



**European conference**

**Paris**

**26<sup>th</sup> June 2025**

# **Program**



**European Network of Restitution Committees on Nazi-Looted Art**













## Video statement



**The Honorable Sir Donnell Denny** was called to the Bar of Northern Ireland in 1974 and practised there, taking silk in 1989, until his appointment to the High Court in 2004. He was knighted in 2005. He was the Presiding Judge of the Chancery Division until he retired from the Bench in 2019. He was also a member of the English Bar; being elected a Bencher of the Middle Temple in 2006.

Sir Donnell was the first Catholic to hold the office of High Sheriff of Belfast since Partition when he was appointed in 1983, and has been Chairman of Opera Northern Ireland, Trustee of the Ulster Museum and as a Director of the Tyrone Guthrie Centre and Hearth Social Housing. He is President of the Ulster Architectural Heritage Society and an Honorary Member of the Royal Town Planning Institute.

He has been a member of the Spoliation Advisory Panel since 2000 and has been the Chairman since 2012. In 2023, Sir Donnell was appointed as Chair of the Advisory Committee on the Restitution and Repatriation of Cultural Heritage in the Republic of Ireland.

## Panellists



**David Rowland** is the Head of Collections Policy in the Department for Culture Media and Sport with oversight on Nazi-era spoliation, restitution, Treasure and the Portable Antiquities Scheme.









## **The outcome: restitution of the painting to the family**

The museum's investigation corroborated several elements of the claim, notably: the existence of the painting in the Goering collection, as well as its appearance in the inventory of Kurt Meissner, a dealer listed in the Roberts Commission files on suspected art looters.

Following a thorough investigation and review of the evidence, the Spoliation Advisory Panel has recommended the restitution of *La Ronde Enfantine* by Gustave Courbet, currently in the possession and legal ownership of the Fitzwilliam Museum, University of Cambridge, to the heirs of Robert Bing.

This recommendation carries no implication of wrongdoing on the part of the Museum or the original donor, The Reverend Eric Milner-White, both of whom are recognised as having acted honourably and in good faith, in accordance with the ethical and professional standards of the time. The Museum, which acquired the work in 1951 through Milner-White's generous donation, has preserved and cared for the painting for over seventy years. The Panel commended the Museum for its cooperation and for the stewardship it has demonstrated in safeguarding the artwork, thereby enabling its return to the heirs of the original owners.









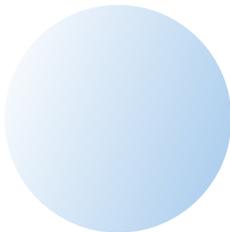


Netherlands

**The Abraham Nijstad case  
examined by  
the *Restutiecommissie***

The Dutch Restitutions  
Committee (*Restitutiecommissie*)  
and the case of Abraham Nijstad  
(1895-1960), a Dutch Jewish art  
dealer who sold works of art to  
the Nazis under duress in an  
attempt to safeguard his family  
from anti-Semitic persecution

## Panellists



The story of the Nijstad family will be shared by family members. Two of **Abraham Nijstad's grandchildren** will be present on stage.



**Dr. Saskia Cohen-Willner** is an assistant-professor of Art History at the Leiden University Centre for the Arts in Society (LUCAS) and a member of the Dutch Restitutions Committee.



**Dr. Floris Kunert** is an historian and researcher at the Expert Centre Restitution of the NIOD Institute for War Holocaust and Genocide Studies in Amsterdam.



**Iris Looman**, is head of the Department of Movable Heritage, Rijksdienst voor het Cultureel Erfgoed (Netherlands Cultural Heritage Agency).

## The Abraham Nijstad case

### Sale of paintings under duress by Abraham Nijstad

Abraham Nijstad (1895-1960) was a renowned Dutch Jewish art dealer and estate broker and heir to a dynasty of art dealers that had been active in the antiques and fine art trade in the Netherlands since the 19th century. Nijstad's grandfather, also named Abraham (1835-1903), founded the business in 1862.



Abraham Nijstad in 1942

During the Second World War, many Jewish art dealers in the Netherlands faced persecution and spoliation under Nazi occupation. Abraham Nijstad was forced by the Nazis to purchase artworks on the Dutch art market for the *Sonderauftrag Linz* (Special Mission Linz), an organisation dedicated to acquiring works of art for a future Führer Museum. Special Mission Linz enlisted Jewish experts to facilitate purchases from private art collections. Many private individuals were more reluctant to deal directly or at all with Nazis, but could sometimes be persuaded to part with artworks if they believed they were selling to Jewish art dealers or would be aiding such dealers in doing so. In return for these activities various temporary exemptions from anti-Jewish measures were granted to such art experts. The duration of the exemptions was never revealed to their recipients in order to increase uncertainty. It was abundantly clear to Jewish experts, art dealers and estate brokers like Nijstad that their own lives and those of their family members depended on the goodwill of the Nazis and the degree to which the experts were able to fulfil expectations. After the liberation of the Netherlands, Jewish experts such as Nijstad faced a lack of understanding about the position they had found themselves in and reproach for seemingly having 'collaborated'.

Despite all his efforts, Abraham and his family were arrested by the Germans in August 1943 and deported to Westerbork transit camp. In late 1944, they were transferred to Theresienstadt in Czechoslovakia, where they remained until their liberation by Soviet troops on 9 May 1945.

After the war, Abraham resumed the antiques trade with resilience and determination. The Nijstad family has continued activities in the art world, carrying on Abraham's legacy.



NK 1759 – *Mountain Lake with Deer and Birds* by A.D. Hondius



NK 2194 – *Landscape with Windmill* by A. Schelfhout



NK 2365 – *Imaginary Mediterranean Port* by A. Storck

## **The restitution request brought before the Dutch Restitutions Committee by the heirs of Abraham Nijstad**

After finding paintings on the website of the Dutch Origins Unknown Agency ([herkomstgezocht.nl](http://herkomstgezocht.nl)), the heirs of Abraham Nijstad submitted an application for restitution to the Dutch State. The request concerned seven paintings, which were part of The Netherlands Art Property Collection (NK Collection).

On 23 March 2021, the State Secretary for Culture and Media asked the Restitutions Committee to issue a recommendation about restitution of the paintings.

### **The Outcome: restitution of three paintings to the family**

After extensive research by the Expert Centre Restitution of the NIOD Institute for War, Holocaust and Genocide Studies, the Dutch Restitutions Committee concluded that it is highly plausible that three of the seven paintings - *Mountain Lake with Deer and Birds* (Hondius), *Landscape with Windmill* (Schelfhout) and *Imaginary Mediterranean Port* (Storck) – were originally the property of Abraham Nijstad and that the sale thereof was connected with measures taken by the occupying forces and arose out of necessity.

Research revealed that all seven of the paintings were acquired in 1943 and 1944 by Special Mission Linz through Nijstad's involvement, which involvement had taken different forms. In certain transactions Nijstad had acted as an intermediary. In three transactions he had purchased the paintings himself and subsequently sold them on to Dr Erhard Göpel for Special Mission Linz.

Based on the research and its findings, the Restitutions Committee issued a recommendation to the Dutch Minister of Education, Culture and Science advising him to reconstitute three paintings (Hondius, Schelfhout and Storck) to the legal successors pursuant to inheritance law of Abraham Nijstad. The application to reconstitute the other four paintings was rejected because it was not sufficiently plausible that they had been Abraham Nijstad's property at the time at which they were sold to Special Mission Linz.

The story of the Nijstad family illustrates that restitution is more than the recognition of injustice and the returning of an artwork. It is also about

keeping a family history alive when artworks are often the only tangible reminders of the victims of Nazi violence. Members of the Nijstad family will be sharing their personal story during the conference in Paris at the invitation of the Dutch Restitutions Committee.



Former residence and art gallery of A. Nijstad, Lochem, the Netherlands

## **The Restitutiecommissie**

The Restitutions Committee was established on 23 December 2001 by decree of the Netherlands State Secretary for Education, Culture and Science.

### Restitutions Committee

#### **History of the Restitutions Committee**

Between 1933 and 1945 the Nazis seized, stole and purchased (exercising duress) artworks, antiques, jewellery and other objects of cultural value from private individuals, art dealers and others on a large scale throughout Europe.

After the unconditional surrender of the Nazis the allies recovered a large proportion of these items of cultural value, particularly in Germany, which were brought back to their country of origin. The recovery was accompanied by the instruction to national governments to manage the art being returned and to ensure it was restituted to its rightful owners or their legal heirs.

In the Netherlands, the Netherlands Art Property Foundation (SNK) was tasked with such recovery and restitution activities. A great deal of cultural material was returned to the original owners by the SNK in the years immediately following the war. Some of the items that were not restituted after the war were auctioned off by the Dutch State during the nineteen-fifties. The remainder was incorporated in the Netherlands Art Property Collection (NK Collection) and became part of the Dutch National Art Collection.

Starting at the end of nineteen-nineties, interest in art treasures that had been looted during the Second World War was rekindled in the Netherlands and other countries. This resulted in forty-four countries signing the Washington Principles on Nazi Confiscated Art (1998). These eleven non-binding principles concern how to deal with Nazi looted art. The Washington Principles call for





## **Restitutions Committee's Tasks and Procedure**

The Restitutions Committee issues recommendations to the Minister of OCW about restitution applications concerning artworks held by the Dutch State (Dutch National Art Collection and NK Collection). The Minister first assesses whether the Committee has adhered to the assessment framework and policy guidelines. Then, the Minister makes a decision about the restitution application based upon the Committee's recommendation.

If an artwork is not held by the Dutch State, the Restitutions Committee issues a binding opinion to the current holder of the artwork and the former owner of the artwork or his/her heirs or legal successors concerning restitution.

All requests must concern an application for the restitution of items of cultural value that the original owner involuntarily lost possession of due to circumstances directly related to the Nazi regime.

### *Research*

After a restitution application has been submitted, a comprehensive investigation is conducted before a recommendation or binding opinion is issued. The Restitutions Committee can call on the Expert Centre Restitution (ECR, part of the NIOD, Institute for War, Holocaust and Genocide Studies in Amsterdam) to conduct an investigation into the historical facts of a case. In essentially all cases, ECR-research into the facts forms the basis for the recommendation or binding opinion issued by the Committee.

### *Hearing All Sides*

The Committee follows a meticulous procedure based on the right to a fair hearing, thus actively involving the applicant or applicants and listening to all sides of the story. Among other things, this means that the restitution applicants and the current holder of an item of cultural value are given the opportunity to respond, within a generous time frame, to the ECR's overview of the historical facts. The Committee also organizes hearings, unless both parties state that they see no need for them. The Committee furthermore



For more information about the Assessment Framework go to:

<https://www.restitutiecommissie.nl/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/DecreeRC2021incl-notes-validfrom24Jan23.pdf>



For more information about the procedural regulations of the Restitutions Committee go to:

<https://www.restitutiecommissie.nl/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/RC-Regulations-6thOct2023.pdf>



### *Related organisations*

**Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands (RCE):**

<https://www.herkomstgezocht.nl/origins-unknown>



**Expert Centre Restitution of the NIOD:**

<https://www.niod.nl/en/research/expert-centre-restitution>

### **To contact the Restitutiecommissie**

Nationaal Archief (National Archives of the Netherlands)  
Prins Willem-Alexanderhof 20, 2595 BE The Hague, The Netherlands  
PO Box 556, 2501 CN The Hague, The Netherlands  
+31 (0)70 376 59 92  
[info@restitutiecommissie.nl](mailto:info@restitutiecommissie.nl)  
[www.restitutiecommissie.nl/en](http://www.restitutiecommissie.nl/en)



Austria

## **The Saul Juer case examined by the *Art Restitution Advisory Board***

The case presented by the Austrian Commission for Provenance Research and the Art Restitution Advisory Board centres on Steve Glauber, a former CBS journalist who lives in New York City.

He will present the story of his grandfather, Saul Juer, whose belongings were gradually expropriated by the Nazis and who was murdered in the Auschwitz extermination camp.





**Mathias Lichtenwagner** is tasked with search for heirs in art restitution cases at the Commission for Provenance Research since 2018. For his master in political science, he looked into Vienna as a center of Nazi military justice, for his PhD he currently working an veterans association of the SS in Austria.

## Panellist



**Dr. Pia Schölnberger** is since 2019, the Head of the *Kommission für Provenienzforschung* (Commission for Provenance Research) at the Federal Ministry of Housing, Arts, Culture, Media and Sport. Pia Schölnberger received her doctorate from the University of Vienna with a thesis on the Austrofascist detention camp in Wöllersdorf. After working at various memorial and research institutions, she joined the Albertina in 2011 as a provenance researcher on behalf of the Commission for Provenance Research. Since 2019, she has headed the Commission as well as the office of the Art Restitution Advisory Board.





Oil painting by an anonymous artist  
*"Portrait unbekannter Militärbeamter im Generalsrang"*, undated.







up the Commission for Provenance Research in February 1998. This new Commission was tasked with systematically examining the inventories of the federal museums, with a particular focus on acquisitions between 1938 and 1945, as well as claims for restitution immediately after 1945. The Federal Act on the Restitution of Artworks from Austrian Federal Museums and Collections (Art Restitution Act), was published in the Federal Law Gazette on 4 December 1998, one day after the adoption of the Washington Principles on Nazi-Confiscated Art, which Austria also signed. The Art Restitution Act enables the restitution of artworks in federal collections that were confiscated or acquired due to, or as a result of, Nazi persecution.

## **Organisational overview**

### **Commission for Provenance Research**

The Commission is set out in Section 4a of the Art Restitution Act, which also outlines its responsibilities. Therefore, the Commission must ensure that all federal collection inventories are included in ongoing investigations. In the case of objects that appear to meet the Art Restitution Act criteria, the Commission creates reports or dossiers for the Advisory Board, including the relevant documentation.

In addition to the Art Restitution and Remembrance Culture Department at the Federal Ministry for Housing, Arts, Culture, Media and Sport, the Commission comprises the Bureau, which serves as the central contact and information hub, and provenance researchers who work on-site at the various federal collections.

These researchers systematically investigate all acquisitions from 1933 to the present day. At the same time, indications/proposals from victims or their families are followed up. However, restitution requests are not a precondition for the investigations – after all, the asset losses in question are related to genocidal acts involving the extermination of entire families and generations, thereby also erasing memories and knowledge of what was once possessed.

Thus, the aim is to investigate all acquisitions since 1933 in terms of their fulfilment of the Art Restitution Act's criteria. In cases of suspicion or upon third-party requests for return, dossiers will be compiled for the Art Restitution Advisory Board.











**To contact the *Kommission für Provenienzforschung***

**Federal Ministry for Housing, Arts, Culture, Media and Sport**

Pia Schölnberger, Head of the Department for Art Restitution and  
Remembrance Culture, Concordiaplatz 2, 1010 Vienna, Austria

[pia.schoelnberger@bmwkms.gv.at](mailto:pia.schoelnberger@bmwkms.gv.at)

**Commission for Provenance Research** at the Federal Ministry for Housing,  
Arts, Culture, Media and Sport, c/o Bundesdenkmalamt, Hofburg,  
Säulenstiege, 1010 Vienna, Austria

[provenienzforschung@bda.gv.at](mailto:provenienzforschung@bda.gv.at)



Germany

## Discussion with the *Beratende Kommission* and the Jewish Claims Conference

### Panellists



**Prof. Dr. Wolf Tegethoff** is the Deputy Chair of the *Beratende Kommission*. From 1991 to 2017, he was appointed Director of the *Zentralinstitut für Kunstgeschichte* (Central Institute of Art History), and he got guest professorships in Bonn, Haifa and Venice: since 2000, he is an honorary professor at the Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München.



**Rüdiger Mahlo** is the representative of the Jewish Claims Conference in Europe. He chairs the board of directors of Jewish Digital Recovery Project JCRP creating a database of Jewish art collectors and Jewish artists in Europe. Rüdiger Mahlo is also a member of the Board of Directors of the *Deutsches Zentrum Kulturgutverluste*.



## **The Jewish Claims Conference**

The Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany (Claims Conference) is a nonprofit organization with offices in New York, Israel, and Germany, dedicated to securing material compensation for Holocaust survivors worldwide.

Established in 1951 by representatives of 23 major international Jewish organizations, the Claims Conference negotiates and distributes funds to individuals and institutions, while also working to recover Jewish property looted during the Holocaust.

Since negotiations began in 1952, the German government has paid approximately \$90 billion in reparations to individuals who suffered persecution under the Nazi regime — the result of sustained efforts by the Claims Conference, which began advocating for survivors in 1951 through its initial talks with West Germany.

Over 68 years later, the Claims Conference continues to engage annually with German government officials to develop and expand programs that support Holocaust survivors. The organization firmly believes that acknowledging the suffering endured by survivors through symbolic payments remains a moral imperative.

## **Beratende Kommission im Zusammenhang mit der Rückgabe NS-verfolgungsbedingt entzogenen Kulturguts, insbesondere aus jüdischem Besitz**



### **Beratende Kommission NS-Raubgut**

The independent Advisory Commission on the return of cultural property seized as a result of Nazi persecution, especially Jewish property, was established in 2003 by the Federation, Länder and national associations of local authorities to mediate in case of disputes over the restitution of Nazi-confiscated cultural property.

In this way, the Federation, Länder and national associations of local authorities implemented no. 11 of the Washington Principles, which encourage nations “to develop national processes to implement these principles, particularly as they relate to alternative dispute resolution mechanisms for resolving ownership issues”.

The Commission may be called upon by institutions and private persons in case of disputes concerning the restitution of cultural property seized by the Nazis, if both parties agree to mediation by the Commission. Cases before the Commission are conducted according to its rules of procedure. To resolve differences of opinion, the Commission may make recommendations which are not legally binding. For example, it may recommend restitution of the cultural property or restitution against payment of compensation; it can also recommend that the cultural property remain with the current holder in exchange for compensation payment, or advise against restitution.

The Commission comprises up to ten members. Members are independent persons with legal, ethical, cultural and historical expertise who do not hold a prominent political office. Members of the Commission act in an honorary capacity. They are appointed by the Federal Government Commissioner for Culture and the Media in agreement with the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the Länder (KMK) and the national associations of local authorities.

The Advisory Commission has its own office in Berlin, which reports directly to the Chair of the Commission.



**Prof. Dr. Hans-Jürgen Papier** is the Chairman of the Beratende Kommission.

From 2002 to 2010, he was President of the Bundesverfassungsgericht, and from 1991 to 1998, he was Chair of the *Unabhängige Kommission zur Überprüfung des Vermögens der Parteien und Massenorganisationen der DDR*.

Before that, he worked as Deputy Chair of the ethics committee of the Bayerische Landesärztekammer.

## To contact the Beratende Kommission

Seydelstraße 18  
10117 Berlin  
+49 (0) 30 233 8493 90  
[geschaeftsstelle@beratende-kommission.de](mailto:geschaeftsstelle@beratende-kommission.de)  
[www.beratende-kommission.de](http://www.beratende-kommission.de)









## The case of Henry Torrès









### Restitution to the Torrès heirs

Since 2021, numerous other copies from various German libraries have been found and catalogued and are now ready to be returned.

220 works in total from the Henry Torrès library have been identified in German libraries. These are mainly books donated in the 1920s and 1930s, bearing handwritten dedications by their authors. Most are political or historical works, but there are also literary and theatrical works. Some of the authors were themselves Jewish or shared Torrès's communist or patriotic convictions.

Dedications often refer to his status as a lawyer, calling him 'Master'. Several authors address him as a personal friend. The writer Claire Goll is the only woman identified among these dedicatees, with two works. Two autographed volumes have also been found in the hands of Blaise Cendrars, whom Torrès refers to in his memoirs as his 'dear friend', and Francis Carco.











### **To open a claim**

A first form available on the CIVS website is dedicated to the victims of spoliation, their heirs or their beneficiaries. This form enables to refer the matter to the CIVS, so that it can recommend the appropriate reparation, restitution or compensation measures.

A second form also available on the website is dedicated to institutions (museum, library, private individual, etc.) that have one (or more) items of cultural property that may have been spoliated in the context of anti-semitic persecution, and the question of its restitution has arisen. This form enables to refer the matter to the CIVS in order to obtain a ruling under about a potential restitution to the spoliated person or their heirs.

Both forms, completed, signed and accompanied by the documents indicated, can be sent to the CIVS by e-mail - [renseignement@civs.gouv.fr](mailto:renseignement@civs.gouv.fr) - or by post: CIVS, 20 AVENUE DE SEGUR, TSA 20718, 75334 PARIS CEDEX 07, FRANCE. This is equivalent to a referral to the Commission.

### **To contact the CIVS**

TSA 20718 - 75334 PARIS CEDEX 07

+ 33 (0)1 42 75 68 32

[renseignement@civs.gouv.fr](mailto:renseignement@civs.gouv.fr)

[www.civs.gouv.fr](http://www.civs.gouv.fr)









practice, and specified the procedures, while respecting the specific characteristics of each structure.

In 2019, the five European committees for the restitution of Nazi-looted art met in Paris for the first time as a network. This meeting marked the start of a cycle of cooperation that is enriching for the members of the committees themselves, as well as for the claimants or heirs whose compensation claims they handle. This dynamic has continued over the years, with new meetings in London, Berlin and Amsterdam.

In accordance with the Washington Principles (1998), the member countries of this network see the search for looted assets as a cross-border and cross-cultural undertaking, which must be progressive and transparent, open to the observation and proposals of looted persons, their families and heirs, Jewish organisations, NGOs and specialists. This effort of exchange, standardisation of practices and transparency is necessary in order to consolidate and improve the mechanisms put in place in each of the countries concerned.

Over the past five years, the network has established itself as a source of hope and progress for claimants, heirs and provenance researchers. By promoting unprecedented transparency, we have ensured that families navigating the complex paths of restitution have access to clearer and more accessible informations and processes. Our work has enabled these voices to be heard and their stories to be recognised, affirming our commitment to memory.

Five years later, on 1 October 2024, the network met again in Paris. This very productive day gave us the opportunity to look back over the five years of the network's existence, but also to discuss our prospects for the future. There is more to come, including the expansion of the network, the deepening of our relationships, workshops to compare our case handling methods and much more.

Organised based on an initiative from the European network, the conference '*Recovered memories*' highlights the experiences and stories of victims of spoliation and their families.







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**In Europe, victims' families, researchers, institutions and restitution committees are working to ensure that cultural property looted between 1933 and 1945 return to its rightful owners. The German, English, Austrian, Dutch and French restitution committees are debating the issue and giving a voice to the heirs of looted victims.**



**European Network of Restitution Committees on Nazi-Looted Art**