

PRESS RELEASE

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Greater openness and interconnectivity in provenance research: German Lost Art Foundation launches English version of its website Proveana

The German Lost Art Foundation has launched the most comprehensive provenance research database in Germany to date: Proveana, which now offers a user interface in English. At www.proveana.de, it is possible to search the results of research projects funded to date by the Foundation and its predecessor, the Bureau for Provenance Research, as well as data and reports on provenance research relating to the “Gurlitt art trove”. All information contained on the website Proveana is available in English, provenance reports are published in the original (German) version.

Monika Grütters, Minister of State for Culture and the Media, said “The launch of the Proveana database is a milestone in provenance research. The German Lost Art Foundation’s new database will improve the transparency and, in particular, the interconnectivity of numerous research findings. This is an important step forward in the process of dealing with the legacy of Nazi-looted art. The knowledge base enhanced by Proveana is a major asset for science and research in museums, collections, libraries and archives, as well as for many provenance researchers. Proveana is also intended for individuals whose cultural property was seized and their descendants. It is therefore a further useful resource directly aimed at all those on whom we must continue to focus our full attention and all our efforts—the victims of Nazi art theft and their families.”

The newly launched database is designed for continual expansion: an editorial team will constantly add new information and update it. In terms of content, the new database is built on four pillars. It brings together research findings from the four areas funded by the Foundation: Nazi-looted art, items lost during wartime, cultural goods confiscated in the Soviet Occupation Zone and the GDR, and cultural goods and collections from colonial contexts. The main focus is on the confiscation of cultural goods between 1933 and 1945. Proveana provides information about people, institutions, events, collections and objects. There are also additional sources, archived documents, literature and digital resources. “Proveana is intended to become a roadmap for researchers and interested parties,” said Gilbert Lupfer, academic director of the German Lost Art Foundation. “The database will be open to researchers and also to those directly affected so they can carry out their own research.”

The idea behind Proveana is for the database to summarize and cast light on the findings collated from provenance research projects funded since 2008. It pools research, makes results easier to manage and provides in-depth insights. Of course, Proveana does not claim to be complete. It is meant to grow and branch out, making the results of provenance research transparent and more easily useable. Proveana, according to Lupfer, should “establish new connections, demonstrate opportunities and approaches, and open up new resources for interested parties and researchers and support them in their work. This is always based on our aim of contributing to solutions that are in the best interests of the victims of Nazi art theft and the confiscation of cultural goods.”

Proveana also allows access to information held in the Lost Art Database, which the German Lost Art Foundation operates as well. The Lost Art Database mainly documents cultural property that was confiscated under the National Socialist dictatorship, particularly from Jewish owners, as a result of persecution.

The German Lost Art Foundation in Magdeburg was established in 2015 by the German Federal Government, the federal states and the national associations of local authorities. It is the central point of contact, nationally and internationally, for all matters pertaining to cultural goods which were unlawfully seized and which are now located in the collections of German cultural heritage institutions. The Foundation's primary focus is on cultural goods confiscated as a result of persecution during the National Socialist era, especially property owned by Jewish citizens. The Foundation sees its work as an important contribution towards compensating victims for the injustice they suffered.

German Lost Art Foundation

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