They testify to the important role the renowned art dealer and expert Schoeller played in Gurlitt's Paris network. However, as in the drawing *La Promeneuse (Lady Strolling)* by Georges Seurat, it is not always clear whether Schoeller merely appraised the works or whether he was also actively involved in their sale.

After the war, Schoeller was sentenced to pay a substantial fine for unjust enrichment, but cleared of collaboration charges because he could provide credible evidence of having been active in the Resistance.

### **After the War**

The Gurlitt family home in Dresden burned to the ground during the firebombing of the city in February 1945. Hildebrand Gurlitt, his wife and children fled to Aschbach in Upper Franconia – taking with them several boxes of art. For the next three years, they stayed at Pölnitz Manor, where Baron Gerhard von Pölnitz had also provided a refuge for Karl Haberstock, another art dealer who had worked for the “Special Commission Linz”. The works of art in Gurlitt's possession were confiscated by the Allies and taken to the Central Collection Point in Wiesbaden, where they were stored pending a decision on their legal status. Overshadowed by this investigation and others like it, the relationship between Haberstock and Gurlitt was marked by distrust and the constant fear of denunciation.

Gurlitt did nothing to help clarify the provenance of the works in his possession; he even wilfully misrepresented the facts to prevent restitution of several works. His sworn declaration that his business records had been destroyed and that none of the works had come from Jewish collections or from abroad eventually secured the return of most of the works. He successfully reinvented himself as a victim of the Nazi regime. The judicial process of his denazification at the Bamberg Tribunal was eventually discontinued.



There is nothing in Gurlitt's papers to suggest he ever had any second thoughts about his role as an art dealer in the 'Third Reich'. He continued to profit from the close contacts he had established with institutions and collectors in the Rhineland and went on to become director of the Düsseldorf Kunstverein in 1948.

### **Honoré Daumier**

The work of Honoré Daumier (1808–1879) is intimately linked to the invention of lithography and the rise of modern journalism. For decades, the artist satirised French politics and everyday life in biting caricatures. Although his newspaper work commanded high fees, it was not until after his death that he was finally recognised as an artist and began to exercise a strong influence on modernism.

Daumier's prints, on the other hand, had always attracted collectors. Inexpensive, printed in large editions and richly varied in subject matter, they were popular not just in France but also with German collectors. Hildebrand owned a sizable group of Daumier lithographs. During the war years, his stock of prints and drawings grew exponentially, which caused storage problems after the flight from Dresden: 'The situation is truly intolerable – the books are stacked in piles all over the floor and the prints and pictures go to ruin in the dust,' he complained in a letter of 1948.

### **The Female Nude**

The human body has always been a central theme of art. More than any other motif, the nude reflects humanity's view of itself, its ideals, fears and dreams. In his sculptures, Rodin undermined tradition and the classic ideals of beauty, bringing inner turmoil and experience into focus on the tactile surface of his works. Expressive poses and the stylistic device of the seemingly incomplete or fragmented further emphasise the materiality of his sculptures and their raw, handmade character.

Rooted in the classical tradition, Aristide Maillol is seen as the polar opposite of Rodin. The harmonious proportions and calm poses of his female nudes also found favour with the Nazi elites. The erotic appeal of the nude has long been cloaked in mythological or allegorical motifs, for example the figure of Venus. Picasso dropped that pretence, albeit in the discreet medium of printmaking, and made the sexual act itself the central motif of many of his works.

### ***Wagon in the Dunes* by Max Liebermann**

On his own initiative and entirely independent of his commitment to the "Commission for the Exploitation of Degenerate Art", Gurlitt bought four paintings by Max Liebermann from the Kunsthalle Hamburg in 1941. Three of these he sold to private collectors in Hamburg – Georg Glaubitz, Otto Hübener and Hermann F. Reemtsma. *Wagon in the Dunes* remained with Gurlitt until it was



seized by the Allies in Aschbach in 1945 and sent to the Central Collecting Point in Wiesbaden.

In the Winter of 1945, when Carl Georg Heise, the new director of the Kunsthalle Hamburg, approached Gurlitt about the names of the buyers, Gurlitt offered to return *Wagon in the Dunes* to the Kunsthalle as a present – ‘as a voluntary expression of goodwill’. He probably hoped that this generous gesture would impress the Allies and persuade them to return the works they had confiscated.

### **Max Braunthal**

Rarely is the most important clue to a work’s provenance as conspicuous as in this self-portrait by Max Liebermann which bears a dedication to Max Braunthal. Braunthal (1878–1946) was a successful entrepreneur who ran a large department store for women’s clothing in Frankfurt on the Main and put together an art collection. He sold his business in 1924 and moved to France with his family in 1929. Some works of his collection were sold in the 1930s to secure the family’s livelihood, others were seized after the German occupation of Paris. When and how the Liebermann self-portrait shown here came into Gurlitt’s possession remains unclear. Braunthal and his wife were arrested in 1942 and temporarily interned. Thanks to friends in high places, they narrowly escaped deportation and went into hiding in the French countryside under false identities. They returned to Paris after the liberation.

For the painter Max Liebermann, who had always considered himself as a Prussian patriot of the Jewish faith, the Nazis’ rise to power was an existential turning point. Although his works were not condemned as ‘degenerate’, his Jewish heritage meant that after 1938 his works were no longer exhibited in German museums.

### **Wolfgang Gurlitt**

Wolfgang Gurlitt (1888–1965) was a renowned art dealer, publisher and collector who promoted avant-garde artists like Oskar Kokoschka, Lovis Corinth and Alfred Kubin. After 1933, like his cousin Hildebrand, he profited from the criminal activities of the Nazi regime and successfully offered his services to the campaign against ‘degenerate art’ and to the Special Commission Linz.

After the war, Wolfgang Gurlitt was able to draw on his substantial private collection to set up one of the most important modern art museums in Austria. The *Neue Galerie der Stadt Linz – Sammlung Wolfgang Gurlitt* opened in 1948. Five years later, in 1953, the city of Linz acquired the Gurlitt collection, which encompassed works by Gustav Klimt, Egon Schiele, Oskar Kokoschka, Emil Nolde and Max Pechstein. Since then, several of the works have turned out to have been looted. Today, the remainder of the collection forms part of the Lentos Kunstmuseum Linz.



### **Hildebrand Gurlitt as Director of the Düsseldorf Kunstverein**

Having taken office as director of the Düsseldorf Kunstverein on 15 January 1948, Hildebrand Gurlitt once again held a prestigious position in the German art world.

The Kunstverein, founded in 1829, is one of the oldest and biggest in Germany. As its new director, the energetic Gurlitt was able to draw on a large network of contacts and – for the first time in his career – to work without political pressure. In the provisional gallery space in the ruined kunstverein building on Grabbeplatz, he launched an ambitious, modern exhibition programme focusing on German and European top artists, among them Chagall, Beckmann, Maillol, Renoir and Liebermann. He sought to reacquaint German post-war audiences with the ‘old’ avant-garde and succeeded in doubling the membership of the kunstverein and in establishing its reputation both nationally and internationally. Until his death in 1956, he put together some seventy exhibitions, which were well received by the public and by the new political and cultural elites.

### **Gustave Courbet**

Among the paintings found in the Gurlitt cache are several works by Gustave Courbet, some of them quite large. Their authenticity is difficult to judge, partly because the painter employed numerous assistant who worked in their master’s style. It is assumed that *Rocks near the Loue* was largely painted by Maurice Ordinaire and that any involvement by Courbet himself is confined to a few corrections.

The other painting shows *Jean Journet* (1799-1861), a self-appointed apostle of the French proto-Socialist Charles Fourier, in the guise of an itinerant preacher. The differences between the painting shown here and a photograph of the original, which has long been believed lost, suggested that the painting in the Gurlitt cache was a fake or a hitherto unknown second version. However, a more detailed examination of the painting before the opening of the exhibition revealed extensive retouching to the sky that could also have led to changes in the silhouettes of the tree and the figure on the right. In view of these findings, the painting has been judged authentic.

### **Chalk Lithographs by Oskar Kokoschka**

Large-edition prints pose a considerable problem for provenance researchers because the same concrete motif exists in several copies. There are a number of markers – among them signature, numbering, collectors’ stamps, inscriptions – that help establish the identity of specific prints, but in their absence, it is almost impossible to establish a secure provenance.

A case in point are the thirty chalk lithographs shown here. The prints are based on a series of portrait drawings of Kamilla Swoboda, the wife of the Viennese art



historian Karl Maria Swoboda, which Oskar Kokoschka (1886–1980) had made during musical soirées at the couple’s home in 1920. Kokoschka sought to capture Kamilla’s changing expression and emotional response to the music. In 1921, the Viennese publisher Richard Lányi issued ten of these studies in a portfolio with the title *Variations on a Theme. Homage to Kamilla Swoboda*. The introduction was written by the art historian Max Dvořák.

### **Kamilla Swoboda and Richard Lányi**

The history of these lithographs is intimately tied up with the fate of two victims of the Nazi regime.

Kamilla Swoboda, born in 1885 southern Bohemia, was the wife of the art historian Karl Maria Swoboda. In 1938, she fled Vienna for Prague, where she was arrested by the Gestapo in May 1942 and deported to the Theresienstadt concentration camp and from there to Lublin (Majdanek). There is no further record of her fate.

Richard Lányi was born in Vienna in 1884 and established himself as a book dealer and publisher. After the so-called *Anschluss*, the German annexation of Austria in 1938, he shared the fate of many Jewish business owners: his bookshop was ‘Aryanised’, and its lawful owner murdered in Auschwitz in 1942.

### **The Question of Authorship**

The global art market has always been dogged by forgeries. These can be identified in a number of different ways. Scientific methods allow for the examination of paints and their historicity, while stylistic studies try to identify the characteristic ‘hand’ of the artist. The application of these methods ruled out Marc Chagall as the author of the *Allegorical Scene* shown here. In the case of the drawings attributed to Auguste Rodin they even allowed for the identification of the forger. The painting *Rocks near the Loue*, on the other hand, is a borderline case; the work was executed by a pupil of Gustave Courbet, but the master may have intervened with corrections.

Provenance research offers another avenue to establish the authenticity of a work. The seamless history of its derivation does, after all, begin in the artist’s studio. For this reason, forgers often try to imitate an existing original and to usurp its established history. An example of this strategy are the *Bathers* in the style of Edgar Degas, which were probably based on an illustration in the catalogue of the artist’s estate. The copies after Oskar Schlemmer, on the other hand, were probably not made with the intention to deceive, but out of genuine admiration for the original.



### **Still Life Painting**

It is not by accident that after 1600 European still life painting flourished above all in the Netherlands and Flanders. Nowhere else did flowers play as important a role in art and everyday life as in seventeenth-century Holland. Exotic fruit, decorative plants and, above all, elaborate flower arrangements and bouquets were the outward trappings of great luxury. Their depictions offered aesthetic pleasure, but at the same time, they acted as a reminder of the brevity of life and the transience and ultimate futility of all earthly pleasure and pursuits. The fact that the depiction of 'still' objects such as flowers, fruit, marine animals, porcelain or cooking utensils ranked at the very bottom of the academic hierarchy of genres did not make still life paintings any less popular with collectors.

Late nineteenth-century artists found that still life painting offered them great scope for experimentation: Courbet and Manet dispensed with elaborately detailed naturalism in favour of purely painterly qualities such as colour, surface structure and light.



## Chronology of the Gurlitt art trove

**22 September 2010** Following customs checks in a train, the Department of Public Prosecution in Bavaria begins an investigation into the affairs of Cornelius Gurlitt on grounds of suspected tax evasion.

**28 February – 2 March 2012** The flat of Cornelius Gurlitt in Munich is searched and the artworks discovered there are confiscated.

**3 November 2013** The public learns of the „Schwabing art trove“ following an article in Focus magazine. It is claimed that many of the works are looted art; the details regarding the value of the collection are wildly exaggerated.

**11 November 2013** The *Schwabing art trove task force* starts work. During the following weeks the confiscated works will be published on [lostart.de](http://lostart.de).

**11 February 2014** Cornelius Gurlitt's lawyers announce that a large number of further artworks have been found in Gurlitt's house in Salzburg.

**7 April 2014** Cornelius Gurlitt reaches an agreement with the Free State of Bavaria and the Federal Republic of Germany regarding the further treatment of the artworks in his possession. He agrees that the collection should be investigated by the 'task force' and expresses his willingness to retribute those artworks which are proven to be looted art in accordance with the Washington Principles.

**6 May 2014** Cornelius Gurlitt dies at the age of 81 in Munich. The following day the Stiftung Kunstmuseum Bern announces that Gurlitt had made it his sole heir in his will.

**24 November 2014** The Kunstmuseum Bern accepts the legacy.

**1 January 2015** The German Lost Art Foundation, which had been formed by the Federal Government, the Länder and the leading local government authorities on the initiative of the Federal Minister for Culture, Prof. Monika Grütters, takes up its duties.

**28 April 2015** On behalf of various family members Uta Werner, Cornelius Gurlitt's cousin, lodges an appeal against the granting of probate to the Kunstmuseum Bern. It is claimed that at the time when he made his will, Gurlitt was no longer capable of doing so and that the legal heirs should inherit his estate instead of Bern.

**13 May 2015** Max Liebermann's painting *Riders on the Beach* (*Reiter am Strand*) is restituted to the descendants of David Friedmann.



**15 May 2015** The painting *Seated Woman (Sitzende Frau)* by Henri Matisse is restituted to the descendants of Paul Rosenberg.

**14 January 2016** The Task Force presents its final report. Researchers subsequently take up the project Provenance Research Gurlitt for the German Lost Art Foundation.

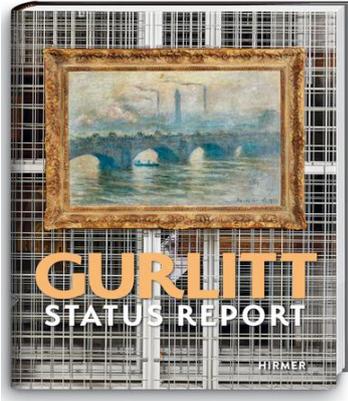
**15 December 2016** The Regional Appeal Court in Munich rejects the objection to Gurlitt's will: Bern is confirmed as heir to the estate.

**20 February 2017** Adolph von Menzel's drawing *Interior of a Gothic Church (Inneres einer gotischen Kirche)* is restituted to the descendants of Elsa Helene Cohen.

**18 May 2017** The Federal German government announces that the painting *The Seine and the Louvre (Die Seine und der Louvre)* by Camille Pissarro has been restituted.

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## Current and Upcoming Exhibitions

### **FERDINAND HODLER**

**Early Modern Artist**

**until 28 January 2018**

Ferdinand Hodler (1853–1918) is one of the most important and most successful artists of the early twentieth century. Celebrated alongside Edvard Munch and Gustav Klimt as a key representative of Symbolism and Art Nouveau, he developed a distinctive style of his own. Hodler's predilection for ornament, his formal repetitions, strong contour lines and idiosyncratic palette were hailed as novel and original by contemporary critics, and his impressive monumental works with their emphasis on large areas of flat colour and clear outlines met with great interest, particularly in Germany.

With more than hundred paintings and numerous drawings, the exhibition is the first comprehensive retrospective of the artist to be shown in Germany in almost twenty years. It sheds light on Hodler's career – training, travels abroad, participation in competitions, scandals and exhibitions – and presents works from the genres of landscape, portrait, figure and history painting.

### **WEATHER REPORT**

**About Weather Culture and Climate Science**

**until 4 March 2018**

The weather – beautiful and threatening in equal measure – is always with us. Weather is climate made tangible, and the record of weather patterns over a period of thirty years can be read as a climate trend. Weather and climate determine our life and survival on earth. The exhibition asks to what extent short-term weather events and long-term climate change influence human civilisation and culture. Adopting an interdisciplinary approach to this highly topical subject, we are showing a wide range of objects, spanning art, cultural history and science from all over the world. Amongst many others the show includes art works by John Constable, William Turner, Gustave Courbet and Otto Modersohn, as well as scientific treasures by Otto von Guericke, Daniel Fahrenheit and Alfred Wegener. The history of meteorology and current aspects of global climate change play a central role in the exhibition.

The exhibition is divided into twelve spaces that describe different elements and phenomena of the weather as they unfold over the course of an eventful day – from a mythically charged dawn to sun, air and the sea in the morning, moving on to fog, clouds, rain and wind in the afternoon and gale, thunderstorm, snow and ice in the evening. The wonder and beauty of the individual weather phenomena and their scientific computation and explanation are given equal billing.



## **FEDERAL PRIZE FOR ART STUDENTS**

**23<sup>rd</sup> Federal Competition of the Federal Ministry of Education and Research  
10 November 2017 to 28 January 2018**

The federal competition *Art Students Display Their Works* has been renamed and is now called *Federal Prize for Art Students*. The new name reflects a new conceptual approach. Whereas the biannual exhibition used to show the work of all artists participating in the competition, it will henceforth showcase only that of the prize winners. This closer focus allows for a better presentation of the awardees and their work.

Each of the twenty-four art academies in Germany nominates two of their most promising students for a chance to win the much coveted prizes. An independent jury selects five to eight winners, who will receive a grant to support their work and a catalogue.

The *Federal Prize for Art Students* is sponsored by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research and organised by the German National Association for Student Affairs. Its aim is the support and promotion of young artists.

The design of the poster and the catalogue accompanying the 23<sup>rd</sup> competition lies in the hands of the Hochschule der Bildenden Künste Saar.

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