

The Journey of the Paintings

Hitler's cultural politics, art trade and storage during the NS era in the Salzkammergut

The PDF is an English translation of the catalog written in German language for "Die Reise der Bilder" ["The Journey of the Paintings"]

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01 FOREWORD

Greeting: Mag. Michaela Keplinger-Mitterlehner

The text is an English translation of the original text written in German language for the catalog of the exhibition "Die Reise der Bilder" ["The Journey of the Paintings"] p. 6.

Translation by John Cima.

Art is a powerful form of memory, clarification and contemplation and makes an important contribution to coming to terms with the past. The exhibition "*Journey of the Paintings*", which is a valuable collaboration between the Lentos Kunstmuseum Linz and the European Capital of Culture Bad Ischl Salzkammergut 2024, helps one to reflect upon the foregone and draw lessons for the present and future. As the Friends of the Lentos Association, we support the further development of the Lentos in many ways. For example, during the last 33 years of its existence, the association has purchased artworks with a value of some two million euros. We support this project because the catalogue constitutes a sustainable reappraisal of the foregone and the artworks bear testimony to what happened. They should sharpen our sense of awareness and remind us to never forget our history.

Mag. Michaela Keplinger-Mitterlehner
Deputy Director General of the Raiffeisenlandesbank Upper Austria
President of the Friends of the Lentos Association

Elisabeth Schweeger: A somewhat different “Journey of the Paintings ”

The text is an English translation of the original text “Eine etwas andere Reise der Bilder” written in German language for the catalog of the exhibition “Die Reise der Bilder” [“The Journey of the Paintings”] p. 7. Translation by John Cima.

History can never be fully appraised. Nonetheless, accurate recollection does mean repeatedly confronting and reviewing historical events. This is because they create the basis of both our own and the collective self-image upon which we draw in order to possibly be able to better assess the present and open up more rational spaces for action in the future.

Since 1984, Cultural Capitals has constituted a venture, which points to the diversity of European culture, networks the title bearers with each other and constantly reconsiders Europe's positioning in the global system. In addition, it has the task of furnishing the culture of remembrance with its necessary place in society.

During the Second World War, more than any other region in Austria, the Salzkammergut was a trans-shipment point and salvage centre for works of art. Therefore, the Lentos Kunstmuseum Linz has now compiled an exemplary presentation of paintings that were collected, stored, looted, “aryanised”, sold, departed with under duress, extorted, moved and rescued in the Salzkammergut during the wartime period.

In cooperation with the Capital of Culture Bad Ischl Salzkammergut 2024, these circumstances are reflected upon at three different locations. The contentual starting point of the Lentos exhibition is provided by both the art depots in St. Agatha, Bad Aussee, Altausee and Bad Ischl/Lauffen, and the persons active on the spot, while the subsequent travels of the artworks around the world represent the continuation of the “journey”.

In Lauffen, the theme is the systematic theft of art, which has been a well-known phenomenon since antiquity and a means of legitimising cultural dominance. The spectrum of artistic positions on display ranges from an examination of colonial robbery and state-planned expropriations in the Third Reich to cultural genocide through the deportation and destruction of identity-forming cultural assets.

Furthermore, in the Kammerhofmuseum Bad Aussee, the life and work of the German art dealer Wolfgang Gurlitt and his Jewish business partner Lilly Christiansen, both of whom lived predominantly in Bad Aussee from 1944 onwards, are the subject of an exhibition.

The Lentos and its curators, Elisabeth Nowak-Thaller, Birgit Schwarz, Hemma Schmutz and Markus Proschek, deserve enormous gratitude for this comprehensive treatment of a historical epoch, which bears witness to the need to respect and protect our cultural heritage and thus an understanding of the significance and power that art and culture have for people and their civil coexistence. A fact that cannot be emphasised frequently enough.

Hemma Schmutz:

Foreword / The Journey of the Paintings

*The text is an English translation of the original text written in German language for the catalog of the exhibition "Die Reise der Bilder" ["The Journey of the Paintings"] pp. 8-9.
Translation by John Cima.*

The self-representational endeavours of totalitarian regimes have always been aimed at consolidating their own rule and humiliating their defeated foes, whose art and culture they have subsequently appropriated through robbery and annihilation. This therewith leads to a dual extinction, with art symbolising the destroyed enemy and becoming the spoils of war.

Scrutiny of the "Sonderauftrag Linz" reveals the sophisticated apparatus required for this purpose, which involved the employment of museums and institutions, art historians, art dealers and party supporters active in cultural politics, and justifies the reappraisal of this story in an exhibition. Furthermore, the denigration and destruction of contemporary art, the dissolution of independent art associations, the dismissal of directors and the appointment of people with "nationalist" leanings to new positions are events that today we continue to witness repeatedly in various countries. Therefore, I am of the opinion that a fresh look at the past is more than urgently required in order to learn from history and curb cultural-political appropriation in the future.

The Salzkammergut and Linz, which are linked by the storage in salt mines of the works foreseen for the "Führermuseum" in Linz, offer us an opportunity to tell this story of the theft and expropriation of cultural artefacts once again and in a differentiated manner. Elisabeth Nowak-Thaller's proposal for the exhibition "The Journey of the Paintings" enables us to approach in a scientific manner, events that have been dealt with previously in popular culture and present an issue of international relevance for the Capital of Culture Salzkammergut 2024.

In a series of other projects, the museums of the city of Linz have already dealt intensively with contemporary history, which is of particular relevance for Linz as the city adopted as his own by the Führer. The outstanding works of Jewish artists such as Friedl Dicker-Brandeis were honoured in an exhibition in 2022, as were those of Ida Maly. These were women, who met their untimely deaths in Auschwitz and Hartheim, as victims of the Nazi killing machine.

The role and function of the art trade has also been examined and in this regard, the exhibition "Wolfgang Gurlitt" represented an institutional-critical treatment of the history of our museum. On the basis of an analytic examination of Wolfgang Gurlitt by Archive Director Walter Schuster, beginning in 1999 the City of Linz paved the way for the return of museum holdings, which led to the restitution of thirteen works from our collection. Nonetheless, this assumption of responsibility and the transfer of works to heirs or joint beneficiaries can only be understood as a gesture and is incapable of reversing the destruction of Jewish culture and Jewish life.

A project of these dimensions is only possible with the conscientious and unselfish support of independent researchers. Within this context, special gratitude is owed to Birgit Schwarz, who has acted as a co-curator and author of this publication, as well as to all the other authors of the essays in this volume. Elisabeth Schweeger has also shown great commitment to our project and we are most grateful that we are able to realise it within the framework of the Capital of Culture and thus achieve a high level of supra-regional visibility for the exhibition.

The effort and costs required for such an undertaking are immense. We would therefore like to express our sincere thanks to all the sponsors who have made special budgets available: the City of Linz, the Federal Ministry of Art, Culture, the Civil Service and Sport, with special thanks to State Secretary Andrea Mayer for her support of the exhibition, the Friends of

Lentos, who have generously supported the publication accompanying the exhibition, the private sponsors Raika and Uniqua, the National Fund and the Linz Tourist Board.

I am happy and grateful that through joint effort this project has been facilitated and in particular would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to my team at the museums of the city of Linz and the Commercial Director, Gernot Barounig, for their help and support.

Elisabeth Nowak-Thaller: Genesis/or/Birth of an Exhibition Concept

The text is an English translation of the original text “Genese eines Ausstellungskonzeptes” written in German language for the catalog of the exhibition “Die Reise der Bilder” [“The Journey of the Paintings”] pp. 11-15. Translation by John Cima.

The “Journey of the Paintings” commenced back in 2018 during intensive research in Bad Aussee related to our museum founder, Wolfgang Gurlitt. In meetings at the Kammerhofmuseum and during visits to selected villas in the Ausseerland, I became acquainted with the dedicated and experienced cultural worker, Hans Fuchs, a Bad Aussee local. As the founder of the “Ausseer Festsommer” association, long-time director of the KIK cultural initiative, organiser and cultural activist, he not only guided me through Bad Aussee and Altaussee as a knowledgeable historian, but also served as source of exciting brainwaves. During conversations about Wolfgang Gurlitt, Aranka Munk and Johannes Hinrichsen, we outlined project plans linked to the successful exhibition *Wolfgang Gurlitt Zauberprinz*, which took place at the Lentos Kunstmuseum Linz in 2019/20. The discussions and visits resulted in a wealth of hypotheses and not only in connection with further progress regarding a coming to terms with the Attersee region’s dark National Socialist history. Instead, these intentions also concerned salvage depots and controversial issues such as looted art, “aryanisation”, restitution and art protection.

Following the award of the title of “European Capital of Culture 2024” to the Salzkammergut in 2019, we both immediately had the bright idea of a related project. The intention was to illustrate the complex “journeys of the paintings” during the National Socialist era using selected examples relating to the Salzkammergut locations of Bad Aussee, Altaussee, Bad Goisern or Lauffen.

Why for a short time did thousands of works of global artistic significance come to be in the Salzkammergut? And following the successful Gurlitt exhibition in 2019/20, which museum would be better suited to answer this question than the Lentos Kunstmuseum? In addition, the personage of the Berlin art dealer Wolfgang Gurlitt (1888–1965), who chose Bad Aussee as his adopted home from 1940 onwards, resided on the slope of the Lenauhügel with his extended family and later became the founder of the New Gallery of the City of Linz, today’s Lentos Kunstmuseum Linz, meant that both the contentual and the geographical links between Aussee and Linz were virtually given. Lastly, the so-called “Führermuseum”, which was closely linked to Hitler personally and with his intensive involvement designed according to his sketches, was also originally to be built in Linz.

No local museum in the Salzkammergut would have been able to develop and implement such a complicated and, from a loan perspective, technically challenging project, requiring the highest, international museum standards. In addition, well-established contacts and connections were essential for two main reasons. Firstly, in the course of personal discussions, to persuade museum directors and collection heads to grant loans, as this would entail disclosing highly sensitive provenances, sometimes related to works suspected of being looted. And secondly, to arouse their enthusiasm for this equally delicate and highly complex exhibition topic.

In France, the Lentos exhibition project even reached political levels. This was because the so-called MNR holdings (MNR – Musées Nationaux Récupération, literally “National Museums Recovery”), returned from the Munich Collection Point, had basically been subject to a legal ban on foreign loans since 1949. Consequently, in exceptional cases loan commitments are not approved by the respective museum directorate, as is standard practice, but instead must be decided upon by the highest political echelon.

The axis Berlin – Bad Aussee – Linz – Munich provided by Wolfgang Gurlitt’s biography was a first signpost for the “Journey of the Paintings”. For why during the last months of the

National Socialist dictatorship did so many works of art travel between France, the Netherlands, Austria, Germany, Switzerland and Italy in the course of a frequently hazardous odyssey? In fact, what was involved was stolen and looted art that had to be hidden, urgent sales born of necessity that had often demanded a hasty transfer abroad, "entartete Kunst" confiscated from German museums, stored in Schloss Schönhausen in Berlin and sold for foreign currency in Switzerland, and legitimate purchases.

Another frequent cause were the rescue operations involving storage and salvage from museums and public institutions, which were undertaken in order to safeguard the artworks from looting and bombing in the final wartime inferno. Ultimately, the American and British occupying powers transferred thousands of works of art to the Central Collection Points (CCP) in Celle, Marburg, Offenbach, Wiesbaden and Munich. The items thus held in these depots for art and cultural assets, which were established by the military authorities in the Western occupation zones, consisted mainly of the holdings of German museums evacuated for protection against war damage, as well as looted property. The American authorities completed their restitution after the end of the war.

The artworks recovered in Austria were taken to Munich: "In September 1949, the American military government handed over responsibility for securing and returning the Nazi looted art still remaining at the Collecting Point to the German authorities. From 1952 to 1962, the "Treuhandverwaltung von Kulturgut München" (Munich Trust Administration for Cultural Property), then the Oberfinanzdirektion München (Munich Regional Finance Office) was responsible for the remaining holdings, repatriations and cases of unresolved provenance. Today, restitution is the responsibility of the "Bundesverwaltungsamts" (Federal Administration Office)¹, which has generously supported the Lentos with loans.

Hitler's "Führermuseum" in Linz and the "Sonderauftrag Linz" provided the main section and central focus of the exhibition concept. Against this background, the internationally renowned expert Birgit Schwarz from Vienna could be brought on board with her expertise as a curator and scientific author. The task was to reposition scientifically long-held myths about Hitler's "Führermuseum" and clarify handed down historic untruths. This part of the project exemplifies the totalitarian art policy of the Nazi era, as after the denigration of modern art as "degenerate", works were looted, confiscated and instrumentalised in the interests of National Socialism.

During the Second World War, like no other region in Austria, the Salzkammergut served as a transshipment point and salvage location for artistic treasures. Adolf Hitler had works of art stored in the Altaussee salt mine for his planned "Führermuseum" in Linz. Furthermore, the famous Schack Collection was also transferred from Munich to Aussee. Consequently, the most important paintings of 19th century German art landed first in the Altaussee salt mine and ultimately in the emergency depot in the Spitalkirche in Bad Aussee. Herbert Rott, the Director of the Schack Gallery, made it possible for masterpieces from the Bavarian State Painting Collection to be loaned to Linz and in an interesting article, took a scholarly look at the travels of the Schack Collection to the Salzkammergut. Birgit Kirchmayr also supported us with her specialist expertise on the storage activities of the "Sonderauftrag Linz" in Kremsmünster Abbey.

Between 1944 and 1945, Austrian museums also utilised the shelter of a salt mine, the climatically favourable Franz-Josef-Erbstollen in Lauffen, as well as provisional, emergency storage depots such as inns (Gasthof Petter, today Landhotel Agathawirt, St. Agatha / Bad Goisern; Gasthof Engljähringer "Grüner Baum", today the ALIF mosque, Bad Ischl), churches (Spitalkirche Bad Aussee) and castles and villas in the Salzkammergut. While objects from the "Sonderauftrag Linz" were deposited at the Agathawirt, the Gasthof Engljähringer functioned as an office for art historians and restorers, as well as a registration point for the salvage task of the Austrian museums.

¹ zikg.eu/institut/geschichte/central-collecting-point-und-gruendung-des-zi, accessed on 31.8.2023.

Whilst the deposits in the Altaussee salt mine have become widely known, not least owing to hit films such as *“Monuments Men”* (2014) or *“Ein Dorf wehrt sich”* (A Village Defends Itself) (2019), as well as the fact that the former art storage area is still accessible today during guided tours and stands out due to a new scientific design, the salvage operations in the Lauffen / Bad Ischl salt mine have always remained a well-kept secret.

For security reasons, no one apart from Viennese museum employees were allowed to know that in 1944/45, during the secret “Berg” operation thousands of artworks from Austrian museums including the Kunsthistorische Museum, the Österreichische Galerie (today Belvedere), the Albertina, the Liechtenstein Collections, the Ethnological Museum and the Academy of Fine Arts, to name but a few, were recovered from the Lauffen/Bad Ischl mine.

Out of a fear of bombing raids, following Hitler's “example”, the Viennese museums moved their masterpieces to Lauffen and stored them in the safe salvage location offered by the tunnels. Here, miraculously, the works of art survived the war unscathed and except for a few losses were saved! However, as opposed to the mine in Altaussee, the Lauffen workings have in the meantime been abandoned and the mine has long been closed to visitors.

Another section of this complex exhibition recalls the fate of Jewish victims of persecution for which Aranka Munk serves as an example. The Viennese Jewess lost her villa at Marktleite 78 in Bad Aussee due to “aryanisation”, was deported to the Litzmannstadt ghetto along with her daughter Lola and died in the Chelmno extermination camp. The portrait of her second daughter, Ria, who died young, was painted by Gustav Klimt and in 1956, through Wolfgang Gurlitt, became part of the Lentos collection and a permanent exhibit.

This unfinished female portrait was restituted in 2009 and since 1998, a total of thirteen works of art that had been acquired through the two art dealers, Wolfgang Gurlitt and Friedrich Welz, who were temporarily resident in the Salzkammergut, have been consecutively returned to heirs or heir communities. Amongst these were masterpieces from the collection, including the aforementioned portrait by Gustav Klimt, landscape paintings by Egon Schiele and Emil Nolde, and portraits and urban landscapes by Lovis Corinth.

Part of the original exhibition concept was linkage of the local venues in Bad Aussee, Altaussee, Bad Goisern or Lauffen through events at selected salvage sites. This concept was submitted in 2020 immediately after the Capital of Culture title was awarded. Great patience and a long wait were now required and in fact I had already secretly given up on the project, but then quite surprisingly, approval was granted in 2022. Nonetheless, eighteen important months, which should have served research, conceptual and content-related specification and the acquisition of loans, had been lost.

The modifications to the new financial framework of the funding by the Capital of Culture necessitated the reorientation, restructuring and adaptation of the original exhibition concept. Additional contributions from the City of Linz and the federal government had to be fought for, sponsors had to be found and the Lentos Friends Association had to be won over as a project supporter. The long “Path of the Pictures” with many locations in the Salzkammergut became the “Journey of the Paintings”, an international exhibition at the Lentos on the topics of Hitler's cultural policy, the art trade and salvage activities in the Salzkammergut during National Socialism.

The “Journey of the Paintings” presents provenances, travel routes and storage sites in the Salzkammergut on the basis of over seventy selected works of art, including loans that were collected, stored, looted, forcibly sold, moved or rescued in the Salzkammergut during the Second World War. As the provenance captions show, these paintings often embarked on lengthy perambulations through Central Europe in order to be used in the creation of Hitler's “Führermuseum”, or for distribution to other museums in the German Reich, but ultimately became stranded in Altaussee.

This publication is devoted to the myths surrounding Hitler's “Führermuseum” with a wide variety of contributions by sixteen authors and a focus on art dealers. In particular, these include Wolfgang Gurlitt, Lilly Christiansen-Agoston, Johannes Hinrichsen and Theodor von Friedrich, who settled in the Ausseerland and enriched themselves by trading in looted property comprised by works

stemming from involuntary emigration, "entartete Kunst" and "aryanisation". Gripping salvage stories and the latest research on storage at Kremsmünster Abbey are further aspects of this complex exhibition, which was designed by the Viennese architectural and artistic duo of Nicole Six and Paul Petritsch.

Persecution, deportation, repression and obscurity have long been a closely guarded topic in the Salzkammergut. Therefore, in terms of content, the "Journey of the Paintings" fits perfectly into the "Power and Tradition" programme theme of the Bad Ischl Salzkammergut Capital of Culture 2024. This is openly and actively dedicated to the culture of remembrance and the vigorous cultivation of tradition, and poses questions about the power relationships that were characteristic of the region. The Imperial court, the summer visitors, Jewish life and its inhumane extermination by National Socialism, industry and tourism, and also the art trade have all shaped this aesthetic landscape. Accordingly, the catalogue and exhibition project deal with critical issues related to this very special cultural region and exemplify the exploitation of art for ideological and propagandistic purposes, as pursued by totalitarian regimes.

The "Journey of the Paintings" has proved to be the most difficult project in my 38-year professional career at Lentos. In the Neue Galerie and later in the Lentos, I was able to conceive, organise, present and ultimately communicate to the public well over fifty attractive exhibitions, predominantly on modern and contemporary art.

However, the delicate and highly sensitive subject matter surrounding looted art, obscurity, persecution and ostracism, not to mention my approach as an art historian rather than one in the contemporary category, resulted in sleepless nights, endless discussions, tough budget negotiations and many last-minute surprises in this final project before my retirement. Indeed, the "Journey of the Paintings" was a "work in progress" until the very last.

It constitutes an attempt, as tentative as it is daring, to employ just a few works of art from European collections to prevent the major topics of the dehumanisation of art under National Socialism, art protection, salvage and the annihilation of art through acts of war from slipping into oblivion, as these are issues that have been ideally prepared academically, but have been very rarely presented in exhibitions. In the immediate past, bombs and fires have obliterated thousands of artworks from Syrian and Ukrainian collections. However, with the present day in mind, the "Journey of the Paintings" demonstrates that even in the most difficult and darkest of times, art can defy warfare and senseless, destructive frenzy.

02 RUINENWERT.
INTERVENTION
FROM HENRIKE
NAUMANN

Marietta Kesting: Furniture footprints

The text is an English translation of the original text "Die Spur der Möbel" written in German language for the catalog of the exhibition "Die Reise der Bilder" ["The Journey of the Paintings"] pp. 25-27. Translation by John Cima.

The artist Henrike Naumann addresses the politics of interiors that at first glance appear apolitical and with the *Ruinenwert* installation, she deals specifically with the German living room from the National Socialist era as a representative spatial figuration permeated by power and ideology. In the title she quotes Albert Speer's "Ruinenwerttheorie" (ruin value theory), which however referred to urban architecture. In Naumann's work, the interior architecture of the living room becomes a performative space that oscillates between the intimate comfort of everyday private life and aesthetic-political mise en scène for affairs of state and official guests. Cosy homeliness tips over into the uncanny and the ruins of the German living room are haunted.

Amongst other projects, Albert Speer, Adolf Hitler's favourite architect, not only planned the reconstruction of Berlin as the capital of the Reich using neoclassical monumental buildings made of natural stone, but also the redesign of Nuremberg as the city of the "Reichsparteitage" (Reich party rallies) and Linz as the "Führerhauptstadt" (capital of the Führer).¹ Moreover, in 1942 Speer also became the Armaments Minister.

According to Speer in a speech that he gave in the 1930s, he remarked that within the time scale of the "thousand-year Reich", in the distant future he already envisaged his buildings as attractive ruins. However, as the art historian Angela Schönberger has demonstrated, there is no source for this statement and the "ruin value theory" first appeared in print in Speer's memoirs published in 1969.² "They [the buildings] were intended to convey permanence and timeless validity as powerful witnesses to the past and form the bridge of tradition to future generations that Hitler demanded."³ Moreover, the ornamental ruin in a garden or park had already been in use since the Romantic period and may well have also have played a role in Speer's ideas.

The focus of Naumann's re-enactment is on the large hall of the Berghof, Hitler's residence on the Obersalzberg, which served as the reception room of what also constituted the de facto second seat of government. This is because during the Nazi era a certain aesthetic was not only applied strictly to the external architecture of buildings, but also the furnishings of individual rooms. Accordingly, the interior designer, Gerdy Troost, who was a close confidante of Adolf Hitler and alongside Leni Riefenstahl and Winifred Wagner one of the most influential women in the "Third Reich", was responsible for designing the interior of both the New Reich Chancellery in Berlin and the Berghof on the Obersalzberg. Troost was also a juror for the *Deutsche Kunst- und Architekturausstellung* at the Haus der deutschen Kunst in Munich and for Bavaria Film. From the documentary photos of that time, Naumann draws associations for the furnishings of her room, which are often only disturbing at second glance. Upholstered seating is neatly arranged into smaller groups. The tables in her installation are laid, one with a tablecloth for lunch or dinner, but with oversized cutlery next to a tiny-looking champagne glass, thus reflecting the monumentalism and the strangely gigantic scale of the large hall of the Berghof in miniature. What was being toasted here,

¹ Albert Speer (ed.), *Neue Deutsche Baukunst*, Prague 1941.

² Angela Schönberger, "Die Staatsbauten des Tausendjährigen Reiches als vorprogrammierte Ruinen?", in: Henrike Neumann ibid., Andreas Brandolini, *Einstürzende Reichsbauten*, Berlin 2021, pp.13–37 (first published in: Werner Hofmann, Martin Warnke (ed.), *Idea. Jahrbuch der Hamburger Kunsthalle. Werke, Theorien, Dokumente*, Munich 1987, pp.97–107).

³ "Die Trümmer des Deutschen Wohnzimmers. Henrike Naumann im Gespräch mit Andreas Brandolini", in: Naumann, Schönberger, Brandolini 2021, pp.87–109, here p.105.

what kind of camaraderie was being staged? Who was invited to sit at the table and who was unwelcome?

Naumann's re-enactment also uses furniture and smaller objects from other historical periods and the present day, thus deliberately creating moments of irritation in opposition to a musealisation aimed at historical accuracy. Equally, this approach reflects Naumann's self-image as an artist who deals with history in depth. Furthermore, it becomes clear that the investigation takes place in the present with its different styles and fashions, which are spatially distributed on several levels.

In an earlier version of the *Ruinenwert* installation created in 2019 for the exhibition *Innenleben. Njideka Akunyili Crosby, Leonor Antunes, Henrike Naumann, Adriana Varejão* in Munich, some of the furniture employed was provided on loan by the exhibition venue, the former Haus der deutschen Kunst, which was greatly influenced by the Nazi era. In addition, the artist sought and found other used objects via classified advertisements on eBay and in flea markets. She is interested in models and miniatures, and historical toys, and smaller objects from the Nazi era and later periods are also strategically positioned. For example, a small stuffed dog sits on a light blue settee and an antique globe stands on a table, reviving memories of the "parlours" of her grandparents' generation.

For the 2024 *Ruinenwert* installation in Linz, a wooden cradle from 1941 was borrowed from the collection of the Nordico Stadtmuseum. It bears the inscription "Für Volk und Vaterland" in the Fraktur typography initially favoured by the National Socialists.⁴ The cradle illustrates how ideology permeated even the everyday and private spheres. Multiple motherhood and the "production" of nationally "valuable" babies are known to have been particularly rewarded during the Nazi era and even now, today's far-right radicals dress their offspring in rompers with Germania lettering, as could be seen in Naumann's early work *Open Group*. Naumann's artistic work always demands an examination of the (dis)continuities in design and furnishings and the legacy of the Nazi era contained in its concrete, material traces. Political and object history are closely linked and encourage visitors to look again and question their own associations with furniture, objects and fashions that were or could have been silent witnesses.

A wall unit with pointed mirrors symbolises the sublime Alpine panorama that was visible through the windows of the Berghof's hall. The mystical and romantic world of the mountains, full of secrets and mortal dangers, as staged in Leni Riefenstahl's films such as *Das blaue Licht*, is deliberately not shown.⁵ In the first version of the work in 2019, the folk song *Der alte Barbarossa* could be heard from the wall unit, however not in a historical recording, but instead re-staged by Naumann's long-time sound collaborator Bastian Hagedorn, who technically multiplied his own singing to create a male voice choir. In Linz, the wall unit is silent and yet if one looks closely it says a great deal and the current and historical references are superimposed as in a kaleidoscope.

⁴ Xavier Laboulbenne, Aljoscha Weskott (ed.), *Fraktur. Gespräche über Erinnerung in der Berliner Republik*, Berlin 2008.

⁵ *Das blaue Licht*, 1932, Director: Béla Balázs. Leni Riefenstahl assisted Balázs and played the leading role. Following the seizure of power by the National Socialists, Riefenstahl declared herself to be the sole director and ensured that the Jewish-Hungarian Balázs was not paid his fee. See Hanno Loewy, *Das Menschenbild des fanatischen Fatalisten. Oder: Leni Riefenstahl, Béla Balázs und Das blaue Licht*, 1999.

Henrike Naumann in Conversation with Anna Schneider

The text is an English translation of the original text "Henrike Naumann im Gespräch" written in German language for the catalog of the exhibition "Die Reise der Bilder" ["The Journey of the Paintings"] pp. 29-31. Translation by Ian Pepper, José Enrique Macián.

Henrike Naumann's work "Ruinenwert" was specially conceived for the Nazi architecture of the Haus der Kunst in Munich. "Ruinenwert" will be adapted and reinstalled for the Lentos Kunstmuseum Linz.

Anna Schneider (AS): The architecture of the Haus der Kunst (HdK), which was designed by Paul Ludwig Troost and—after his early death—his widow Gerdy Troost and Leonhard Gall, was intended to underpin the narrative of the National Socialists' supremacy. For me, as someone who moves through this building on a daily basis, I experience this monumentality, which is designed to make the individual feel small, in an immediate, physical way. You studied stage design and are aware of—and work with—the enormous influence that spaces and their design have on our mental states. What kind of experiences do you seek to evoke in those viewing your work?

Henrike Naumann (HN): I want to involve those viewing it, to invite them to address subjects about which they perhaps don't feel competent or subjects about which they have already formed a set opinion. It's easy enough to enter into a discussion about furniture, and this makes it possible to handle difficult topics in a new, unconstrained way. In my installations, people may have experiences that sharpen or alter their perceptions of things.

AS: For your installation *Ruinenwert* (*Value of the Ruins*), created for the exhibition in the Haus der Kunst, you expand your repertoire of furniture by integrating original furnishings from the Haus der Kunst alongside used furniture from the 1990s. How did this temporal regress come about, this confrontation with National Socialist ideology, and what about it interests you?

HN: I find it fascinating that, with furniture from the National Socialist era, it is taken for granted that it is somehow evil. As though all you need to do is stare at it long enough to recognize the abysses of the Third Reich in every piece of furniture. The question of the ideology of design is one that interests me very much. In my previous work, I cast a critical eye on the postmodernist furniture of the 1990s, asking myself what it has to tell us about the notions concerning the society that prevailed at that time. I am convinced that contemporary narratives of the times are inscribed into items of furniture, and I seek to interpret and reformulate them.

AS: In the layout of your installation in the Haus der Kunst, you refer to Hitler's Berghof on Obersalzberg, or more precisely, to the great hall, a representative room with a view of the Alps where Adolf Hitler received guests. To what extent did the interior of the great hall serve as a point of departure for your reflections on the staging of power?

HN: In her designs, Gerdy Troost, who was Hitler's interior designer, contributed to delineating an image of Hitler as a prudent and well-read statesman. For a long time, he was underestimated as a result. In 1936, the American magazine *Vogue* even published a feature on Hitler's home life.

AS: You cite the Alpine view from Hitler's Berghof, transforming it into something different. What do visitors actually see in your new installation?

HN: In my installation, the Alpine panorama is replaced by an ensemble of furniture. Here, I carry forward an investigation that began in 2017 with the installation *Das Reich* (*The Empire*). There, in order to speak about adherents of the so-called Reich Ideology, I constructed a Stonehenge from shelving units. These are people who are convinced that the German Reich still exists. According to their revisionist and racist theories, the Greater

German Reich is currently under occupation, and they seek spiritual salvation in German history and mysticism. This was my first attempt to comprehend mass-produced furniture as nature and architecture. In *Ruinenwert*, I have taken these investigations further.

AS: You have mentioned before that the color blue, that blue light, plays a special role in your installation. As early as German Romanticism, the *blaue Blume* (blue flower) was a key symbol. Could you explain what it means to you?

HN: An important reference for *Ruinenwert* and for my reflections on mountains in German history was the film *Das blaue Licht* (*The Blue Light*; 1932) by Leni Riefenstahl. It was her directorial debut, and she played the main role. Hitler became aware of her through this film and decided that she would be the one to supply the Third Reich with images. For an understanding of the cinematic aesthetic and the ideology of the National Socialist era, this film has been very important for me.

AS: You have said that an essential impulse for your work is the attempt to generate awareness of concealed power structures in our society. You often speak about the relationship between East and West Germans.

HN: For me, when it comes to confronting East and West Germany, it's not a question of juxtaposition but, instead, of simultaneity. My installations are 100% material from the East, and simultaneously 100% material from the West. It's all a question of your point of view. For me, it's about sustaining these tensions and contradictions.

AS: You were born in Zwickau in 1984 and grew up there, and therefore experienced the political and social changes which occurred in East Germany as a child and adolescent. Which experiences were especially formative for you, or which ones impelled you to take up the impacts of East-West reunification in your works?

HN: The upheavals of 1989/90 had a huge impact on me. Politically, I didn't understand what was happening around me, but I perceived the transformations occurring in aesthetics with great intensity. And I work with these aesthetics. For me, the climate of the 1990s is bound up indissolubly with this new aesthetic hybrid of German Democratic Republic and Federal Republic of Germany. And it was against this background that I experienced the right-wing radicalization of my former schoolmates. I only became really conscious of how much this had shaped me when suddenly, the 1990s were back again—with the revelation in 2011 of the National Socialist Underground in my hometown of Zwickau. Suddenly, a building exploded around the corner, and the youth radicalism of the '90s had matured into a genuine terrorist structure.

AS: In the West after 1945, the Marshall Plan and the promise of democracy actually was accompanied by tremendous economic improvements, while the change of system in the East was often equated with a deficient economic perspective and hence, also with a lack of personal perspectives. Is the insecurity associated with this, the loss of identity, a central reason for the popularity of a right-wing ideology in the East?

HN: I'm always being asked whether I can explain the "East German soul." That's not my concern, at all. When I say that I'm an artist with East German experience, I do so in order to point out that in Germany there are many diverse forms of experience. The East German is only one. In a biography, an artist from Bonn probably wouldn't say that he has a West German background. That's regarded as the standard. I want to break open this hegemony of experience.

AS: For many artists, the notions of nation and class (in contradistinction to sexual orientation or ethnic affiliation) don't play a major role. The art scene in particular celebrates itself as a cosmopolitan, open-minded, liberal community that exists beyond all borders. At the same time, we're talking about a small group that is able to take advantage of the benefits brought by globalization. How do you deal with that?

HN: People sometimes ask me why I still want to discuss national affiliations at all, since we artists are supposedly at home everywhere – It hardly matters whether we're in New York, London, or Paris. For me and for my work, the fact that we're still moving inside of a bubble, and moreover a Western one, makes the question of alternative narratives all the more crucial. I could never live or work entirely within the art world. The world outside is complex, and I want to address this complexity every day in my praxis.

Anna Schneider's contribution, printed here in a modified form, was first published in the exhibition catalog "Innenleben. Njideka Akunyili Crosby, Leonor Antunes, Henrike Naumann, Adriana Varejao" on the occasion of the exhibition of the same name at Haus der Kunst 2019/20.

03

SONDERAUFTRAG

LINZ – HITLERS

FÜHRERMUSEUM

Birgit Schwarz: The long journey of Hitler's paintings to Altaussee

The text is an English translation of the original text "Die langen Reisen von Hitlers Bildern nach Altaussee" written in German language for the catalog of the exhibition "Die Reise der Bilder" ["The Journey of the Paintings"] pp. 72-79. Translation by John Cima.

"Museen
An Bildern schleppt ihr hin und her
Verlornes und Erworbnies
Und bei dem Senden kreuz und quer
Was bleibt uns denn? Verdorbnes!"*

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, 1816

*"Museums
You lug paintings hither and thither
The lost and won all in one cart
And after the waggonage to and fro
What's left for us? Damaged and ruined works of art!"

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, 1816

Goethe's epigram, written in reaction to Napoleon's art thefts, shows us that owing to the transports involved, art robbery endangers the stolen objects themselves.¹ Likewise, as a rule the paintings that reached Hitler's salvage depot in the Altaussee salt mine at the end of the Second World War also had long and dangerous "journeys" behind them. Such travels commenced in Vienna, Amsterdam, The Hague, Paris, Brussels or Prague, Zurich, Florence, Rome, Naples and other European cities, often under compulsion following their theft or extortion from their Jewish owners. Their journeys saw them pass through several art depots and the salt mine was usually their third or even fourth stop. The term "journey" is thoroughly justified in this connection because special conditions applied to transports on behalf of the "Führer". Packing material, crates for paintings, special wagons, petrol vouchers, lorries, supervision by experts, indeed everything that was in short supply due to the war was available for Hitler's paintings right up to the end of hostilities.

Owing to the experience of the hazards engendered by transfers and transportation, which Goethe addresses in his poem, two institutions were established in the 19th century, which were closely linked to each other and dedicated to the preservation of works of art. These were the academic subject of art history and the museum as a scientific institution. Hitler carried out the Nazi art theft in close cooperation with both bodies. His personal Special Representative was the Director of the Dresden Gemäldegalerie, Hans Posse, which is why the headquarters of the so-called "Sonderauftrag Linz" were located in Dresden. Other important players were the Bayerischen Staatsgemäldesammlungen (Bavarian State Painting Collections) in Munich, the Kunsthistorische Museum and the Institut für Denkmalpflege (Institute for the Preservation of Monuments) in Vienna, and the monument preservationists of the "Ostmark".

¹ Bénédicte Savoy, *Kunstraub. Napoleons Konfiszierungen in Deutschland und die europäischen Folgen. Mit einem Katalog der Kunstwerke aus deutschen Sammlungen im Musée Napoléon*, Vienna/Cologne/Weimar 2011, p. 313f.

The professionalisation of the art theft meant that detailed lists were drawn up before each transport of the artworks with the result that the travel routes and stops can be traced to this day. Even more importantly, professionalisation also ensured that by and large the artworks survived the turmoil of war in good condition. Nevertheless, the question arises as to why the paintings had to complete so many stages in the first place, why they were packed and unpacked up to four times, loaded and unloaded and transported from depot to depot by car, train, trucks and caterpillar tractors.

First stations: Munich/“Führerbau” - Vienna/Central Depot

When Hans Posse assumed his post as a Special Representative in the summer of 1939 to build up the collection of paintings for the “Führermuseum”, he found two stockpiles of pictures in two different locations. Some 900 works were in the “Führerbau”, Hitler's residence as party chairman and “Führer” at the Munich NSDAP party forum (Fig. 1), which the art-obsessed dictator had himself gathered there the previous year.² The second batch was in Vienna and consisted of the Jewish art collections confiscated there following the “Anschluss”. These were processed in the central depot in the Vienna Hofburg (Fig. 2) by staff from the Viennese museums under the auspices of the Kunsthistorische Museum and recorded in card indexes.³ Subsequently, a depot for artworks secured by the monument preservation authorities was added in the Orangery of the Belvedere in Vienna and supervised by members of the Institut für Denkmalpflege.⁴

Posse's task was twofold. Firstly, he was to create a single collection from the two stockpiles for the “Führermuseum” planned in Linz, and secondly, he was to distribute the remaining works to museums in the “Ostmark”, as Austria was then called. The Linz collection was to be assembled in Munich where in front of the original, Hitler wished to make the final decision regarding each individual picture personally. The significance of this direct selection for Hitler's self-image as a collector cannot be overstated. According to the standard formulation in contemporary documents, Posse merely prepared the “Führer's” decision and Hitler made the ultimate choice. Thus, although as a rule he followed the advice of the expert, this complex procedure made one thing clear. Hitler was the collector.

The paintings from Vienna intended for the “Führermuseum” were therefore to be brought to Munich and combined with the Linz selection from the “Führerbau”. In order to be able to present the two parts of the collection together and in a gallery-like form, i.e. hanging, a larger building was sought in Munich and the surrounding area. Schloss Schleißheim and the Deutsche Museum in Munich were considered, but both options were rejected because the palace could not be heated and the space available in the Deutsche Museum was

² Birgit Schwarz, *Hitlers Museum. Die Fotoalben Gemäldegalerie Linz. Dokumente zum “Führermuseum”*, Vienna 2004, p. 35.; same, *Geniewahn. Hitler und die Kunst*, Vienna/Cologne/Weimar 2009, pp. 250–255; same, *Auf Befehl des Führers. Hitler und der NS-Kunstraub*, Darmstadt 2014, pp. 19–38.

³ Birgit Schwarz, *Hitlers Sonderauftrag Ostmark. Kunstraub und Museumspolitik im Nationalsozialismus* (texts of the Kommission für Provenienzforschung, Vol. 7), Vienna/Cologne/Weimar 2018, pp. 34–58, [vrl-
elibrary.de/doi/10.7767/9783205206965](https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:hbz:5:1-63862-p0031-9), accessed on 3.6.2023; Online edition of the card index for the so-called central depot for confiscated collections in Vienna, [zdk-online.org](https://www.zdk-online.org/), accessed on 3.6.2023.

⁴ Schwarz 2018, pp. 85–89.

insufficient.⁵ The vacant building of the Schack Gallery in Munich was also found, but the presentation was postponed until after the war because of the danger of bombing raids.⁶

Transit station: the Gemäldegalerie Dresden

Posse worked for a year on an initial plan for the distribution of the Jewish art collections amongst the museums of the “Ostmark”, including the “Führermuseum”. After its approval by Hitler on 2 July 1940,⁷ he drew up the first inventory of the Linz Gemäldegalerie, dated 31 July 1940. He then set about closing the remaining gaps in the collection through purchases. In the following two years, numerous acquisition trips took him to the occupied countries of France, the Netherlands and Belgium, as well as to Italy and Switzerland.

From there, the paintings, packed in transport crates and cared for by specialist forwarding agents, travelled by train to Dresden to be processed, inventoried and, if necessary, cleaned or conservatively treated by the scientific staff of the Gemäldegalerie. Particularly valuable or highly esteemed works such as *The Dance (Iris)* by the French painter Antoine Watteau, which came from the art collection of King Frederick the Great of Prussia, who was a role model for Hitler and not only as an art collector,⁸ were sometimes transported in the passenger compartment of a D-train, (Fig. 3). The painting was bought from the estate of the former German Emperor Wilhelm II and came from Schloss Doorn, his Dutch residence in exile. It was carried by courier to Dresden, where it arrived on 13 February 1942, twelve hours late due to wartime-related delays.⁹ This case highlights the dangers of rail transports, as from 1941 onwards Allied bombers increasingly attacked railway lines and trains, which in the event of an air raid, frequently had to wait in tunnels for hours until the all-clear was given.

Main station: Kremsmünster Abbey

However Dresden was only a transit station, as from December 1940 onwards Posse forwarded his purchases by rail to the “Führerbau” in Munich. In autumn 1940, Posse proposed to Hitler that he buy entire collections and Hitler agreed.¹⁰ It was thus clear that the air raid protective cellars in the “Führerbau” and the “Verwaltungsbau” the two NSDAP buildings on the Königsplatz, would not suffice and additional depots would be needed. Again, various options were discussed. The cultural administration of the “Gau-Oberdonau” urged that the artworks for the “Führermuseum” be stored near the future museum location in Linz and thus in the “Reichsgau Oberdonau”. Here, enormous room capacities were available in large monastery buildings, as these had been confiscated by the Gestapo, subsequently expropriated and placed under “Gau” administration. After a tour of inspection in May 1940, Posse suggested that the former Benedictine Abbey of Kremsmünster, which had been recommended to him by the “Gaukonservator” Franz Juraschek, “serve as a depot

⁵ Schwarz 2004, p. 42; Schwarz 2009, p. 229; Schwarz 2014, pp. 225–229.

⁶ See the contribution “Irrational, oversized, egomaniacal. Myths surrounding Hitler’s ‘Führermuseum’” in the catalogue, pp. 80–89.

⁷ Schwarz 2004, p. 50; Schwarz 2018, pp. 104–113.

⁸ Schwarz 2009, pp. 273–277.

⁹ Discussion on 5 February 1942. Generalkommissar Schmidt, Professor Dr. Posse und Gesandtschaftsrat Wickel, Bundesarchiv, BAArch B 323/114, No. 660; Hans Posse, fifth travel log, Deutsches Kunstarchiv, Germanisches Nationalmuseum, Nuremberg, DKA, NL Posse, Hans I, B-6, entry from 13.2.1942.

¹⁰ Schwarz 2004, pp. 74–77.

for the planned “Führermuseum” in Linz and Hitler approved this proposal (Fig. 4).

The transports from Vienna commenced immediately afterwards and continued to roll for three months. The works of art were housed in the monks' quarters, which following their expulsion were empty. Large formats were placed in the “Kaisersaal”, the monastery's banqueting hall. Posse planned to send his acquisitions from Dresden directly to Kremsmünster and show them to Hitler there in the rooms of the Abbey's picture gallery. However, Hitler insisted on continuing to view the new acquisitions in Munich.¹¹

Consequently, when in 1941 several deliveries of paintings arrived in Munich in quick succession, a veritable “depot crisis” ensued. The depot manager, Hans Reger, protested that in the long-term he would be unable to accommodate so many paintings. Posse then instructed him to transfer the paintings that Hitler had already perused to Kremsmünster.¹² On 1 August 1941, a first truck transport with 120 paintings left Munich in this direction and all in all 1,732 paintings and 49 objects were transported from Munich to Kremsmünster.¹³

However, there were also transports in the opposite direction. On the return journeys, paintings that Posse had acquired in Vienna were taken to Munich. Nonetheless, the most valuable works from confiscated Jewish property in Vienna remained in Kremsmünster for the time being, as their transfer would have eradicated the intended relief effect for the “Führerbau” depot.

Emergency station: Munich/“Führerbau”

The increasing threat posed by bombing raids to the above-ground Linz depot in Kremsmünster Abbey gave Hitler cause for concern, especially as his Special Representative, Hans Posse, was suffering from cancer and by the end of 1942 lay dying in a Berlin clinic. Although his assistant, Gottfried Reimer, represented Posse, Hitler reacted almost hysterically in the tense situation following the encirclement of the Sixth Army in Stalingrad, since the most important and precious paintings from the Viennese Jewish art collections were stored in Kremsmünster. In November 1942, the buildings were covered with dark green camouflage paint and a motorised fire engine was acquired.

On 9/10 March 1943, Munich's city centre was the target of an initial heavy air raid, which hit the NSDAP's party headquarters, the “Braune Haus”, in the immediate vicinity of the “Führerbau”. As of then, the most important assignment of the new Special Representative, Hermann Voss, who had been working for Hitler since 15 March 1943, was to also carry out a personal check on the salvage sites for safety and this was completed in April.¹⁴ The air raid situation was further exacerbated by the landings of the Allies on Sicily in July 1943 and their rapid advance to the north. It was foreseeable that the “Ostmark air raid shelter” would no longer remain safe. The first bombing raid on Austrian territory struck the Wiener Neustädter aircraft plant on 13 August 1943, which meant that Kremsmünster Abbey had come within range of the Allied bombers.

On 30 November 1943, Hitler instructed the “Sonderauftrag Linz” to, “completely clear out the depot as quickly as possible and house its contents at other locations that corresponded

¹¹ Schwarz 2014, pp. 230–233; Schwarz 2018, pp. 235–245.

¹² Schwarz 2014, p. 231f.

¹³ Artwork salvage transports from the “Führerbau” in Munich to Kremsmünster Abbey, list from 2.12.1943, BArch NS/6 413.

¹⁴ Kathrin Iselt, “Sonderbeauftragter des Führers”. *Der Kunsthistoriker und Museumsmann Hermann Voss (1884–1969)*, Cologne/Weimar/Vienna 2010, pp. 216–230.

to the current war conditions".¹⁵ Some of the paintings intended for Linz were therefore separated from the Vienna confiscations and taken to the air-raid shelters of the "Führerbau" in Munich.¹⁶

Final stop: The Altaussee salt mine

At the same time, the search for underground depots in mines began. Hermann Voss considered mining sites in Saxony, Thuringia and the "Sudetengau", but on 23 December 1943 the assistant to the "Sonderauftrag Linz", Gottfried Reimer, suggested to Hitler that the Altaussee salt mine, as well as the dissolved Cistercian abbey in Hohenfurth (Vyšší Brod) and Schloss Thürnthal near Fels am Wagram could serve as, "alternative storage sites for the Kremsmünster Abbey art depot".¹⁷ This initiative stemmed from the head of the Viennese Denkmalamt, Herbert Seiberl, who had already housed ecclesiastical art property in the Altaussee mine. The Salzberg fulfilled all the criteria for safe salvage, as it had a constant climate and was located in the so-called "Alpenfestung", far removed from important transport routes and railway lines. Moreover, owing to a steep access road, it was easy to secure. Hitler agreed to the proposal and part of the salt mine was declared a Reich salvage depot.¹⁸

As only objects with a height of up to 1.40 m and a maximum length of 5 metres could be placed in the galleries, larger formats were housed in Schloss Thürnthal near Fels am Wagram. In 1943, Hohenfurth Abbey (Vyšší Brod) had been prepared for the collection of the German-Dutch banker Fritz Mannheimer acquired in Amsterdam. For these exquisite, decorative art objects made of precious metal, rock crystal, ivory etc. 32 large safes had been installed in the cloister, into which corresponding objects from the Kremsmünster depot, as well as the numismatic items of the "Sonderauftrag Linz", were now moved.¹⁹ Towards the end of the war, the depot goods from Schloss Thürnthal and Hohenfurth Abbey were transferred to Altaussee.²⁰ In April 1945, a final transport from Thürnthal came to a standstill in the Pöschepass due to deep snow, which is why a provisional depot was established at the Agathawirt Inn near Goisern.²¹

Summary

Two conflicting forces determined the astonishingly powerful "travel dynamics" of the paintings. The museum experts and monument conservators were obliged to preserve,

¹⁵ Schwarz 2009, pp. 296–297; Schwarz 2014, p. 248.

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 232f.; Transport lists Kremsmünster-Munich: Kommission für Provenienzforschung, BDA, archive, restitution material, Box 13/1, File 74.

¹⁷ Gottfried Reimer to Helmuth von Hummel, 23.12.1943: BArch B 323/105, No. 507f.

¹⁸ Iselt 2010, pp. 230–236; Birgit Schwarz, "Das Salzbergwerk Altaussee als Bergungsdepot der Kunstsammlungen Adolf Hitlers", in: Veronika Hofer (ed.), *Berg der Schätze. Die dramatische Rettung europäischer Kunst im Altausseer Salzbergwerk*, Scharnstein 2006, pp. 30–33; Schwarz 2014, pp. 248–257.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 234.

²⁰ Ibid., pp. 248–250; www.lexikon-provenienzforschung.org/thuernthal-schloss, accessed on 4.6.2023; www.lexikon-provenienzforschung.org/hohenfurth-vysssi-brod, accessed on 4.6.2023.

²¹ See the contribution "'Received from the Munich Collecting Point' – The complex appropriation, salvage and research process regarding 17 paintings from the 'Sonderauftrag Linz', which having been salvaged in the Salzkammergut, arrived in Linz in 1948" from Birgit Kirchmayr in the catalogue, pp. 125–132.

document and scientifically process the works of art. In principle, this was also in Hitler's interest, which is why he called in the specialists because the planned museum was not only intended to establish his fame as an art collector, but also perpetuate it in the long-term. However, with the escalation of the air war, the joint goals of generating collector fame on the one hand and preserving the Linz collection on the other became increasingly contradictory. For in order to maintain his self-image as a collector and museum patron, the collection for his "Führermuseum" had to be composed by him personally, which is why he insisted on inspecting all new acquisitions in the Munich "Führerbau" himself. In turn this led to additional transports of the artworks, which ideally should have all been routed via Munich. His art experts tried to avoid this and not without success. A large part of the confiscated Jewish art collections did not reach Munich, but remained in the "Ostmark" until the end of the war.

Until their temporary final destination in the Altaussee salt mine, the paintings intended for the "Führermuseum" therefore usually went through up to four stages, some perhaps even one more. This was because Hitler, who at the end of the war rarely came to Munich, as he was almost constantly at the "Führerhauptquartier" such as the Wolfsschanze in East Prussia, now had paintings brought from Munich to the military command centre on the "Führermaschine". Some of the paintings in the Altaussee salt mine may thus have made an additional journey, of which, however, there is no documentation.²²

²² Hans Baur, *Ich flog Mächtige der Erde*, Kempten 1956, p. 276; Schwarz 2009, p. 267.

Birgit Schwarz: Irrational, oversized, egomaniacal. Myths surrounding Hitler's "Führermuseum"

The text is an English translation of the original text "Irrational, überdimensional, egomanisch. Mythen um Hitlers 'Führermuseum'" written in German language for the catalog of the exhibition "Die Reise der Bilder" ["The Journey of the Paintings"] pp. 80-89. Translation by John Cima.

I. Irrational

The photo has become iconic and exemplifies Hitler's intense involvement with the plans for his "home town" of Linz following the end of the Second World War. In the basement room under the great hall of the "Neue Reichskanzlei" in Berlin, the dictator sits in front of the model for the development of Linz on the banks of the Danube (Fig. 1). The model, which Hermann Giesler, the architect responsible for the Linz plans, brought to Berlin in February 1945, could even be so illuminated by adjustable spotlights as to simulate sunlight during the course of the day. Hitler is said to have spent hours deeply absorbed with the aspects of the model.¹

An important witness to Hitler's interest in Linz, which did not diminish despite the imminent defeat, was Albert Speer, who as the "Führer's" favourite architect and confidant was involved in the plans from the very beginning. Speer interpreted the obsessive preoccupation with the Linz plans as an escape from reality and thus provided the interpretation pattern that remains prevails today.² It may well be true that Hitler sought and possibly found temporary relief from the pressures of an unbearable reality in front of the Linz model. However, the approaching end of his rule was clearly evident to him when he withdrew into the "Führerbunker" with his closest staff at the end of February 1945. But this was not only a place of retreat, but also the Führer's headquarters and centre of power, from where Hitler directed the General Staff.

Moreover, the Linz model before which Hitler staged a "bunker meditation" (Joachim Fest) in the spirit of the philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer, constituted a control mechanism according to which the real world and the entanglement in it (the will) must be overcome through the elevation of the spirit into the world of ideality (the imagination). Supposedly only genius is capable of this triumph through aesthetic contemplation, which with the help of art is liberated from all constraints and therefore free.³ The performance artist Hitler (Wolfram Pyta) regularly led generals and members of the government to the front of the model during their visits to the "Führer's" headquarters in order to once again confirm their oath to the myth of the genial strategist. And it was not least with the help of these stagings that he succeeded in keeping hold of the reins until the very end. The picture by his photographer, Walter

¹ Hans Georg Hiller von Gaertringen (ed.), *Das Auge des Dritten Reiches. Hitlers Kameramann und Fotograf Walter Frentz*, Munich/Berlin 2006, p. 86f.

² Joachim C. Fest, *Hitler. Eine Biographie*, 4th Edition, Frankfurt am Main/Berlin/Vienna 1973, p. 726.

³ Birgit Schwarz, *Geniewahn. Hitler und die Kunst*, Vienna/Cologne/Weimar 2009, pp. 302–310; regarding Hitler and Schopenhauer *ibid.*, pp. 51–53; *ibid.*, "Das Schöne als Wille und Vorstellung. Bildende Kunst im Dritten Reich", in: Konrad Liessmann (ed.), *Vom Zauber des Schönen. Reiz, Begehren und Zerstörung* (Philosophicum Lech, Vol. 13), Vienna 2010, pp. 155–172; Wolfram Pyta, *Hitler. Der Künstler als Politiker und Feldherr. Eine Herrschaftsanalyse*, Munich 2015, pp. 161–163, 233f.

Frentz, of one such bunker meditation by the performance artist documents the scene for posterity.⁴

Whatever the case, Hitler's actions regarding his favourite project in Linz, the "Führermuseum", were characterised by a great sense of reality. Right up to the end, he strove to ensure its completion, even beyond his death. Since 1944, he had the museum collection safeguarded by placing it in the Altaussee salt mine at the cost of enormous effort in terms of personnel and logistics, forbade its destruction from the bunker⁵ and, shortly before his suicide on 30 April 1945, decreed in his will that the Linz Gallery should be realised. He hoped that the "Reichsgau Oberdonau" (as Upper Austria was named during the Nazi dictatorship), to which he had endowed the entire property of the Linz cultural institutes by decree in 1942, would implement the project.⁶ This calculation was not entirely unrealistic, as proven by the efforts of the Austrian government and the province of Upper Austria in the post-war period to bring parts of the "Führermuseum" collection to Linz after all.⁷

The notion of the fictionality and irrationality of the "Führermuseum" was furthered by the circumstance that the Linz museum building was not built. However, the fact that a building did exist for the collection, namely the Schack Gallery at Prinzregentenstrasse 9 in Munich, has been overlooked to this day. In this gallery, located not far from both the Haus der Deutschen Kunst and his residence as NSDAP leader, the "Führerbau", Hitler wanted to present the Linz pictures to the public "as soon as possible", namely before the Linz museum building was completed. The gallery stood unused and was kept vacant throughout the war in order to be available without delay "for the Führer's art purposes" (Hans Posse) immediately after the end of hostilities.⁸

II. Oversized

Albert Speer and his "ghostwriter" Joachim Fest also promulgated the idea of the oversized nature of the "Führermuseum". Speer, the General Building Inspector for the Reich's capital, transferred the gigantomania of his Berlin building projects to the Linz plans and in particular to Hitler's favourite project, the "Führermuseum", which would have figured in Hitler's imagination as the "largest museum in the world". Moreover, Joachim Fest canonised this myth in his powerful biography of Hitler.⁹

⁴ Klaus A. Lankheit "'...immer dieselben Gesichter, dieselben Gespräche.' Hitler and his circle in the photos of Walter Frentz", in: Hiller von Gaertringen 2006, pp. 133–140, in particular p. 136.

⁵ See the contribution "Robbery – Repatriation – Rescue. Myths and facts about the Ghent Altar" in the catalogue, pp. 90–99.

⁶ S. Lane Faison, *Linz. Hitler's Museum Library. Consolidated Interrogation Report No. 4*, ed. by U. S. Army, Office of Strategic Services, Art Looting Investigation Unit, Washington, D. C., 15.12.1945, S. 4 and Attachment 21.

⁷ Birgit Kirchmayr, "Raubkunst im 'Heimatgau des Führers'. Aspekte, Zusammenhänge und Folgen von nationalsozialistischer Kulturpolitik und Kunstenteignungen im Reichsgau Oberdonau", in: *ibid.*, Friedrich Buchmayr, Michael John (ed.), *Geraubte Kunst in Oberdonau*, Linz 2007, pp. 35–190, here pp. 158–166.

⁸ Schwarz, Geniewahn, 2009, p. 271f.

⁹ Fest 1973, p. 726; regarding the myth of the world's largest museum s. Birgit Schwarz, *Hitlers Museum. Die Fotoalben Gemäldegalerie Linz. Dokumente zum "Führermuseum"*, Vienna/Cologne/Weimar 2004, p. 7f. and p. 13f.

The existing planning material for the museum building shows a four-wing complex above a floor area of 142 x 127 metres (Fig. 2).¹⁰ The “Führermuseum” would therefore have been far from being the planet’s largest museum. Instead, this superlative belongs to the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, built at the beginning of the 20th century, which was already the world’s biggest art museum building in 1938/1939, when the Linz planning began, and in an expanded form remains so today. The façade on 5th Avenue is 400 m-long, whereas that of the “Führermuseum” would have measured only 128 m. Speer knew all this and therefore did not base his claim on the architectural plans, because that would have been controllable, but instead on “Hitler’s fantasies” (Joachim Fest).

There is another parameter for the size of a museum, namely the number of museum objects. But it is precisely in this connection that a great deal of uncertainty with regard to the “Führermuseum” remains today. The reason for this is that its Inventory catalogue, which was kept at the Gemäldegalerie in Dresden, the logistical centre of the so-called “Sonderauftrag Linz”, was confiscated by a Soviet Trophy Commission in 1945, transported to Moscow and has been unavailable for research ever since.¹¹ Consequently, the *Linz Report*, the investigations by the US secret service organisation OSS, which took place at the end of 1945, had to be based on an assessment of the collection without the Dresden catalogues and assumed a good 5,000 paintings for Linz. This figure was founded on the deposits in the Altaussee salt mine, Hitler’s salvage depot. However, the report lists an additional ten depots with “Linz material” and accordingly concluded that the “Führermuseum” had surpassed the Louvre and the Hermitage in terms of the size of its collection.¹² The official database of the Federal Republic of Germany on the “Sonderauftrag Linz”, the inappropriately named “Linz Database”, which the Deutsche Historische Museum in Berlin put online in 2008, currently lists 6,682 works, including sculptures, furniture, works on paper, jewellery, etc.¹³

Since the “Führermuseum” was conceived as a picture gallery and the Gemäldegalerie Linz collection can actually be estimated more accurately. The albums document 1,600 works of art, mainly paintings, but no graphic art, furniture or crafts.¹⁴ Hitler had given his Special Representative for developing the collection, the Director of the Dresden Gemäldegalerie, Hans Posse, the galleries in Munich and Vienna, i.e. the Alte Pinakothek and the Kunsthistorische Museum, as reference points.¹⁵ The Alte Pinakothek, which when it opened in 1836 was the largest museum building in the world, initially exhibited around 2,000 paintings. Today, it houses some 700 and a similar development is evident at the Kunsthistorische Museum in Vienna, which opened in 1891. In one compares these figures

¹⁰ See the ground floor plan from 1941: Lioba Schmitt-Imkamp, *Roderich Fick (1886–1955) (Hitlers Architekten, Vol. 3)*, Vienna/Cologne/Weimar 2014, pp. 169–171, fu. 78.18, p. 275.

¹¹ Schwarz, Fotoalben, 2004, p. 16f.; Birgit Schwarz, *Auf Befehl des Führers. Hitler und der NS-Kunstraub*, Darmstadt 2014, pp. 245–247.

¹² Schwarz, Fotoalben, 2004, pp. 15–20; Schwarz 2014, pp. 11–18.

¹³ dhm.de/datenbank/linzdb/, accessed on 24.7.2023. Thanks to Brigitte Reineke, Deutsches Historisches Museum, for the information; Birgit Schwarz, “Der Dresdener Katalog im Bundesarchiv in Koblenz als Quelle der Provenienzforschung”, in: *Kunstchronik*, Vol. 57, No. 8, 2004, pp. 365–368.

¹⁴ The albums are edited in: Schwarz, Fotoalben, 2004; Birgit Schwarz, “Hitlers Galerie zwischen Buchdeckeln: Die Fotoalben ‘Gemäldegalerie Linz’”, in: Alexandra Reininghaus (ed.), *Recollecting. Raub und Restitution*, exhibition cat., MAK Vienna, Vienna 2009, pp. 151–155; Schwarz 2014, pp. 98–103.

¹⁵ Schwarz, Fotoalben, 2004, p. 30.

again with the largest art museums in the world, the Hermitage in St. Petersburg is said to have three million objects and the Louvre in Paris calls 480,000 objects its own.¹⁶

Posse designed the Linz Gallery to show round 1,000 paintings.¹⁷ A figure that corresponds roughly to the number of paintings in the Dresden Gallery building, which displayed 1,336 paintings in 1939¹⁸ and reflected the modern presentation aesthetic that Hitler valued and practised at the Großen Deutschen Kunstausstellungen in Munich with only a few pictures and extensive white walls. On 23 February 1939, he told the museum's architect Roderich Fick, "Initially, the rooms are to be filled very sparingly and only first-class items are to be exhibited."¹⁹

The reason for the large discrepancy in the inventory figures is simple. Hitler collected paintings not only for the "Führermuseum", but also for museums of the entire German Reich. On 18 June 1938, the day on which during a visit to the Dresden Gemäldegalerie he chose Hans Posse as his "Sonderbeauftragte" (Special Representative), he also obtained the "Führervorbehalt" (Führer's reservation), a prerogative of disposal over the entire looted art holdings in Austria in order to enable their distribution amongst the museums of the "Ostmark", which included the planned "Führermuseum" (Fig. 3). The "Führer's reservation" was extended as required and by the end of the Second World War applied to the entire German Reich and all the occupied countries.²⁰

From the outset, Posse was thus responsible for a museum programme of enormous proportions, namely the replenishment of the holdings of Greater Germany's art museums with "Führerspenden". These donations formed a complementary programme to the "cleansing" of German museums in the "Entartete Kunst" campaign, which to this day has not been investigated systematically. Hitler withdrew "evil" modern works of art from the museums and donated "good", historical ones to them. The "Führer" thus took and the "Führer" gave!

Posse's first official journey as Hitler's Special Representative took him to Vienna and the central depot of the confiscated Jewish art collections in order to obtain an impression of their usefulness for Hitler's dispensation programme. As their quality was high and they were therefore suitable for museums, Hitler commissioned him to prepare the distribution.²¹ From the outset, the "Sonderauftrag Linz" was therefore actually a "Sonderauftrag Deutsches Reich". Posse devoted an entire year to the allocation project. It was not until the Western campaign in the early summer of 1940 that the excessive "acquisition phase" began. This consumed more than 108 million "Reichsmarks" and has long shaped our perception of the "Sonderauftrag Linz". On 23 June 1940, Posse went on an initial acquisition tour to the Netherlands, which was followed at short intervals by further buying trips to the occupied countries, as well as to Italy and Switzerland. At the same time, he continued to work on

¹⁶ hermitagemuseum.org/wps/portal/hermitage/about?lng=de; louvre.fr/decouvrir, accessed on 24.7.2023.

¹⁷ Schwarz, Geniewahn, 2009, p. 269f.

¹⁸ Uta Neidhardt, "Kriegsverluste der Dresdener Gemäldegalerie. Geschichte mit offenem Ausgang", in: Heinrich Becker (ed.), *Schattengalerie. Symposium zur Beutekunst. Forschung, Recht und Praxis*, Aachen 2010, pp. 39–55.

¹⁹ Schmitt-Imkamp 2014, Note. 851, p. 170.

²⁰ Regarding the "Führervorbehalt" see Schwarz 2014; Birgit Schwarz, *Hitlers Sonderauftrag Ostmark. Kunstraub und Museumspolitik im Nationalsozialismus* (article series of the Kommission für Provenienzforschung, Vol. 7), Vienna/Cologne/Weimar 2018, here in particular pp. 177–179.

²¹ Schwarz 2014, p. 85f.

distribution plans for the extensive “residual inventory” of the confiscated Jewish-owned artworks.²²

In spring 1942, Hans Posse was diagnosed with cancer, which despite surgery and treatment by well-known medical experts progressed rapidly. From the summer of 1942, the seriously ill man was no longer able to travel, which is why he devoted the last months of his life to the matter of the expropriated Austrian monasteries and their art collections. Posse died in December 1942. At the state funeral ordered by Hitler, Propaganda Minister Joseph Goebbels announced the hitherto secret Linz museum project, which was widely reported in the press. In addition, after Posse's death, articles about the collection appeared regularly in the Nazi magazine *Kunst dem Volk*, which was edited by Hitler's friend Heinrich Hoffmann.²³ What was not made public was the distribution programme, the implementation and propagation of which was planned for the post-war period. After the war, this specific source situation led to all high-ranking Nazi looted art being attributed to the “Führermuseum”.

III. Egomaniacal

The name “Führermuseum” is an already contemporary provisional designation that had a strong signalling function and made the museum project unmistakable. It was also justified in terms of content, since the “Führermuseum” would have become a collector's museum, characterised in many respects by the person of the “Führer”. Nevertheless, in the late phase of the Second World War, the second Special Representative, Hermann Voss, switched to using the far less specific designation “Linz Museum”. Two years before the fall of the Third Reich and Hitler's suicide, the term “Führer” thus disappeared from the museum name without a murmur.

Voss had accepted Hitler's appointment for career reasons, as it was linked to the directorship of the Dresden Gemäldegalerie. After the turnaround of the war in the winter of 1943/44, he was faced with the end of the Third Reich. He therefore tried to put a distance between the Dresden directorship and his function as Hitler's Special Representative. He no longer conducted his correspondence on the letterhead of the Dresden Gemäldegalerie, as Posse had done, but under the designation “Der Sonderbeauftragter für Linz”. Conversely, Posse had been referred to as “Sonderbeauftragter des Führers”. By focusing on Linz, Voss diverted attention away from his responsibility for the implementation of the “Führer's reservation” and the looted art distribution programme. The renamings were quite clearly early attempts at denazification. In the post-war period, these names were retained for obvious reasons and with them the fixation on Linz. The “Linz Museum” and the “Sonderauftrag Linz” thus became synonyms for the Nazi art theft.

In fact, there was a good deal of Linz in the “Führermuseum” and more than research has perceived to date. Famously, Hitler's museum idea had been formed in Linz on 12/13 March 1938, when Bürgermeister Sepp Wolkersdorfer complained to him about a lack of museums. On a second visit to Linz a few weeks later, Hitler visited the Francisco-Carolinum Museum in the Museumsstrasse and gathered an impression for himself. The edifice, built between 1884 and 1892 according to plans by the German architect Bruno Schmitz, was by then overflowing with objects from prehistory and early history, natural science and zoology, art and the decorative arts. A great deal could not be exhibited and had been stored. Moreover, expansion plans had been put on hold in 1931 due to the deterioration of the province's finances.²⁴ In 1933, the commemorative publication marking the centenary of the Upper Austrian Provincial Museum had already warned that the problem of overcrowding could only be solved, “by a new building, either for the gallery and the art and cultural history

²² Schwarz 2018, pp. 121–134.

²³ Schwarz, Geniewahn 2009, pp. 280–285.

²⁴ Ibid., pp. 221–224.

collections, or to accommodate the natural science museum”.²⁵ Hitler, who had felt an affinity to the Francisco Carolinum since his youth, thus took up older Linz plans and turned the either-or into a both-as well, as the first Nazi planning phase envisaged the construction of two new buildings, a natural science museum and a picture gallery.²⁶ In a later planning phase, a weapons museum was also foreseen.²⁷

After Hans Posse informed Hitler in the summer of 1939 about the extent and outstanding quality of the Jewish art collections in Vienna, the museum plans assumed larger dimensions. The location of the gallery was detached from the main building in the Museumsstrasse and moved to the Opernplatz in the south of the city as part of a cultural forum (Fig. 4). Nevertheless, the institutional ties to the province of Upper Austria or the “Reichsgau Oberdonau” remained, and the “Führermuseum” would have become the art museum of the “Reichsgau”.

Posse was an outstanding networker and on his first official trip commissioned by Hitler, already travelled to Linz in order to gain an idea of the museum holdings of the Landesmuseum Francisco Carolinum and develop the museum concept in personal discussions with Director Theodor Kerschner and Justus Schmidt, the Head of the Art History Department (Fig. 5). There was time for intensive personal and undocumented exchanges not only during the day, but also at dinner. Posse spent the first evening in Linz with Kerschner and the second with Schmidt.²⁸ Posse had close biographical, academic and art historical ties with Austria and the Danube region, which may have played a role in his appointment as a Special Representative. He had completed his studies in art history at the Vienna Institute für Kunstgeschichte and like Austrian museum directors and collection managers was a member of the “Institut für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung”.²⁹ He was an expert on Lucas Cranach the Elder (1472–1553), the Saxon court painter who as “artistically closely connected with the Danube region” (Posse), was to be represented with major works in the Linz Gallery (Fig. 6).³⁰

Posse conceived the “Führermuseum” as an “Ostmark” collection. In addition to acquisitions from the holdings of the Landesmuseum, he envisaged acquisitions from the vacated properties of the monasteries and convents of the “Ostmark” and “the confiscated Jewish art collections in Vienna”. He wished to focus on the “Donauschule”, the art historical designation for a circle of painters of the early 16th century, who had been active along the Danube, in Regensburg, Passau, the monasteries of Melk and St. Florian, and Vienna. In addition, he speculated on obtaining works “by the main master of the Danube School, Albrecht Altdorfer, as still possessed by St. Florian Abbey”, namely the 14 panel paintings of the St. Sebastian Altar.³¹

²⁵ Hermann Ubell, “Geschichte der kunst- und kulturhistorischen Sammlungen des oberösterreichischen Landesmuseums”, in: *Jahrbuch des oberösterreichischen Musealvereins*, Vol. 85, 1933, pp. 181–344, here p. 343.

²⁶ Regarding the initial planning phase: Schwarz, Geniewahn, 2009, p. 227f.

²⁷ Harry Slapnicka, “Hitlers Linzer Neubaupläne und der Wettlauf der Architekten”, in: *Kunstjahrbuch der Stadt Linz* 1987, pp. 94–106, here 95f. On 13.6.1943 the Director of the Weapons Collection of the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna, Leopold Ruprecht, was commissioned with the creation of a collection for the Weapons Museum, see BArch B 323/9, p. 192.

²⁸ Schwarz 2018, pp. 61–63.

²⁹ Ibid., p. 63f.

³⁰ Schwarz, Fotoalben, 2004, p. 34; Schwarz 2014, pp. 61–63.

³¹ Schwarz, Fotoalben, 2004, pp. 43–47; Schwarz 2014, pp. 89–94.

This collection concept also explains the choice of Hermann Voss as Posse's successor. He had received his doctorate in 1906 from Henry Thode, subsequently Richard Wagner's son-in-law, at the University of Heidelberg with a thesis on Wolf Huber and the Danube style. Along with Albrecht Altdorfer (c. 1480–1538), the painter, who was born in Feldkirch in around 1493 and died in Passau in 1553, is considered to be the most important master of this group. With his book *Der Ursprung des Donaustils. Ein Stück Entwicklungsgeschichte deutscher Malerei* (1907), Voss constructed a homogeneous, greater German artistic landscape stretching from the Upper Rhine to Austria.³² Within the context of Nazi ideology, the collection focus on the Danube School in the "Führermuseum" would have served as a cultural legitimisation of Austria's "Anschluss" with the German Reich.

Summary

It was not the "Führermuseum" that was gigantic, but Hitler's cultural plans for a National Socialist post-war order. Hitler collected, i.e. bought and looted works of art not only for Linz, but also for museums throughout the German Reich. Today, as a result of relabeling by Hermann Voss, this distribution pool is still considered to be the stock of the "Sonderauftrag Linz". Indeed, the official database of the Federal Republic of Germany is named the "Linz Collection" and the inventory numbers are called "Linz Numbers".³³ Before 1945, or in the case of Hermann Voss 1943, these inventories were called "Sammlungen des Führers"; the inventory numbers were not marked with "L" for Linz, but with "F" for "Führer" or "Führerbau".³⁴ Thus "Führer" had quietly become "Linz"! The correct content would be "Sonderauftrag Deutsches Reich", "Hitler Sammlung", "Hitler-Nummern" or "Führerbau-Nummern".

Hitler's intentions for Linz and especially the cultural projects were undoubtedly oversized. However, the fiction of the "Führermuseum" as a super museum is a chimera, both in terms of the size of the building and the inventory. To this day, this illusion overlays an actually gigantic distribution programme of predominantly Nazi looted art among Austrian and German museums and thus depoliticises Hitler's museum policy into an unreal, if not insane, project of a megalomaniac dictator.

³² Schwarz, Fotoalben, 2004, p. 60f. Details on academic training from Kathrin Iselt, "Sonderbeauftragter des Führers". *Der Kunsthistoriker und Museumsman Hermann Voss (1884–1969)*, Cologne/Weimar/Vienna 2010, pp. 21–24.

³³ dhm.de/datenbank/linzdb/, accessed on 23.7.2023.

³⁴ See Hans Posse, List of paintings planned for Linz. Status as of 31.7.1940, BArch B 323/193; Schwarz, Galerie, 2004, p. 21.

Birgit Schwarz: Robbery – Repatriation – Rescue. Myths and facts about the Ghent Altarpiece¹

The text is an English translation of the original text “Raub – Repatriierung – Rettung. Mythen und Fakten um den Genter Altar” written in German language for the catalog of the exhibition “Die Reise der Bilder” [“The Journey of the Paintings”] pp. 91-99. Translation by John Cima.

Rescue competitions

In 2014, George Clooney's film *Monuments Men* told the story of the military art protection unit Monuments, Fine Arts, and Archives Section and their search for Adolf Hitler's secret art depot in Altaussee.² The narrative revolves around the most famous work of art stored there, the *Ghent Altarpiece* by Jan van Eyck, a late Gothic winged reredos (completed in 1432). The Monuments Man Walter Garfield, played by John Goodman, finds the crucial clue to the location of the depot in a photo album that he tracks down in the art storeroom of the Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg (ERR) in Schloss Neuschwanstein. When Garfield opens the album, the page with the photo of the *Ghent Altarpiece* appears with the adjacent Nazi stamp in English “Salt mine Altaussee” (Fig. 1, Fig. 2). The *Gemäldegalerie Linz* photo albums and thus the photographic catalogue of the “Führermuseum” planned by Hitler for Linz form the template for the prop album.³ However, the *Ghent Altarpiece* is not even listed in it, as actually Hitler had not intended the altar for Linz, but for Berlin.⁴ The suspicion that Hitler wanted this major work of European art history for his “Führermuseum” is actually old. It was already circulating during the Third Reich and was fuelled by the fact that the works of art in Hitler's salvage depot were considered to be part of the “Führermuseum”. Franz Wolff-Metternich, the officer in charge of art protection at the Army High Command in France from 1940 to 1943, voiced the surmise after the war to Charles de Jaeger, who made it public in his book *Das Führermuseum. Sonderauftrag Linz*, published in 1964.⁵ The *Monuments Men* film treats this belief as fact and follows the book by Robert M. Edsel, which served as a basis for the screenplay.⁶ However, in reality the majority of the artworks in the Altaussee salt mine were foreseen for distribution to museums of the Greater German Reich.⁷

¹ This contribution constitutes a revised and updated version of: Birgit Schwarz, “Alle retten den Genter Altar. Der Weg durch Europa 1940–1945”, in: Stephan Kemperdick, Johannes Rößler, Joris Corin Heyder (ed.), *Der Genter Altar. Reproduktionen, Deutungen, Forschungskontroversen*, Petersberg 2017, pp. 12–25.

² [de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Monuments Men %E2%80%93 Ungew%C3%B6hnliche Helden](https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Monuments_Men_%E2%80%93_Ungew%C3%B6hnliche_Helden), accessed on 30.7.2023.

³ Birgit Schwarz, *Hitlers Museum. Die Fotoalben Gemäldegalerie Linz. Dokumente zum “Führermuseum”*, Vienna/Cologne/Weimar 2004.

⁴ See the contribution “Irrational, oversized, egomaniacal. Myths surrounding Hitler's ‘Führermuseum’” in the catalogue, pp. 80–89.

⁵ Birgit Schwarz, *Auf Befehl des Führers. Hitler und der NS-Kunstraub*, Darmstadt 2014, pp. 143–146, here p. 157; Charles de Jaeger, *Das Führermuseum. Sonderauftrag Linz*, Esslingen/Munich 1988, p. 143–145.

⁶ Robert M. Edsel, Bret Witter, *The Monuments Men: Allied Heroes, Nazi Thieves and the Greatest Treasure Hunt in History*, New York/Boston/Nashville 2009, p. 119.

⁷ See the contribution “Irrational, oversized, egomaniacal. Myths surrounding Hitler's ‘Führermuseum’” in the catalogue, pp. 80–89.

The film takes the artistic liberty of proceeding counterfactually and exaggerating dramaturgically by having US Monuments Men save the *Ghent Altar* in a race with a Soviet trophy commission. In reaction to the American rescue narrative, several books and films have appeared in the meantime claiming the rescue deed for the miners and inhabitants of Ausseer Land and thus for Austria.⁸ In fact, it was local people who prevented the destruction of the works of art ordered by the fanatical “Gauleiter” of Upper Danube, August Eigruber, even before the arrival of the US Army. Nonetheless, with regard to the *Ghent Altarpiece* the situation is more complicated and complex. Here, the supervisors of Hitler's art depot, the Austrian monument conservator Herbert Seiberl and the German restorer Karl Sieber, played a decisive role as they moved the panels to an area of the mine that was safe from Eigruber's bombs. Because they were Nazi officials, little attention was paid to their role. That said, by virtue of their training and mandate, they were the sole professional art experts on the spot and furthermore the only persons with a precise knowledge of the otherwise secret deposits. Accordingly, they alone were capable of achieving a targeted rescue for the *Ghent Altarpiece*.

The Ghent Altarpiece on the run

On 10 May 1940, Nazi Germany's western offensive began with the invasion of the Netherlands, Belgium and Luxembourg by German troops. The Belgian city of Ghent was occupied on 23 May. Six days earlier, Jan van Eyck's *Ghent Altarpiece* had been evacuated from St Bavo's Cathedral and taken by truck to the French town of Pau in the Pyrenees, packed in ten crates with other works of art from Ghent. After a hazardous journey, the convoy reached its destination unharmed on 24 May 1940, one day after the capture of Ghent, and the panels of the *Ghent Altarpiece* were deposited in the local castle museum.

The rescue to the extreme southwest of France, which in fact was not to be occupied by the Germans, was a well-justified precautionary measure. This was because six panels of the shrine had been sold by the church administration of St Bavo to a Brussels art dealer in 1816 and they had subsequently come to the Kaiser-Friedrich-Museum in Berlin as legal purchases. However, they had had to be returned to Belgium after the First World War under conditions imposed by the Treaty of Versailles.⁹ The German side never accepted this move and as expected, shortly after the capture of Ghent the Director General of the Berlin State Museums, Otto Kummel, demanded the repatriation of the six Berlin wing panels.¹⁰

However, for the time being, the *Ghent Altarpiece* was beyond the reach of the Germans but the Van Eyck Year 1941, which celebrated the 500th anniversary of the artist's death with coverage in the Nazi press and numerous commemorative events, brought the issue into the public domain. The German Military Commander in Belgium announced his intention to

⁸ Konrad Kramar, *Mission Michelangelo. Wie die Bergleute von Altaussee Hitlers Raubkunst vor der Vernichtung retteten*, St. Pölten/Salzburg/Vienna 2013; *Ein Dorf wehrt sich*. TV film, DE/AT, 2019, de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ein_Dorf_wehrt_sich, accessed on 30.7.2023.

⁹ Schwarz 2014, pp. 143–146; Johannes Rößler, “Zwischen den Fronten. Der Genter Altar im Ersten Weltkrieg und im Friedensvertrag von Versailles”, in: Stephan Kemperdick, *ibid.* (ed.), *Der Genter Altar der Brüder van Eyck. Geschichte und Würdigung*, exhibition cat., Gemäldegalerie der Staatlichen Museen – Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Berlin, Petersberg 2014, pp. 100–111.

¹⁰ Schwarz 2014, p. 146f.; Schwarz 2017, p. 13; Martin Schawe, “Van Eyck in Neuschwanstein. Die Bayerischen Staatsgemäldesammlungen, der Genter Altar und der Sakramentsaltar aus Löwen im Zweiten Weltkrieg”, in: Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen (ed.), *Annual Report 2017*, Munich 2018, pp. 140–167, here p. 144, pinakothek.de/sites/default/files/downloadable/2018-04/BStGS_Jahresbericht_Innenteil_DS.pdf, accessed on 12.9.2023

return all the works of art deposited in Pau to Ghent. Initial measures were implemented and a delegation travelled to Pau in order to inspect the state of preservation and storage of the artworks with a view to their return to German-occupied Belgium.¹¹

¹¹ Schwarz 2017, p. 17; Schawe 2018, p. 145.

Stefanie Wilson:

Searching for Traces.

On the significance of provenance features on the backs of paintings, using the example of loans from the Federal Republic of Germany

The text is an English translation of the original text “Die langen Reisen von Hitlers Bildern nach Altaussee” written in German language for the catalog of the exhibition “Die Reise der Bilder” [“The Journey of the Paintings”] pp. 101-111. Translation by John Cima.

For around 25 years, research into the provenance of artworks, especially within the context of the National Socialist tyranny from 1933 to 1945 and Nazi art theft, has been steadily gaining in importance as an academic and internationally networked discipline. Moreover, since the so-called “Schwabing” or Gurlitt art find” in 2012, provenance research has been recognised and discussed by a wider public and not only in the German-speaking countries.

Provenance research identifies previous owners, their biographies and persecution-related fates, reconstructs art collections, analyses exhibitions and auctions, auction houses and art dealers. In short, provenance research examines the paths a work has travelled since its creation and the circumstances under which changes of ownership have occurred. It then embeds its findings within the historical context in order to enable an assessment of whether or not an art object was confiscated as a result of NS victimisation. This basis for this interdisciplinary research is provided by catalogues raisonnés, artists' monographs, source material on art dealers or participants in Nazi art looting, auction and exhibition catalogues and the increasing number of digital databases that are available for current research.

Another, but no less important, starting point for research into the provenance of an artwork is the so-called reverse side autopsy. This is the examination of the back of a picture with the aim of recording and identifying all the features that can be found there. These can consist of stamps, inscriptions, seals, labels, sticker remnants or

exhibition stickers, as well as numerals, numbering or admission numbers (Fig. 1).¹

The significance of these individual characteristics is beyond doubt. They can refer to ownership and ownership relationships, exhibitions in which a picture was presented, auctions at which it was offered, or journeys on which it was sent. Therefore, their identification supplies researchers with valuable information and very precise statements about the provenance of a work. As witnesses to history, they help to reconstruct the paths of an art object and make its travels visible.

In addition to its own acquisitions, donations, cultural assets from the central state sector of the GDR and the “Gurlitt art find”, the art holdings of the Federal Republic of Germany also include cultural assets from the property of the former Reich, the so-called “residual holdings” of the Central Collecting Point in Munich, which were transferred to federal ownership on the basis of Article 134 of the constitution.² These consist of paintings, prints, sculptures, arts and

¹ The guidelines of the Deutsches Zentrum Kulturgutverluste can be used to properly record and identify features on the object: *Leitfaden Provenienzforschung zur Identifizierung von Kulturgut, das während der nationalsozialistischen Herrschaft verfolgungsbedingt entzogen wurde*, pp.45–56, kulturgutverluste.de/sites/default/files/2023-04/Leitfaden-Download.pdf, accessed on 24.9.2023.

² Regarding the Central Collecting Points see Iris Lauterbach, *Der Central Collecting Point in München. Kunstschutz, Restitution, Neubeginn* (publication of the Zentralinstitut für Kunstgeschichte in Munich, Vol. 34),

crafts items, coins, books and archaeological objects. The majority of these cultural artefacts originate from the “Sonderauftrag Linz”³, which involved the formation of a collection based on works from Adolf Hitler's private art collection and collections confiscated from their Jewish owners.⁴ As a rule, the works intended for the “Sonderauftrag Linz” were transported to the so-called “Führerbau” in Munich, a section of the NSDAP party headquarters in the Arcisstrasse, where they were registered and stored until the initial removals. The architect Hans Reger (1898 – probably 1979)⁵, who worked in the “Führerbau” from 1938 to 1945, was responsible for the depot administration, the registration of the works and the subsequent salvage transports. He used a white, blue-framed label with a perforated edge to mark the art objects delivered to the “Führerbau”, which was stuck onto the back of the paintings, frames or picture supports and labelled with a handwritten inventory number.⁶ This label simplifies the identification of works that once belonged to the “Sonderauftrag” inventory (Fig. 2, 3).

Owing to the continuing hostilities and shortly after the German invasion of the Soviet Union, beginning in August 1941 the first works from the Munich “Führerbau” were transported to the Benedictine monastery in Kremsmünster in Upper Austria, which had been confiscated by the Gestapo. The monastery served as a “Reich art depot” until 1943 and was foreseen for works of art from the “Sonderauftrag Linz”. In addition, as from May 1941 the art collections confiscated from Jewish owners in Vienna were already transferred to Kremsmünster.⁷ The initial transport from Munich took place on 1 August 1941 under the

Berlin/Munich 2015; Craig Hugh Smyth, *The Central Art Collecting Point in Munich* (publication of the Zentralinstitut für Kunstgeschichte in Munich, Vol. 63), Passau 2022.

³ Angelika Enderlein, “Der Kunstbestand der Bundesrepublik Deutschland. Kunstschatze aus sieben Jahrhunderten, Geschichte einer Sammlung”, in: Henning Rader, Vanessa-Maria Voigt (ed.), *“Ehem. Jüdischer Besitz”. Erwerbungen des Münchener Stadtmuseums im Nationalsozialismus*, Munich 2018, pp. 246–257, here p.253, kunstverwaltung.bund.de/DE/Provenienzforschung/Fachaufsaetze/fachaufsaetze_node.html, accessed on 4.9.2023.

⁴ For details regarding the “Sonderauftrag Linz” see among others Hanns Christian Lühr, *Das Braune Haus der Kunst, Hitler und der „Sonderauftrag Linz“. Kunstbeschaffung im Nationalsozialismus*, Berlin 2016; Birgit Schwarz, *Hitlers Museum. Die Fotoalben ‚Gemäldegalerie Linz‘. Dokumente zum „Führermuseum“*, Vienna/Cologne/Weimar 2004; *ibid.*, *Auf Befehl des Führers. Hitler und der NS-Kunstraub*, Darmstadt 2014; see also the contribution “Irrational, oversized, egomaniacal. Myths surrounding Hitler's ‘Führermuseum’” from Birgit Schwarz in the catalogue, pp. 80–89.

⁵ See Meike Hopp, Stephan Klingen, “Vom ‚Führerbau‘ zum Central Collecting Point. Verlagerung von Kunst und Kulturgut am Beispiel München 1942–1949”, in: Pia Schölnberger, Sabine Loitfellner (ed.), *Bergung von Kulturgut im Nationalsozialismus. Mythen – Hintergründe – Auswirkungen* (publications of the Kommission für Provenienzforschung, Vol. 6), Vienna/Cologne/Weimar 2016, pp. 69–84, [vrlibrary.de/doi/pdf/10.7767/9783205201564-005](https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:hbz:5:1-63884-p0061-9), accessed on 4.9.2023. Hans Reger was an employee of the architectural office of Paul Ludwig Troost (1878–1934), which was responsible for the administration of the picture collections; see among others Schwarz 2004, S. 19.

⁶ In addition to the now established designation “Linz number”, in the past the numbers were also known as “Hitler numbers” or “Führerbau numbers”. However, the term “Linz number” can certainly be criticised, as it suggests that all the art objects registered under these figures were intended for the “Führer Museum” in Linz, which was not the case.

⁷ See Birgit Kirchmayr, “Reichskunstdepot Kremsmünster”, in: *Lexikon der österreichischen Provenienzforschung*, lexikon-provenienzforschung.org/kremsmuenster-reichskunstdepot, accessed on am 5.9.2023; for details see

auspices of Hans Reger, who drew up and signed the transport lists and accompanied the transports.⁸ On the basis of the inventory numbers and the surviving transport lists, the artworks can be assigned individually in time to one of the total of twelve transports.⁹ For example, in the case of the painting *Soldaten in der Wachstube* by the Dutch artist Jacob Duck (p. 45), it can be shown that the number 2949 noted on the back of the label refers to the list of the “11th long-distance transport of artworks (salvage run)”¹⁰ on 12 and 13 November 1943 (Fig. 4). In the list, the picture is noted with the inventory number assigned by Reger, the artist's name, work title (here *Wachlokal*) and dimensions (Fig. 5).¹¹

In Kremsmünster, the works were once again registered and given a “K number”, which was handwritten on the back of the artefacts. Today, these numbers simplify the attribution of artworks to interim storage at the “Reichskunstdepot Kremsmünster”. The work *Soldaten in der Wachstube* was allocated the number “K1780”, which was noted in black pencil on the picture support (Fig. 6). The “K numbers” also provide information about a further transport step, namely the transfer from Kremsmünster to the Altaussee salt mine,¹² which began in 1943. This is because they are noted on the corresponding transport lists.¹³

The painting *Soldaten in der Wachstube* arrived in Altaussee on 25 January 1944 and was registered there with the number 1618/1.¹⁴ The art objects that had remained in the “Führerbau” in Munich until then were also brought to Altaussee in a total of eleven transports from 1944 onwards.¹⁵ According to the US art protection officer George Stouts, at

also the contribution “Kremsmünster – the unknown station on the *Journey of the Paintings*” from Birgit Kirchmayr in the catalogue, pp. 112–124.

⁸ See also Bundesarchiv Koblenz (BArch), B 323/160, “Verwahrung und Verwaltung von Kunstgegenständen im Münchener Führerbau, in Stift Kremsmünster und im Salzbergwerk Alt-Aussee”, correspondence A–K, letters from Hans Reger to Dr. Juraschek from 5.9.1941, p. 149, fol. 74.

⁹ Transport lists (picture register) “Führerbau” München – Stift Kremsmünster”, in: BArch, B 323/11, “Bergungsdepots im Salzbergwerk Alt-Aussee, Stift Kremsmünster, Stift Hohenfurth, in Bad Ischl und Salzburg 1941–1952, from p. 649, fol. 319, here: XI. Transport, 12 and 13.11.1943; XII. Transport, 28.11.1943.

¹⁰ See BArch, B 323/11, p. 811, fol. 400.

¹¹ See *ibid.* p. 5 of the transport list, p. 821, fol. 405.

¹² From August 1943, the Altaussee salt mine served initially as a security depot for the Institute for the Preservation of Monuments in Vienna. From 1944 onwards, cultural artefacts from among others, the “Sonderauftrag Linz”, the NSDAP party chancellery and the “Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg”, also began to be stored in Altaussee. See Anneliese Schallmeiner, “Die modernen Nibelungen salzen ihre Schätze ein”. Altaussee als Bergungsort des Instituts für Denkmalpflege”, in: Pia Schölnberger, Sabine Loitfellner (ed.), *Bergung von Kulturgut im Nationalsozialismus. Mythen – Hintergründe – Auswirkungen*, Vienna/Cologne/Weimar 2016, pp. 103–127.

¹³ See also Leonard Weidinger, *Reichskunstdepot Kremsmünster – Gemälde: „K-Liste“*, leonhard.weidinger.wien/daten/kremsmuenster-gemaelde, accessed on 26.9.2023.

¹⁴ See BArch, B 323/612, control number index (arrival card index according to Munich numbers), n.d., arrival card, incoming number 2274/2, Aussee no. 1618/1.

¹⁵ Transport lists (picture register) “Führerbau” München – Salzbergwerk Altaussee”, in: BArch, B 323/11, “Bergungsdepots im Salzbergwerk Alt-Aussee, Stift Kremsmünster, Stift Hohenfurth, in Bad Ischl und Salzburg 1941–1952, from p. 856, fol. 422, here: I. Transport 19.5.1944; II. Transport 24.6.1944; III. Transport 15.8.1944;

the end of the war over 1,000 paintings, drawings, watercolours, graphics and sculptures were located in the Altaussee salt mine. In addition, there were weapons and pieces of armour, tapestries, furniture, around 2,000 boxes of books and numerous other objects.¹⁶ More than 1,500 works remained in the “Führerbau” and the neighbouring NSDAP administration building.¹⁷

Another significant and always clearly identifiable number on the backs of those paintings that can be assigned to the “Restbestand CCP” is the so-called “Mü number”. After the end of the Second World War, the Allies began to recover and secure art and cultural artefacts from the provisional NS storage depots. For this purpose, the US military government established several art collection centres in its area of responsibility, the so-called Central Collecting Points.¹⁸ The largest of these was installed in the former NSDAP administration building and the “Führerbau” on the Königsplatz in Munich.¹⁹ The cultural assets found in over 600 storage centres were recorded, photographed, examined for their provenance and, where possible, restituted to their rightful owners.²⁰ Today, the Central Collecting Point's arrival cards, which were created when the objects reached Munich, can be viewed digitally.²¹ Among other additions, the “Mü number” assigned to them was also applied to the back of the artwork in blue crayon, where in many cases it has been preserved up to the present day (Figs. 7, 8, 9).

Today, the Mü numbers are an important starting point for further research into the provenance of these artworks. From an online database relating to the Central Collecting Point in Munich, the numbers can be employed to retrace the contemporary knowledge regarding the provenance of the objects, which is fundamental to current research. In addition, features on the back of the works, which can still be discovered today, were noted on the various index cards. The painting *Fuchs vor seinem Bau liegend* by the German artist Karl Blechen (p. 63) arrived at the Central Collecting Point in Munich on 18 October 1945 and

IV. Transport 24.8.1944; V. Transport 31.8.1944; VI. Transport 13.9.1944; VII. Transport 21.9.1944; VIII. Transport 4.10.1944; IX. Transport 28.10.1944; X. Transport 23.11.1944; XI. Transport 23.4.1945.

¹⁶ See Lynn H. Nicholas, *Der Raub der Europa. Das Schicksal europäischer Kunstwerke im Dritten Reich*, Munich 1997, p. 456, quote according to George Stout, diary entry from 21.5.1945.

¹⁷ See Meike Hopp, Leonard Weidinger, *Rekonstruktion des „Führerbau-Diebstahls“ Ende April 1945 und Recherchen zum Verbleib der Objekte. Summarischer Projektbericht*, 30.6.2018, p. 3f., zika.eu/forschung/projekte/pdf/zi-projekt_fuehrerbau-diebstahl_summarischer_bericht_2019-05-08, accessed on 25.8.2023.

¹⁸ The Central Collecting Points in the American occupation zone were established in Bamberg, Celle, Marburg, Nuremberg, Schloss Dyck am Niederrhein, Offenbach and Wiesbaden, see BArch, B 323/328, “Einrichtung, Tätigkeit und Auflösung von Kunstsammelstellen in Bamberg, Celle, Schloss Dyck, Nürnberg, Offenbach und Wiesbaden”, 1945–1956.

¹⁹ In this connection above all see Lauterbach 2015, p. 45ff.

²⁰ Regarding the history of internal and external restitution under the direction of the American Military Government, later the Trusteeship Administration of Cultural Property at the Federal Foreign Office and the subsequent federal administrations, see among others *ibid.*, p. 93ff. and kunstverwaltung.bund.de/DE/Provenienzforschung/Historie/historie_node.html, accessed on 29.11.2023.

²¹ dhm.de/datenbank/ccp/dhm_ccp.php, accessed on 28.8.2023.

was registered there with the number 10504.²² On the so-called property card allocated to the work, it was noted that amongst other identifications marks on its reverse side the lettering “Gal. Matthies, Berlin / Sti 144” could be found (Fig. 10).²³ In fact, a corresponding label has been preserved on the back of the painting's decorative frame (Fig. 11). This shows that the work was presented in 1927 at the Galerie Matthiesen in Berlin as part of the exhibition *Das Stilleben in der deutschen und französischen Malerei von 1850 bis zur Gegenwart*. In the exhibition catalogue, the lender is given as “Slg. P., Berlin”.²⁴ The label thus provides valuable information about the provenance and the then owner, while at the same time it can be viewed as a small mosaic stone in the history of the Galerie Matthiesen.

Apart from labels from galleries, which can provide information about art dealers, sales or exhibitions, occasionally handwritten numbers can be assigned to an art dealer. On the reverse side of the painting *Der eifersüchtige Tiroler* by Franz Defregger is the number 127, handwritten in yellow crayon on the decorative frame of the work (Fig. 12). The number refers to an auction by the Berlin auctioneer Hans W. Lange, who offered the painting between 27 and 29 January 1943 in his auction rooms at Bellevuestrasse 7 in Berlin. It is listed in the corresponding auction catalogue under lot number 127 with the title *Eifersucht* and is depicted on plate 25.²⁵ The property card of the Central Collecting Point also states that the work was sold at this auction.²⁶

There are further examples, which show that Hans W. Lange labelled the paintings on offer at his auctions with the lot number.²⁷ These labels in crayon vary in colour between yellow,

²² See BArch, B 323/612, control number index (arrival card index according to Munich numbers), n. fol., arrival card, incoming number 10504.

²³ See BArch, B 323/664, so-called restitution index according to Munich numbers, n.d., Property Art Card, incoming number 10504.

²⁴ See *Das Stilleben in der deutschen und französischen Malerei von 1850 bis zur Gegenwart*, exhibition catalogue, Galerie Matthiesen, Berlin, Berlin 1927, p. 11, no. 4, without illustration. It relates to the collection of the Berlin privy councillor and collector Alexander Prentzel (1875–1955). See also the entry in the Provenienzenbank.bund, kunstverwaltung.bund.de/SharedDocs/Provenienzen/DE/10000_10999/10504, accessed on 25.9.2023.

²⁵ See Hans W. Lange (company), *Gemälde alter und neuerer Meister, mittelalterliche Plastik, Möbel, Bronzen, Tapisserien, Golduhren. Versteigerung am 27. bis 29. Januar 1943*, auction cat., Hans W. Lange, Berlin 1943, [doi.org/10.11588/diglit.61496#0030](https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:hbz:5:1-64964-p0030-9), accessed on 22.9.2023.

²⁶ See BArch, B 323/663, so-called restitution index according to Munich numbers, n.d., “Property Art Card”, incoming number 9080.

²⁷ A systematic comparison of the paintings in German federal ownership, which has already begun, may therefore provide valuable information about Hans W. Lange's business practices, as well as those of other auctioneers and art dealers. The historian Caroline Flick, an expert on the Hans W. Lange art auction house, has already been able to provide random evidence of this for Hans W. Lange. She has also pointed out a possible correspondence between the numbers written in yellow crayon and Hans W. Lange. See Caroline Flick, “Fischer (Bauführer von Schinkel), *Der Schinkelplatz mit Bauakademie während des Baus*”, in: *Gute Geschäfte. Kunsthandel in Berlin 1933–1945*, exhibition cat., Aktives Museum Faschismus und Widerstand in Berlin, Berlin 2011, p. 173f.; *ibid.*, *Verwertung der Umzugsgüter Georg und Martin Tietz*, August 2018, pp. 41, 43, carolineflick.de/publikationen/Verwertung-Umzugsgueter-Tietz.pdf, accessed on 29.11.2023; *ibid.*, *Helene Haases „Hagemeister“*, September 2018, p. 53, note 200, carolineflick.de/publikationen/Helene-Haases-Hagemeister.pdf, accessed on 22.9.2023.

white and blue, whereby the meaning of these chromatic differences is to date unexplained. Nevertheless, the alignment of comparable numbers on the reverse side of paintings with Hans W. Lange's auctions would appear to be worthwhile.

However, it should be noted that it is often difficult or even impossible to identify the numerical sequences noted on the reverse sides. For example, as yet it has not been possible to determine what the number 106 noted in blue chalk on the back of Jacob Duck's *Soldaten in der Wachstube* might refer to (Fig. 4). We can only hope that in

future further conclusions on the basis of comparable reverse side inscriptions will become feasible.

Occasionally, reverse side features can also be helpful in limiting the periods related to the interim stations of a work, even if no direct conclusions can be drawn about a contemporary owner. The painting *Die Türken vor Wien* by the Augsburg artist Georg Philipp Rugendas the Elder (1666–1742) (p. 51)²⁸ was, perhaps together with its counterpart,²⁹ in Berlin at an as yet undetermined point between 1933 and 1939. A sheet metal plate attached to the back of the frame by the Berlin glazier “Leo Rehfeldt”, who also framed the picture and gilded the frame (Fig. 13), would support this assumption. Research into the Rehfeldt glazier's workshop has revealed that at the latest, it had been based at Nürnberger Strasse 27 in Berlin since 1903 under the management of the Jewish glazier and master gilder Adolph Rehfeldt (1855–1936).³⁰ In 1933, his son Leo Leis Rehfeldt (1889–1966)³¹ took over his father's business.³² He lived at the same address with his wife Käthe and two children until he fled in November 1938. His family followed him into emigration in the spring of 1939 after the business was “aryanised”.³³ According to current research, neither the customer index

²⁸ See Provenance note in the Provenienzdatenbank.bund of the Kunstverwaltung des Bundes, kunstverwaltung.bund.de/SharedDocs/Provenienzen/DE/9000_9999/9217.html, accessed on 3.9.2023.

²⁹ Georg Philipp Rugendas, *Die Türken vor Wien*, n.d. 73×97 cm, oil on canvas, kunstverwaltung.bund.de/SharedDocs/Provenienzen/DE/9000_9999/9212.html, accessed on 3.9.2023. The sheet metal sign of the Leo Rehfeldt glazier's workshop is also mounted on the reverse side of the picture.

³⁰ In the Berlin address books for 1903 to 1940, the company “Adolph Rehfeldt” is listed continually at the address Nürnberger Strasse 27. See Berlin address books 1799–1970, digital.zlb.de/viewer/berliner-adressbuecher/, accessed on 3.9.2023. In the Jewish address books for Berlin 1929/30 and 1931/32, both Adolph Rehfeldt (Nürnbergerstrasse 27) and Leo Rehfeldt (Grosse Frankfurter Strasse 32) are listed, see. *Jüdisches Adressbuch Für Gross-Berlin*, Berlin 1929, p. 325, digital.zlb.de/viewer/metadata/34039536/0/, accessed 3.9.2023.

³¹ See Leo Rehfeldt's birth certificate in: Bundesamt für zentrale Dienste und offene Vermögensfragen (BADV), Sondervermögens- und Bauverwaltung with the Senator for Finance Berlin, file no. 4-4859/50, p. 4.

³² See Leo Rehfeldt's affidavit from 14.3.1955, BADV, Sondervermögens- und Bauverwaltung with the Senator for Finance Berlin, file no. 4-4857/50, p. 24. According to the Landesarchiv Berlin a commercial register file regarding the transaction has not survived.

³³ See *ibid.* according to Leo Rehfeldt's affidavit, his wife Käthe was instructed by the National Socialists to hand over the business to a Mr Heinen. In the Berlin address books between 1940 and 1949, Frank Heinen is listed with an art and building glass business at the address Nürnbergerstrasse 27. See *Berliner Adressbuch 1940*, Berlin 1940, S. 224, digital.zlb.de/viewer/image/34115495_1940/3809/, accessed on 3.9.2023; *Branchen-Adressbuch für Berlin*, Berlin 1946, p. 389, digital.zlb.de/viewer/image/34235165_1946_1947/491/, accessed on 3.9.2023; *Berliner Stadtadressbuch 1949. Bd. III: Branchenadressbuch für Berlin*, Berlin 1949, p. 425, digital.zlb.de/viewer/image/34117222_1949_3/495/, accessed on 3.9.2023. During one of the Rehfeldt family's restitution proceedings after the war, Frank Heinen argued that he had come across the business premises by

nor other business documents of the Rehfeldt glassworks are known that could provide information about a possible client for the framing of the painting.³⁴ Furthermore, as yet it has proven impossible to ascertain whether the painting was in the glazier's shop as merchandise or a commissioned work at the time of the "aryanisation" of the firm. In this respect, the attached metal sign from Leo Rehfeldt and the research that it has initiated into the history of the glazier's and the persecution of the Rehfeldt family have simultaneously assisted the determination of a period during which the painting *Türken vor Wien* must have been in Berlin and thrown light upon the fate of a Jewish family in Berlin subject to Nazi persecution. Conversely, to date it has not been possible to identify the owner of the painting.³⁵

The examples listed here are merely a small selection of the variety of different features that can be found on reverse sides and have become intrinsic to them. A major difficulty still exists with regard to the identification of these features, which in many cases is not as clear as in those mentioned. Researching unknown inscriptions on an object is usually tedious, as the necessary research tools and above all a broader research network are still lacking. One exception is the *Datenbank der Provenienzmerkmale*, which was published by the Austrian Commission for Provenance Research in 2016.³⁶ The Proveana research database of the Deutsches Zentrum Kulturgutverluste could also be used in the future to document and research reverse side features.³⁷

chance and had rented the shop in November 1938 with Käthe Rehfeldt's consent. She had not sold him any stock. See Landesarchiv Berlin, B Rep. 025-07 no. 3015/50, p. 3.

³⁴ Although during the compensation proceedings for Käthe Rehfeldt, both Willi Felix (1892–1962), subsequently the director of the Charité Berlin-Ost, and the art dealership Geisenberger & Söhne were referred to as Rehfeldt's clients, research into these individuals did not yield any positive results. See Entschädigungsamt Berlin, Reg. No. 324.581, p. E5 and E6.

³⁵ No information could be found in the Rehfeldt family's applications for restitution and compensation that could be linked to the ownership or sale of the Rugendas painting. See Landesarchiv Berlin B Rep. 025-04 Nr.4859/50, B Rep. 025-07 no. 3015/50 and Entschädigungsamt Berlin, Reg. No. 324.581 and 274.034. The surviving file of the "Vermögensverwertungsstelle" of the Oberfinanzpräsident Berlin, which provided information about Käthe Rehfeldt's assets, also contained no references to the picture.

See Brandenburgisches Landeshauptarchiv Potsdam, Rep. 36 A Oberfinanzpräsident Berlin-Brandenburg (II), no. 30715.

³⁶ This has set itself the task of documenting and classifying a wide variety of differing reverse side features, thereby simplifying the comparison of provenance characteristics. This can also contribute to the identification of the former owners or individual stations of the objects, etc. As at September 2023 920 objects are recorded in the database see provenienz.collectiveaccess.de, accessed on 23.9.2023. Available for drawings and prints is Frits Lugt's standard work, *Les Marques des Collections des Dessins et d'Estampes*, which was published in 1921 and since then has been revised on several occasions and transferred to a database see marquesdecollections.fr/, accessed on 23.9.2023.

³⁷ Proveana, Forschungsdatenbank des Deutschen Zentrum Kulturgutverluste, proveana.de/de/start, accessed on 13.12.2023.

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An additional problem is that frequently only fragments of stickers, labels and other lettering remain, or these have been overpainted or crossed out and sometimes been deliberately removed. Consequently, they are either difficult or impossible to identify.

The features on the reverse sides of art objects harbour great potential for provenance research, which is yet to be fully exploited. Therefore, it is important and desirable to systematically compare these traces on artworks that have passed through similar routes and provenance phases. The aim must be to publish the findings from the backs of artworks in order to render them comparable and thus useful for interdisciplinary co-operation.

Lugt's standard work, *Les Marques des Collections des Dessins et d'Estampes*, which was published in 1921 and since then has been revised on several occasions and transferred to a database see marquesdecollections.fr/, accessed on 23.9.2023.

Illustrations

Fig. 1: Rear view, Ferdinand Georg Waldmüller, *Dame in schwarzem Kleid und weißer Spitzenhaube*, 1825, oil on canvas, 70.5 × 58 cm, on permanent loan from the Federal Republic of Germany at the Germanisches Nationalmuseum Nuremberg, copyright: GNM Nuremberg

Fig. 2: Rear view (detail "Linz no."), Jacob Duck, *Soldaten in der Wachstube*, n.d., oil on wood, 49 × 38 cm, on permanent loan from the Federal Republic of Germany to the Landesmuseum Oldenburg, copyright: Landesmuseum Oldenburg

Fig. 3: Rear view (detail "Linz no."), Georg Philipp Rugendas, *Türken vor Wien*, n. d., Oil on canvas, 73 × 98 cm, on permanent loan from the Federal Republic of Germany to the Deutsches Historisches Museum, Berlin, copyright: DHM Berlin

Fig. 4: Rear view, Jacob Duck, *Soldaten in der Wachstube*, n.d., oil on wood, 49 × 38 cm, on permanent loan from the Federal Republic of Germany to the Landesmuseum Oldenburg, copyright: Landesmuseum Oldenburg

Fig. 5: Transport list of the XI transport "Führerbau", Munich - Kremsmünster, 12 and 13 November 1943, p. 5, in: Bundesarchiv Koblenz, B 323/11, transport lists (picture directories)

Fig. 6: Reverse photograph (detail "Kremsmünster no."), Jacob Duck, *Soldaten in der Wachstube*, n. d., oil on wood, 49 × 38 cm, on permanent loan from the Federal Republic of Germany to the Landesmuseum Oldenburg, copyright: Landesmuseum Oldenburg

Fig. 7: Bundesarchiv Koblenz, B 323/618, so-called "Kontrollnummernkartei" according to Munich numbers, n.d., "Arrival Card", entry number 9080

Fig. 8: Reverse view, Franz von Defregger, *Der eifersüchtige Tiroler*, 1899, oil on canvas, 110.5 × 98.2 cm, on permanent loan from the Federal Republic of Germany to the Staatliche Museen Kassel, Museumslandschaft Hessen, copyright: Staatliche Museen Kassel

Fig. 9: Rear view (detail, "Mü-no."), Franz von Defregger, *Der eifersüchtige Tiroler*, 1899, oil on canvas, 110.5 × 98.2 cm, on permanent loan from the Federal Republic of Germany to the Staatliche Museen Kassel, Museumslandschaft Hessen, copyright: Staatliche Museen Kassel

Fig. 10: Federal Archives Koblenz, B 323/664, so-called restitution file according to Munich numbers, n.d., "Property Art Card", entry number 10504

Fig. 11: Reverse side photograph (detail "Galerie-Etikett Matthiesen"), Karl Blechen, *Fuchs vor seinem Bau liegend*, ca. 1832, oil on canvas, 26 × 35 cm, on permanent loan from the Federal Republic of Germany to the Saarlandmuseum, Saarbrücken, copyright: Saarlandmuseum Saarbrücken

Fig. 12: Rear view (detail, lot number), Franz von Defregger, *Der eifersüchtige Tiroler*, 1899, oil on canvas, 110.5 × 98.2 cm, on permanent loan from the Federal Republic of Germany to the Staatliche Museen Kassel, Museumslandschaft Hessen, copyright: Staatliche Museen Kassel

Fig. 13: Rear view (detail, sheet metal sign "Glaserei Rehfeldt"), Georg Philipp Rugendas, *Türken vor Wien*, n.d., oil on canvas, 73 × 98 cm, on permanent loan from the Federal Republic of Germany to the Deutsches Historisches Museum, Berlin, copyright: DHM Berlin

Birgit Kirchmayr: Kremsmünster – the unknown station on the “Journey of the Paintings”¹

The text is an English translation of the original text “Kremsmünster die unbekannte Station auf der Reise der Bilder” written in German language for the catalog of the exhibition “Die Reise der Bilder” [“The Journey of the Paintings”] pp. 112-124. Translation by John Cima.

“Week after week, the first art transports rolled into Kremsmünster from both East and West simultaneously in a never-ending stream. This was the beginning of the largest accumulation of artistic goods and most colossal mass movement of paintings and all kinds of artworks that world history has ever seen.”²

Kremsmünster Abbey, National Socialism and art

The Upper Austrian monastery of Kremsmünster, founded in 777 by the Bavarian Duke Tassilo III, has an exquisite art collection containing objects that have found their way into the monastery over the centuries. Amongst the special gems are the Tassilo chalice³ dating from the 8th century, the two Tassilo candlesticks, a 12th-century flabellum and a fine ivory diptych.⁴ However, as the following article concerns Kremsmünster Abbey and art within the context of National Socialism, its content cannot be limited to the monastery's own collection. For in spite of all its splendour, both now and then, it could hardly compete with the art-historical value of the works of art that found temporary sanctuary in the monastery between 1941 and 1944. These were the paintings of the so-called “Führersammlung” (Führer collection). Under the name “Sonderauftrag Linz” (Special Mission Linz), a team headed by the Dresden art historian Hans Posse worked from 1939 onwards on the creation of a collection for an art museum in Hitler's “home town” of Linz. A large number of these works of art were appropriated from the seized collections of Viennese Jews and occupied France.⁵ In

¹ This article is based on research by the author, some of which has already been published as part of the *Geraubte Kunst in Oberdonau* research project: Birgit Kirchmayr, Friedrich Buchmayr, Michael John, *Geraubte Kunst in Oberdonau* (Oberösterreich in der Zeit des Nationalsozialismus, Vol. 6), Linz 2007, pp. 141–150. The present contribution is an updated version, supplemented by new source findings and taking into account the advances in relevant research that have taken place in the meantime.

² Franz Juraschek, “Die Klosterdenkmale Oberösterreichs. Ihr Schicksal in und nach dem Kriege”, in: *Jahrbuch des Oberösterreichischen Musealvereins*, 92, 1947, pp. 84–99, here p. 93.

³ The latest research employs the designation “Tassilo-Liutpirc-Chalice”. See Egon Wamers (ed.), *Der Tassilo-Liutpirc-Kelch im Stift Kremsmünster. Geschichte – Archäologie – Kunst*, Regensburg 2019.

⁴ See Hans Bertele-Grenadenberg, *Die Kunstdenkmäler des Benediktinerstiftes Kremsmünster*, Vol. 2: *Die stiftlichen Sammlungen und die Bibliothek* (Österreichische Kunsttopographie, Vol. 43), Vienna 1977.

⁵ Within this context, the term “Nazi art theft” is often used. In fact, this is accurate, but the methods of appropriation were different and often quasi-legitimised by the instrumentalisation of existing laws such as the possibility for seizure and confiscation under the Austrian Export Prohibition Act. The boundaries between daylight robbery and the exploitation of power structures (keyword forced sale) were thus sometimes fluid. From today's perspective, all so-called legal transactions with Nazi persecutees in the territory of the former German Reich and its sphere of influence are subject to the Art Restitution Act of 1998 (Federal Law Gazette 181/1998, amended in 2009).

1941, the collection of paintings for Linz already comprised a sizeable number of works and was largely housed in the "Führerbau" in Munich. However, a search for a superior location was under way, which is the point at which Kremsmünster came into play. The prerequisite for this interest was the confiscation of the abbey in 1941. In the course of the "Klostersturm", numerous monasteries in Austria were seized at the time, although, prior to this event, monastic life in the Kremsmünster abbey had already been disrupted. In the autumn of 1938, the Benedictines had to hand over the traditional grammar school that they had administered, which was then converted into a National Socialist "Oberschule für Jungen". Only recently discovered photo albums provide insights into everyday life in this secondary school for boys, which within a very short time was transformed from a Catholic establishment into an elite National Socialist institution in the mould of a Napola.⁶ The monastery itself was confiscated by order of the Gestapo on 3 April 1941. Abbot Ignaz Schachermayr was expelled from the "Gau" and unless they had already been conscripted into military service, most of the monks had to leave the convent within a matter of weeks. Merely those who were obliged to serve as administrators of certain areas remained behind. The seized assets of the convent were definitively confiscated in favour of the "Reichsgau Oberdonau" by decree on 22 November 1941.⁷ The art collections now owned by the "Gau", as well as the natural science and other cultural-historical collections, were placed under the administration of the "Museum des Reichsgaues Oberdonau" in Linz (previously the Upper Austrian Provincial Museum).

Kremsmünster as a salvage repository for the "Sonderauftrag Linz"

Immediately after the expropriation of the monastery in spring 1941, the stage was set for its future function as an art depot. "Gauleiter" August Eigruber had learned from "Gaukonservator" Franz Juraschek that the staff of the "Sonderauftrag Linz" were looking for an appropriate place to house the "Führersammlung" (Führer Collection), and in April 1941 he sent the following proposal to Munich: "As the first building most suitable for housing the art objects, I propose the Kremsmünster Abbey. It is located in the remote Kremstal on a completely unimportant railway line, 28 km from Linz and 20 km from Steyr as the crow flies."⁸

This description is somewhat surprising, since Kremsmünster's location between the industrial centres of Linz and Steyr was to prove highly unfavourable in the further course of the war. Initially however, Eigruber's initiative met with success although closer study of the available data shows that the idea of storing the art holdings of the planned "Führermuseum" in Kremsmünster did not actually come from him personally, but from "Gaukonservator" Franz Juraschek. In February 1941, before Kremsmünster was confiscated, Juraschek had already suggested to the "Gauleiter" that Adolf Hitler or Hans Posse be offered the opportunity to store the "Führersammlung" in "Oberdonau".⁹ Eigruber approved of the idea and probably already saw himself side by side with Adolf Hitler viewing the magnificent works of art in Kremsmünster. In his letter to Munich, he conveyed a description of the spatial advantages of accommodation in the confiscated monastery, there would be a 16 x 26 m

⁶ Birgit Kirchmayr, "Bilder des Nationalsozialismus. Ein zeithistorischer Quellenfund im Stift Kremsmünster und was er uns zeigt", in: 165. *Jahresbericht Öffentliches Stiftsgymnasium Kremsmünster 2022*, Kremsmünster 2022, pp. 59–78; Wolfgang Leberbauer, "1938: Schicksalsjahr für das Stiftsgymnasium Kremsmünster", in: 161. *Jahresbericht des öffentlichen Stiftsgymnasiums Kremsmünster 2018*, Kremsmünster 2018, pp. 131–150.

⁷ See Rudolf Hundstorfer, *Das Stift unterm Hakenkreuz. Sonderabdruck aus dem 104. Jahresbericht des Öffentl. Gymnasiums der Benediktiner zu Kremsmünster*, Kremsmünster/Linz 1961, p. 40f.

⁸ Bundesarchiv Koblenz (BAK), B 323, Sch. 164: Eigruber to the Führerbau Munich (letter from 22.4.1941).

⁹ Bundesdenkmalamt (BDA) Linz, factual files, box S. L-N: 227/41, Juraschek to Eigruber (letter from 8.2.1941).

room available in the form of the Kaisersaal ("also suitable as a screening room"), two further halls and 14 large rooms, and another 20 would be added when currently accommodated resettlers from Bessarabia are "transferred to the East".¹⁰

An inspection by Hans Posse on 9 May, which took place immediately following Eigruber's suggestion, was positive. Juraschek reported to Eigruber that Posse found the possibility of having exhibition rooms available that could be used "on the occasion of a visit by the Führer" particularly attractive, as this option did not exist at the other depots.¹¹ Juraschek's plan had thus succeeded and the holdings of the "Führermuseum" were to be brought to Kremsmünster. Apart from additional prestige for the "Gau", Juraschek also saw the preservation of the monastery as a cultural monument as guaranteed.¹²

The first works of art from the "Führer Collection" already arrived in the summer of 1941. These were transports from the Vienna Central Depot for Confiscated Art,¹³ which were dealt with by the Vienna Institute for the Preservation of Monuments, as well as transports from the Munich "Führerbau" (Figs. 1 and 2). Richard Rankl, a Benedictine from Kremsmünster, who was one of the few monks to remain in the monastery "on duty", recorded the events in his diary:

"In the course of the summer, the transports of paintings, furniture and other works of art arrived from Vienna and Munich. In the Kaisersaal there is said to be a very large painting by Makart, which the Duce, Mussolini, gave to the Führer.¹⁴ The refectory is completely filled with furniture and artworks, and the door to the winch room is walled off. [...] The entrance to the sacristy from the convent is also walled off and now most of the rooms are filled with art treasures."¹⁵

Rankl mentions the Kaisersaal and the refectory, which were only two of the (in total greater) number of rooms in the abbey and convent wing of the monastery that were employed as depots. According to the research to date, no photos of the storage have survived, only a preserved sketch, which relates to the arrangement of crates and individual objects in the refectory (Fig. 3).¹⁶ Rankl continued to make regular notes when larger transports arrived at the monastery. However, he was hardly privy to the actual events surrounding the storage of the artworks. Instead, his confrere Fr Petrus Mayrhofer, an art teacher and restorer trained at the Akademie der bildenden Künste in Vienna, was responsible on site. In 1942, Rankl noted in his diary that Mayrhofer had been appointed "Leiter der Kunstverwaltung des

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ BDA Linz, factual files, box S. L-N:1049/41, Juraschek to Eigruber (letter from 12.5.1941).

¹² BDA Linz, restitution material, folder 17, Juraschek to Robert Hiecke (letter from 13.5.1941); see also Juraschek 1947, p. 93f.

¹³ The Central Depository was established in autumn 1938 in the rooms of the Neue Burg (which today houses the Kunsthistorische Museum's collection of old musical instruments). Thousands of objects that had been seized from their Jewish owners after the Anschluss were stored and inventoried there under the direction of the Denkmalamt (Institute for the Preservation of Monuments) and the Kunsthistorische Museum. See also [zdk-online.org/das-zentraldepot](https://www.zdk-online.org/das-zentraldepot), accessed on 31.8.2023.

¹⁴ This must be Makart's triptych *Die Pest in Florenz* (The Plague in Florence), which belonged to the inventory of the "Sonderauftrag Linz" with the "Linz number" 1098. It was expropriated by the Italian authorities from a Jewish Florentine family and given to Adolf Hitler as a gift during a visit to Florence in 1940.

¹⁵ Stiftsarchiv Kremsmünster (StAKr), Richard Rankl diary. Vol. XVII, entry November 1941.

¹⁶ StAKr, file "Kunst vor 1945", sketch undated.

Führermuseums“ (Head of the art administration of the Führermuseum)¹⁷, which is however, a simplistic description, for in fact the depot administration was subject to a complex web of responsibilities at Reich and “Gau” levels, ranging from the “Sonderstab Linz” (Special Team) in Dresden and Munich to the Gau Conservatory and the Gaumuseum in Linz, all the way to Vienna, where the Institute for the Preservation of Monuments and the Kunsthistorische Museum were involved. It is therefore hardly surprising that there were rivalries and accusations regarding competences in which the Gestapo administrator of the monastery was often entangled, especially as the accounting for the costs incurred on site for the administration of the depot also passed across his desk. These were expenses for construction work, materials and, as the documents show, also for deployed prisoners of war. For example, the terse statement of account of 15 July 1942 sent to the “Gaukonservator” reads, “I am sending you the enclosed, in accordance with the agreement, the statement of account for the 5 prisoners of war charged to you, as well as for other small items for the “Führermuseum” [...]”.¹⁸

In spite of the unavoidable say of the administrator, Fr Petrus Mayrhofer was the contact person on site for depot issues and on closer examination of his person, this may come as a surprise. For as recent archive discoveries show, in 1939 Mayrhofer, who was soon to be called a “confidant” of the Gestapo,¹⁹ had been denounced for so-called “Kanzelmißbrauch” (pulpit abuse)²⁰ and sentenced to fifteen months in prison.²¹ He was incarcerated in the Linz goal for almost a year and was only released four months early on 16 July 1940 “as a result of a merciful remission of the criminal law”. Despite this prehistory and persistent attacks from local NSDAP entities, after his release Fr Petrus Mayrhofer may indeed have taken up a “position of trust” in the monastery administered by the Gestapo. In the absence of clear sources, we can only make assumptions about the background, which at least do not rule out a possible dependency relationship or blackmail.²²

Whatever the case, as Rankl had correctly observed and recorded, and is also confirmed by numerous transport lists, art deliveries had been arriving in Kremsmünster continuously since the summer of 1941. However, these increasingly failed to correspond to “Gaukonservator” Juraschek’s ideas and as early as October 1941, he reported to Eigruber his concern regarding Posse’s alteration to his instructions. Apart from those that had already arrived, valuable works of art from the Viennese collections were no longer to be brought to Kremsmünster, but instead were to be transported to Munich. In return, “second- and third-rate works” were to come from Munich to Kremsmünster. Juraschek’s report on this to

¹⁷ StAKr, Richard Rankl diary Vol. XVIII, entry 4.12.1942.

¹⁸ StAKr, file “Kunst vor 1945”, invoice to the Zentralstelle für Denkmalschutz, Dr. F. pers. from Juraschek, Gaukonservator, Kremsmünster 15.7.1942.

¹⁹ As in several sources, e.g. BDA Linz, restitution material folder 17, correspondence Juraschek, office memoirs 12.9.1941: “He [Verwalter Hager] also stated that there were no concerns on the part of the Gestapo regarding the personage Dr Mayrhofer. On the contrary, he can be seen as a confidant of the Gestapo.”

²⁰ During the NS era (§ 130a), above all “pulpit abuse” related to sermons rated as being hostile to the NS. Numerous priests were denounced regarding actual or suspected oppositional content in their sermons and imprisoned for “pulpit abuse”.

²¹ Oberösterreichisches Landesarchiv (OÖLA), remainders. Sicherheitsdirektion Linz, Sch. 13, File 1560/43.

²² At this point a more detailed description of Mayrhofer’s contradictory biography, written after the war, cannot be given. Please note however that the author is researching into various newly discovered sources and a separate description is planned.

“Gauleiter” Eigruber from 23 October 1941 paints a vivid picture of the storage situation in Kremsmünster at that time and is therefore quoted here in full:

“Gauleiter! By order of the Deputy Gauleiter, I report on the stocks received in Kremsmünster for the Führermuseum. In accordance with the Führer's instruction obtained by you at the end of May 1940 [sic] Dir. Posse Dresden ordered that the artworks made available to the Führer in Vienna, as well as the Dutch purchases, be transported to Kremsmünster. In fact, 9 transports arrived in Kremsmünster from Vienna in June, mainly with valuable furniture, arts and crafts and about 250 paintings, all from former Ostmark ownership, as well as the Lanz Collection from Amsterdam, furniture and 100 paintings. In July, Posse suddenly changed his instructions. I don't know if a lecture from the Führer was a reason for this. He did not permit the further consignments from Vienna that had already been announced for Kremsmünster to start rolling. Instead, 5 transports arrived from Munich with mostly second- and third-rate works, most of which would not be considered for the Führermuseum in Linz because they were not good enough. Then he informed me that the very valuable Lanz Collection was not to be unpacked, as it might be collected again from Kremsmünster. On 1.8., he told me per telegraph that the paintings, which had arrived from Vienna, that means the aforementioned 250 paintings, were to be taken back to Munich as return freight. However, I only had the Viennese paintings from a single depot room removed. Amongst them are valuable works by German, Italian, Dutch and French old masters and Austrians of the 19th century such as Holbein, Cranach, Andrea del Sarto, Salvator Rosa, Teniers, Cuyp [Cuyt], Watteau, Troyon, F. Alt, Pettenkofen (a total of 68 pieces). Apart from furniture and arts and crafts, the following paintings are currently in Kremsmünster; from Vienna 180, from Amsterdam 100, from Munich 800. The stocks from Vienna and Amsterdam are valuable, as are about 50 excellent works from Munich. The artists represented include Waldmüller, Rudolf Alt, Makart, Pollaiuolo, Signorelli, Giorgione, Tintoretto and Rubens. On the basis of these facts, information from the representative in Munich, information I obtained from Vienna, and finally a telephone conversation with Posse himself on 20.10, the following picture emerges. Posse is of the opinion that the Führer will not look at the artworks in Kremsmünster now and that these will only be perused after the war. Therefore, all the paintings of value are to be collected again from Kremsmünster and brought to Munich. Since the end of July, further transports from Vienna with works from the Ostmark, partly also from the Oberdonau, as well as further transports from Holland, have only been directed to Munich. In order to create space for this in Munich, the lower-quality items that were still in Munich were brought to Kremsmünster. Kremsmünster thus becomes a depot for second-rate paintings and completely loses the significance originally intended for it.”²³

However, the available records indicate that transports from Vienna continued to reach Kremsmünster. In April 1942, Rankl reported the arrival from Vienna of three large furniture vans in which the wall coverings from the Palais Rothschild were delivered.²⁴ In September 1942, 45 paintings and art objects from the confiscated collections were transported to Kremsmünster from the Institute for the Preservation of Monuments.²⁵ The transport list includes works from the collections of Alphonse and Louis Rothschild, Oscar Bondy, Albert Pollak and others, including several paintings by Ferdinand Georg Waldmüller, a Friedrich Amerling portrait, a Rudolf von Alt, various sculptures, art objects and furniture. In January 1943, in the course of the dissolution of the Rothschild Collection, additional objects were transferred to Kremsmünster from the so-called “Jagd” depot near Vienna. The correspondence clearly states that all these items came from “confiscated Jewish” collections

²³ BDA Linz, factual files, box S. L-N: 231/41, Juraschek to Eigruber (letter from 23.10.1941).

²⁴ StAKr, diary Richard Rankl XVII, entry 21.4.1942.

²⁵ BDA Vienna, restitution material, box 13/2, folder 1: “Verzeichnis der anfangs September 1942 von Wien (Institut für Denkmalpflege) nach Kremsmünster (Stift) überführten Kunstgegenstände”.

and therefore it is absolutely clear that the persons responsible for the depot in Kremsmünster also knew their origin.

In addition to the transfers from Vienna, as announced, a large number of removals from the Munich "Führerbau" depot to Kremsmünster Abbey also took place. Between 1 August 1941 and 28 November 1943, a total of 1,732 paintings and other objects (furniture, tapestries, etc.) were transferred from Munich to Kremsmünster in twelve transports.²⁶ On 8 October 1942, Rankl noted the provisional storage situation, "Some 5,000 works of art are currently housed in the monastery and also roughly 400 crates!"²⁷

Owing to its classification as a "Reich art depot", camouflage and security measures for the Kremsmünster monastery complex were subject to regulation by the highest authorities. A report telegraphed to the Obersalzberg in June 1943 for the attention of Martin Bormann provides information about the special manner in which the monastery complex was concealed,

"the camouflage of kremsmuenster will be [...] carried out in such a way that from the entire large complex, single special parts are camouflaged with nets, so that from above the whole complex will look like four separate, square-shaped farmhouses, which are very common in oberdonau. [...] I will ask gauleiter eigruher [...] to have an aerial photograph of Kremsmuenster taken and sent to you."²⁸

Fr. Richard Rankl did not seem to have been overjoyed with the camouflage measures at the abbey, "As I was told yesterday by the master builder [...] the monastery is to be painted with green camouflage paint for air-raid protection. Then we will look nice!"²⁹

In spite of these measures, Kremsmünster Abbey offered insufficient security. Therefore, in 1943 the "Gau" conservators of the Reich were called upon to look for places safe from air attack, specifically mine tunnels or similar locations, for the housing of works of art. "Gaukonservator" Juraschek also began to examine possible tunnels in "Oberdonau". He sent his findings and suggestions to Vienna, and in the summer of 1943 there was an inspection and examination of the proposed depot in the Altaussee Salzberg workings, which ended with the depot being approved.³⁰

In a letter to "Gauleiter" Eigruher dated 4 January 1944, Juraschek writes of his pride in the fact, "that owing to the two salvage locations in "Oberdonau" [Kremsmünster and Altaussee] which I proposed [...] in this regard the "Gau Oberdonau" is now also at the top of the salvage landscapes of the Reich ".³¹

²⁶ BAK, NS 6-413: transport lists Führerbau Munich to Kremsmünster; StAKr, art salvage file before 1945, documentation of the composition of the transports, 2.12.1943.

²⁷ StAKr, diary Richard Rankl Vol. XVII, entry 8.10.1942.

²⁸ BAK, NS 6-73: cable Hummel, Führerbau to Bormann (telegram from 19.6.1943).

Fig. 4 shows an unusual photo of the abbey with recognisable camouflage measures, undated, probably in the period 1943/44.

²⁹ StAKr, diary Richard Rankl Vol. XVIII, entry 17.11.1942.

³⁰ BDA, restitution material, box 22, folder 1: no. 2106/43 Dr. J/P, expertise Linz 20.12.1943.

³¹ BDA, restitution material, box 22, folder 5: Juraschek to Eigruher (letter from 4.1.1944).

The relocation of the “Führersammlung” from Kremsmünster to Altaussee and the salvaging of Kremsmünster’s own artistic treasures

From 1943 onwards, the Altaussee mine workings proposed by Juraschek were in fact to become the most important art salvage depot in the German Reich. Initially, there were no plans to also relocate holdings from the “Sonderauftrag Linz” there, but rather the Salzberg was to only hold Austrian art objects that had to be relocated from Viennese museums due in particular to the acute threat of bombing raids. Valuable art from “Oberdonau”, which in this case again came mainly from the expropriated monasteries and included the precious objects from Kremsmünster Abbey, was also destined for storage in the Salzberg.³² An amalgamation with the inventory of the “Sonderauftrag Linz” also resulted in line with Juraschek’s wish to also store in Altaussee the altarpieces from the Hohenfurth monastery, which had been destined for the “Sonderauftrag Linz”. On 9 October 1943, Herbert Seiberl, the head of the Vienna Institute for the Preservation of Monuments and responsible for the salvage in Altaussee, had written to the head of the “Sonderauftrag Linz”, Gottfried Reimer, requesting permission to salvage the altarpieces in Altaussee and at the same time asked if he, “would like to designate any other particularly valuable items [from the “Sonderauftrag”] for safekeeping in this depot”.³³ Reimer showed interest and therefore, following the acquisition of various further expert opinions, Altaussee subsequently also became the main salvage location for the stocks of the “Führermuseum”. This meant that the “Führersammlung” holdings previously stored in Kremsmünster were now shifted to Altaussee. The removals commenced on 10 January 1944 in the middle of winter and thus under difficult conditions. According to current research, the only written sources documenting these transports are in the archives of the Kunsthistorische Museum Vienna.³⁴ In a list running to several pages, all of the transports that left Kremsmünster for Bad Aussee, as well some of those for Thürnthal³⁵ and Hohenfurth are documented with exact figures, transport dates and wagon numbers. Some 40 wagons are listed for Bad Aussee, which were dispatched between January and September 1944 and alone contained over 2,000 pictures (cf. Fig. 5)³⁶. From mid-May 1944, salvage transports of “Sonderauftrag Linz” stocks from Munich to Aussee finally began.

Although in 1944 Juraschek was still proud that the central salvage locations of the Reich were in “Oberdonau”, in retrospect he pointed out his concern that the storage of the “Sonderauftrag Linz” stock could pose a danger to the salvaged domestic works of art.³⁷ In fact, as is well known, at the end of the war there was a massive threat to the works of art stored in the Salzberg and the task was to prevent Eigruber’s “Nero-Befehl” (order) to destroy the deposits. From the numerous reports on the destruction and rescue strategies in Aussee in April and May 1945, it is clear that “Gaukonservator” Juraschek is unlikely to have played any relevant role in this regard. According to Juraschek’s own statements, in April 1945 he was primarily occupied with the rescue and return of the most valuable works of art from the Upper

³² BDA, restitution material, box 19, folder 12: written record of the packing of the “Gaukonservator 03” salvage crate, 16.5.1944.

³³ BDA, restitution material, box 10, folder 6: Seiberl to Reimer (letter from 9.10.1943).

³⁴ Archive of the Kunsthistorische Museum (KHM), XIII 14, salvage fascicle 4: composition of the transport according to B.A. Thth. H.fth. I would like to thank Leonhard Weidinger and Susanne Hehenberger for pointing out this document!

³⁵ Thürnthal was selected as the salvage location for especially large works.

³⁶ KHM, XIII 14, salvage fascicle 4: composition of the transport according to B.A. Thth. H.fth.

³⁷ Juraschek 1947, p. 95.

Austrian monasteries, including the Tassilo chalice from Kremsmünster Abbey. This was officially in the salvage crate “Gaukonservator 03” in the Altaussee salt mine (cf. Fig. 6), but according to Juraschek, this did not seem safe to him even when it was salvaged in 1944. Therefore, in consultation with Herbert Seiberl, he secretly placed the Tassilo chalice and several other works from Upper Austrian monasteries in the Lauffen/Bad Ischl workings.³⁸ Then, at the beginning of April 1945, he must have decided to remove the valuable chalice from its hiding place, as the Tassilo chalice was secretly stowed in a rucksack and taken by train and partly on foot by Juraschek to Pettenbach, where Fr Petrus Mayrhofer took charge of it on 18 April 1945 and brought it back to Kremsmünster.³⁹ The Tassilo chalice was therefore no longer in the mine tunnels when the American units reached Aussee in May 1945 and the responsible Monuments, Fine Arts, and Archives Section took custody of the stored art treasures. The holdings of the “Sonderauftrag Linz”, which had previously first been stored in Kremsmünster and then in Aussee, and consisted to a large extent of the collections confiscated in Vienna in 1938, then began their next “journey” on trucks to the Art Collecting Point in Munich. There the complex history of their restitution to their former owners commenced, aspects of which remain unresolved to this day.

³⁸ Juraschek 1947; BDA archive, restitution material, box 22, folder 2: Juraschek to Vernon Kennedy, 8.1.1951; see also Anneliese Schallmeiner, “Die modernen Nibelungen salzen ihre Schätze ein. Altaussee als Bergungsort des Instituts für Denkmalpflege”, in: Pia Schölnberger, Sabine Loitfellner (ed.), *Bergung von Kulturgut im Nationalsozialismus. Mythen – Hintergründe – Auswirkungen* (series of texts from the Kommission für Provenienzforschung, Vol. 6), Vienna/Cologne/Weimar 2016, pp. 103–128, here p. 122f.

³⁹ Juraschek 1947, p. 96. Numerous myths regarding the return already existed at the time. For the latest reconstruction based on the documents quoted here and statements by witnesses see P. Altman Pötsch, „Schrift- und Bildzeugnisse zur Geschichte des Tassilo-Liutpirc Kelches im Stift Kremsmünster“, in: Wamers 2019, pp. 185–210, in particular pp. 202–206.

Illustrations - captions and photo credits

Fig. 1: From June 1941, transports from the Vienna "Central Depot for Confiscated Art" reached Kremsmünster. Packing and transport lists are preserved in several archives; the illustration shows the first page of "Packing List VII" from June 1941. The abbreviations "AR" and "LR" refer to the collections of the Viennese bankers and art collectors Alphonse Rothschild (AR) and Louis Rothschild (LR).

Bundesdenkmalamt Archive Vienna, restitution material

Fig. 2: The compilation of all transports with objects of the "Führersammlung" from the "Führerbau" in Munich to Kremsmünster Abbey shows 12 transports in the period from 1.8.1941 to 28.11.43 and a total number of 1,732 paintings.

Stift Kremsmünster archive / BDA Vienna restitution material / BAK Koblenz portfolio B323

Fig. 3: The sketch shows the refectory of the monastery with stored works of art. It was probably drawn by Gustav Gugenberger (Museum des Reichsgaus Oberdonau) in the summer of 1941; the numbers refer to stored items from the Rothschild collections.

Stift Kremsmünster archive

Fig. 4: Kremsmünster Abbey with camouflage measures, presumably 1943/44

Private archive of Dagmar Fetz-Lugmayr, Kremsmünster

Fig. 5: A list handwritten by the restorer Josef Hajsinek, preserved in the archive of the Kunsthistorische Museum, documents the removal of works of art from the Kremsmünster depot to Bad Aussee, Thürnthal and Hohenfurth from January 1944. The majority of the holdings of the "Führermuseum" previously stored in Kremsmünster were transported from Bad Aussee railway station to the tunnels of the Salzberg in Altaussee

Kunsthistorische Museum archive

Fig. 6: The most important works of art from Kremsmünster Abbey, including the Tassilo Chalice and the flabellum, were officially stored in the salvage crate of the "Gaukonservator" Franz Juraschek in the Altaussee salt mountain. He first had them moved unofficially and then took from the salvage depot before the end of the war.

Kremsmünster Abbey archive / BDA Linz, Vienna, restitution material

Birgit Kirchmayr: “Received from the Munich Collecting Point”. The paintings, that following their salvage in the Salzkammergut, came to Linz in 1948.

The text is an English translation of the original text “Vom Collecting Point München übernommen”. Über Gemälde, die nach ihrer Bergung im Salzkammergut 1948 nach Linz gelangten“ written in German language for the catalog of the exhibition “Die Reise der Bilder” [“The Journey of the Paintings”] pp. 125-145. Translation by John Cima.

Initial situation

It is well known that Adolf Hitler wished to establish an art museum in Linz and for this purpose he enlisted the support of renowned art historians, the first and foremost of whom was Hans Posse, the Director of the Dresden Gallery, as well as numerous high-earning art dealers. A system was created by means of the “Führervorbehalt” (Führer's reservation), which enabled Hitler and his staff from the “Sonderauftrag Linz” to prioritise art objects “secured” and confiscated throughout the German Reich and the occupied territories. Such seizures related primarily to art from collectors persecuted for being Jewish.¹ During the war thousands of items managed by the “Sonderstab Linz”, along with other works of art from museum and private collections deemed worthy of protection, were then gathered together in the mine workings of the Ausseerland. This article focuses on 17 “Sonderauftrag Linz” paintings, which owing to a chain of peculiarities and coincidences in the course of their war-related recovery followed a special path that was to determine their future. This is because they are the only paintings “collected” for Linz that at present are still physically located in the city, and with the exception of one painting restituted in 2003, remain in the custody of today's LandeskulturgmbH, formerly the Oberösterreichische Landesmuseum. Until the end of the 1990s, their background appeared to be of little interest, but 1998 marked a turning point in the manner in which so-called “Nazi-looted art” was dealt with both multinationally and in Austria. On an international level, the Washington Principles were adopted, which called for a “just and fair solution” with regard to the handling and restitution of art seized during the Nazi era² and on a national level, the Austrian Art Restitution Act was passed.³ Several federal provinces followed suit with their own restitution laws and regulations, including Upper Austria in 2002.⁴ As early as 1999, the Landesmuseum in Linz was commissioned to carry out an internal review and as a result, the Upper Austrian Cultural Directorate awarded a research project to the Johannes Kepler University Linz.⁵ Apart from

¹ Regarding the “Sonderauftrag Linz” see amongst others Birgit Kirchmayr, “Adolf Hitlers ‘Sonderauftrag Linz’ und seine Bedeutung für den NS-Kunstraub in Österreich”, in: Gabriele Anderl, Alexandra Caruso (ed.), *NS-Kunstraub in Österreich und die Folgen*, Innsbruck/Vienna/Bozen 2005, pp. 26–41; Birgit Schwarz, *Hitlers Museum. Die Fotoalben Gemäldegalerie Linz. Dokumente zum “Führermuseum”*, Vienna/Cologne/Weimar 2004; *ibid.*, *Sonderauftrag Ostmark. Kunstraub und Museumspolitik im Nationalsozialismus* (series of articles of the Kommission für Provenienzforschung, Vol. 7), Vienna/Cologne/Weimar 2018.

² See the full text of the declaration at [state.gov/washington-conference-principles-on-nazi-confiscated-art/](https://www.state.gov/washington-conference-principles-on-nazi-confiscated-art/), accessed on 25.10.2023.

³ BGBl. 181/1998, amended BGBl. 117/2009.

⁴ LGBl. 92/2002.

⁵ For the results of the research project see Birgit Kirchmayr, Friedrich Buchmayr, Michael John, *Geraubte Kunst in Oberdonau* (Oberösterreich in der Zeit des Nationalsozialismus, Vol. 6), Linz 2007.

a structural classification of National Socialist art policy and looted art within a local context, the focus was also on provenance research that included the 17 paintings involved here, which according to the Landesmuseum's inventory came "from the Munich Collecting Point".⁶ The aim was to clarify how and why these paintings came to the Landesmuseum and how their provenance was to be categorised, particularly with regard to suspicions of "Raubkunst" (looted art). Provenance research in the early 2000s was often pioneering in nature because at that time much basic knowledge, numerous tools and networking opportunities, especially within the context of digitisation, which was in its infancy, were all unavailable. However, in the meantime Nazi-related provenance research has become increasingly professionalised and can now be seen as a highly specialised sub-discipline in both the fields of art history and history, as well as in an interdisciplinary approach.⁷ The following is therefore intended trace the earlier research process related to the "Collecting Point pictures", present the researched journey of the paintings and expand upon it with current perspectives.

The research process

Initially, the index cards created in the 1960s in the Upper Austrian Landesmuseum provided the sole starting point for research into the paintings in question. Under the provenance category, they showed the entry "1945 vom Collecting Point München übernommen"⁸ and several entries also had a number preceded by a "K". (Fig. 1) The Collecting Point Munich had been established in 1945 by the American Monuments, Fine Arts and Archives Section to centrally store and identify art objects from depots in the German Reich and to hand them back to the countries of origin.⁹ In turn, the "K" numbers referred to the salvage depot established in Kremsmünster in 1941.¹⁰ Therefore, owing to these references a high probability existed that these objects were former "Führermuseum" holdings and thus at least

⁶ OÖ Landesmuseum Direction, *Rückgabe von Kunstgegenständen, die während der NS-Ära in das OÖ. Landesmuseum gelangten*. Final report of the Upper Austrian Landesmuseum from 30.4.1999; supplemented and extended in January 2000.

⁷ In this regard, already see 2009 Ingo Zechner, "Von der Etablierung einer Hilfswissenschaft. Provenienzforschung in den österreichischen Bundesmuseen und Sammlungen", in: Gabriele Anderl, Christoph Bazil, Eva Blimlinger, Oliver Kühschelm, Monika Mayer, Anita Stelzl-Gallian and Leonhard Weidinger (ed.), ... *wesentlich mehr Fälle als angenommen. 10 Jahre Kommission für Provenienzforschung* (Series of articles of the Kommission für Provenienzforschung, Vol. 1), Vienna/Cologne/Weimar 2009, pp. 70–84. Currently Christoph Zuschlag even refers to a "provenancial turn" in the humanities and cultural sciences: Christoph Zuschlag, "Provenienz – Restitution – Geschichtskultur", in: Thomas Sandkühler, Angelika Eppler, Jürgen Zimmerer (ed.), *Geschichtskultur durch Restitution? Ein Kunst-Historikerstreit*, Vienna/Cologne/Weimar 2021, pp. 429–448.

⁸ The exact wording of the entries varies: in the case of some of the index cards only "Collecting Point" is used, in others "Collecting Point München". On one card, instead of 1945, 1947 is noted as the handover year while on another entry there is the additional note, "war für das Führer-Museum Linz". As could be clarified during a conversation with Brigitte Wied, the former head of the Art History department, in the 1960s she inventoried the pictures during a stocktaking, but no official acceptance confirmation was made. See conversation with Dr. Brigitte Wied, Linz 9.5.2003. Also quoted in: Kirchmayr, Buchmayr, John 2007, p. 253.

⁹ At the time of the original research there was already literature regarding the Central Collecting Point (CCP) Munich, for the latest publication please refer to: Iris Lauterbach, *Der Central Collecting Point in München. Kunstschutz, Restitution, Neubeginn*, Berlin/München 2015.

¹⁰ See the contribution "Kremsmünster – the unknown station on the Journey of the Paintings" in this catalogue, pp. 112–124.

potentially also looted art. Research in the archives of the Bundesdenkmalamt (BDA) (Federal Monuments Office) in Vienna verified these assumptions and complemented the information regarding the route of repositories, which included not only Kremsmünster, but also the Thürntal depot in Lower Austria, St. Agatha near Bad Goisern and, in the post-war years, Schloss Ennsegg in Enns in Upper Austria and finally Linz. It became evident that the information on the Landesmuseum's index cards "vom Collecting Point München übernommen" was not entirely correct, as after the end of the war the paintings in question were under American control, but had not been transferred to Munich. This was confirmed by the existing correspondence between the Austrian Bundesdenkmalamt and the Collecting Point administration, which also included the property cards for the paintings¹¹ that contained valuable provenance information. (Fig. 2). The American Monuments, Fine Arts and Archives Section had filmed material from the business records of the "Sonderauftrag Linz" and copies of these microfilm documents are stored in the Bundesarchiv Koblenz.¹² In the meantime, all of the relevant files have been completely digitised and can be accessed online. This was not yet the case in the 2000s, but a research trip to Koblenz provided further important information about the provenance of the images, which is subsequently presented in greater detail. However, firstly the recovery odyssey of the aforementioned paintings should be examined more closely.

The journey of the paintings

The 17 paintings in question date from various centuries, are diverse in style and content and emanate from differing collections. However, they all correspond with the collection focus of the "Sonderauftrag Linz", which in line with Adolf Hitler's preference for German and Austrian art of the 19th century, centred on Old Masters of French, Dutch and Italian art. The 17 paintings examined here reflect this cross-section of which part is of German-Austrian origin, as exemplified by the Biedermeier scenes in Friedrich Gauermann's (1807–1862) *Landschaft mit Kühen* and the Bavarian *Landschaft bei Bernried am Wurmsee* by Ludwig Hofelich (1842–1905). There is also the 17th century painting *Das Urteil des Paris* by the Italian painter Carlo Cignani (1628–1719) and *Die Anbetung der Könige* by the French artist Gerard de Lairese (1641–1711). The paths of all these paintings crossed after they were acquired between 1938 and 1943 for the "Sonderauftrag Linz" and from 1943 onwards they mostly followed the same salvage route. The earliest Linz acquisition is Hans Makart's *Die Ernte*, which was part of a triptych that had already been purchased for Adolf Hitler by the Munich art dealer Karl Haberstock before Hans Posse was appointed as the "Special Representative for Linz".¹³

¹¹ BDA archive Vienna, restitution materials, K. 16, M.1.

¹² Bundesarchiv Koblenz (BArch), portfolio B 323 ("Treuhandverwaltung für Kulturgut"). A large part of this portfolio consists of paper copies of the 28 rolls of the "Linz film". The cataloguing of the contents of the B 323 portfolio no longer corresponds with the "Linz film" numbers. In this situation a helpful, internal concordance is available at the BArch.

¹³ BDA archive Vienna, restitution materials, K. 16, M. 1, property card Hans Makart, *Bacchusfest*; Kunstsammlungen Augsburg archive, Haberstock business ledgers, HA/XXVIII/29.

When it was stored in the Munich “Führerbau”, it was allocated the number three (these numbers are also designated as “Linz numbers”), whilst the majority of the paintings shown here only joined the Linz collection in 1943 and therefore have correspondingly high “Linz numbers”.¹⁴ In 1941, the paintings were moved from the Munich “Führerbau” to Kremsmünster, where they were stored in the art depot created in the confiscated monastery buildings. However, although from 1944 onwards the majority of the paintings deposited there were transported on to Bad Aussee/Altaussee for salvage purposes, the paintings in question here took a different route, as they were taken from Kremsmünster to Thürntal in Lower Austria.¹⁵ Why? The answer is quite simple, because of their size. All of the 17 paintings concerned are large formats with lengths and widths of between one and more than three metres, and this was the decisive factor for their storage in Thürntal, which was intended as a depot for large formats. It was only shortly before the end of the war that it was decided to relocate the works from Thürntal to the Salzkammergut. In February 1945, owing to the weather the Pötschenpass between Goisern and Ausseerland snowbound and consequently for the first time a transport on its way to Bad Aussee was provisionally accommodated in the Gasthof Petter in the small community of St. Agatha near Bad Goisern. Subsequently, the inn was also to be used for further art storage and therefore the paintings under consideration were transferred from Thürntal to St. Agatha in two transports (on 7 and 16 April 1945!). According to a list, a total of 29 large-format paintings from the “Linz Collection” transported from Thürntal were stored at the Gasthof Petter, as well as three sculptures and other paintings from Berlin and Berchtesgaden.¹⁶ After the American art protection units took over the administration of the art objects stored in the Salzberg in May 1945, the objects in the Petter Inn in St. Agatha also came under their control. However, unlike the “Sonderauftrag Linz” inventory from the Aussee mine workings, the paintings in question at the Gasthof Petter were not transferred to Munich. By 1946 at the latest, the owner of the inn was pushing for their speedy removal because although he had rented out the large hall and the extra room in his “then disused inn” for the storage of paintings, and until March 1945 had also been paid interest, he was unaware of “what all this entailed”. In his letter of 13 April 1946 to the Bundesdenkmalamt, he demanded back payment of the outstanding interest and the termination of the rental agreement, as he needed the rooms

¹⁴ The “Sonderauftrag Linz” collected primarily for the creation of the planned art museum in Linz, but a precise differentiation between the works that were destined for Linz and those foreseen for other “Ostmark” museums is no longer possible. Of the 17 paintings discussed here, five can be traced to the surviving albums containing new acquisitions, which were presented to Adolf Hitler:

Hans Makart, *Bacchusfest* (Album XIII/2b), Gerard de Lairese, *Anbetung der Könige* (Album XXII/50), Ferdinand von Rayski, *Hasenjagd* (Album XXV/30), Carlo Cignani, *Urteil des Paris* (Album XXVIII/29) and Melchior de Hondecoeter, *Hühnerhof* (XIX/23). In the case of the last picture, the correspondence is not entirely certain, as all that exists from this album is a register and therefore neither dimensions or an illustration can be assessed. Reproductions of the album pages are contained in Schwarz 2004.

¹⁵ Schloss Thürntal belongs to the municipality of Fels am Wagram. Following its confiscation from the persecuted Jewish owners, from 1943 onwards it was employed as a salvage location by the Instituts für Denkmalpflege. Amongst other items, the expropriated collection of the aristocratic Polish family Lanckoronski was stored there, as well as objects of the “Einsatzstab Rosenberg”. See

Anneliese Schallmeiner, “Schloss Thürnthäl”, in: *Lexikon der österreichischen Provenienzforschung*, lexikon-provenienzforschung.org/thuernthal-schloss, accessed on 23.10.2023.

¹⁶ BDA archive Vienna, restitution materials, K. 16, M. 9, restorer Karl Sieber to the BDA, 29.1.1946.

again in order to run the inn.¹⁷ It was actually then decided to offer the innkeeper compensation and clear the depot.¹⁸ In March and May 1947, the paintings were finally transferred in two shipments to the BDA depot in Ennsegg. Then in 1948, the paintings which were still under American control and in the administrative custody of the Bundesdenkmalamt, were moved from Ennsegg to Linz, where they were initially housed in the “Steinernen Saal” (Stone Hall) of the “Landhaus” (provincial parliament) and then in the “Depot of the Land Museum Linz, Untere Donaulände 28”, prior to be deposited directly in the Landesmuseum building in the Museumsstrasse in 1952. This relocation was still of a provisional and fiducial nature, but it remained in use for longer than planned and for sixteen of the paintings concerned, it is still in place today.

From an American perspective, in line with an “external restitution” the paintings should have been returned to the countries for which their pre-war ownership had been established. This would have been Germany for eight paintings and The Netherlands and Italy for one painting each. Several of the 29 paintings stored in St. Agatha and Ennsegg were actually returned, but with regard to the remaining 17 paintings transferred to Linz, the Denkmalamt did not comply with this request. It can only be assumed that, on the one hand, the office intended to keep the paintings in Austria and on the other, that apparently there were doubts about their attribution. The case continued to occupy the Bundesdenkmalamt even after the dissolution of the American Collecting Points and in particular the question of German ownership was the subject of Austrian claims in the course of the German “Überleitungsvertrag” (transfer agreement) and within the context of dealing with the so-called “Münchner Restbeständen” (Munich remainders), as part of the 1969 Art and Cultural Property Consolidation Act.¹⁹ The custodian of the paintings, the Landesmuseum in Linz, was apparently not informed of this fact, for as described, the paintings had already been inventoried there in the 1960s without an official confirmation of transfer.

The provenances of the paintings

Although following their acquisition within the context of the “Sonderauftrag Linz” the route of the paintings can be traced in detail, their previous provenances remain partially incomplete. Almost all of the paintings had been acquired via the German art trade and none had come directly from a confiscated collection via the “Führervorbehalt”. Nonetheless, provenance research in connection with the acquisitions through the art trade is particularly difficult, as on the one hand it is now clear that many works of art belonging to victims of Nazi persecution were resold via the art trade and on the other, the source situation has proven to be especially problematic. On the basis of the accessible data, it has only been possible to clearly exclude Nazi persecution-related confiscation for two paintings, one of which came from the Bavarian State Painting Collection, while the other was acquired by a collector, who cannot be categorised as a victim of Nazi persecution. Of the remaining fifteen, the available data has led to the conclusion that a Nazi-related dispossession in the provenance chain

¹⁷ Ibid., Georg Petter to the BDA Wien, St. Agatha 13.4.1946.

¹⁸ ATS 1,000 were transferred to the innkeeper, but he regarded this sum as insufficient and therefore he sought to withhold pictures from the first transport. The Bundesdenkmalamt declared itself to be not responsible as it was not “the legal successor to the then tenant” (the then Instituts für Denkmalpflege). See the correspondence between the BDA Vienna and the innkeeper Georg Petter in the BDA archive Vienna, restitution materials, K. 16, M. 9.

¹⁹ See BDA Vienna archive, restitution materials, K. 23/1: restitution Germany; the term “Munich remainders” was used to designate those objects that following the closure were sent to Austria. They were the object of the Art and Culture revision acts from 1969, 1986 and 1995, and in 1995 they were handed over the Federal Association of the Jewish Community in Austria and sold off during the “Mauerbauch auction”.

cannot be excluded.²⁰ Thus far, this has been confirmed in relation to two works. Firstly, for the Dutch painting *Knabe im Hühnerhof*, which could be attributed to the collection of the Neumann family of merchants based in Vienna and was restituted to the owners' daughter in 2003²¹ and secondly for Auguste Galimard's *Leda with the Swan*. Information existed that this had once belonged to the collection of the King of Württemberg, which was auctioned off in the 1920s, but then there was a provenance gap until it was sold in the art trade to the "Sonderauftrag Linz". However, as described above, this case demonstrates that progressive digitisation in provenance research can resolve previously unsolved cases. For through the digitisation of archive data, in 2017 it first became possible to determine that Adolf and Selma Wolf, an industrialist couple from Stuttgart, had acquired the painting at the Württemberg auction and owned it until the National Socialist expropriation. A search for the painting by the couple's daughters in the 1960s was unsuccessful, and they only received compensation from the Federal Republic of Germany for their expropriated art property.²² The painting *Landschaft mit Kühen* by Friedrich August Gauermann was attributed to the Viennese art dealer Else Gall.²³

Summary and outlook

As far as the so-called Collecting Point holdings of the Oberösterreichische Landesmuseum, now the Landeskultur gmbH, are concerned, a provenance research project in the early 2000s was able to clarify a number of unanswered questions regarding their background. The paintings acquired for the planned Linz Art Museum within the context of the "Sonderauftrag Linz" had a complex, but fully reconstructable route, which saw them taken from the Munich "Führerbau" via Kremsmünster and Thürnthal to the St. Agatha near Goisern in the Salzkammergut and from there, to Linz. After the end of the war, they were in the custody of the Bundesdenkmalamt under American administration and at least in part, should have been handed over to Germany, Italy and The Netherlands. However, this did not happen and instead during the 1950s the coerced journey of the paintings came to a halt with their "temporary" safekeeping in Linz. Despite the resumption of research in the early 2000s within the context of the new restitution legislation in Austria, the previous provenances for some of the paintings are still incomplete and the question of any Nazi-related expropriation remains open. The advanced possibilities for provenance research described initially should therefore definitely be utilised. Perhaps then, the gaps existing for individual pictures can still be closed and their enforced travels be finally brought to an end.

²⁰ See the table "Der Bestand von Collecting Point-Gemälden. Ergebnisse der Provenienzuntersuchung" in Kirchmayr, Buchmayr, John 2007, pp. 274–289.

²¹ See Kirchmayr, Buchmayr, John 2007, pp. 290–297.

²² See Birgit Kirchmayr, Gregor Derntl, "*Leda mit dem Schwan* oder: Provenienzforschung und Restitutionspolitik seit 1945. Ein Beispiel aus Oberösterreich", in: Eva Blimlinger, Heinz Schödl (ed.), ... (k)ein Ende in Sicht. 20 Jahre Kunstrückgabegesetz in Österreich (Series of articles of the Kommission für Provenienzforschung, Vol. 8), Vienna/Cologne/Weimar 2018, pp. 163–170.

²³ Current information on the status of provenance research and with regard to restitution can be found on the website of Oberösterreichische Landes-Kultur GmbH, oekultur.at/sammlungen, accessed on 15.12.2023.

Illustrations

Fig. 1

The Oberösterreichische Landesmuseum's (today LandeskulturgmbH) index card of the 1960s for the painting *Hasenjagd* by Ferdinand Rayski
OÖ LandeskulturgmbH

Fig. 2

A property card for the painting *Das Urteil des Paris* by Carlo Cignani.
All the information gathered during research by the American Collecting Point administration into all the artworks in its care was noted on the property cards *Bundesdenkmalamt archive*

04 THE SCHACK GALLERY AND STORAGE DEPOTS OF THE BAVARIAN STATE PAINTING COLLECTIONS

Herbert W. Rott: From Munich to Aussee. The Schack-Galerie in the “Third Reich”

The text is an English translation of the original text “Von München nach Aussee. Die Schack-Galerie im ‘Dritten Reich’” written in German language for the catalog of the exhibition “Die Reise der Bilder” [“The Journey of the Paintings”] pp. 155-166. Translation by John Cima.

Like the Alte and Neue Pinakothek, the Sammlung moderne Kunst in the Pinakothek der Moderne and the Museum Brandhorst, the Schack-Galerie (since 2009: Sammlung Schack) is part of the Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen (Bavarian State Painting Collections). However, this was not always the case. Indeed, the collection of 270 19th century paintings was only transferred to the ownership of the Bavarian state in 1939 and subsequently placed under the administration of the Staatsgemäldesammlungen. This transition was decided upon by Adolf Hitler personally and his admiration of the artists represented particularly prominently in the Schack-Galerie such as Moritz von Schwind, Carl Spitzweg, Anselm Feuerbach and Arnold Böcklin, is also likely to have contributed significantly to the fact that towards the end of the Second World War, seventy paintings from the gallery, including almost all the major works, were stored in the Altaussee mine workings. This measure alone sheds light upon the political significance of the collection, which it not only possessed following its appropriation by the National Socialists.

“A gallery of idiosyncratic character”

In the 19th century, alongside King Ludwig I's Neue Pinakothek, the Schack-Galerie was the second most important collection of contemporary painting in Munich. However, unlike the royal collection, which from the 1880s onwards was steadily expanded through state acquisitions and developed an increasingly international profile, Adolf Friedrich von Schack's collection has remained unchanged since the death of its founder in 1894.¹ It is thus a document of the artistic taste of the era and reflects the preferences and

Interests of the collector. This applies to the choice of artists, themes and genres, with a clear focus on history and landscape painting, as well as to the collector's retrospective, idealistic understanding of art, which saw no place for the newer realistic movements. As Schack wrote regarding his basic premises, “Maids presenting coffee to their masters, Bavarian mountain farmers whose bare knees are the most interesting thing about them, are not to be found in my collection.”² This not only excluded genre painting, which was very popular at the time, but also the work of important realists such as Wilhelm Leibl, Adolph Menzel and Max Liebermann. A comparable orientation towards classical patterns, a rejection of the present and a pronounced tendency towards escapism can also be found in the works of Schack as a poet, whose role models were Goethe, Lord Byron and August von Platen.

It was one of the collector's fundamental decisions to limit himself exclusively to German artists of his own time. Schack knew and appreciated the old masters, especially Titian and

¹ For the history of the collection see Christian Lenz (ed.), *Adolf Friedrich Graf von Schack. Kunstsammler, Literat und Reisender*, exhibition cat., Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen, Schack-Galerie, Munich, Heidelberg 1994; Andrea Pophanken, *Graf Schack als Kunstsammler. Private Kunstförderung in München (1857–1874)*, Munich 1995; Herbert W. Rott, *Sammlung Schack. Katalog der ausgestellten Gemälde*, ed. Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen, Ostfildern 2009, pp. 11–29.

² Adolf Friedrich von Schack, *Meine Gemäldesammlung*, 7th edition, Stuttgart 1894, p. 200.

the Venetians, but was aware that with his limited means he could not contend with other players in the competitive old master market. Therefore, instead of acquiring dubious or supposed originals, he brought the admired old masters into the collection in the form of high-quality copies, which he had painted by young painters such as Franz Lenbach and August Wolf in the museums and churches of Italy and Spain. By contrast, the original paintings in his collection, which he mainly acquired in the 1860s and 1870s, were all by contemporary German artists, many of whom were still young and at the beginning of their careers. Another basic consideration of the collector was to promote individual artists over an extended period of time and acquire larger groups of works, each of which formed its own focal point within the collection. In this way, among others, 33 paintings by Schwind, 16 paintings by Böcklin and 11 paintings by Feuerbach came together, which later made the gallery famous. In this way, Schack's gallery was to acquire "an idiosyncratic character, whereas otherwise it would only have featured paintings by artists whose works could already be seen everywhere".³ As Schack acquired many works at an early stage, when these painters were still not well known or controversial, in later years he was able to observe with satisfaction that artists such as Böcklin (during his lifetime) and Feuerbach (posthumously) gained renown and ultimately rose to become heroes of the German painting of their period. This esteem was also reflected by the public response to the gallery, as since 1865 Schack had opened his palace in the Brienner Strasse, which had been remodelled and extended several times, to visitors (Fig. 1). In fact, in the years around 1900, the Schack-Galerie numbered amongst the most frequently visited museums in Munich and no traveller with an affinity for art left the city without having first viewed its collection. In particular for art lovers with a nationalist tendency, it was regarded as the venue where one could study recent German painting in the form of major works by the most important artists and thus as a type of small national gallery in the truest sense of the word. Schack himself also saw it in this way. This self-confident assessment is similarly reflected in his will, in which he gave thought to the future of the collection after his death. In the first version of 1874, Schack already stipulated that following his passing the collection should be bequeathed to the German Kaiser.⁴ He linked this to the expectation that the inheritor would then move the gallery to Berlin, the capital of the new German Empire. Schack admired Bismarck, whom he described as "the greatest statesman [...] that Germany has ever seen" and felt that the foundation of a united German empire under the leadership of Prussia was the "high point of my existence".⁵ In recognition of the promised legacy, in 1876 Kaiser Wilhelm I raised Schack to the rank of count.

When Schack died in 1894, Wilhelm II, the grandson of Wilhelm I, became his heir. However, contrary to the expectations of its founder, the Kaiser left the collection in Munich and in 1909 erected a new gallery building on the Prinzregentenstrasse, together with the adjacent Prussian legation, therewith presenting himself to the Bavarian public as a generous patron and art-loving monarch (Fig. 2). The collection has been housed in this building with its massive façade designed by Ernst Ihne in the style of Prussian state classicism ever since. The pediment is emblazoned with the inscription in large letters, "Kaiser Wilhelm II to the city of Munich for the enhancement of its fame and in memory of great artists".

Following the end of the German Empire in 1918, the Schack-Galerie was transferred to the Krongutverwaltung (Crown Estate Administration) and finally to the Prussian state. In 1932, the Verwaltung der staatlichen Schlösser und Gärten Berlin, which had been established five years earlier, assumed overall responsibility for the building and collection. In 1922, Ludwig Justi, the Director of the Berlin National Gallery and known as the founder of the new department of the National Gallery in the Kronprinzenpalais with paintings by the German Expressionists, had already undertaken a comprehensive new presentation on behalf of the

³ Ibid. p. 138.

⁴ Mecklenburgisches Landeshauptarchiv Schwerin (MLHA), Nachlass Schack, will from 8.6.1874.

⁵ Adolf Friedrich von Schack, *Ein halbes Jahrhundert. Erinnerungen und Aufzeichnungen*, 3 vols., Stuttgart/Leipzig 1888, vol. 1, p. 328, vol. 2, p. 86.

Krongutverwaltung. Justi completely redesigned the less than 15-year-old hanging, had a number of originals and the large-format copies removed and presented the remaining paintings in a fresh manner with more space and on strongly coloured walls. In addition, he ensured that the paintings exhibited were made accessible through a new collection guide, which replaced the old catalogues in which the paintings were merely listed.⁶ The new guide also provided information about the artists and gave the collector Schack an opportunity to speak at length through excerpts from his book *Meine Gemäldesammlung*. Apart from a few subsequent changes, the Schack-Galerie remained in the presentation introduced by Justi until the beginning of the Second World War as an independent museum administered from Berlin. A photograph taken in around 1930 shows the Schack-Galerie personnel wearing the uniforms of Prussian civil servants (Fig. 3).

The neighbouring legation building was also used as such during the Weimar Republic until the dissolution of the Prussian legation in 1932. Then, after the National Socialists came to power in 1933, it served as the seat of the Reichstatthalter (Governor) Franz von Epp. This proximity to a seat of state power and representation also affected the painting collection, which owing to its focus on German artists of the 19th century already had a national character. Wilhelm II himself attended the opening of the building in 1909 and in his speech praised the special character of the collection as exemplary for contemporary art, "At the same time, however, the collection is a benchmark for the visitor's judgement of contemporary art; it shows that the artist has the splendid task of not only depicting the events of everyday existence in a sometimes drastic, sensational and repulsive form, but rather under the influence of aesthetics in the purest sense, out of a noble conviction and with the flame of the ideal in his breast, to lift his contemporaries above the misery of daily life and to cultivate and strengthen the people's sense of beauty."⁷ When the centenary of the birth of Schack, the collection's founder, was commemorated on 2 August 1915, the diplomat Wilhelm von Schoen, the Bavarian Minister of Culture Eugen von Knilling and the Lord Mayor of Munich Wilhelm von Borscht gave the speeches.⁸ The Prussian envoys and after 1933, also the Reichstatthalter, were able to make use of the Schack-Galerie's collection to furnish the rooms in the legation palace. The gallery served as an annex for state representation, just as some rooms in the legation building were employed as museum galleries for a short time after the legation was abolished in 1932.

Although the Schack-Galerie constituted imperial and later Prussian property and was administered from Berlin, the links to the Munich museums and in particular to the Staatsgemäldesammlungen were close. As early as 1895, the restorer of the Alte Pinakothek, Alois Hauser, took care of the paintings in the Schack-Galerie and subsequently conservators from the Staatsgemäldesammlungen were also repeatedly called in to assess their condition and any damage. When the Neue Pinakothek celebrated the centenary of Anselm Feuerbach's birth with a major retrospective in 1929, the paintings from the Schack-Galerie were amongst the most important loans. However, it was not until 1939 that the Schack-Galerie was transferred to Bavaria and incorporated into the Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen. This was at the behest of Hitler, who had a special plan for the paintings in the Schack-Galerie.

⁶ Ludwig Justi (ed.), *Verzeichnis der Schack-Galerie. Mit Erläuterungen ihres Begründers und Äusserungen der Künstler*, 4th edition, Munich 1930.

⁷ Paul Seidel, "Die neue Schack-Galerie in München und ihre Einweihung am 18. September 1909" in: *Hohenzollern-Jahrbuch*, vol. 13, 1909, p. 216–227, here p. 219

⁸ *Münchener Neueste Nachrichten*, 3.8.1915.

The "Schack-Galerie of 19th century German masters"

Birgit Schwarz has already expressly pointed out Hitler's relationship with the Schack-Galerie and the artists represented there.⁹ Because it was in this gallery that Hitler, who had been prevented from becoming an artist, found the painters he particularly esteemed; the late Romantics and "Deutsch-Römer" Arnold Böcklin and Anselm Feuerbach, the painter of German fairy tales and legends Moritz von Schwind and the cosy portrayer of old German realities Carl Spitzweg. Hitler regarded them all as artists who were initially unrecognised and only later appreciated, just as he saw himself as an unsung genius. Moreover, he viewed the collector Schack, who had fostered these talents at an early stage, as a role model for his own endeavours as a collector and patron.

Apart from the Schack-Galerie, in Munich there was also the Neue Pinakothek, which likewise possessed important works by these and other German artists. In the course of 1938, Hitler came to the decision to combine the holdings of these two museums to form the "Schack-Galerie der deutschen Meister des 19. Jahrhunderts". As the location for the new museum, he chose the Kunstaustellungsgebäude (art exhibition building) on the Königsplatz, which had housed the Neue Staatsgalerie since 1920 and would be extended for its new role. In order to create the preconditions for the foundation of this museum, Hitler ensured that both collections were brought together under one administration. In an initial step, during September 1938 the ownership of the Schack-Galerie, including the building and the adjacent former legation building, was transferred from the State of Prussia to the German Reich.¹⁰ On 1 February 1939 this move was followed by the "Decree regarding the establishment of a 'Schack-Galerie der deutschen Meister des 19. Jahrhunderts'", which was signed by Hitler and the head of the Reich Chancellery, Hans Heinrich Lammers.¹¹ This edict stipulated that the new museum on the Königsplatz was to include the entire holdings of the Schack-Galerie, as well as "supplementary works of art from the Bavarian state collection". This limitation is important insofar as a considerable share of the paintings in the Neue Pinakothek, including almost all the works from Ludwig I's collection, did not belong to the state, but to the Wittelsbacher Ausgleichsfonds (Wittelsbach Equalisation Fund), which was founded in 1923 and therefore beyond Hitler's direct control. The decree designated the State of Bavaria as the owner of the new Schack-Galerie and the Bavarian Minister President as the person responsible for managing the museum in accordance with Hitler's instructions. After Ludwig Siebert, the Bavarian Minister President since April 1933, was informed of Hitler's decision, he asked the Director General of the Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen, Ernst Buchner, to sketch a plan for the unification of the two museums. Buchner's response, which he sent to Siebert at the beginning of July 1939, shows little enthusiasm and outlines a rather more pragmatic approach.¹² Buchner proposed a separation between the new Schack-Galerie on the Königsplatz and the Neue Pinakothek with a caesura around 1870. The works of the older generations of artists, from the Classicists and Romantics to the German-Romans, were to be housed in the Schack-Galerie on the Königsplatz, while the Neue Pinakothek would be reserved for the works of the younger generations. Buchner wished to place the Schack-Galerie's collection of copies on the ground floor of the planned extension to the Alte Pinakothek, where there would be a direct link to the original paintings by old masters. Buchner does not account for the differing ownership structures in the Neue Pinakothek and also includes the paintings of the former royal collection owned by the Wittelsbacher Ausgleichsfonds in his considerations. Furthermore, Buchner's dossier does not provide an answer to the question of what should

⁹ Birgit Schwarz, *Geniewahn. Hitler und die Kunst*, Vienna/Cologne/Weimar 2009, pp. 70–75.

¹⁰ Bayerisches Hauptstaatsarchiv München (BayHStA), Stk 7457, contract between the German Reich and the State of Prussia from 13.9.1938.

¹¹ BayHStA, Stk 7457, decree from 1.2.1939.

¹² BayHStA, Stk 7457, Ernst Buchner's report from 3.7.1939.

happen to the older English and French paintings in the Neue Pinakothek, as Hitler's new Schack-Galerie was to be reserved exclusively for the "German masters". Minister President Siebert agreed with Buchner's concept, as did the Gauleiter and Minister of Culture Adolf Wagner, who in the meantime had expressed his irritation at Hitler's decision to transfer responsibility for the new, expanded Schack-Galerie to the Minister President and not to him as the head of the department actually responsible for the museums. However, this initial concept did not materialise and no further steps were taken to merge the two collections. For the new museum in the extended Kunstaussstellungsgebäude on Königsplatz, fifteen halls with a total of 3,300 square metres were planned.¹³ This would have been almost four times the exhibition space of the Schack-Galerie on the Prinzregentenstrasse. However, concrete plans for the extension were also not drawn up.

The contract for the transfer of the Schack-Galerie from the State of Prussia to the German Reich already mentions possible compensation. The "compensation required in accordance with budgetary regulations" was to be reserved for a later agreement. When Lammers informed the Bavarian Minister President of Hitler's decree on the establishment of a "Schack-Galerie der deutschen Meister des 19. Jahrhunderts" and the transfer of ownership and administration of the collection from the Reich to the state of Bavaria, he added, "The extent to which Bavaria must compensate the Reich for the transfer of ownership of the art treasures of the Schack-Galerie is reserved for a later agreement or an order by the Führer."¹⁴ However, there were neither negotiations regarding compensation to Prussia or the German Reich, nor is there any known decree from Hitler. Nevertheless, in order to obtain an estimate of the actual value of the collection, the Berlin art dealer Karl Haberstock was commissioned to carry out an appraisal, which he presented in March 1940. In the introduction, Haberstock states that it was "a collection of unique character", which "contains the best that a great German art epoch has produced". Indeed, following a temporary low in the years after the First World War, the appreciation of the artists represented in the collection had recently returned to its former heights. At 180,000 Reichsmarks, the highest valued painting is the first version of Böcklin's *Villa am Meer* (Fig. 4). Other paintings valued at six figures include Böcklin's *Triton und Nereide* (RM 170,000) and *Amaryllis* (RM 140,000), Feuerbach's *Familienbild* (RM 150,000) and *Paolo und Francesca* (RM 130,000, Fig. 5), as well as Schwind's *Graf von Gleichen* (RM 150,000). Haberstock estimated the total value of the paintings, including the copies, at RM 5,246,500. With a mark-up to take into account the special provenance of the collection, Haberstock arrives at the sum of seven million Reichsmarks and adds, "that this is too low rather than too high."¹⁵

We do not know what would have become of Hitler's museum plans if history had taken a different course. However, by deciding to unite the paintings of the Schack-Galerie with those of the Neue Pinakothek, he would in any case have disregarded the declared will of the collector, who expressly stipulated in the last version of his will that the paintings in his collection, "originals as well as copies, should not be separated and should not be hung between other paintings."¹⁶

¹³ BayHStA, Stk 7457, note from 13.2.1939.

¹⁴ BayHStA, Stk 7457, letter from the Reichsminister and Head of the Reich Chancellery Hans Heinrich Lammers to the Bavarian Minister President Ludwig Siebert from 11.2.1939.

¹⁵ BayHStA, Staatsgemäldesammlungen Registratur, file no. 48/2 no. 2271, "Schätzung der Schack-Galerie", 28.3.1940.

¹⁶ MLHA, Nachlass Schack.

War and relocation

On 29 August 1939, three days before the German Reich attacked Poland, Buchner received instructions from the State Chancellery to look after the Schack-Galerie collection, "in the same way as the other state collections and to initiate the necessary measures."¹⁷ With the outbreak of the war, responsibility for the security of the works thus fell to the Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen. Following a ministerial directive, the Schack-Galerie was closed immediately, as were the two Pinakothek galleries and the Neue Staatsgalerie on the Königsplatz. The first transport from the Schack-Galerie took place on 30 August, even before the actual start of hostilities, initially to the Alte Pinakothek and on the following day from there to Dietramszell near Bad Tölz, where the former monastery was one of the first and most important salvage sites for works from the Staatsgemäldesammlungen. Further transports took place on 4 and 5 September.¹⁸ On 4 October 1939, 107 paintings were transferred from the Schack-Galerie to the basement of the Neue Pinakothek, which was temporarily considered a safe shelter. These were works by less important artists and the collection of copies, some of which were stored on rollers.¹⁹ The more important paintings were taken to safety outside Munich. On 14 October 1939, Minister President Siebert informed the Reich Minister of Science, Education and National Education that, "all the valuable and artistically significant paintings in the Schack-Galerie had been removed and placed in the castles of Dietramszell and Neuschwanstein [...]"²⁰ In January 1942, 82 paintings from the Schack-Galerie were in Schloss Neuschwanstein, where together with Schloss Dietramszell, the most valuable holdings of the Staatsgemäldesammlungen were stored.²¹ Further storage locations for paintings from the Schack-Galerie were the monasteries of Ettal and Polling.²² Neuschwanstein was one of a total of sixteen storage locations, some of which were used only temporarily, that were located mainly in monasteries and castles in the foothills of the Alps. Schloss Neuschwanstein was considered to be a particularly safe relocation site owing to its situation below the Tegelberg and Säuling peaks.²³ However, in December 1942, the first air raid alarms were also sounded there and these steadily increased up to the winter of 1943/44. Even though no bombing was reported in the immediate vicinity, the threat was growing and in the resultant discussion about safe storage locations, in February 1943 the Reich Ministry of Science, Education and National

¹⁷ BayHStA, Staatsgemäldesammlungen Registratur, file no. 48/2 no. 2271, letter from Rudolf von Bezold to Ernst Buchner from 29.8.1939.

¹⁸ BayHStA, Staatsgemäldesammlungen Registratur, file no. 20/3a no. 544, "Aufstellung über die Bergungs-Arbeit der Gemälde im Staatsbesitz" from the Wetsch company, undated.

¹⁹ BayHStA, Staatsgemäldesammlungen Registratur, file no. 48/2 no. 2271, "Liste der am 4. X. 39 aus der Schack-Galerie übernommenen und in die Neue Pinakothek gebrachten Bilder".

²⁰ BayHStA, StK 7457, letter from the Bavarian Minister President Ludwig Siebert to Reichsminister Bernhard Rust from 14.10.1939.

²¹ BayHStA, Staatsgemäldesammlungen Registratur, file no. 20/3a no. 559, "Liste der am 24. I. 1942 in NS [Neuschwanstein] befindlichen Bilder der A.P., N.P., Schleißheim, Schackgalerie und WAF."

²² BayHStA, Staatsgemäldesammlungen Registratur, file no. 48/2 no. 2271, undated lists of the storage locations for the Schack-Galerie paintings.

²³ Regarding the storage of the holdings see Martin Schawe, "Vor 50 Jahren. Die Bayerischen Staatsgemäldesammlungen im Zweiten Weltkrieg", in: Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen (ed.), *Jahresbericht 1994*, Munich 1995, pp. 9–27; see also the essay, "The storage depots for the state-owned and private holdings of the Bavarian State Painting Collections during the Second World War" from Andrea Bambi in this catalogue, pp. 167–173.

Education suggested three mining sites in north-west Germany and requested that the Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen give their estimation of whether such locations were also suitable for the storage of paintings.²⁴ When asked by Buchner for an assessment, Reinhard Lischka, the head of the Restoration Department, expressed his disapproval. Darkness, heat and humidity would promote mould growth, which would attack the binding agent and be destructive for paintings.²⁵

This attitude altered when, in the winter of 1943/44, the salt mine in Altaussee offered another option for the relocation of the most valuable Munich holdings. After a *vsite* inspection on 21 December 1943, Buchner informed Reichsleiter Bormann's personal advisor that he considered the mine suitable for the salvage of particularly valuable paintings: "The increasing threat from the air and the endangerment of remote, above-ground depots, which until recently were considered safe, makes salvage below natural ground appear to be the best and most desirable protective measure, as long as the spaces are atmospherically healthy and not too damp or too dry. The chambers of the salt mine in Alt-Aussee now fulfil the conservation requirements for underground salvage to an entirely satisfactory degree. The only restriction is that owing to the height and width of the tunnel, only medium-sized and smaller formats can be stored there, but this is sufficient for by far the greater number of artworks."²⁶ In January 1944 Buchner then decided to move around 300 particularly valuable paintings from the Munich museums, which had previously been housed in Schloss Neuschwanstein, to Altaussee, along with the seventeen panels of the Ghent Altarpiece and the four panels of the Last Supper Altarpiece by Dieric Bouts the Elder²⁷, which since August 1942 had also been stored in Neuschwanstein. The transport, personally accompanied by Buchner, took place on 5 September 1944. Among the roughly 300 Munich paintings that were taken to Altaussee were seventy from the Schack-Galerie alone. The selection was not based solely on the estimated value, as would have been apparent from Haberstock's paper. Rather, the aim was evidently to bring the holdings of the most important artists to safety as completely as possible. For example, 29 paintings by Schwind alone went to Altaussee, almost the entire collection. The same applies to Böcklin (12), Lenbach (7) and Spitzweg (4). Feuerbach was represented with six paintings, Rottmann with three. Only the particularly large formats of these artists were excluded. Also stored in Altaussee were the three views of Rome by Johann Georg von Dillis and *Die Schwemme*, the only original painting by Hans von Marées in the collection (Fig. 6). Buchner had made his selection here solely on the basis of art-historical significance, as these works had been given a comparatively low rating by Haberstock. With Böcklin's first version of *Villa am Meer*, Lenbach's *Hirtenknabe* (Fig. 7), Feuerbach's *Paolo und Francesca* and Schwind's *Hochzeitsreise* and *Morgenstunde*, the most famous paintings in the Schack-Galerie were deposited in Altaussee until shortly before the end of the war. After explosives were placed in the mine tunnels at the instigation of Gauleiter August Eigruber and there was a risk that all the artworks stored there would be blown up and destroyed, in the final days of the war they were relocated again. On the initiative of Gaukonservator Herbert Seiberl, important works were removed from the mine

²⁴ BayHStA, Staatsgemäldesammlungen Registratur, file no. 20/3a no. 544, letter from Reichsminister Bernhard Rust to Ernst Buchner from 1.2.1943.

²⁵ Ibid. letter from Reinhard Lischka to Reichsminister Bernhard Rust from 9.3.1943.

²⁶ Ibid. letter from Ernst Buchner to Helmut von Hummel from 22.12.1943.

²⁷ Martin Schawe, "Van Eyck in Neuschwanstein. Die Bayerischen Staatsgemäldesammlungen, der Genter Altar und der Sakramentsaltar aus Löwen im Zweiten Weltkrieg", in: Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen (ed.), *Jahresbericht 2017*, Munich 2018, pp. 140–167, staging.pinakothek.de/sites/default/files/downloadable/2018-04/BStGS_Jahresbericht_Innenteil_DS.pdf, accessed on 21.11.2023.

workings.²⁸ These included the seventy paintings from the Schack- Galerie, which were brought to safety in the Spitalskirche zum Heiligen Geist in Aussee. The American art protection officer and later renowned art historian, Frederick Hartt, discovered them there in October 1945 before they were transported back to Munich shortly afterwards.²⁹

Unlike the two Pinakothek museums, the Schack-Galerie building on Munich's Prinzregentenstrasse survived the Second World War unscathed (Fig. 8). The bombing mainly caused damage to the roofs and this was soon repaired. Windows and doors, the floors and the interior fittings had to be renewed. On 2 August 1950, the Schack-Galerie was the first museum in Munich to reopen after the war. On display were the paintings from Count Schack's collection. Only two paintings, Böcklin's *Pan im Schilf* and Feuerbach's *Medea* from the bombed-out Neue Pinakothek were added. There were no war-related losses amongst the salvaged paintings³⁰ and the Bavarian State Chancellery moved into the adjacent, former legation building, which was also largely intact.

²⁸ Anneliese Schallmeiner, "Die modernen Nibelungen salzen ihre Schätze ein. Altaussee als Bergungsort des Instituts für Denkmalpflege", in: Pia Schölnberger, Sabine Loitfellner (Pub.), *Bergung von Kulturgut im Nationalsozialismus. Mythen – Hintergründe – Auswirkungen* (Schriftenreihe der Kommission für Provenienzforschung, Vol. 6), Vienna/Cologne/Weimar 2016, pp. 103–127, here p. 122f.

²⁹ Report from 1st Lt Frederick Hartt, Monuments Fine Arts and Archives Branch, to Lt Colonel Ernest T. DeWald from 26.10.1945, Washington, D.C., National Archives, General Administrative Records, MFA Field Reports (1945–1950), R&R 54, [fold3.com/image/300246552](https://www.fold3.com/image/300246552), accessed on 24.11.2023. Friendly advice from Hans Fuchs, Altaussee.

³⁰ A painting by Max Schmidt was the only work from the Schack-Galerie to be lost owing to the war. This was a loan of the Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen to the guesthouse of the Reichsaußenministerium in Hirschberg Castle at Haarsee near Weilheim. Martin Schawe, *Die Verluste der Bayerischen Staatsgemäldesammlungen im Zweiten Weltkrieg*, Vienna/Cologne/Weimar 2019 (Schriften der Bayerischen Staatsgemäldesammlungen, Vol. 3), p. 231.

Illustrations

Fig. 1: The Schack-Galerie on the Brienner Strasse, photo, ca. 1890

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Fig. 2: Schack-Galerie and Prussian Legation on Prinzregentenstrasse, photo by Georg Pettendorfer, ca. 1910

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Fig. 3: Large skylight hall on the first floor with paintings by Feuerbach and Marées, and Schack-Galerie personnel, photo, ca. 1930

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Fig. 4: Arnold Böcklin (1827–1901), *Villa am Meer I*, 1864

Resin painting with wax coating on canvas, 124.5 × 174.5 cm

Munich, Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen, Sammlung Schack, inv. no. 11528

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Fig. 5: Anselm Feuerbach (1829–1880), *Paolo und Francesca*, 1864

Oil on canvas, 137.0 × 99.5 cm

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Fig. 6: Hans von Marées (1837–1887), *Die Schwemme*, 1864

Oil on canvas, 64.8 × 96.3 cm

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Fig. 7: Franz von Lenbach (1836–1904), *Hirtenknabe*, 1860

Oil on canvas, 107.7 × 154.4 cm

Munich, Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen, Sammlung Schack, inv. no. 11450

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Fig. 8: Facade of the Schack-Galerie after the end of the Second World War, photo, 1946,

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Andrea Bambi: The storage depots of the Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen for state-owned and private holdings during the Second World War

The text is an English translation of the original text “Die Ausstellungsdepots der Bayrischen Staatsgemäldesammlungen im Zweiten Weltkrieg für staatliche und private Bestände” written in German language for the catalog of the exhibition “Die Reise der Bilder” [“The Journey of the Paintings”] pp. 167-173. Translation by John Cima.

Like many other German museums and collections, the Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen (Bavarian State Painting Collections) placed a large percentage of their artworks in storage in order to protect them from war damage and looting. This led to the establishment of storage depots in mines, monasteries and castles. Martin Schawe was the first to describe in detail both the removals into storage, which lasted from September 1939 to 1944, and the retrieval of the Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen holdings, which took place in 1945 and 1946.³¹ In her dissertation, Theresa Sepp described Ernst Buchner (1892–1962), the Director General of the Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen, as a “salvage expert”.³² However, the following description of the salvage sites and the strategic measures taken to safeguard the art holdings deliberately refrains from assessing Buchner's expertise. Nonetheless, his fatal involvement in art theft during National Socialism, his lack of self-recognition after 1945 and the attempts to rehabilitate him in the course of the reconstruction of the Alte Pinakothek are a formative part of the history of the Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen and continue to occupy provenance researchers to this day.³³

In principle, the salvage of the artworks was organised according to value. This meant that because they were “irreplaceable”, the most valuable items were prioritised and taken first to salvage locations that were assumed to be bomb- and fireproof. Such items included major works by Altdorfer, Dürer, Memling, Raphael, Rubens and Titian from the Alte Pinakothek. These were followed by further lists of particularly valuable works of art, which were to be stored in air raid shelters or cellars. The final list was comprised by the “remaining” works of art, which likewise were foreseen for storage in air raid shelters and cellars. These categories were regulated in the “Richtlinien über die Durchführung des Luftschutzes in Museen, Büchereien, Archiven und ähnlichen Kulturstätten” (Guidelines on the implementation of air raid protection in museums, libraries, archives and similar cultural sites).³⁴ The second important criterion was the employment of differing salvage locations because as stated in

³¹ Martin Schawe, “Vor 50 Jahren – Die Bayerischen Staatsgemäldesammlungen im Zweiten Weltkrieg”, in: Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen (Ed.), *Jahresbericht 1994*, Munich 1995, pp. 9–27; id. 1947 – Die Bayerischen Staatsgemäldesammlungen”, in: Iris Lauterbach (Ed.), *Kunstgeschichte in München 1947. Institutionen und Personen im Wiederaufbau*, Munich 2010, pp. 91–104.

³² Theresa Sepp, *Ernst Buchner (1892–1962). Meister der Adaption von Kunst und Politik*, diss., Munich University, Munich 2020, pp. 200–203.

³³ Ibid. pp.158–224; Andrea Bambi, “Nicht pinakothekswürdig”. Ernst Buchners Museumspolitik und ihre Folgen. Tauschgeschäfte und Ausstellungen in den Pinakotheken 1933–1945”, in: Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen (Ed.), *Jahresbericht 2016*, Munich 2017, pp. 126–135, staging.pinakothek.de/sites/default/files/downloadable/2017-04/BStGS_2016_Jahresbericht-DS.pdf, accessed on 31.10.2023.

³⁴ Schawe 1994, p. 11.

the 1939 leaflet regarding the search for suitable salvage locations issued by the Bavarian State Office for the Preservation of Monuments, the key requirement was decentralisation.³⁵

Following the invasion of Poland by the German Wehrmacht in September 1939, Buchner had closed all the museums and branch galleries of the Bayerischen Staatsgemäldesammlungen and the Bavarian State Ministry for Education and Culture commissioned him with the salvaging of the most valuable paintings at various sites.³⁶ The selection of the depots was subject to a number of benchmarks. The locations had to be protected against air attacks, for example by being in the immediate vicinity of mountains. There were to be no military or defence facilities in the vicinity and the sites needed to be in a structurally dry condition.³⁷ Moreover, regular stock checks and shrapnel protection by means of barricades were required.

Between 1939 and 1944, around 12,000 works of art from the Bayerischen Staatsgemäldesammlungen were placed in storage. A special aspect in this regard is the fact that private collections were also included as so-called deposits. Alone in the Raitenhaslach depot near Burghausen, this involved over 200 collections with more than 1,000 works of art.³⁸ Moreover, in August 1941, the Ministry of the Interior decreed that the holdings of art dealers, insofar as they were comprised of historic works, were equally worthy of protection³⁹ and from 1943 onwards, private individuals were also allowed to store their art collections subject to the proviso that this did not jeopardise the interests of the museums and the artworks were deemed to be of national importance.⁴⁰ As a result, numerous private collectors approached the directorate of the Bayerischen Staatsgemäldesammlungen and either requested that their collections to be taken to the depots or asked for advice on how to salvage them safely.⁴¹

³⁵ Ibid. p. 11, Note 12.

³⁶ Bayerisches Staatsministerium confirmation, 4.9.1939, in: "Allgemeines – Verschiedenes bei Kriegsausbruch", Bayerisches Hauptstaatsarchiv (BayHStA), Staatsgemäldesammlungen Registratur, AZ 20/3a, no. 544.

³⁷ Buchner progress report in: "Allgemeines – Verschiedenes bei Kriegsausbruch", BayHStA, Staatsgemäldesammlungen Registratur, AZ 20/3a, no. 544.

³⁸ Including the collections of Karl Arnold, Armgard von Faber du Faur, Johannes von Kalckreuth, Ludwig Seidl, Mathilde Beckmann, Max Klinger, Albert Heimann, Hans Defregger, Günther Grassmann, Ernst Ziegler, Eugen Brüschwiler, Maria Almas-Dietrich, Friedrich Heinrich Zinckgraf, NSDAP Gauleiter Adolf Wagner, Minister President Heinrich Held and State Commissioner Heinrich Jolas. See various lists from differing storage depots and index (possession of pictures from private owners), BayHStA, Staatsgemäldesammlungen Registratur, AZ 20/3a, no. 550.

³⁹ Schawe 1994, p.16, Note 49.

⁴⁰ Ibid. p. 21.

⁴¹ See correspondence 1943 und 1944 in: "Allgemeines – Verschiedenes bei Kriegsausbruch", BayHStA, Staatsgemäldesammlungen Registratur, AZ 20/3a, no. 544.

Depending upon their importance and taking decentralisation into account, batches of more than 1,000 works were distributed to the subsequently named storage sites. Amongst these, Bad Aussee was the only underground storage location. Due to its low ceiling heights, particularly valuable small and medium-sized paintings from the Pinakotheks, the panels of the Ghent and Leyden altarpieces previously located in Neuschwanstein and parts of the Schack Gallery were stored there.⁴² Paintings and sculptures from the Alte and Neue Pinakothek, artworks from the Munich Residenz, wooden figures from the Blutenburg altarpiece and privately owned deposits were hoarded in the castle and monastery of Dietramszell near Bad Tölz. Furthermore, from 1944, the directorate and treasury of the Bayerischen Staatsgemäldesammlungen were also relocated there.⁴³ Ettal Abbey housed paintings from the Alte Pinakothek, the Neue Pinakothek and the Staatsgalerie, as well as privately owned deposits. In Höglwörth, paintings from the Schleißheim depots were stored alongside works from the Alte Pinakothek, Neue Pinakothek and Staatsgalerie, and items from private collections. Works of art from the Bamberg, Bayreuth, Aschaffenburg and Speyer branch galleries were housed in Neuburg an der Kammel. Schloss Neuschwanstein provided protection for paintings from the Alte and Neue Pinakothek, the Schack Gallery and the State Gallery. Paintings from the Augsburg and Schleißheim branch galleries and holdings from the Schack Gallery were all deposited in Polling Abbey. The Raitenhaslach Monastery near Burghausen held paintings from the Alte Pinakothek, Neue Pinakothek and Staatsgalerie, as well as privately owned works and holdings from the Ansbach and Würzburg branch galleries.

Schloss Herrenchiemsee was evacuated in 1941 and its holdings transferred to Ettal Abbey. Schloss Tegernsee also had to be relinquished as a salvage site because from 1943 it served as a military hospital.⁴⁴ Two confiscated hunting lodges belonging to the Hirsch'sche Güterinspektion (estate management office) south-west of Immenstadt in the Allgäu region were considered as a replacement, but were then ruled out owing to their poor accessibility in heavy snowfall.⁴⁵ Other salvage centres for smaller and very small holdings were located in Hohenburg in the Upper Palatinate, Schloss Hirschberg in the Altmühltal, Fischen in the

⁴² See article "From Munich to Aussee. The Schack-Galerie in the "Third Reich" from Herbert W. Rott in catalogue, pp. 155–166 and article "Robbery – Repatriation – Rescue. Myths and facts about the Ghent Altar" from Birgit Schwarz, pp. 90–99. See also Martin Schawe, "Van Eyck in Neuschwanstein. Die Bayerischen Staatsgemäldesammlungen, der Genter Altar und der Sakramentsaltar aus Löwen im Zweiten Weltkrieg", in: Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen (ed.), *Jahresbericht 2017*, Munich 2018, pp. 140–167, staging.pinakothek.de/sites/default/files/downloadable/2018-04/BStGS_Jahresbericht_Innenteil_DS.pdf, accessed on 31.10.2023; Birgit Schwarz, "Alle retten den Genter Altar. Der Weg durch Europa 1940–1945", in: Stephan Kemperdick, Johannes Rössler, Joris Corin Corin Heyder (ed.), *Der Genter Altar. Reproduktionen, Deutungen, Forschungskontroversen*, Petersberg 2017, pp. 12–25; Sepp 2020, pp. 187–212.

⁴³ Conservator Feuchtmayr to the Bayerisches Staatsministerium für Unterricht und Kultus, 5.9.1944, in: "Sicherstellung von Gemälden aus Privatbesitz während des Krieges 1939–1942", BayHStA, Staatsgemäldesammlungen Registratur, AZ 20/3a, no. 543.

⁴⁴ Buchner to the Bayerisches Staatsministerium für Unterricht und Kultus, 25.10.1943, in: "Allgemeines – Verschiedenes bei Kriegsausbruch", BayHStA, Staatsgemäldesammlungen Registratur, AZ 20/3a, no. 544.

⁴⁵ Hunting lodges in Wiesach in Gunzesried and Ehrenschwang in the municipality Ach, Buchner to Parteikanzlei, 16.12.1943, in: "Allgemeines – Verschiedenes bei Kriegsausbruch", BayHStA, Staatsgemäldesammlungen Registratur, AZ 20/3a, no. 544.

Allgäu, Ingolstadt, Landhaus Oberried near Murnau, Landsberg, Dießen, Griesbach, Rosenheim, Bayreuth and Hamburg.⁴⁶

In 1942 Munich, the “Hauptstadt der Bewegung” (“capital of the movement”), was already under massive attack from Allied bombers, although Southern Germany initially remained a secondary theatre of aerial combat until 1943. This was due to the vast distance to be covered from the British Isles and therefore, during the first five years of hostilities Bavaria remained the “air-raid protection zone” of the German Reich. However, with the entry of the Americans into the war, the Allied air bases in Italy and the deployment of new aircraft, this changed decisively. Munich, Ansbach, Aschaffenburg, Augsburg, Bayreuth, Erlangen, Fürth, Ingolstadt, Kitzingen, Memmingen, Nuremberg and Schweinfurt were bombed from 1943 onwards and by 1945, almost all other Bavarian cities had suffered the same fate.

Nonetheless, the holdings of the Bayerischen Staatsgemäldesammlungen stored in the aforementioned salvage depots survived the massive bombardments due to the strategically well-chosen locations and not least thanks to the meticulous controls and surveillance by the museum's own staff (Fig. 1).⁴⁷ Despite this fact, from September 1943, the fifth year of the war, the Bavarian State Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs ordered the organisation of “meetings of loyal followers to consolidate and strengthen the operational readiness of authorities and departments”.⁴⁸ The booklet “Die Parole” (“The Code Word”) contained instructions and guidelines together with an appeal by “Gauleiter” Paul Giesler. Ernst Buchner read this out on 5 September 1943 and then gave his own “forceful” speech to the thirty “followers” of the Bayerischen Staatsgemäldesammlungen employed in Munich.⁴⁹ The following month, Ernst Buchner received an order from Adolf Hitler, delivered verbally by Heinrich Hoffmann, to camouflage the salvage depots against air raids and to supply a confidential list of the buildings that urgently required concealment to the “Luftgaukommando”.⁵⁰ As late as March 1945, at the “Führerhauptquartie” Hitler and Bormann expressly instructed Buchner to secure and preserve the “art treasures important to the war effort” and was assured that he would continue to have sufficient supervisory

⁴⁶ See “Auflistungen in Sicherstellung von Gemälden bei Kriegsausbruch August 1939”, in: BayHStA, Staatsgemäldesammlungen Registratur, AZ 20/3a, no 541.

⁴⁷ Conversely, works from the holdings of the Bayerischen Staatsgemäldesammlungen, which as long-term loans were kept in other public institutions and museums at 200 differing locations and therefore not in selected salvage depots, were subject to severe damage or lost. See 674 loss reports in the Lost Art database of the Bayerischen Staatsgemäldesammlungen:

[lostart.de/de/suche?filter\[type\]\[0\]=Objektdaten&filter\[report_type\]\[0\]=Suchmeldung&filter\[institution\]\[path\]=Deutschland~Bavarn~M%C3%BCnchen~Bayerische%20Staatsgem%C3%A4ldesammlungen](https://lostart.de/de/suche?filter[type][0]=Objektdaten&filter[report_type][0]=Suchmeldung&filter[institution][path]=Deutschland~Bavarn~M%C3%BCnchen~Bayerische%20Staatsgem%C3%A4ldesammlungen), accessed on 26.10.2023.

⁴⁸ The Bavarian Staatsminister für Unterricht und Kultus to all subordinate authorities and departments 15.9.1943, in: “Allgemeines – Verschiedenes bei Kriegsausbruch”, BayHStA, Staatsgemäldesammlungen Registratur, AZ 20/3a, no. 544.

⁴⁹ Report of the Betriebsgemeinschaft Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen to the Kreisverwaltung Munich, 5.10.1943, in: “Allgemeines – Verschiedenes bei Kriegsausbruch”, BayHStA, Staatsgemäldesammlungen Registratur, AZ 20/3a, no. 544.

⁵⁰ Named therein are Dietramszell, Ettal, Neuburg an der Kamm, Neuschwanstein, Polling, Höglwörth, Raitenhaslach and Hohenburg. Buchner to the Luftgaukommando, 12.10.1943, in: “Allgemeines – Verschiedenes bei Kriegsausbruch”, BayHStA, Staatsgemäldesammlungen Registratur, AZ 20/3a, no. 544.

personnel to guard and monitor the works in question.⁵¹ Buchner then turned to the Munich “Landbauamt” (Land Construction Office) and requested “15 prisoners” for the preservation of valuable artworks⁵² and the depot at Höglwörth, as subsequently described, provides one example of such a salvage location.⁵³

The castle-like abbey building with its collegiate church is located between Teisendorf and Anger near Bad Reichenhall, close to the 1,300 m high Teisenberg and not far from Salzburg. The former Augustinian Chapter was the smallest and poorest in the royal bishopric of Salzburg and also the only one in Bavaria to be spared secularisation.⁵⁴ In 1817, the then provost of the monastery himself ordered its dissolution and in 1821, the Wieneringer brewery family acquired the monastery, which has been privately owned ever since. A certain Professor Sattler informed Director General Ernst Buchner about Höglwörth and in March 1943 he commissioned the conservator, Hermann Lohe, to view the monastery. The premises offered by the innkeeper family for the storage of the artworks were inspected and found to be suitable. Buchner then confirmed the offer with the brewery owner Wieneringer and his wife and announced the first transport. The works of art to be evacuated were loaded onto the railway using specially requested Wetsch furniture vans and taken to Teisendorf. From there, tractors pulled the furniture vans to Höglwörth. The paintings were wrapped in blankets with the outstanding pieces packed individually and several smaller works placed in crates.⁵⁵ All of the transports, including the loading and unloading procedures, took place within one day and lists were used to check both completeness upon departure and arrival at the salvage location.

In principle, there was at least one armed overseer per salvage depot, who was responsible for the stock for a specific period of time. These “Gefolgschaftsmitglieder” (followers), who had been seconded to the location, were not permitted to leave their posts without consulting the management. Their duties included daily, numerical stock checks, which involved nightly inspections, and the documentation of climatic values (temperature and humidity). Reporting on these values to the “Gemäldedirektion” (Paintings Directorate) in Munich was also part of their assignments and in the event of unsatisfactory climatic values, recommendations were made for targeted ventilation. At intervals of several weeks, scientific staff, specifically conservators, visited the salvage depots and spot-checked the paintings for damage. Reports to the Directorate about enemy aircraft, including counts of their numbers, constituted another aspect of the overseers’ tasks (Fig. 2). In general, the salvage operation was subject to the strictest secrecy and all those involved were under oath to remain silent. Accordingly, in the surviving documents the salvage locations are often abbreviated (e.g. “NS” for Neuschwanstein, “E” for Ettal) and rarely written out in full.

During the storage period, the Höglwörth Monastery was initially the responsibility of the aforementioned conservator Hermann Lohe (1897–1962) and then the painter and

⁵¹ Buchner to the Staatsminister für Unterricht und Kultus, 27.3.1945, in: “Sicherstellung von Gemälden aus Privatbesitz während des Krieges 1939–1942”, BayHStA, Staatsgemäldesammlungen Registratur, AZ 20/3a, no. 543.

⁵² Buchner to Landbauamt, 20.3.1945, in: “Sicherstellung von Gemälden aus Privatbesitz während des Krieges 1939–1942”, BayHStA, Staatsgemäldesammlungen Registratur, AZ 20/3a, no. 543.

⁵³ All the following information regarding BStGS artworks from Höglwörth, BayHStA, Staatsgemäldesammlungen Registratur, AZ 20/3a, no. 551.

⁵⁴ See berchtesgaden.de/kloster-hoeglwoerth, accessed on 26.10.2023.

⁵⁵ See “Erfahrungen bei der Bergung von beweglichen Kunstgegenständen”, author unnamed, undated, in: Allgemeines – Verschiedenes bei Kriegsausbruch, BayHStA, Staatsgemäldesammlungen Registratur, AZ 20/3a, no. 544.

conservator Gregor Hurst (1878–1959). They received support from the scientific assistant Margarethe Brandt (1890–?), who checked the collections in Munich and at other storage locations and accompanied transports. Obtaining firewood for heating was one of the main tasks in co-operation with the local forestry office in Rodeneck. In the monastery, the paintings were distributed in piles and numbered consecutively. This system led to the creation of so-called reminder slips, which in turn provided the inventory numbers. In line with their value, the paintings were stacked close to the exit doors so that, in the event of danger, they could be moved to safety as quickly as possible. An initial large transport with 111 old and 160 newer masters took place on 29 April 1943 and a second followed on 23 September 1943 with 47 old and six newer masterpieces, as well as seventeen privately owned works. Both deliveries were completed without complications and the conservator in charge both reported to Buchner that the paintings were well housed and also handed over humidity tables, i.e. climate values. From April 1943, the private collections of Marie Bendel, Countess Elsa Baudissin, Ernst Buchner, Paul von Dall'Armi, Armgard Faber du Faur, Elisabeth and Josepha Freund, Hugo Frommel, Marie Hanfstaengl, Marie Kern-Löfftz, Emma Postulka, Count von Moy and Ernst Ziegler were stored in Höglwörth. Moreover, as from June 1944, a further 878 old masters from Schleißheim and the cellars of the Neue Pinakothek were also deposited there along with a further 82 privately-owned works and 86 portraits of professors and scholars from the Munich Academy. The private collections included those of the Maria Almas Dietrich Gallery, the Heilmann-Stuck families and the Oberlandesgerichtsrat Osthelder, as well as holdings from the Obersalzberg. By December 1945, Höglwörth was home to a total of 1,418 paintings plus 69 crates, 57 of which belonged to the university and contained further paintings.

The military government ordered the return transport of the Bayerischen Staatsgemäldesammlungen holdings from the temporary storage facilities on 3 December 1945, but it took until the end of 1946 for them to be stored in Munich. They were kept initially at the Central Collecting Point in the former NSDAP administration building, where they could only be moved with the authorisation of the CCP.⁵⁶ The depots at the storage locations themselves were closed after the end of the war. The return of the private collections to their owners was only possible following an application, the completion of a political questionnaire and the receipt of an authorisation of the military government from either the recovery locations or via the Collecting Point.⁵⁷

Seventy-three air raids had severely damaged Munich and some sixty per cent of the buildings in the city centre had been destroyed. Items from private collections that had not been transported out of Munich and had thus remained in the city had fallen victim to fire and looting in the cellars of the Neue Pinakothek. These works included paintings from the collections of Angelika von Tschudi, the widow of the former Director General of the

⁵⁶ Eberhard Hanfstaengl to the Bayerisches Staatsministerium für Unterricht und Kultus, 4.12.1945, in: "Allgemeines – Verschiedenes bei Kriegsausbruch", BayHStA, Staatsgemäldesammlungen Registratur, AZ 20/3a, no.544.

⁵⁷ Questionnaire of the Military Government of Germany; revised 1 January 1946, C.C.G. (B.E.) Public Safety (Special Branch), in: "Sicherstellung von Gemälden aus Privatbesitz während des Krieges 1939–1942", BayHStA, Staatsgemäldesammlungen Registratur, AZ 20/3a, no. 543.

Pinakothek, and Konrad Freiherr von Miller.⁵⁸ The tapestries by Albert Heilmann, which were also stored there, had to be dug out from the piles of rubble and were severely damaged.⁵⁹

⁵⁸ Hans Vogler to Hanfstaengl, 10.11.1945; from Miller to Hanfstaengl, 13.1.1946, in: "Sicherstellung von Gemälden aus Privatbesitz während des Krieges 1939–1942, BayHStA, Staatsgemäldesammlungen Registratur, AZ 20/3a, no. 543.

⁵⁹ Hanfstaengl to Heilmann, 21.9.1945, in: "Sicherstellung von Gemälden aus Privatbesitz während des Krieges 1939–1942", BayHStA, Staatsgemäldesammlungen Registratur, AZ 20/3a, no. 543.

Illustrations

Fig. 1: The salvage depots of the Bayerischen Staatsgemäldesammlungen and the flight routes and bombing raids of the Allied air fleet units over Bavaria in the last years of the war, © Landesamt für Digitalisierung, Breitband und Vermessung

Fig. 2: Report on enemy aircraft over Raitenhaslach, 14.6.1944, © Bayerisches Hauptstaatsarchiv

05 ART TRADE IN AUSSEERLAND DURING THE NAZI ERA

Monika Löscher: On the history of the salvage of art and cultural assets during the Second World War in the Salzkammergut

The text is an English translation of the original text “Zur Geschichte der Bergungen von Kunst- und Kulturgütern im Zweiten Weltkrieg im Salzkammergut” written in German language for the catalog of the exhibition “Die Reise der Bilder” [“The Journey of the Paintings”] pp. 212-223. Translation by John Cima.

During the Second World War, more than any other region in Austria, the Salzkammergut, was an important salvage location for numerous masterpieces of European art. The artistic treasures stored in the salt mine in Altaussee from 1943 onwards were partly ecclesiastical and monastic property, but also resulted from the Nazi looting campaigns throughout Europe. Also deposited in Altaussee were the stockpiles of the “Sonderauftrag Linz” (Special Mission Linz), which were more extensive than the planned, but ultimately never realised, “Führermuseum” in Linz.¹ Much has already been written about the recovery of art and cultural artefacts from the salt mine in Altaussee² and numerous television documentaries, as well as feature films have been produced.³ There are two reasons for this interest. Firstly, this extraordinarily large accumulation of works of art of the highest order existed in an archaic mountain world where nothing had changed for centuries and secondly, there was the

¹ See dhm.de/datenbank/linzdb/index.html, accessed on 21.8.2023.

² In selection: Theodor Brückler, “Gefährdung und Rettung der Kunstschatze im Altausseer Salzberg. Versuch einer kritischen Rekonstruktion”, in: Eva Frodl-Kraft, *Gefährdetes Erbe. Österreichs Denkmalschutz und Denkmalpflege 1918–1945 im Prisma der Zeitgeschichte* (studies regarding monument protection and preservation, Vol. 16), Vienna/Cologne/Weimar 1997, pp. 363–383; *ibid.*, „Kunstwerke zwischen Kunstraub und Kunstbergung: 1938–1945”, in: ders. (ed.), *Kunstraub, Kunstbergung und Restitution in Österreich 1938 bis heute* (studies regarding monument protection and preservation, Vol. 19), Vienna/Cologne/Weimar 1999, pp. 13–30; Robert M. Edsel, Bret Witter, *Monuments Men. Die Jagd nach Hitlers Raubkunst*, St. Pölten/Salzburg/Vienna 2013; Katharina Hammer, *Glanz im Dunkel. Die Bergung von Kunstschatzen im Salzkammergut am Ende des 2. Weltkrieges*, Altaussee 1996; Veronika Hofer (ed.), *Berg der Schätze. Die dramatische Rettung europäischer Kunst im Altausseer Salzbergwerk*, Scharnstein 2006; Emmerich Pöchmüller, *Weltkulturschatze in Gefahr*, Salzburg 1948; Christian Reder, “Im Salzbergwerk. Zeitgeschichte – ein Beitrag zum Abbau von taubem Gestein”, in: Hans Michael Roithner (ed.): *Ausseer Beiträge zur Zeit- und Kulturgeschichte*, Bad Aussee 1985, pp. 59–66; Anneliese Schallmeiner, “‘Die modernen Nibelungen salzen ihre Schätze ein.’ Altaussee als Bergungsort des Instituts für Denkmalpflege”, in: Pia Schölnberger, Sabine Loitfellner (ed.), *Bergung von Kulturgut im Nationalsozialismus. Mythen – Hintergründe – Auswirkungen* (series of articles for the Kommission für Provenienzforschung, Vol. 6), Vienna/Cologne/Weimar 2016, pp. 103–128; Birgit Schwarz, “Alle retten den Genter Altar. Der Weg durch Europa 1940–1945”, in: Stephan Kemperdick, Johannes Rössler, Joris Corin Heyder (ed.), *Der Genter Altar. Reproduktionen, Deutungen, Forschungskontroversen*, Petersberg 2017, pp. 12–25; Wolfgang Weisz, “Vorsicht, Marmor – nicht stürzen!” *Die wahre Geschichte über die Rettung der Kunstschatze in den Salinen von Altaussee 1945*, Graz 2009; Rainer Hilbrand, *Die Kunstgüter im Altausseer Salzberg 194 –1945* (series of articles of the Literatur- und Heimatmuseum Altaussee. Vol. 2), Altaussee 1985.

³ *Ein Dorf wehrt sich* (DE/AT, Director: Gabriela Zerhau, 2019); *The Monuments Men* (US/DE, Director: George Clooney, 2014); *Hitlers Madonna und die Retter der Raubkunst*, (documentary, DE/AT, Director: Petra Dormmann, 2014); *Bombensicher. Der Schatz im Salzbergwerk – Retter der Raubkunst* (documentary, AT, Director: Werner Boote, 2014).

adventurous final act with the threatened destruction by “Gauleiter” August Eigruber and the subsequent dramatic rescue at the very last minute. The salvage site in Altaussee is often confused with the “Erbstollen” (mine passages) in Lauffen near Bad Ischl, but actually it was established somewhat later and the initial transports first took place in November 1944 after Gottfried Reimer, the deputy head of the “Sonderauftrag”, had given the go-ahead. Nonetheless, it did store items from the national collections in Vienna, which included works from the Albertina and the Kunsthistorische Museum.⁴ Notwithstanding these facts, even today, the two salvage depots, which belonged to the “Alpenländische Salinen” company and were sequestered upon an order from the “Reichsfinanzminister”, continue to be the object of confusion.

However, in order to tell the story of the salvage of art and cultural treasures during the Second World War, one must begin earlier, because the storage sites in the Salzkammergut cannot be considered in isolation, but rather stand at the end of a lengthy development. The Hague Convention on Land Warfare from 1899, the earliest codification of obligations under international law for moderation in hostilities, already included a passage on the protection of cultural property in armed conflicts.⁵ Nevertheless, in practice this passage proved inadequate and acceptance was limited by the so-called general participation clause, which stated that all parties involved in the conflict had to have ratified the convention.⁶ Moreover, during the First World War, Venice already took measures to safeguard its artistic and cultural treasures by dismantling sculptures and protecting buildings with sandbags.⁷

However, in the years from 1914 to 1918, the degree of destruction, confiscation, abduction and salvage that occurred virtually everywhere during National Socialism, was never reached, but nonetheless those involved in salvage 25 years later could draw upon these earlier experiences.⁸ With the aerial bombardments in the Abyssinian War (1935/36) and the Spanish Civil War (1936–1939), the threat posed by the modern war in the air was increasingly recognised, not only with regard to the civilian population, but also artistic and cultural assets. One related result was the relocation of the contents of the Prado Museum, first to Valencia and later to Geneva.⁹ Furthermore, from the mid-1930s onwards air-raid protection issues increasingly dominated the meetings of the Comité de Direction des Offices International des Musées, the first international museum organisation.¹⁰ In 1936, the

⁴ See KHM Archive, 73/ED/44, AV Fritz Dworschak, 13.11.1944.

⁵ See Article 27: “In sieges and bombardments all necessary steps should be taken to spare as far as possible edifices devoted to religion, art, science, and charity, hospitals, and places where the sick and wounded are collected, provided they are not used at the same time for military purposes. The besieged should indicate these buildings or places by some particular and visible signs, which should previously be notified to the assailants.”

fedlex.admin.ch/eli/cc/23/261_225_251/de, accessed on 25.7.2023.

⁶ See “Allbeteiligungsklausel” (General participation clause), in: Karl Strupp, Hans-Jürgen Schlochauer (ed.), *Wörterbuch des Völkerrechts*, Vol. 1, Berlin 1960, p. 28f.

⁷ See skd.museum/ausstellungen/eine-stadt-im-krieg/; dszv.it/wpcontent/uploads/2022/12/1_Abschlussbericht_Studienkurs_Venedig-FTS.pdf, accessed on 26.7.2023.

⁸ See KHM-Archive, 78/ED/42, Files. Berichte über bisherige Erfahrungen, Bericht Dworschak (concept), undated.

⁹ See esmadrid.com/de/touristeninformation/museo-del-prado, accessed on 25.7.2023.

¹⁰ The Offices International des Musées / International Museums Office was founded in 1926 upon the initiative of the League of Nations and in 1946 was merged with the International Council of Museums (ICOM): atom.archives.unesco.org/international-museumsoffice-imo, accessed on 26.7.2023.

members worked on the bases for an intervention in favour of the threatened Spanish works of art and the spring meeting of 1937 was entirely devoted to the topic of art protection.¹¹

Therefore, the measures taken under National Socialism to protect art and cultural assets were not fundamentally new and did not occur without preparations. As early as 20 September 1938, Adolf Hitler ordered that “bombproof cellars be created without delay for galleries that contain valuable art treasures”.¹² On 19 and 22 July 1939, two meetings were held in Vienna at the “Luftgaukommando” (Air District Command) and at police headquarters with the “Luftschutzreferenten” (Air Raid Protection Officers), which were attended by all the directors and air raid protection specialists from the museums, as well as the staff of the “Zentralstelle für Denkmalschutz” (Central Office for the Protection of Monuments). The monuments authority was selected as the contact point for public, private and ecclesiastical institutions, while the Kunsthistorische Museum, under the provisional direction of the numismatist, Fritz Dworschak, became the contact for state museums.¹³ In line with instructions from the Vienna Police Directorate, the museums' inventories were divided into three groups (A, B, C). The most important objects (A) were to be moved immediately to the outskirts of Vienna when Air Raid Protection called, those in group B were to be safeguarded in Vienna and those of group C were to remain in the collections. For the salvage of group A, two buildings were secured in Lower Austria, the former Gaming charterhouse and the Rothschild hunting lodge in Steinbach near Göstling.¹⁴

On 31 August 1939, the first transport of A-class objects from the Kunsthistorische Museum took place to the salvage depot “Jagd”, the code name for the hunting lodge. The most important items from the “Zentraldepots für beschlagnahmte Sammlungen” (Central Depot for Confiscated Collections) were also stored there.¹⁵ The “Zentraldepot” was established in the Neue Burg in autumn 1938 in order to collate works confiscated from the Viennese art collections of their persecuted Jewish owners in a central location.¹⁶ On 2 September 1939, the first transport consisting of paintings from the Österreichische Galerie and the Barockmuseum reached Gaming, which was used as a holding centre on the basis of the law regarding the accommodation of public offices (GBL. f. Ö. No. 278/1938).¹⁷

In addition, the inventories of the Albertina (until 1940), the Kunstgewerbemuseum, the Kunsthistorische Museum, the Liechtensteingalerie and the Museum für Völkerkunde were also safeguarded there. The Viennese museums, which had closed as a result of the salvage operations, unlocked their doors again in October 1939. For example, the reopening of the Kunsthistorische Museum, was reported in the press under the headline, *Schätze im richtigen Licht. Ringmuseum neugeordnet – wiedereröffnet* (“Treasures in the right light. Ring Museum

¹¹ KHM archive, 377/VK/1936, Stix to the BMfU, 31.10.1936.

¹² See NHM-Archiv, Michel inventory, file, “Bericht Berg allg. (auch Ischl)”, Reichsminister für Wissenschaft, Forschung und Kunst to regional administrations: Anordnung zur Einrichtung von Luftschutzkellern, 20.9.1938. According to Berg, who authored the report in April 1946, the decree was first sent by the Reichserziehungsminister to the regional government in Austria on 11 March 1939, but was not received by the responsible ministerial department.

¹³ See BDA archive, NS material, K.2, Files. Kunstschutz, 2/Res/1939, file note Josef Zykan, undated.

¹⁴ See KHM archive, 78/ED/42, Fasc. Reports concerning prior experiences, report Dworschak (draught), undated [mid-1942?].

¹⁵ See KHM archive, 78b/ED/42, Fritz Dworschak to the Z/GK Department, 18.7.1942.

¹⁶ See zdk-online.org/das-zentraldepot/, accessed on 21.8.2023.

¹⁷ See BDA archive, restitution materials, Box 1, M. 15, Gaming, fol. 82 and KHM archive, XIII 15, protocol, 2.9.1939.

reorganised – reopened”).¹⁸ Since the most valuable items were now deposited in Lower Austria, the new displays included exhibits from the depots, as well as recently acquired works.¹⁹ Accordingly, at no time were the salvage measures a secret, but conversely, the exact depot locations were probably only known to the people involved.

In March 1942, an air raid alert was triggered in Vienna for the first time²⁰ and owing to the fear of Allied air raids on the city on 13 July 1942 the “Reichsstatthaltereie” (Reich Governor's Office) ordered further salvage measures. Moreover, in mid-1942 Ludwig Berg from the “Reichskulturreferat” (Reich Cultural Department), a newly established section of the “Reichsstatthaltereie”, was assigned the central management and thus ultimate responsibility for all of the museum salvage measures. Berg had previously worked as an administrator for museums in Department Z/GK²¹ and had been involved in the salvage operations from the beginning.²² The principle of decentralisation continued to apply to the numerous salvage measures that now commenced and served as a basic rule for the A- and B-operations inside and outside Vienna, in order that “in the event of the destruction of a depot, no total loss of a material, of the entire holdings of a particularly important artist or of a specific group of artists, or of an epoch, can occur”.²³ All in all, over 200 art and cultural treasure depots were established for the Viennese state museums, most of them in Vienna and Lower Austria.²⁴ The salt mine in Lauffen near Bad Ischl played a major role in the final salvage phase.

At the beginning of 1943, a letter was sent to various addressees including the Vienna Monument Authority, by Robert Hiecke, the “Ministerialdirigent” (Principal Secretary) in the “Reichserziehungsministerium” (Reich Ministry of Education), in which the salvage possibilities for coal and rock salt mines in north-western Germany were to be considered.²⁵ As a result, Herbert Seiberl, the head of the “Institut für Denkmalpflege” in Vienna, and Franz Juraschek, the “Gaukonservator” of “Oberdonau”, inspected the salt mine in Altaussee, which belonged to the Alpenländische Salinen, and found it suitable for salvage purposes.²⁶

The first storage operation for the “Institut für Denkmalpflege” took place on 25 and 26 August 1943.²⁷ The salvage location quickly proved its suitability, as indicated by humidity of 60 to 75

¹⁸ *Volks-Zeitung*, 14.10.1939, p. 7; see also *Wiener Neueste Nachrichten*, 14.10.1939, p. 6; *Das kleine Blatt*, 15.10.1939, p. 6.

¹⁹ See KHM archive, I 16, 24, circular letter from Fritz Dworschak, 11.10.1939.

²⁰ See Herbert Haupt, *Jahre der Gefährdung. Das Kunsthistorische Museum 1938–1945*, Vienna 1995, p. 50.

²¹ See KHM archive, 78/7/ED/42, Fritz Dworschak to the Z/GK Department, 29.5.1942.

²² See KHM archive, XIII 15, protocol, 5.11.1939.

²³ See KHM archive, 78/19/ED/42, secret circular letter from the Reichsstatthalter to the museum directors, 13.7.1942.

²⁴ See Susanne Hehenberger, Monika Löscher, „Geheime‘ Bergungsorte: das Rothschildsche Jagdschloss Steinbach bei Göstling (Jagd), die Kartause Gaming (Schloss), das aufgelassene Stift Klosterneuburg (Stift) und das Salzbergwerk Lauffen bei Bad Ischl (Berg). Arbeitsalltag – Sicherheitsvorkehrungen – Rückbergungen” in: Schönlberger, Loitfellner 2016, pp. 35–68, here p. 36.

²⁵ See BDA archive, restitution materials, Box. 28, M. 5, not numbered, Robert Hiecke to Herbert Seiberl, 1.2.1943.

²⁶ See Hammer 1996, pp. 42–45.

²⁷ See BDA archive, restitution materials, Box 22, M. 3, fol. 27.

per cent, good ventilation and a constant temperature of 6-8° C.²⁸ Therefore, from December 1944 onwards the Viennese collections deposited their art and cultural objects in another salt mine, namely in Lauffen near Ischl, only a few kilometres distant from Altaussee.²⁹

Initially, Fritz Dworschak, the Director of the Kunsthistorische Museum, who was involved in the salvage measures from the outset, was in charge of operations. However, at the beginning of February 1945, he fell seriously ill and was replaced by Gert Adriani, the director of the Gemäldegalerie. Subsequently, an incident that occurred in early February 1945 had serious repercussions. During the unloading of a transport at the railway station in Bad Ischl onto horse-drawn sleighs, which took place as rain and darkness began to fall, the transfer of the items to be salvaged was not completed fully. Adriani overlooked some paintings, major works from the Gemäldegalerie, which remained wedged in the railway wagon and were thus transported back to Vienna.³⁰ The same "Reichsbahn" railway wagon was available to Herbert Seiberl for a salvage transport to Altaussee and arrived at Bad Aussee station two weeks later. To Seiberl's utter amazement, tapestries and paintings from the Kunsthistorische Museum came to light.³¹ Adriani was then replaced by Victor Luithlen, a curator of the collection of old musical instruments, who was to remain head of salvage until the last return transport in 1947. On 4 May 1945, the final activities took place in the workings, which was then sealed and buried. Unlike the mine in Altaussee, there was never any threat of the complete destruction of the works of art in Lauffen by the National Socialist rulers. On 13 May 1945 US troops arrived in Lauffen and took charge of the salvage location. The Monuments, Fine Arts and Archives Department headed by the architect, Robert Posey, assumed local control.³²

The events of the last days of the war in the mine in Altaussee are widely known and require only brief recall here. At the end of April 1945, "Gauleiter" August Eigruber intended to blow up the Altaussee salvage depot and destroy the art treasures. He had eight crates containing bombs carried into the mine with the now famous camouflage inscription "Vorsicht Marmor – nicht stürzen" (Warning! Marble – Keep upright). Seiberl decided to save what he considered to be the most valuable art and cultural treasures with the help of some of his employees and the most outstanding pieces of Austrian origin were removed from the mine. Emmerich Pöchmüller, General Director of the salt works, tried in vain to persuade Eigruber to change his mind, and the miners, who also feared the loss of their jobs, went to see Ernst Kaltenbrunner, the head of the "Reichssicherheitshauptamt" (Reich Security Main Office), who was also in Altaussee at this time. On 3 May 1945, he ordered the bombs to be removed, but one day later, Eigruber issued a counter-order to return them to the mountain immediately. However, after a heated telephone discussion between Kaltenbrunner and Eigruber, this order was cancelled. During the night of 3 to 4 May the miners finally transported the explosives, consisting of unexploded bombs, out of the mountain.³³

On 8 May 1945, the mine was taken over by the 3rd US Army under General George Patton.³⁴ Under the supervision of the "Monuments Men", the objects were moved to the Central Art

²⁸ See BDA archive, restitution materials, Box 22, M. 2, fol. 70, report dated 19.7.1943 regarding the inspection of the Aussee salt mine by Herbert Seiberl on 17.7.1943.

²⁹ See Monika Löscher, www.lexikon-provenienzforschung.org/lauffen-salzbergwerk, accessed on 22.8.2023.

³⁰ See KHM archive, 2/I/ED/45, Josef Hajsinek, Franz Sochor, report concerning the incorrect transfer of salvage items to Bad Aussee of salvage items from the Kunsthistorisches Museum, 23.2.1945.

³¹ See KHM archive, 2/I/ED/45, Herbert Seiberl, report from memory concerning the incorrect transfer of salvage items to Bad Aussee of salvage items from the Kunsthistorisches Museum, 15.2.1945.

³² See Monika Löscher, www.lexikon-provenienzforschung.org/lauffen-salzbergwerk, accessed on 22.8.2023.

³³ See Brückler 1997.

³⁴ See Brückler 1997, pp. 376–379.

Collecting Point in Munich and the long search for the original owners began. A task that still continues to this day and has occupied generations of provenance researchers.

During the National Socialist era, the transfer of cultural property to protect it from wartime conflicts was not a singular occurrence and as can be shown by the example of the painting, *Bauernhochzeit* (The Peasant Wedding), from the Kunsthistorische Museum, numerous relocations and transfers took place. This masterpiece by Pieter Bruegel the Elder was moved to the charterhouse in Gaming on 31 August 1939, and in early 1944 to Schloss Stiebar in Gresten, only a few kilometres away.³⁵ From 6 November 1944, the painting was deposited in the vault of the Postal Savings Bank Office at Georg-Coch-Platz in Vienna before finally arriving at the salt mine in Lauffen with a transport on 6 February 1945.³⁶

Just before the end of the war, on 3 May 1945, upon the order of the “Gauleiter” and “Reichsstatthalter” in Vienna, Baldur von Schirach, and subject to the threat of armed force, the most valuable paintings, tapestries and crates with examples from the sculpture collection of the Kunsthistorische Museum were loaded onto two military trucks and taken west with the exact destination remaining unknown. Among them were all the paintings by Rembrandt, Titian, Velazquez and Pieter Bruegel the Elder, such as the *Bauernhochzeit*. Two restorers from the Kunsthistorisches Museum, Franz Sochor and Josef Hajsinek, had to accompany the transport, which first travelled in the direction of Mittersill before arriving in Bramberg in the Pinzgau region of Salzburg, where the works of art were housed in the buildings of the Weyerhof farm, which still exists today. The next day the journey continued, now accompanied only by Wehrmacht officers. The two restorers had to stay in Bramberg, from where they tried to make contact with the US Army. On 23 May 1945 they were able to return to Bad Ischl and the artworks later reappeared safe and sound in St. Johann in Tyrol, where they were handed over to the US military administration, which initially stored them in a hall in Kleßheim near Salzburg.³⁷ On 17 November 1945, the works arrived back at the Franz-Josefs-Bahnhof in Vienna and the *Bauernhochzeit* was shown again for the first time in the “Exhibition of Masterpieces of the Picture Gallery of the Kunsthistorisches Museum” in the Hofburg.

³⁵ See KHM archive, 98/ED/43, Gresten.

³⁶ See Gemäldegalerie, Kunsthistorisches Museum, inventory register, entry to GG_1027.

³⁷ See Monika Löscher, www.lexikon-provenienzforschung.org/sochor-franz, accessed on 30.8.2023; KHM archive, XIII 33, Lauffen, Rapportbücher Erbstollen, report from 3.5.1945.

Illustrations

Photo 1: MPI collection, ICC photographic archives, Unidentified photographer, Venice - Bartolomeo Colleoni monument, horse roped for transport, silver salt gelatine, MPI6077728

Photo 2: MPI collection, ICC photographic archives, Unidentified photographer, Venice - St. Mark's Basilica, horse transport, 1915, silver salt gelatine, MPI153192

Photo 3: MPI collection, ICC photographic archives, Unidentified photographer, Venice - St. Mark's Basilica, façade, war protection, 1915-1918, silver salt gelatine, MPI153026

Photo 4: The Gaming charterhouse, undated. © KHM-Museumsverband, photographer: unknown

Photo 5: The Steinbach bei Göstling hunting lodge

Photo 6: The Steinbach bei Göstling hunting lodge, undated © KHM-Museumsverband, photographer: unknown, AR_XV_3

Photos 7 and 8: Painting transport to Gaming and storage in the church, probably autumn 1939. The man with the stick is Ludwig Baldass, the then Head of the Paintings Gallery of the Kunsthistorische Museum, AR_IV_95_2_1 (Photo 8)

Photo 9: II 27.294, bunk in the "Springerwerk", Altaussee

Photo 10: "Springerwerk" (?), (a print is also to be found in the KHM archive)

Photo 11: Employees of the Central Office for the Protection of Monuments at work. The photo was taken by art historian, Eva Frodl on her first day at work in the mine. The mine administration equipped her and her colleagues with the miners' festive costumes, but subsequently they wore ski trousers and anoraks.

Photo 12: Unloading of a painting transport at the entry to the Altaussee mine (BDA)

Photo 13: Salvage depot in the Kaiser-Franz-Josef Erbstollen in Lauffen bei Bad Ischl. From l. to r. Karl Höher, Rupert Brantner (both KHM Museum Guard) and Head of Salvage, Victor Luithlen

Photo 14: Group photo following the removal of the crates packed with 500 kg bombs from the Aussee salt mine, May 1945

Photo 15: Oskar Laske *1874 in Czernowitz, Österreich, † 1951 in Wien, Österreich
Bergungsort, 1944 Deckfarbe, Bleistift, 41,2 × 59,9 cm, ALBERTINA, Wien, Inv.-Nr. 30131
Foto: © ALBERTINA, Wien, ein Auftrag von Baldur von Schirach.

06 ART TRADE IN AUSSEERLAND DURING THE NAZI ERA

Alexandra Cedrino:

“The passion of seeking and finding”

An attempt to approach Wolfgang Gurlitt

The text is an English translation of the original text “Die Leidenschaft des Suchens und Findens. Der Versuch der Annäherung an Wolfgang Gurlitt” written in German language for the catalog of the exhibition “Die Reise der Bilder” [“The Journey of the Paintings”] pp. 226-236. Translation by John Cima.

Prologue

Who was Wolfgang Gurlitt? In general, we tend to associate his name with a certain shadiness as an art dealer and as far as his private life is concerned, he is frequently ridiculed as the eccentric patriarch of a patchwork family with three wives. My relationship to him is divided. I am torn between sympathy, amicability and even familial feelings on the one hand (after all, he is my grandfather) and on the other, mistrust of this fascinating, but ultimately enigmatic man. Many aspects of his professional activities (which I certainly find irritating) have in the meantime been expertly researched and well documented. Therefore, I leave the assessment of his business dealings to the scientists and researchers, who can and should examine his actions impartially.

Accordingly, the aim of this text is neither to exonerate nor condemn Wolfgang Gurlitt. But instead to examine his personal life, which may serve to promote a better understanding of the man and his actions. It is therefore time to open the door slightly more ajar and take a look at Wolfgang Gurlitt, the private person, family man and friend.

Munich

I was a happy child and grew up in one of the most beautiful areas of Munich, the Hofgarten, in the immediate vicinity of the Armeemuseum (today's Bavarian State Chancellery), the Theatinerkirche, the Residenz and also the Feldherrnhalle, which contained a gallery, the display windows of which were emblazoned with the name Wolfgang Gurlitt. Here, in the Hofgarten-Arkaden, my grandfather, who died a year before I was born, had installed his gallery along with the adjoining bookshop for his daughters Maria and Angelina. The gallery could be entered directly from the street or through the arcades. An iron, spiral staircase in the bookshop led up to a mezzanine floor above, containing two large, bright exhibition rooms with windows facing the Hofgarten and the Theatinerkirche, where works by a diversity of artists ranging from Tommi Ungerer, Ronald Searle and Puig Rosado, to Surrealist painters including the Austrian Ludwig Schwarzer, or children's book illustrators such as Walter Schmögner with his “Pluderich” drawings were on show.

For we children, there was hardly anything more exciting than the exhibition openings, when we carried trays with wine glasses through the crowd and felt very grown up, or when the exhibiting artists gave us their time and perhaps not only signed the invitation cards on display, but as in the case of the graphic artist and illustrator, Puig Rosado, also drew something for us. When we finally lay in our beds, through the wall separating our children's room from the gallery, we could hear the voices of the adults, which accompanied us all the way to sleep. Although this “apartment” was actually a converted former office without a bathroom or kitchen, we children never had the feeling of being spatially restricted. Anyway, our grandmother's flat three floors above us, where we ate, played and bathed, formed the centre of our universe along with the children's bookshop, where the foundation stone for my love of books and illustrations was laid. Much to the displeasure of her sister Maria, our mother allowed us free access to all the books sold there and I took enthusiastic advantage of this dispensation, which has made me the voracious reader that I have remained to this day.

The booksellers employed in the shop were also called upon to provide childcare when required and thus became temporarily integrated into the extended family in which we were brought up. Its nucleus consisted of our mother Angelina, our grandmother Käthe, our aunt Maria and “Aunt” Alice (and just two men). I only understood much later that this form of care, which was tried, tested and accepted in Berlin, as well as the network of relationships, which for we children was unfathomable, originated from my grandfather, who was rarely spoken of in our presence. At the time, all I had to know was that there was always someone on hand to gather us up when we needed catching. Indeed, upon reflection this was both the freest and simultaneously the most sheltered period of my childhood and youth, which only culminated in 1976 with the death of my grandmother and the end of the Gurlitt Gallery.

Problem children

Andreas Bartsch, who had been an employee of the gallery since 1961, remembers,

“A great hustle and bustle [prevailed] in the gallery every day. It was not only the exhibition visitors, the artists and the art dealer colleagues who came to the gallery, but also the emigrated friends and acquaintances from Gurlitt's time in Berlin, who included the film director Fritz Lang, the married couples Jakob Steinhardt and Eric Isenburger, the colleagues Marianne Feilchenfeldt, Dr Fritz Rothmann, Ernst Rathenau and writers such as Walter Mehring, etc.”¹

Moreover, the Gurlitt daughters, Maria and Angelina, also emphasised repeatedly that after the war many people looked in at the gallery to thank their father for his wartime support. The veracity of these claims and what form this assistance actually took I cannot say, although I would naturally like to believe in them. A short correspondence from 1949 between Gurlitt and his cousin Winfried, whom he employed in his publishing house and had defrauded him financially, is the only concrete, written evidence I could find in this regard. When Gurlitt confronted Winfried about this matter, he threatened to press charges if he caused him trouble. He knew that Gurlitt had employed Jews in his publishing house and in particular, Ignaz Jeczower, an art and cultural historian, writer and translator. As further offences, he listed “friendly intercourse, protection and support of Jews”, as well as “the concealment and support of Jews and half-castes through false statements with respect to their descent” and “misconduct with regard to racial defilement”. Gurlitt had no choice, but to remain silent if he did not want to risk even more serious consequences.²

Nonetheless, he seems to have continued to try to support people close to him such as the painter Eric Isenburger, whom he advised to flee to France immediately after his first solo exhibition in 1933, as well as the painter Clara Siewert and the playwright Herbert Eulenberg. Gurlitt became aware of the 71-year-old painter Clara Siewert in 1933. He was impressed by her oeuvre, the motifs of which perambulated in an irritating manner “between dream and reality”,³ and in 1936 arranged a large solo exhibition of over 170 of her works in his rooms on the Matthäikirchplatz in Berlin. However, by 1936 the art world was hardly interested in an elderly painter whose self-portraits, nudes, fairy-tale illustrations and literary material were so

¹ Andreas Bartsch, “Erinnerungen an die Galerie Wolfgang Gurlitt”, in: Hemma Schmutz, Elisabeth Nowak-Thaller (ed.), *Wolfgang Gurlitt Zauberprinz. Kunsthändler – Sammler*, exhibition cat., Lentos Kunstmuseum Linz, Museum im Kulturspeicher Würzburg, München 2019, pp. 413–415, here p. 413f.

² Exchange of letters between Wolfgang and Winfried Gurlitt, from October to November 1949, private archive.

³ This is also the title of the major retrospective of the artist held in 2008. See Roman Ziegglängsberger, *Clara Siewert. Zwischen Traum und Wirklichkeit*, exhibition cat. Kunstforum Ostdeutsche Galerie Regensburg, Regensburg 2008.

inscrutable and quixotic. Nevertheless, Gurlitt planned a second exhibition for January 1944, which however did not materialise owing to the war.

When Siewert's flat and her studio were destroyed by air raids at virtually the same time as Gurlitt's own rooms, he realised that she would be overburdened by an assertion of claims for damages and commissioned a financial advisor with this task.⁴ He himself drew up a list⁵ of the destroyed works and sent it to the responsible office with his professional assessment. He estimated the financial damage at RM 63,100. Furthermore, he had heard of convalescent homes for bombed-out artists, where Clara Siewert, who was in poor health, might receive care. Once again he used his connections and asked the "Reichskammer der Bildenden Künste" (State Chamber of Fine Arts) whether it would be possible to accommodate her in such a facility.⁶ "Landesleiter" Schmidt replied immediately that Ms Siewert should "write to him when she wants to go into one of our convalescent homes for three weeks". He would then "make the necessary arrangements".⁷

On 27 December 1944, the final judgement in the Clara Siewert compensation case was issued, with the Chamber awarding her a total of RM 13,500. This amount was far removed from that which Gurlitt wished to obtain for her and in a last attempt to have his assessment accepted he approached the responsible expert in person. However, the decision was not amended and Gurlitt was thus unable to prevail against the power of disposition of the appraiser and the responsible authorities.

Finally, Clara Siewert died of heart failure in a Berlin nursing home in October 1945, shortly after the end of the war. She left behind a few hundred marks, which were used both for her funeral and that of her sister Rosa. Rosa had passed away only one day before. Both were buried in the Berlin-Reinickendorf cemetery. Clara's few surviving works were first exhibited in 2008 in a retrospective on her life and work.

Another of Gurlitt's "problem children" was the Rhinelander Herbert Eulenberg, a dramatist who had long since passed his artistic zenith, but was still highly productive and in certain circles held in great esteem, above all for his pronounced humanism. Over the years, thirty of his works had been published by the Gurlitt-Verlag alone, but by the mid-1920s virtually no one was captivated by his fairy tale-like and unworldly texts. Only his three volumes of essays *Schattenbilder* were still in moderate demand and they, together with income from writing articles and editorials for daily newspapers, kept him afloat financially. However, the idiosyncratic humanist and democrat continued to be appreciated for his integrity and admired as a sincere intellectual and moral authority. Consequently, at the latest from 1933 onwards he constituted a thorn in the side of the new rulers. Eulenberg skillfully resisted the pressure to conform and made neither moral nor artistic compromises. As a result, since the party could not touch him either "racially", as his family tree was "impeccable", or under criminal law because despite his rejection of the ruling ideology he was entirely innocent of any offence, it banned him from publishing. Nevertheless, he was still just about able to eke out a living thanks to the financial support of his large circle of friends.

However, in 1942 Eulenberg's situation appeared to take a turn for the better, as he received an approach from a publishing house that was interested in his work. Eulenberg, who was inexperienced in business, signed a contract without having it legally examined and then suddenly realised that the publisher was only interested in selling off his previously published writings as residual items, which would thus endanger his entire literary life's work. In his

⁴ Dipl.-Kfm. Heinrich Zimmermann to Wilhelm Richard Schmidt, advisor to the Reichskammer der Bildenden Künste, 5.8.1944, private archive.

⁵ List of the artworks of Ms Klara [sic] Siewert destroyed during an air raid on Berlin, private archive.

⁶ Wolfgang Gurlitt to "Landesleiter" Artur Schmidt, 16.3.1944, private archive.

⁷ Artur Schmidt to Wolfgang Gurlitt, 29.3.1944, private archive.

perplexity, he finally asked Gurlitt for help, who barely hesitated and developed a strategy to assist his friend. Gurlitt turned to the “Kulturkammer” and threatened the publishing house with legal action if it did not abandon its plan to destroy Eulenberg's works. When the publishers finally realised that the Chamber would reject their financial demands, they disappeared from the scene. Eulenberg was released from the dubious contract and Gurlitt paid the accumulated storage costs for the remaining stocks of his works, which sold just as poorly as they had during the years before. Nevertheless, the two continued to work on Eulenberg's literary comeback with optimism, but without any significant success. However, if Gurlitt was capable of one thing, it was to spread hope and confidence where none existed (any longer).

Gurlitt's attempts to achieve a revival of Eulenberg's plays also ended in failure, even though Eulenberg had even provided him with a letter of recommendation from Hermann Goering's wife, Emmy, a former actress. But by the time Gurlitt sent this missive as a suggestion for an Eulenberg renaissance to Gustav Gründgens, who had risen to the position of “Staatsrat” (State Councillor) and “Generalintendanten der Preußischen Staatstheater” (General Director of the Prussian State Theatres), the latter had already resigned from his post and volunteered for military service.⁸ Furthermore, the surprising initiative of the editor of the *Hamburger Tageblatt*, the Hamburg gazette of the NSDAP, who approached Eulenberg with a proposal to forward an article he had written for his newspaper to various theatre directors, in order to perhaps revive interest in his work, ultimately came to nothing.

To this day, the Eulenberg renaissance for which Gurlitt campaigned so vehemently has yet to materialise. Nonetheless, he did not forsake his friend, sending him “royalties” at regular intervals and financing recuperative trips for Eulenberg and his wife Hedda to the Gurlitt villa on the Lenauhügel (Lenau hill) in Bad Aussee, where they were welcome guests.

Bad Aussee

If I close my eyes, I can still see the Lenauhügel and the bungalow to the left of the driveway, somewhat elevated upon the hillside, which Gurlitt had built for his daughters after the war. A little further on is the old villa of dark wood where my mother and aunt grew up. Gurlitt bought this through his ex-wife Juliette and his wife Käthe, and it was where “Aunt” Alice, Juliette's sister, lived until her death. Most of the time there were so many of us that we had to split up between the two houses. Our parents and the chauffeur, Mr Pielmeyer, slept along with Alice in the old villa, while we children, our grandmother and aunt, stayed in the bungalow.

Above all, it is the little things that I remember such as the living room with the table and the red upholstered corner seat where meals were taken. Breakfast with our grandmother. The light that passed through a large, untrimmed hazelnut bush and a French window to fall upon the worn carpet below. The red armchair, which stood in front of the stove that was heated on cool days when we hoped that it would finally stop raining. The view of the Dachstein peak hiding behind low-lying clouds. The children's room with the handsome, massive table in the middle, the wall unit and the albums full of film photos and newspaper articles about the coronation of the young Queen Elizabeth II. The tiled stove and the adjoining small bedroom with the red-and- white cushions on the beds. Our grandmother's bedroom with its large fitted cupboards. The cool dampness that had spread throughout the house, because it was only inhabited in the summer months. The terrace, which was paved with large slate slabs that smelled so wonderfully when cooled by the rain after a hot day. We never visited the house in winter when the snow was deep because the adults' memories of often having to be dug out by the neighbours during the Aussee winters were all too vivid.

However, when the Gurlitt family arrived in Aussee in 1944, nothing that I knew as a child existed. No bungalow and only the villa, which neither possessed running water nor modern sanitary facilities, conditions that could not be compared to anything that had constituted the

⁸ Wolfgang Gurlitt to Herbert Eulenberg, 4.5.1943, private archive.

family's life to date. At best the villa was seen as a holiday domicile, temporary emergency quarters for the family during the worst of times and as a repository for the art collection and library endangered in Berlin. Certainly all of this, but the fact that one day the Lenauhügel would become its permanent residence had not been planned.

In November 1943, Gurlitt travelled with his family to Strasbourg. From there he returned to Berlin with Lilly Agoston to oversee the transport of the artworks to be evacuated to Bad Aussee, but was caught in the city by an air raid that annihilated all the flats, storage facilities and the business. In a single night, explosive and incendiary bombs annihilated everything that he had built up over decades. And yet the family members had been granted a blessing in disguise. For had they been in the city that night and taken refuge in the showcase bunker envied by the neighbourhood ... Of the more than 100 people who had sought shelter there, only four survived.

The large, bright and lavishly furnished flat where Käthe had lived with the girls was also completely destroyed.⁹ Its playroom, children's room, drawing room, parents' bedroom, cloakroom, dining room, kitchen and bathroom had formed a golden cage in which everything revolved around the two children, who had not only been cosseted by their parents, but also by the other family members, the aunts, and therefore grew up completely dependent and distant from the realities of life, without higher education or practical skills. Paintings by Italian Baroque masters adorned the walls, while silk curtains filtered the incoming light and bathed the rooms in a delicious semi-darkness. Lush runners and rugs lay upon the floors, muffling the creaking of the parquet flooring. The tables were laden with precious china, crystal and the finest silver cutlery. Coloured chandeliers made of Venetian glass descended from the ceilings.

However, although everything in Berlin had been obliterated, the family knew that once again they had escaped with a fright. Unlike many others, who had suffered similar fates, they had found a new home in Bad Aussee and had thus avoided the constant threat of air raids. As Gurlitt wrote to the director of the Kunsthalle Bremen, Emil Waldmann: "Despite all the difficulties, one does feel safe on the Lenauhügel."¹⁰

To Max Pechstein¹¹ he wrote,

"I don't know if you know the area, but it really is indescribably beautiful, from one side of our house we can see the constantly snow-covered Dachstein, from the other we look across the Pötschenstrasse to the Loserberg, and to the Trisselwand."¹²

Nevertheless, it must have been a profound change for both the family and the freedom-loving Gurlitt, who "never shared a household with a woman [he] was married to, but always

⁹ Application for damage restitution in accordance with the "Kriegssachschädenverordnung" (War Damage Regulation) from 30.11.1940, applicant Käthe Gurlitt from 11.4.1944, private archive.

¹⁰ Wolfgang Gurlitt to Emil Waldmann, 27.1.1944, private archive.

¹¹ After bitter legal disputes, the mid-1920s saw the final break between Gurlitt and Max Pechstein, an artist who was so important to him. It was not until 1944, more than twenty years after the rift, that there was a cautious rapprochement. Pechstein had written to Gurlitt to find out whether paintings had also been destroyed that belonged to them jointly and for which Gurlitt had to pay him half of the proceeds when they were sold. If the correspondence from Pechstein's side was initially quite curt, his tone became friendlier and more affable with each letter. (Correspondence between Wolfgang Gurlitt and Max Pechstein, consisting of ten letters and postcards between 1943 and 1944), private archive.

¹² Wolfgang Gurlitt to Max Pechstein, 11.2.1944, private archive.

appeared there as a guest for a few hours of the day”, and now had to live with all “his” wives “crammed together in shared accommodation”.¹³

A wizard with women

To this day, Gurlitt's “harem” fires the public's imagination. Depending upon one's opinion of him, with either a contemptuous or an admiring undertone, he is called a “pasha” or a “womaniser”. He is the subject of erotic speculation, which might even have pleased him. After all, this aspect of his personality was mirrored by one of the main focuses of his publishing house, erotic literature (one only has to think of his *Venuswagen* ¹⁴, which had brought him to trial for pornography in the early 1920s).

Women generally had a stimulating effect upon the handsome, charismatic and sexually permissive Gurlitt. He is said to have had countless affairs, for example with the actress Henny Porten, or the “scandalous” dancer Anita Berber. He was a “magician with women”,¹⁵ but also a responsible libertine, who always parted amicably with his numerous lovers. Perhaps it was precisely this quality that enabled the polyamorous paterfamilias to gather an exclusive ménage of three women around him in an extended family with which he lived in changing constellations that revolved solely around him, but for which he cared and never abandoned. This form of cohabitation, however, had its price. All the (female) members of the extended family had to possess a high degree of tolerance and nerves of steel, because Gurlitt's behaviour outside of his binding relationship(s) undoubtedly continued to offer potential for conflict.

Who were the three women that allowed themselves to become involved in forming this type of arrangement? Firstly, there was the beautiful Alsatian actress, Karoline Julia Goob (1889–1953), called Juliette or Jule, who Gurlitt married in 1918. Little is known about this marriage, except that it remained childless and was only divorced amicably in 1937, when Wolfgang already had two daughters with Käthe. However, Juliette continued to live with him, her elder sister Alice (1885–1975) and Gurlitt's friend Lilly Agoston at Matthäikirchplatz.

In 1918, Gurlitt also hired a secretary, the red-haired Käthe Lange (1900–1976), who had bright blue eyes and because of her many freckles, was affectionately known as the “Tigerchen” (Little Tiger). It is impossible to say precisely when the relationship began, but it lasted until Gurlitt's death. Käthe also married in 1923 and bore the surname von Salzen until her marriage to Gurlitt, but this initial relationship would appear to have existed only on paper. Her first-born daughter Maria (1929–2018) later recalled that she had always wondered why it said “von Salzen” and not “Gurlitt” on her doorbell. She and her sister Angelina (1933–1990), who was four years younger, were born out of wedlock and although their parents had married in 1937, they only discovered this fact after their mother's death in 1976.

Finally in 1919, Lilly Agoston (1894–1950), a Hungarian Catholic of Jewish descent, became Gurlitt's “girl Friday”. The clever and prudent Lilly, whom he valued for her sharp mind and determination, soon became his right-hand woman and business partner. Whether she was

¹³ Wolfgang Gurlitt to Thomas Ring, 11.8.1947, private archive.

¹⁴ On 6 November 1920, “in the fight against filth in words and pictures” the “Staatsanwaltschaft II, Abteilung Unzüchtigkeit in Wort und Bild” (Public Prosecutor's Office II, Indecency in Words and Pictures Department), confiscated the book series *Venuswagen* after Schiller and *Die Königin von Golkonde* after Bürger, which had been published as private prints by the Gurlitt Press and partly illustrated by Corinth. According to the Reichsgericht, the books were likely to “offend the sense of shame and morality of normal people in sexual relations”. The trial was held in camera, presumably so as not to disturb the public's delicate sense of morals. Gurlitt was sentenced to a fine of 1,000 marks.

¹⁵ Maria Gurlitt often used this term in conversations about her father.

also his mistress, as repeatedly claimed, and remained as such throughout the years, is unproven. What is certain is that she was extremely important for him. They travelled, worked and lived together and were professionally inseparable. In all artistic matters they harmonised and operated as equals. He remained faithful to his best friend all his life, even or especially, in the difficult and stressful years from 1933 to 1945. And when it would certainly have been easier for him to separate from her, the Hungarian Jewess, he arranged a marriage of convenience for her protection.¹⁶ For Gurlitt, her death in 1950 constituted a severe emotional blow, which caused him to gradually lose his footing and become entangled in increasingly unrealistic, illusory and financially risky projects.

Towards the end of Gurlitt's life, living with him became increasingly difficult. This was in spite of all the sincere affection that he had for his wife and daughters and was certainly exacerbated by the loss of Jule and especially Lilly, but also by a certain tendency to remain silent, or make partial hints, which repeatedly led to misunderstandings and hurt. Whether this trait was already inherent in him, or had been formed by his experiences in the Third Reich as a necessary strategy for survival, can only be a matter of speculation.

Nevertheless, his wife Käthe and his two daughters formed a protective shield around him, which was intended to safeguard him from putative attacks beyond his death.

Epilogue

Wolfgang Gurlitt loved to excess. His desire was fierce and spontaneous, and whatever triggered its ignition, whether a woman or a painting, he wished to possess the source at all costs and spared no effort to obtain it. One of his friends once aptly described it as the "passion of seeking and finding".¹⁷ Therefore, although his death was a catastrophic emotional blow to the family, in retrospect it was perhaps also the moment when it finally found peace and was able to break free from his grasp. Moreover, at least as far as their dispositions still allowed, the individual members could venture to take cautious steps towards independence. Gurlitt, who had always enjoyed living in style and had generously provided for all those he had taken into his protection, left behind a financial disaster, which his widow, who until then had only been a wife and mother, had to resolve. She outgrew herself at that moment and took up the fight for the gallery. Unrealistic and oversized projects were terminated, parts of Gurlitt's art collection were sold to pay off the accumulated debts, and the gallery was turned into a realistic, albeit far more modest, player in the art market.

By definition, the portrait of Gurlitt, which we now have and that I have sketched here can only be incomplete and will always remain so. In addition, what will come to light about him in the future is bound to merely constitute a small part of what defined the man and his actions. This also includes aspects, especially of a business nature, that due to their historical context may at least prove to be morally questionable.

My grandfather chose the path that he thought was right in order to lead his family, friends and his business through dark times as best he could. In the process, he himself created countless facets of dazzling shades of grey and one or two distortions. And although I repeatedly find fault with his professional activities and wonder about his vanity and egotism, there are qualities that reconcile me to him and I trust also find expression in my character. His solidarity. His stubbornness. His tenacity. His way of dealing with setbacks and defeats. His unwavering love of art and life.

¹⁶ A for him welcome side-effect of this "Scheinehe" (sham marriage) was undoubtedly that via Agoston, Gurlitt obtained foreign exchange, which he employed for surreptitious purchases from the "Aktion Entartete Kunst".

¹⁷ Emil Waldmann to Wolfgang Gurlitt, 6.12.1943, private archive.

Elisabeth Nowak-Thaller: Lucrative business. Berlin art dealers in Ausseerland during the NS-era

The text is an English translation of the original text "Lukrative Geschäfte. Berliner Kunsthändler im Ausseerland in der NS-Zeit" written in German language for the catalog of the exhibition "Die Reise der Bilder" ["The Journey of the Paintings"] pp. 237-261. Translation by John Cima.

Under the Nazi regime, the art trade profited from the persecution, expulsion, looting and murder of Jewish art collectors and dealers. From 1938 onwards, an increasing number of Jewish collections came onto the art market as a result of compulsory levies such as the "Jewish property tax" or the "Reich flight tax" imposed upon fleeing Jews and ultimately through confiscations and the expropriation and deportation of collectors.

Half of the entire art trade in the German Reich took place in Berlin around the elegant Kemperplatz in the Tiergarten district and in the Lützow area, where above all the galleries for contemporary art were located. Bruno and Paul Cassirer launched their business in the Viktoriastrasse, Johannes Hinrichsen and Paul Lindpaintner in the Bellevuestrasse. Moreover, in roughly 1940, a new focal point formed around the Kurfürstenstrasse, where apart from Karl Haberstock, one of Hitler's most important suppliers with good contacts in The Netherlands, France and Switzerland, Wolfgang Gurlitt also resided.¹ The galleries of Johannes Hinrichsen and Gurlitt were located nearby in the same neighbourhood, but only briefly, because in November 1943 and 1945 bombing destroyed the exhibition and storage facilities, offices and opulent apartments of both art dealers. However, prior these attacks, the dealerships had already been relocated to the safety of the Ausseerland.

Apart from Berlin, the artistic centres of Munich and Vienna were also popular meeting places for dealers, fences and their helpers. In Munich, the member of the NSDAP and fanatical National Socialist, Maria Almas-Dietrich, operated on a grand scale. She was in close contact with Heinrich Hoffmann, Hitler's photographer, and through the involvement of another woman, the Nazi Gerdy Troost, who was another Hitler intimate, Munich joined Berlin as an important hub for the Nazi art trading. The dealers Adolf Weinmüller, Julius Böhler and Friedrich Zinkgraf were all based in Munich and. between 1936 and 1943, the auction house of the profiteer Weinmüller, who owing to his good contacts with the NSDAP became a monopolist, organised 33 auctions with a total of 24,500 works from mainly expropriated collections.² Moreover, in August 1940, the Gestapo founded the "Vugesta" in Vienna, a company for the exploitation of the removal goods of deported and fugitive Jews. The confiscated artworks were mainly sold at the Dorotheum auction house in Vienna and the "Sonderauftrag" purchased hundreds of items from this auction house, which acted increasingly aggressively in the manner of an art dealership. Wolfgang Gurlitt also acquired a painting by Egon Schiele from the "Vugesta" at the Dorotheum in Vienna, which the Lentos Art Museum in Linz was to restitute to the heirs of Daisy Hellmann in 2003.

The outbreak of war triggered a "flight into material assets", thus increasing the demand for so-called old art in the German Reich. In addition, the art purchases of the Nazi grandees, above all Hitler and Goering, further fuelled the art market. As a result, the prices for artworks climbed to previously undreamt of heights. The trade was now also frequently able to sell

¹ Stefan Pucks, "Zur Topografie des Berliner Kunsthandels 1918–1945", in: *Gute Geschäfte, Kunsthandel in Berlin 1933–1945*, exhibition cat., Aktives Museum Faschismus und Widerstand in Berlin, Berlin 2011, pp 17–19, here p. 17f.

² Meike Hopp, *Kunsthandel im Nationalsozialismus. Adolf Weinmüller in München und Wien* (publications of the Zentralinstituts für Kunstgeschichte, Vol. 30), Cologne/Weimar/Vienna 2012, p. 136.

inferior quality at inflated prices, a circumstance that repeatedly benefited the Berlin dealer Wolfgang Gurlitt. However, the situation with regard to avant-garde art was completely different as this was defamed as “degenerate”. Initially, it was sold under the table at bargain prices. Then in 1937, the Nazi state released for sale abroad some 20,000 works confiscated as “degenerate” from hundreds of museums in order to “make money from the rubbish” (Joseph Goebbels). However, in defiance of anti-Semitic tendencies, art dealers such as Karl and Josef Nierendorf or Wolfgang Gurlitt continued to show exhibitions of “degenerate”, predominantly Jewish artists, until 1938.

From 1933 onwards, many Jewish art dealerships in Germany were systematically liquidated. Successful Jewish art dealers such as Alfred Flechtheim or Curt Valentin became the target of public criticism and were driven into exile. Until February 1938, when they were banned from practising their profession, Jewish art dealers were still allowed to sell works of art from their gallery stock, but had to pay the foreign currency to the Nazi state and by the end of 1938 the Berlin art trade was officially entirely in “Aryan” hands. 312 Jewish art dealers and gallery owners had been robbed of their livelihoods and either murdered or forced to emigrate. Their holdings were subsequently confiscated, looted and auctioned. In turn, established or new, non-Jewish art dealers and auction houses capitalised on a large scale from the brutal “Aryanisations”. Profiteers and fences actively and unrestrainedly participated in the Nazi persecution.³ Indeed, those who were able to involve themselves as art dealers in the National Socialists’ art thefts and supply the frequent buyers such as Hitler or Goering were thus financially secure.

During the war, two Berlin art dealers, Wolfgang Gurlitt and Johannes Hinrichsen, who had already regularly spent summer holidays in the Ausseerland, settled down in the area’s unique landscape. Irrespective of whether they saw the promise of lucrative business from the Nazi bigwigs also living locally, it was close family ties that brought both men to the region. Gurlitt had resided in his villa “Lenauhügel” in the spa town of Bad Aussee since 1940, while Hinrichsen had occupied the palatial “Wassermann-Villa” in Altaussee, a romantic village in which aristocrats and many artists had settled, since 1938. Here, “insiders and die-hard fanatics” enjoyed their summer retreats.⁴ Families remained in the countryside beyond the holidays, while the men commuted to their places of work, mostly in Vienna. However, beginning in 1938 the peaceful summer seclusion was to change abruptly. The Jewish summer guests and villa owners were dispossessed, expelled, persecuted or, like Aranka Munk and her daughter Lola who had lived in Aussee in summer since 1916, deported and murdered. “Ariseurs” acting as trustees such as Eduard Beyerer, Theodor Friedrich (Bad Aussee) or Wilhelm Haenel (Bad Ischl) sold off numerous Salzkammergut villas, generally together with their contents, to NSDAP party members at far below their value. Moreover, owing to a lack of jurisdiction, other once attractive properties were left to decay altogether. As a trustee, the spa director Beyerer finally owned 24 confiscated villas in Aussee, while the “wild Aryaniser” Haenel was even reprimanded by the responsible Nazi authorities for his arbitrary behaviour.⁵

The villa of the deported Aranka Munk at Marktleite 78 in Bad Aussee, was much coveted. A former tenant and Aranka’s physiotherapist applied to purchase the property in April 1942 with an offer of 20,000 Reichsmarks and a year later, Hermann and Ruth Maria Kobbe won the bid for the house and its inventory. There were numerous interested parties for this precisely catalogued list of contents, which included paintings, valuable furniture, works of art

³ André Schmitz, “Foreword”, in: *Gute Geschäfte* 2011, pp. 8–9, here p. 8; Christine Fischer-Defoy,

“Gute Geschäfte. Kunsthandel in Berlin 1933–1944”, in: *ibid.*, pp. 10–13.

⁴ Rudolf Lothar, “Grundlseeer Geschichten”, in: *Neues Wiener Journal*, 11.8.1932, p. 9.

⁵ Marie-Theres Arnbom, *Die Villen vom Ausseerland. Wenn Häuser Geschichten erzählen*, Vienna 2021, p. 86, p. 45f.

and a highly desirable Aubusson carpet.⁶ In November 1942, while in the villa of Aranka Munk, who by that time had already been deported, Gottfried Reimer, the head of the "Sonderauftrag Linz", selected the carpet for the "Führer Museum". Gurlitt acted as an intermediary and as he lived in the neighbourhood and there was no appraisal, he informed the new special commissioner Hermann Voss of this choice. Gurlitt also intervened regarding the furnishings of the "de-Jewificated" Villa Alberti in Bad Aussee, in which no works of art of museum quality were ultimately discovered.⁷ In fact, word quickly spread among collectors and dealers in the local areas about which works of art had been confiscated, expropriated or sold and where. However, owing to a lack of sources, the conditions under which Gurlitt obtained Klimt's *Frauenbildnis* that Aranka Munk had commissioned from the painter following the suicide of her daughter Ria and which, according to witnesses, was in the Aussee house, remains an unsolved mystery. At the second attempt and despite the note "Caution Jewish property" affixed by the city authorities, in 1956 Wolfgang Gurlitt sold the unfinished Klimt painting, which at that time was not particularly valuable, to the City of Linz for 9,600 schillings. Subsequently, following lengthy and difficult provenance research and restitution negotiations, on 10 August 2009 the Lentos Kunstmuseum Linz restituted this late work, which had always been part of its collection and since the 1950s on loan around the world, to the Jewish Community of Vienna.⁸

Galerie & Verlag Gurlitt. Berlin – Bad Aussee

While topics such as "Aryanisation" and art theft have attracted increasing attention amongst researchers and the public, owing to the scarcity of sources the history of the art trade in the Salzkammergut has thus far received scant notice. This article once again focuses on Wolfgang Gurlitt, the Berlin dealer who came to live in Aussee and later founded the Neue Galerie der Stadt Linz / Wolfgang-Gurlitt-Museum, the Lentos Kunstmuseum Linz of today (Fig. 2).

Born on 15 February 1888 in Berlin as the son of the successful but short-lived court art dealer Fritz Gurlitt, Wolfgang learned the art trade "from the bottom up" at the Galerie Fritz Gurlitt, which he then took over "from the hands of his mother" in 1912. The gallery, which around 1900 still numbered among the leading art dealerships, made an international name for itself with spectacular modern exhibitions. The French Impressionists, Böcklin, Feuerbach, Leibl, Corinth and Liebermann, the Austrian painters Schiele, Klimt and Kokoschka as well as the draughtsman Kubin were all represented there with works at an early point in time. In addition, the Gurlitt Verlag specialised in modern graphic art and art-historical bibliophile publications. However, as summarised by Gurlitt in 1946, "Owing to the wartime events, in 1939 activities had to cease. [...] Almost all of the publishing house's books were banned or placed on the list of undesirable literature, as the composition of the publishing programme was based solely on quality and not on racial and political considerations."⁹

In addition to the graphic art boom, which had continued to provide the Gurlitt Verlag with sizeable income in the early 1920s, it was primarily the erotica published by Gurlitt that ensured profits in the competitive art market. The end of the former and the consequences

⁶ Ibid., pp. 42–50.

⁷ Birgit Schwarz, "Wolfgang Gurlitt und der Sonderauftrag Linz", in: Hemma Schmutz, Elisabeth Nowak-Thaller (ed.), *Wolfgang Gurlitt Zauberprinz. Kunsthändler – Sammler*, exhibition cat., Lentos Kunstmuseum Linz, Munich 2019, pp 435–441, here p. 439.

⁸ See the contributions from Michael John and Maria Altrichter in this catalogue, pp. 312–322 and 335–357.

⁹ Oberösterreichisches Landesarchiv (OÖLA), Gurlitt citizenship file, application for the granting of Austrian citizenship submitted by Wolfgang Gurlitt on 31.1.1946.

emanating from the publication of the *Venuswagen* volumes in 1919/20, which were initially condemned by the public prosecutor's office and later by the Nazi regime, meant that the "quarter-Jew, half-breed of the second degree" Gurlitt and above all his Jewish business partner Lilly Agoston were now under the scrutiny of the Gestapo. Gurlitt, from 1926 the only German dealer in "erotic art" to be listed in the annual magazine *Pantheon* (Fig. 3), earned good money with erotic portfolios that included homoerotic content. The *Venuswagen* was confiscated as "material endangering morality" and the publisher was fined, but the trial, which was accompanied by media coverage, provided valuable publicity. Even the head of the König-Albert-Museum in Zwickau, Wolfgang's cousin Hildebrand Gurlitt, who later became Hitler's art dealer, was now outraged by Wolfgang's erotic publishing house, which "almost only publishes smut".¹⁰

The "Roaring Twenties" marked the beginning of a permanent financial crisis for Gurlitt. The luxurious adaptations to his apartment and gallery rooms left him with many unpaid bills. Moreover, as early as 1922, there was a dispute and lawsuit with Max Pechstein, whom Gurlitt had originally represented with an exclusive contract. In 1927 Gurlitt sued Duke Joachim Ernst von Anhalt for the payment of 500,000 marks for lost commissions and the same year also saw the start of a drastic reduction in the Gurlitt Galerie's exhibition activities. At the latest, by the 1930s the heyday of the Berlin gallery was at an end, as the economic crisis, inflation, the increasingly difficult graphics market and Wolfgang Gurlitt's lavish lifestyle threatened both his livelihood and that of his partner Lilly Agoston. The "bankruptcy culture" circled several times over the once renowned gallery, which had specialised mainly in representational modernism, German Expressionism and graphic art, but also in Jewish artists, especially young talents such as Eric Isenburger, Jeanne Mammen and Lotte Laserstein.

Nonetheless, owing to the close family ties to Austria, derived from his father's birth in Vienna and the professorship in archaeology of his uncle "Memmo" in Graz, Gurlitt and his family set up a new home in Bad Aussee. This took place in 1940, despite the financial problems which in 1936 had forced Gurlitt to hand over the business of the company "Kunsthandlung Fritz Gurlitt G.m.b.H" founded in 1926 to Lilly Agoston.¹¹ By means of financial dealings, Gurlitt's French, ex-wife Juliette and wife Käthe officially acquired 50 per cent¹² of the splendid villa on the Lenauhügel, including the furnishings, for a total of 44,000 Reichsmarks. The previous owner was Robert Neiber, who had acquired the Salzkammergut-style house with its magnificent view of the surrounding mountains in 1934. According to a Jewish employee, who was a friend of Gurlitt's, this transfer of ownership to his wives was "only for security reasons during the Nazi regime under which, as a special patron of modern art, my friend was persecuted and harassed in every way [...] The Gurlitt house is a large condominium with a patriarchal character, in which a stranger needs time to orientate. Apart from the first and second wives, the children of the second marriage, the first was childless, there is the sister of the first wife, also French, and my friend's employee of Danish nationality and currently named Christiansen. By the way, she is intelligent and purposeful to an equal degree. Upon obtaining Austrian citizenship, these ownership relationships will be reorganised."¹³

Whether with regard to the gallery, art publishing house or real estate, even before and especially after the war, Gurlitt always possessed great cunning and the necessary

¹⁰ Archive Cornelius Gurlitt, TU Dresden, letter from 27.8.1920, Hildebrand to Wilibald Gurlitt.

¹¹ Bundesarchiv Berlin, R 2 Pers, W. Gurlitt, Reichskulturkammer file, Gurlitt to the Landesleiter of the Reichskammer der bildenden Künste, 14.6.1936.

¹² Letter to Dr Carl Scherer Vienna, Seewalchen, 21.2.1946, privately owned; *Alpenpost, Ausseer Nachrichten*, 25.4.1940, p. 5.

¹³ Ibid.

connections to conceal his property through financial transactions in which his wives assisted him. Furthermore, until the small adjacent “Almhütte” bungalow was built, the Gurlitt wives, who attracted attention in Aussee not merely because of their metropolitan lifestyle and appearance complete with chauffeur, lived under the same roof with their “Pasha” in what were by their standards very cramped conditions.

In his application for Austrian citizenship from 1946, Gurlitt wrote about his career: “[...] Following the rejection by the Viennese [sic] Nazi authorities of the long-planned relocation of the gallery to Vienna, from this point onwards the management of the gallery was also transferred to Bad Aussee. After the bombing of the branches in Berlin and Würzburg, the company's entire operations were moved to Aussee, where the business was also registered and the Gmunden tax office became responsible for taxes. In close co-operation with the Austrian freedom movement, at the end of the war the applicant was entrusted with the management of the cultural office in Ausseerland and from there was intensively involved in the development of cultural life in Aussee. In addition, links were established with Salzburg and a plan for the organisation and rebuilding of the exhibition system was submitted to the provincial government. [...]”¹⁴

The citizenship file also contains a confirmation dated 30 December 1945, “that Mr Wolfgang Gurlitt from Reitern no. 38, municipality of Bad-Aussee is an active member of the Aussee resistance movement. Gurlitt helped to dismantle the German Wehrmacht and also sank its weapons.”¹⁵ In addition, the file includes a letter from a police post commander in which it is confirmed on 2 July 1946 that “the aforementioned does not appear in the governmental list of former Nazis”.¹⁶ Furthermore, in a letter of recommendation to the Ministry, the painter and prorektor of the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna, Sergius Pauser, praises the fact that, “Mr Wolfgang Gurlitt occupies an outstanding position in artistic life and has a worldwide reputation.”¹⁷

It is no longer possible to determine whether these confirmations and recommendations enclosed with the citizenship application were letters of favour intended to speed up the process, or whether Gurlitt, who was never a party member had really disposed of weapons, which is difficult to imagine. However, the attests do indicate that Gurlitt was well connected with the authorities, not only in his new place of residence, Bad Aussee, where both his daughters were now enrolled in school, but also in Vienna and Salzburg. In 1949, he even organised an exhibition at the Aussee Festival (Fig. 4)! On 5 June 1945, the mayor of Aussee certified that Wolfgang Gurlitt was provisionally employed to manage the official business of the Department of Art and Culture and on 10 July, together with his partner Lilly Agoston, he was appointed and officially confirmed as the head of the Department of Culture of the Gmunden district authority (Fig. 5, 6).¹⁸

¹⁴ OÖLA, Gurlitt citizenship file 31.1.1946.

¹⁵ Ibid., Security Commissioner Bad-Aussee, Gendarmerie Major (illegible), 30.12.1945.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Sergius Pauser, letter to State Secretary Graf, Vienna, 15.6.1946, privately owned.

¹⁸ Office of the Bürgermeister, Bad Aussee, 5.6.1945, Gmunden district authority, 10.7.1945, privately owned.

The “dear good little wolf”¹⁹: victim, escape helper, rescuer and profiteer

Wolfgang Gurlitt, whose grandmother was of the Mosaic faith, was a friend of many Jewish artists²⁰ and collectors and assisted their escape by acquiring or temporarily storing their belongings. He was also demonstrably highly committed to helping Jewish gallery employees. For example, Elisabeth A. Wills, who eventually emigrated to Louisiana (Missouri), worked as an assistant in the Kurfürstenstrasse office in Berlin from September 1940, because as a “half-Jew” she was otherwise unable to find employment. Gurlitt had her trained at a private business school. He also took care of his office manager Walter Kasten, who was of self-declared Roma or Sinti descent, in the “most generous form.” Moreover as Kasten recounts, “Due to the persecution of the Jews, people wearing the star often appeared bringing works of art in their possession and begging Mr Gurlitt to assist them financially with a purchase. Even if the objects had no particular artistic value, Mr Gurlitt helped everyone. In particular, I remember Mrs Ringelnatz, who was in a very bad state because her husband was ostracised during the Nazi era. Equally, Crown Prince Wilhelm von Hohenzollern, who was living under house arrest in Potsdam, arrived with two guards to ask Mr Gurlitt for help in selling some art objects. [...]”²¹

Elisabeth Wills moved with Gurlitt to Aussee for a short time and “where I spent several months because we continued to do some of the office work from there. [...] In the meantime, the Waffen-SS had moved into Aussee with a large military hospital, which as you can imagine, brought with it all the dangers of the Nazi regime. Mr Gurlitt and I discussed that my safety as a half-Jew was greater in Berlin than in little Bad Aussee where everyone knew everybody else. But we stayed in touch [...] because I have nothing but gratitude and respect for the courage and [the] good deeds that Wolfgang Gurlitt demonstrated in an extremely dangerous time.”²²

The author of *Hell was Empty. A Biography from the Third Reich*, Dieter W. Gombert, who as a victim of political persecution was at the time was living illegally, was given a job as an assistant to Gurlitt until he managed to flee to Switzerland and later emigrate to the USA. Gurlitt commissioned Gombert to bid at the auction of the Jewish publishing house of his former competitor Bruno Cassirer. A self-portrait and Bruno Cassirer's portrait by Max Slevogt were acquired for around 20,000 Reichsmarks. The Asset Realisation Office of the Chief Finance President of Berlin-Brandenburg, which had the task of confiscating and auctioning off Jewish property for the benefit of the state treasury, sold Slevogt's portrait of Bruno Cassirer at one of three auctions between 1942 and 1944. Gombert brought the paintings to Bad Aussee, wrapped in a woollen blanket, “Where I got to know his family. Women ran the household. It consisted of his first wife Juliette, who lived in a large room with her older sister [sic]. He was also married to a younger lady, Mrs Käthe Gurlitt, the mother of his two daughters Maria and Angie. In addition, he had a secretary, Lilli Agoston-Christiansen, who showed an unusual talent for business and controlled and planned his entire business with a rod of iron. It is interesting to know that Mrs Agoston, who was about 50 years old, was a Hungarian Jewess and in order to protect her, Gurlitt had married her off to a very young Dane for a sum of money. This gave her a Danish passport, which did not have to show the evil red 'J'. This family lived together harmoniously and in his altruistic way, Gurlitt didn't wish

¹⁹ Expression used in letters of condolence from close friends, privately owned.

²⁰ In 1930/32, Gurlitt published the lesbian picture cycle *Lieder der Bilitis* by the Jewish painter Jeanne Mammen and organised her first solo exhibition in 1930. Lotte Laserstein's first one-person show at the Gurlitt Gallery took place in 1928. An exhibition of the Jewish painter Eric Isenburger, a friend of Gurlitt's, was organised in Berlin in 1933. The show was attacked by the National Socialist press and defamed as “degenerate”. Regarding Isenburger, see the article by Gregory Hahn and Karolina Hyży in this catalogue, pp. 271–280.

²¹ Archive of the City of Linz, letter from Elisabeth A. Wills, USA, to Dr. Friedrich Mayrhofer, 20.3.1999.

²² Ibid.

to put anyone out on the street. [...] Later in July 1944 and after I stayed in a hotel in Bad Aussee, from where Gurlitt sent me on many journeys, the charming townspeople began to ask who this strange young man was and why wasn't he doing his duty in the army? They wanted to serve the great Führer and help Germany to victory! For this reason I had to leave Bad Aussee and I went to Strasbourg, where I found people with like-minded political views. The wonderful thing was that Mr Gurlitt gave me documents stating that on his behalf I was to acquire valuable art treasures for him. These documents saved my life on several occasions before I managed to escape to Switzerland.”²³

Whether in Berlin, Vienna, Munich or Bad Aussee, the hunt for valuable art, often defamed as “degenerate” or confiscated from Jewish ownership, was a widespread phenomenon in which many art dealers and their agents indulged. On 19 October 1942, Gurlitt and his local buyer Gombert were able to acquire a marble bust and a female plaster head by Charles Despiau for 1,200 Reichsmarks at the subsequent sale of Max Cassirer's expropriated, high-calibre art collection. In January 1943, Gurlitt immediately offered the portrait *Bruno Cassirer* by Max Slevogt, which is mentioned by Gombert, to the Berlin National Gallery, but the acquisition was rejected on the grounds that it came from a “Jewish painter”.²⁴ Gurlitt was only able to sell the work to the Nationalgalerie in 1961. The painting is currently classified as “looted property”, confiscated as a result of Nazi persecution, and in all probability will have to be restituted.²⁵

Gurlitt's daughter Maria, who always lovingly admired her father, describes growing up in a Jewish environment and her personal aversion to the art dealer profession, “When I was a child, he [father Wolfgang] sent me to the Jewish kindergarten Simon in Berlin, he found my later girlish infatuation with Rommel dreadful, and of course he forbade me to become a 'BdM Mädle'. It may be that my father made enemies because he was successful in his profession and could appear arrogant. In addition, his demeanour and liberal lifestyle did not correspond to the National Socialist ideal or the narrow-mindedness of the post-war period. [...] I experienced him as an enthusiastic and inspiring art lover”.²⁶ Maria's judgement of the local population reads like a bitter postscript, “First they [the people of Aussee] wanted to throw us out. Then I became an Austrian. Then the Germans wanted to kick me out. I actually longed to become a farmer. After 17 years in Aussee, I went back to Munich because I fell in love. Then I wished to do layouting for magazines and bookselling, but I wasn't permitted to do that because 'a Gurlitt doesn't work'. I had to go into the art trade. Full of tips and tricks. Terrible! Art dealers are dreadful! I never wanted to be an art dealer in my life. [...]”²⁷ Maria recounts with some pride that Kubin, Haesele, Bilger and the Isenburger couple as well as Charlotte Berend- Corinth were very close to her father and occasionally visited him on the Lenauhügel.

Nonetheless, the powerful Gurlitt clan in Aussee was also faced by strong headwinds and fierce protests. In 1945, the Aussee editor Ferdinand Wesiak complained to the American military administration that although Austrian labour was available, the municipality of Aussee was employing three Reich Germans, namely “Messrs Winitzki, Gurlitt and Kasten” in its

²³ Archive of the City of Linz, letter from Dieter W. Gombert to Dr. Friedrich Mayrhofer, 24.3.1999.

²⁴ Caroline Flick, “Enteignung, Vertreibung und Verwertung. Das Beispiel Max Cassirer”, in: *Gute Geschäfte* 2011, pp. 153–166, here p. 166.

²⁵ Hubertus Butin, “Porträt Slevogts als Raubkunst. Abgerechnet wird zum Schluss”, in: *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 9.11.2023, [faz.net/aktuell/feuilleton/schwerer-ns-raubkunstverdacht-in-der-alte-nationalgalerie-bei-bild-von-max-slevogt-19302516.html](https://www.faz.net/aktuell/feuilleton/schwerer-ns-raubkunstverdacht-in-der-alte-nationalgalerie-bei-bild-von-max-slevogt-19302516.html), accessed on 9.12.2023.

²⁶ Lentos Kunstmuseum Linz, letter from Maria Gurlitt regarding the Cornelius Gurlitt picture find, undated [2013/14].

²⁷ Summary of an interview noted in keywords with Maria Gurlitt in Munich, May 2018.

service. The fact that Gurlitt had been put in charge of the Bad Aussee Art and Culture department by the acting mayor Gaiswinkler and that Walter Kasten, Gurlitt's secretary, had also been recruited for the municipal administration as an employee and advisor to Gaiswinkler, also irritated the editor greatly. Wesiak defamed Walter Kasten, who had returned from military service to his family living in Aussee in June 1945, by calling him a "communist agitator [...] who holds meetings and thus interferes in Austria's domestic political affairs. This is happening with the toleration and public support of Mr Gaiswinkler. As a free Austrian citizen, I protest against these abuses that have arisen under the eyes of the military administration and request [...] the removal of these foreign elements from the municipal service of Bad-Aussee."²⁸ In the wake of the Nazi terror, hostility towards Jews and foreigners as well as denunciation also characterised the lives of many unwanted "Reich German" immigrants.

A letter to the Jewish art dealer Otto Kallir, who had emigrated from Vienna to New York via Paris, demonstrates just how difficult, chaotic, opaque and dubious the art trade actually was. Kallir had founded the Neue Galerie in Vienna in 1923 and prior to his forced emigration initially maintained a friendly business relationship with Gurlitt. However, after the war, Kallir accused Gurlitt of acquiring and trading in looted Dutch goods, including carpets and on 5 September 1947 the latter replied angrily, "I did everything I could in Germany and Austria to help the persecuted and oppressed. I risked my life and the existence of my family a thousand times in order to save human lives or in attempts to improve the unbearable situation in which the persecuted and oppressed found themselves. [...] Your accusations that I acquired looted property must be rejected in the strongest possible terms. [...] I have not made any purchases

that were not correct and proper. Incidentally, this has also been expressly confirmed to me by the American authorities in Salzburg with responsibility for my person."²⁹ Furthermore, owing to compensation payments, Kallir cast doubts upon the reality of Gurlitt's claim that the bombing had virtually ruined him. Another dispute of a financial nature between the dealers was caused by the lengthy storage of a painting by Jacques-Louis David that began in 1939. Lilly Agoston had deposited the painting in Kallir's Galerie St Etienne in Paris for safekeeping and it was not until 1947 that it arrived at Kallir's address in New York. Storage fees, customs duties and insurance premiums had caused sizeable costs and Gurlitt refused to reimburse these expenses. It took until February 1949 for Gurlitt to declare his willingness to pay 5,000 shillings to Kallir on behalf of the "owner" Lilly Christiansen after which, the U.S. Office of Alien Property released the painting.³⁰

Kallir had already considered acquiring the villa on the Lenauhügel in Aussee before Gurlitt, but owing to the political pressure of the Nazi regime and the persecution of the Jews, at the latest he had been forced to abandon this idea by 1938. Immediately after the war, in the summer of 1946, he suggested to Gurlitt from the USA that he would swap the Aussee house for paintings. "As good as this country is and as happy as one must be to have come over here, an Aussee summer is not to be underrated [...]"³¹ In turn, Gurlitt informed the gallerist of his ambitious plans to set up a municipal museum in Linz, rebuild the Landesgalerie in Salzburg and expand his sphere of activity to Vienna, Zurich and Stockholm. At the same time, in 1947 he lamented the loss of his two Berlin galleries, the warehouse and the publishing house. "Now, by contrast we have a little house on the Lenauhügel that is so small there is not even one room for every inhabitant. [...] I think it's

²⁸ Ferdinand Wesiak to the American Military Government, Linz/Donau, 8.9.1945, Bräuhof 12, Bad Aussee, privately owned.

²⁹ Jane Kallir, "Otto Kallir und Wolfgang Gurlitt", in: Schmutz, Nowak-Thaller 2019, pp. 403–409, here p. 405.

³⁰ Ibid., p. 405f.

³¹ Ibid., p. 404.

fair to say that apart from the Lenauhügel, nothing remains and that if we hadn't owned it, [we] wouldn't have had a roof over our heads and would probably still be sitting somewhere today, wedged between strangers.”³²

We know that Kallir's accusations were well founded. For although as a passionate art collector and “discoverer” of artists, Gurlitt was always generous, as a dealer he behaved less magnanimously and instead, as was customary in the branch at the time, optimised his profits. He demonstrably acquired artworks from confiscated Jewish collections at auction houses such as H. W. Lange or Leo Spik in Berlin or the Dorotheum in Vienna, and both hoarded and purchased fugitive property. Twelve restitutions from the Lentos Kunstmuseum Linz, which are dealt with in this catalogue by Maria Altrichter, show that Gurlitt repeatedly benefited from the enforced sales of Jewish collectors who had fled. He often took works directly into “safekeeping” and was unwilling or unable to return the consigned goods entrusted to him as agreed because these had long since been sold without consultation. However, in this respect Gurlitt was not a special case because after the war, all too often collectors were quickly snubbed or lied to about the alleged destruction of the consigned works.

Thus like many other dealers, Gurlitt was involved in the liquidation of the businesses of ostracised Jewish colleagues as a profiteer and a reseller of “degenerate” art. In particular, the confiscation of “degenerate” art from German museums opened up new business perspectives for four favoured art dealers; Ferdinand Möller, Karl Buchholz, cousin Hildebrand Gurlitt and Bernhard A. Böhmer, who was close to Wolfgang Gurlitt. The paintings *Die Freunde* and *Alter Mann (Vater Hirsch)* by Oskar Kokoschka, which were confiscated from German museums as “degenerate”, and Otto Mueller's *Badende Mädchen* were acquired by Gurlitt from Bernhard A. Böhmer and have been part of the Lentos collection since the museum was founded. The commissions were often high, but at least the lucrative transactions saved the modernist works from destruction. The unsalable remnants of “degenerate” art were burned in the courtyard of the fire station at Lindenstrasse 42 in Berlin on 20 March 1939.

Wolfgang Gurlitt's Jewish partner, who now had a Danish passport, and his ex-wife from Strasbourg were able to buy and sell abroad without hindrance thus allowing him to profit from the holdings that were systematically looted and captured by the Wehrmacht in occupied territories. While apart from Hildebrand, Gurlitt, Karl Haberstock, Maria Almas-Dietrich and Gerdy Troost were among the dealers who actively expanded the holdings of the Linz collection of the planned “Führer Museum”, in actual fact contrary to his ambitions, Wolfgang Gurlitt only acted as a marginal figure in the “Sonderauftrag Linz”. In this regard, Hildebrand Gurlitt utilised his position of supremacy and incidentally, Wolfgang characterised Hildebrand as an “unpleasant Nazi sympathiser whom he did not like”.³³

From 1933 onwards, Wolfgang Gurlitt repeatedly saw himself as a victim of anti-Semitism and the object of persecution. After the war, he again positioned himself as an “art saviour”. In fact, since 1936 onwards, he had been accused by the Gestapo of trading in works by Jewish artists and collectors and of having a business relationship with Lilly Agoston,³⁴ while simultaneously he attempted to gain a foothold in the flourishing Nazi art trade. Ultimately, due to the appointment of Hildebrand Gurlitt and his own lack of financial resources, he failed. Nonetheless, from Aussee and with the support of Justus Schmidt, the head of the Oberösterreichische Landesmuseum, as well as through his acquaintance with Hermann Voss, he persisted in trying to do business with the “Sonderauftrag Linz”. Personal contacts

³² Ibid., p. 405.

³³ Lentos Kunstmuseum Linz, letter from Maria Gurlitt, undated [2013/14].

³⁴ Landesarchiv Berlin (LAB), A rep., 243-04, no. 2875, personal file Wolfgang Gurlitt, letter of the NSDAP from 14.1.1939 and the Landesleitung der Reichskammer der bildenden Künste from 27.4.1942.

to high-ranking Nazis in Berlin were equally helpful as was the connection to Theodor Fischer in Lucerne. And while the paintings for the “Führer Museum” in Linz and Hitler’s collections in Altaussee were stored in the salt mine, Gurlitt deposited his collection in the immediate vicinity with Theodor Friedrich, the “Reich German Ariseur”, at Obertressen 1 in in Bad Aussee. Whether Gurlitt’s collection was actually stored there in part or only on paper is still unknown today, as to date research has come to nothing. Apart from Klimt’s *Frauenbildnis (Ria Munk III)*, the purchases he made through his networks during local seizures in the Salzkammergut will probably remain a mystery.

After the war, prestigious business led the Aussee resident-by-choice to search for new areas of activity in nearby Salzburg. A document from the Salzburg provincial government informs us that, “In 1945 Wolfgang Gurlitt, director of the Gurlitt Gallery and Publishing House in Bad Aussee in Salzburg, was allocated the Stände-Saal and the Gloriensaal with tower room in the government building (Neugebäude, Mozartplatz, Salzburg,) for the installation of your [Gurlitt’s] picture gallery”.³⁵ These magnificent rooms of the Residenz were indeed an attractive offer for the Gurlitt collection! Furthermore, in 1946 the Austrian Cultural Association in Salzburg confirmed that Gurlitt “[...]on the basis of long-term negotiations and contracts with the provincial government had taken on the establishment of a state gallery in Salzburg and [he] [...] would be able to make a significant contribution to the organisation of the upcoming festival in the field of fine arts. This action represents a unique contribution from the Galerie Gurlitt to the cultural reconstruction of Austria. [...]”³⁶

The files also remain silent as to why Gurlitt was never able to realise his grandiose plans for a renewal of the exhibition system in Salzburg even though the native Berliner organised highly successful shows at the Salzburg Kunstverein. Whatever the reason, an important role was played by his powerful rival Friedrich Welz, who was based in St. Gilgen and had excellent links to the Gauleiter in Salzburg, as well as sizeable political influence as an art dealer. Moreover, Gurlitt was ultimately satisfied to settle for the far less attractive offer from the City of Linz of smaller exhibition rooms on the main square for his “Wolfgang Gurlitt Museum”. Following the prior negotiation of the legal agreements with the city authorities in 1946, in 1947 he launched his lending gallery with the provisional opening of a Kubin exhibition (Fig. 7).

New beginnings in the art trade – the “saviour of art”

In the post-war years numerous art dealers presented themselves as “art saviours” and used this term for personal denazification. In fact, after 1945 merely a handful of them were brought to justice for fencing or profiteering and only two Berlin colleagues, Hansjoachim Quantmeyer and Karl Haberstock, were prosecuted for their role in the trade in looted artworks. The latter spent ten months in prison in the USA but in 1951 the proceedings against him were dropped.³⁷ Hildebrand Gurlitt, Maria Almas-Dietrich and Gerdy Troost were interrogated but never convicted.

Friedrich Welz, the “master of confusion”, was also based in the Salzkammergut.³⁸ A member of the NSDAP and the authorised representative of the Gauleiter, he was equally involved in the international trade in looted art. He lived with his wife in the “Aryanised” Villa Steinreich in St. Gilgen, handled stolen works on a grand scale and later concealed important proof of provenance. From mid-1945 to April/May 1947, Welz was imprisoned in

³⁵ OÖLA, Wolfgang Gurlitt citizenship file, letter of the Landesregierung Salzburg, Dept. II from 7.12.1945.

³⁶ Österreichischer Kulturbund, Landesleitung Salzburg, confirmation H. R. Harbach, received in Bad Aussee on 18.3.1946, privately owned.

³⁷ Fischer-Defoy 2011, p.12.

³⁸ Gert Kerschbaumer, *Meister des Verwirrens. Die Geschäfte des Kunsthändlers Friedrich Welz*, Vienna 2000.

the Glaserbach/Salzburg internment camp, but legal action under the War Crimes Act was discontinued in 1950. Following restitution proceedings regarding the Villa Steinreich and the art collections of Dr Heinrich Rieger and the Galerie Würthle to Lea Bondi-Jaray, at the same time as Gurlitt in Linz, in 1947 Welz expanded his gallery at a new location in the Sigmund-Haffner-Gasse 16 in Salzburg, which thus became the city's leading address for modern art. Like Gurlitt, Welz made enormous efforts to obtain a standing in public art institutions and museums, and was thus able to claim that he was the reason why Kokoschka, who founded the "Schule des Sehens" in 1953, remained in Salzburg for a lengthy period of time. The ambitious and power-obsessed art dealers and publishers, Welz and Gurlitt, frequently crossed paths and Gurlitt's successor in Linz, Walter Kasten, continued to do business with Friedrich Welz for the City of Linz until the 1970s.

Lilly Christiansen-Agoston

Lili Mirel Auspitz was born on 15 July 1894 in Budapest, the daughter of a Jewish engineer. The art-loving actress changed her surname to "Agoston" and the spelling of her first name to "Lilly".³⁹ Until 1919, she worked for Hans Thieme at the Rowohlt Verlag.⁴⁰ However, after meeting the dazzling gallery owner Wolfgang Gurlitt, probably around 1920 in Berlin, she started work in his renowned gallery. Although Gurlitt had already been married to her friend Juliette (Julie, Julia) Goob (born 1889) since 1918, Lilly became his "life partner" and in the years to come this ménage-à-trois would prove to be a practicable model for the success of the Gurlitt Gallery. However, owing to increasing financial difficulties, Gurlitt transferred his gallery and the publishing house to his business partner Lilly Agoston in an ingenious financial transaction.⁴¹ Moreover, even though the Gestapo had become aware of the "Jewish" connection between Gurlitt and Agoston, nonetheless as the Jewish owner and managing director, until March 1939 the Reich Chamber of Fine Arts granted her a special licence as an art dealer, Gurlitt having cultivated excellent contacts with its director.

Thanks to his good relations with Berlin museum directors and leading members of the National Socialist regime such as Artur Schmidt the Berlin Regional Director of the Reich Chamber of Fine Arts, Gurlitt was able to continue the art trade largely unrestricted. Schmidt even personally lobbied for a postponement of the oath of disclosure for Wolfgang Gurlitt. His debts were reduced to 26,000 Reichsmarks and thus bankruptcy was averted. In 1937, the year of the divorce, the "Galerie Julia Gurlitt" was entered into the Berlin commercial register. Julia thus suddenly became the owner of the Gurlitt Gallery at the address Matthäikirchplatz 7 and then from 1939 onwards at Kurfürstenstrasse 78, even though her ex-husband and Lilly Agoston continued to run the art dealership.⁴²

A nomadic life: between Berlin, Linz and Bad Aussee

The duo Gurlitt & Agoston were a symbiotic pair. While Gurlitt was responsible for the exhibition programme and artist contacts, Agoston took care of the balance sheets and financial management of the gallery and publishing house with a firm hand. Both were networked throughout Europe, had excellent connections to the international art market and after the end of the war planned to open branches in Würzburg, Salzburg and Zurich. They regularly travelled through Austria and above all to Paris, Strasbourg and Switzerland.

³⁹ Vanessa-Maria Voigt, "Lilly Christiansen und Wolfgang Gurlitt", in: Schmutz, Nowak-Thaller 2019, pp. 111–117, here p. 111.

⁴⁰ Condolence card Hans Thieme, Rowohlt Verlag, 24.9.1950, private archive, Germany.

⁴¹ For this and the following see Voigt 2019, p. 112f.

⁴² Bundesarchiv Berlin, R 2 pers., Wolfgang Gurlitt, file Reichskulturkammer, Landesleitung bildende Künste.

In March 1939, as a Jew Lilly Agoston had to flee to Paris via Budapest with works of art, in order to finally arrive in Copenhagen and wed a young Dane by the name of Christiansen in what was a sham marriage paid for and arranged by Wolfgang Gurlitt. Now equipped with a Danish passport, she returned to Berlin in 1940, where she lived with Wolfgang's divorced wife Juliette at Matthäikirchplatz 7. As a Dane, she could now officially make purchases of "degenerate" art with foreign currency and deposit the purchase amounts in Danish kroner at the German Reichsbank. Useful contacts with the Lucerne art dealer Theodor Fischer facilitated the storage of commission works in Switzerland and led to co-operation with him between 1938 and 1949. Indeed, Gurlitt and Agoston repeatedly tried to sell paintings to or through Fischer.⁴³

As Wolfgang's extended family had already transferred to Aussee, Lilly lived undisturbed in Gurlitt's Berlin flat on Lützowplatz, but this was completely bombed out in the night of 22/23 November 1943. Consequently, Lilly also had to move to the Lenauhügel in Bad Aussee, where Juliette and her rival, "Wölfchen's" young wife Käthe, resided with their daughters Maria and Angelina. They lived in the small bungalow (Fig. 8), which was subsequently newly built next to the historic villa (Fig. 9, 10) on the large property. Gurlitt and Agoston had had the foresight to move a large part of the art collection to Bad Aussee before the bombing and from 1942 stored it initially on the Lenauhügel or with Theodor Friedrich, who was known to the locals as "Baron Friedrich".⁴⁴ Theodor Friedrich owned an officially authorised real estate mortgage and administration office in Bad Aussee and was involved in "Aryanisation processes" in the Ausseerland. Following a complaint about stolen carpets and antique chests from the Villa Nemetschke in Altaussee, which after a search were found in his house, in 1941 he was actually incarcerated briefly in the Bad Ischl district court prison.⁴⁵ Ing. Theodor and Margarethe Friedrich lived at the address Obertressen 1⁴⁶ and Friedrich worked on a "Main list of Jewish property" drawn up by the Gestapo and therefore had first class information regarding available artworks, which he was able to pass on to Agoston or Gurlitt.

How close were Gurlitt and Friedrich, who were neighbours in Bad Aussee? After a lively correspondence between Welz and Gurlitt in Salzburg, Friedrich assumed the handover and transport of paintings for the Gurlitt Gallery. The works involved were by Baudry, Bonington, Ribot, Daumier and Henner, paintings that Gurlitt received from Friedrich, but which have disappeared to this day.⁴⁷ In this connection, Friedrich acted as an "art forwarder" but due to its large format was unable to load up the Baudry painting and therefore Gurlitt tried in vain to collect it from Welz.⁴⁸ In 1939, the Friedrich law firm demonstrably inventoried the Altaussee houses of the Jewish entrepreneur Paul Hellmann and his wife Irene at the address Puchen 60.⁴⁹ The villa and the music house were once the centre of cultural life in Altaussee and like Aranka Munk, the Hellmanns owned valuable works of art consisting of two paintings by

⁴³ See the contribution from Sandra Sykora in this catalogue, pp. 262–270.

⁴⁴ Bundesarchiv Koblenz (BArch), B 323/134, fol. 28, no. 146, letter from Wolfgang Gurlitt to Hermann Voss, 22.6.1943.

⁴⁵ Leopold Emmerich Walkner, *Jüdisches Leben im steirischen Salzkammergut. Eine Spurensuche. Die Menschen, die Häuser, die Geschichte und die Geschichten dazwischen*, diss., Universität Wien, Vienna 2017, p. 63f. The author thanks Mr Walkner for the valuable information.

⁴⁶ Friendly information from Sieglinde Köberl, Kammerhofmuseum Bad Aussee, e-mail from 4.11.2021 to the author. From 1952, Margarete Friedrich is registered there until a new change of ownership in 1976.

⁴⁷ Salzburger Museum Carolino Augusteum, Museumsakten, Zweckverband, Übergabebestätigung Gurlitt-Verlag, 26.6.1944.

⁴⁸ Ibid., letter from Welz to Gurlitt, 28.8.1944.

⁴⁹ Friendly information from Martin Thomas Pollner regarding Sieglinde Köberl, 15.10.2021.

Gustav Klimt, as well as works by Rudolf von Alt and Carl Moll. Their son Bernhard was murdered in Sobibor in 1943 and Irene in Auschwitz in 1944. In 1948, the villas in Altaussee were returned to Ernst Hellmann, who was now living in Australia, and his London-based sister Ilse.⁵⁰ In 1939, Theodor Friedrich's real estate firm also assessed the property of the publicist Leopold von Chlumecky, who following his emigration to South America sold the property together with its inventory. The sale price was based on an imprecise appraisal drawn up by Friedrich.⁵¹

Where was the extensive Gurlitt collection kept safe? We know about the emergency depots, but not their contents. Nevertheless, correspondence and file notes refer to three locations. As early as 1942, the first section of the collection, which had travelled from Berlin, found a new home at Obertressen 1 / Altausseerstrasse 1 with "Baron Friedrich" because the cramped Gurlitt villa offered little space. Owing to the fire at the "Alpenhof" hotel adjacent to Friedrich's depot in January 1945, parts of the Gurlitt collection were transferred to the Festung Hohensalzburg, but once again no more concrete evidence of events exists. Other items from the collection briefly found a home in Würzburg, where following the destruction of his Berlin gallery, in addition to Salzburg Gurlitt wished to establish a gallery near the Würzburg Residenz at Maxstrasse 1.

Co-founder of the Neue Galerie der Stadt Linz / Wolfgang-Gurlitt-Museum

Lilly Agoston played a significant role in the founding of the Neue Galerie. She organised the first exhibitions, had been close friends for decades with Kubin and Kokoschka, who had important exhibitions in Linz, and officially represented the busy, itinerant art dealer Gurlitt in all matters. She was his most important companion, both privately and in business, and was therefore involved in all of the Galerie Gurlitt's commercial activities. Lilly knew more about Galerie Gurlitt's business than Gurlitt himself, who was only marginally interested in financial matters. Moreover, together with Gurlitt she retained the Jewish collection of Dr Fritz Loewenthal on commission and without the knowledge of the owner, who had been forced to emigrate, Agoston sold a painting by Adriaen Isenbrant from this collection to Maria Almas-Dietrich.⁵² However, new documents point to Johannes Hinrichsen as the intermediary or buyer.⁵³ Hinrichsen's account book at the Dresdner Bank contains a handwritten note of a payment of 9,000 Reichsmarks to Gurlitt made in April 1940 bearing the reference "Isenbrant-Traut". The art dealer networks between Berlin and Aussee clearly functioned perfectly! In the case of another painting from the Loewenthal family collection, this time by Lesser Uri, the Galerie Gurlitt again proved to be a highly dubious business partner. The restitution of this painting in 1999 marked the beginning of the restitution process at the Lentos Art Museum in Linz, which had already begun researching into the provenance of the work in the 1990s.⁵⁴ Much of Lilly Agoston's life remains a mystery. Why was her sham marriage not divorced after 1945? Apparently, a Danish passport had many advantages. With the transfer of the gallery, the art collections of Lilly Agoston and Wolfgang Gurlitt now appeared to be identical. In 1949, she applied to the Federal Monuments Office in Vienna for the export of "her" collection. This included works on loan from the Neue Galerie der Stadt Linz. The authorities promptly refused the export for as impenetrable as the ownership structure seemed, the Monuments Office knew that Wolfgang Gurlitt was actually the owner

⁵⁰ Arnbom 2021, p. 103f.

⁵¹ Martin Thomas Pollner to Sieglinde Köberl, 15.10.2021.

⁵² BArch, B 323/656, Munich no. 4538, Linz no. 1173; database regarding the Collecting Point Munich: dhm.de/datenbank/ccp/dhm_ccp.php?seite= (search term in field Mü-no.: 4538); Voigt 2019, p. 114.

⁵³ See the contribution from Annett Büttner in this catalogue, pp. 281–289.

⁵⁴ See the contribution from Maria Altrichter in this catalogue, pp. 335–357.

of the works to be exported. But what was the reason for the sudden desire to send them abroad? In 1948, did Lilly wish to settle in Switzerland with her Danish “alibi husband”, as stated in the export application? In reality, she was actually planning to set up an international art trading business together with Wolfgang, with branches in Zurich, Munich, Copenhagen and even Stockholm.

Death on the Lenauhügel. “Lilly, the faithful shadow”

After Lilly suffered sudden heart failure in Aussee on 9 September 1950 aged 56 and Gurlitt unexpectedly discovered her dead in bed, the art dealer descended into a deep depression. He lamented to Dr Ernst Koref, the mayor of Linz, about the death and planned a memorial room as a “Lilly Christiansen-Agoston bequest” in the Neue Galerie. Together with artist friends, he organised the memorial booklet *In Memoriam* for Lilly with personal dedications from Margret Bilger, Anton Faistauer and Oskar Kokoschka. Lilly was named on the memorial card as the deputy director and employee of the gallery for thirty years, as well as the co-founder of the Neue Galerie Linz / Wolfgang-Gurlitt-Museum. Some 180 (!) messages of condolence, long letters, consoling cards, even poems from all over Europe, signed by important museum directors from Germany, Austria and Switzerland, tributes from international collectors, high-ranking politicians, mayors and provincial governors as well as condolences from artists and cultural workers all bear initial testimony to the importance of Lilly Christiansen-Agoston as an internationally active art dealer.⁵⁵

“I cannot imagine your work without Mrs Christiansen, your faithful shadow!” “Lilly was a marvellous person!” In the messages of condolence, she is described as a “lively and forceful lady”, as “a comrade and helper of your business affairs who sacrificed herself to the last”. Handwritten letters state “So serious, so eminently capable”. She was “the most selfless person”, a “spiritual woman”, “a helper whose expertise, dedication and trustworthiness were unrivalled”. Maria, Wolfgang's daughter, said: “Lilly Agoston was a great manager. I hate her! As a person, she was wonderful.”⁵⁶ “Her direct manner” and her androgynous, sometimes tomboyish demeanour probably amazed and impressed many at that time. Indeed, in the light of current facts, 79 years after the Holocaust only the quoted “self-evident honesty” needs to be re-evaluated and not just morally. There are even lines in the condolence messages that refer to lucrative business contacts with Lilly. “The Leibl is still in Zurich waiting for a buyer. Here in Vienna, the situation is becoming bleaker by the day.”⁵⁷

The many pages of mourning testimonials read like a who's who of the German-speaking artistic and cultural scene. They include Emmy Haesele, Eberhard Frowein, Margret Bilger, Ottilie Kasper, Kurt Absolon, Heiner Dikreiter, Hans Ankwicz-Kleehoven, Hilde Heger, Egon Oberhuber, Karl Hauk, Rudolf Baschant, Charles Albert de Burlet, Hans Cürliis, Ernest P. Friedmann, Otto Mauer, Herbert Boeckl, Egon Hofmann, Toni Hofer, Leo Spik, Ludwig Grote, Alfred Wickenburg, Hugo Perls, Gustav Kapsreiter, Hortense Hinrichsen, Hans Riehl, Otto Benesch, Nico Dostal, Franz Öhner, Johannes Ude, Herbert Dimmel, Walter Feilchenfeldt, Otto Demus, Christian Broda, Hugo Schwarz, Ernst Huber, Irma Toledo, Slavi Soucek and Karl Garzarolli.

Lilly Agoston was buried in the non-Jewish section of the cemetery in Bad Aussee.⁵⁸ Eight months after her death, Gurlitt decided to sell part of his remaining collection to the City of

⁵⁵ My thanks are due to Wolfgang Gurlitt's antecedents, who made available a comprehensive folder containing messages of condolence.

⁵⁶ Conversation between Maria Gurlitt and the author, May 2018.

⁵⁷ Messages of condolence, privately owned, Germany.

⁵⁸ Grave sector A, row 1 00015/16, in the meantime the grave has been closed.

Linz. With the money he received, he would start a new life with his wife and daughters in Munich, part company from the City of Linz on bad terms and open a gallery at Galeriestrasse 2b in Munich.

The villa on Lenauhügel in Aussee continued to be a summer retreat for the family even after Gurlitt's death on 26 March 1965 and following the demise of his widow in 1977, the entire property passed to her son-in-law and daughters. Between 1978 and 2014, they sold their shares to a family from Aussee, who in the absence of the owners, had taken exemplary care of the holiday home, which by now was in dire need of renovation.

Together with Andreas Bartsch and the support of her daughter Maria and son-in-law Orlando Cedrino (1932-2011), Käthe Gurlitt continued to run the gallery in the Hofgarten arcades, which specialised in caricature, until her death in 1975. Andreas Bartsch, who was one of its first employees, closed the gallery in 1977 and according to daughter Maria, many of the business documents were disposed of.

Johannes Hinrichsen and Wolfgang Gurlitt: two Berliners in Ausseerland

Born in 1884, Johannes Hinrichsen,⁵⁹ who had initially settled in Berlin in 1904 as an artist, established his own art dealership in 1927. At least at the beginning, he showed many of the modern painters represented by Gurlitt and like the latter concentrated on figurative painting. Hinrichsen opened the exhibition *Die schaffende Frau in der bildenden Kunst* in Berlin in 1927 and twenty years later, in August 1947, Gurlitt showed *Die schöpferische Frau*, in his Linz gallery, in which alongside Käthe Kollwitz and Clara Siewert, he presented emerging Austrian women artists.

With the arrival of Paul Lindpaintner, who moved in aristocratic circles, the art dealership “J. Hinrichsen / P. Lindpaintner. Antiques, Paintings, Sculpture” began to focus mainly on old art. In particular, Gothic works were presented at Hinrichsen's exhibitions, both on loan and for sale, and this reorientation turned Hinrichsen into the art supplier of the manic collector Hermann Goering. In the 1933 financial year, Hinrichsen employed a secretary and a house servant, and in 1934 a restorer was taken on in the speciality shop for “sculptures and old pictures”. The continuous increase in annual turnover was stated as 296,049 Reichsmark in 1938, 300,100 Reichsmarks in 1942 and 358,771 Reichsmarks in 1943.⁶⁰

According to his records, Hinrichsen built up one of the “largest Central European galleries” in Berlin and made a name for himself in the art world by organising numerous international exhibitions. Nevertheless, his art-dealing activities remain a great mystery to this day and the purchases made for Hermann Goering and Hinrichsen's international trading relationships are still a research desideratum.⁶¹ As in Gurlitt's case, Hinrichsen's supposedly “completely” burned company archives have also led to large scholarly gaps with regard to provenances, purchases and sales.

“In my professional life, I have devoted a great deal of attention to Austrian art and even before my marriage to my wife, born von Kestenach, a successful Austrian violin virtuoso, I lived for long periods in Austria.”⁶² Hinrichsen married in 1921 and decided to move to Altaussee in 1927, “Where I have now been living voluntarily and without interruption for almost 20 years. I have amassed a collection of important artworks here, which is known far beyond the borders of Austria and due to its international value and significance for Austrian

⁵⁹ Regarding Hinrichsen, see the contribution from Annett Büttner in this catalogue, pp. 281–289.

⁶⁰ OÖLA, Stb 3032, citizenship file Hinrichsen, letter from 9.11.1943.

⁶¹ Gerhard Plasser has undertaken extensive archive research regarding Hinrichsen in Austria: Roswitha Juffinger, Gerhard Plasser, *Salzburger Landessammlungen 1939–1955*, Salzburg 2007.

⁶² OÖLA, Stb 3032, Hinrichsen citizenship file, citizenship application, 2.1.1946.

art has been placed under a conservation order by the Austrian authorities (State Conservator Dr von Juraschek, Upper Austrian Provincial Government, Linz).⁶³

Hinrichsen not only owned one of the most beautiful villas in Altaussee, but also a considerable amount of land. According to the archives of the Federal Monuments Office in Vienna, works of art from the Middle Ages (sculptures, decorative arts and stained glass windows) of museum quality were still on display on the upper floor of the villa in 1949.⁶⁴ He was the largest taxpayer in the small community and locally possessed many artistic objects of great value. After becoming a naturalised Austrian citizen, he planned to re-establish relations with the art markets and "bring foreign currency to his adopted country".

Like Gurlitt, the childless Hinrichsens neither belonged to the NSDAP, nor were they politically active, as confirmed by the mayor of Altaussee on 16 April 1946. Letters of recommendation from the director of the Albertina, Karl Garzarolli-Thurnlackh, describe Hinrichsen as an extremely reputable and prudent art dealer who was in excellent contact with the Albertina and "could become a major foreign exchange earner for Austria". Already when the head of the painting collection at the Landesmuseum Joanneum, Garzarolli-Thurnlackh supported Hinrichsen, who "for many years has mainly done business abroad and in this way has brought in large sums of foreign currency and made them available to the state in accordance with the foreign currency regulations [...] and thus contributed to the improvement of our economy".⁶⁵ On 15 July 1946, Johannes Hinrichsen was granted Austrian citizenship by the governor of Upper Austria.

After the end of the war, parts of Hinrichsen's villa in Altaussee were seized by the CIC (Counter Intelligence Corps), the American counterintelligence agency, and valuable art possessions were allegedly damaged.⁶⁶ With the aid of the provincial conservator Juraschek, Hinrichsen sought to evict his unwelcome American guests. In turn, the Federal Monuments Office linked the internationally networked dealer to two possible cases of looted art, a *Stilleben* by P. Paepe and *Ansichten von Venedig* by Michele Marieschi. However, investigations by James A. Garrison, Chief of the RD & R Division, came to nothing, as Hinrichsen enjoyed an "excellent reputation and is generally regarded as a man of unimpeachable conduct and an entirely correct art dealer and collector".⁶⁷

However, following his death in March 1971, what happened to the large art collection of the dealer who lived in Altaussee until the end of his life? According to a district court report from 30 March 1971, when he passed away Hinrichsen did not possess a single artwork from his collection that had been so highly praised and in 1942 placed under a conservation order!⁶⁸ Had Hinrichsen successively sold all of his art treasures abroad over the years, perhaps even with the support of his colleagues Welz or Gurlitt? The files are once again silent. Johannes Hinrichsen was buried together with his wife Hortense, who died on 20 December 1983, at the cemetery in Altaussee. Until recently, the grave, which has now been closed, was maintained.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Bundesdenkmalamt, archive, card file. 37/1, Hinrichsen fol. 16; Juffinger, Plasser 2007, p. 116.

⁶⁵ ÖÖLA, Stb 3032, Hinrichsen citizenship file, letter of application to the Landeshauptmannschaft, from 2.1.1946.

⁶⁶ Juffinger, Plasser 2007, p. 115.

⁶⁷ Bundesdenkmalamt, archive, card file. 37/1, Hinrichsen fol. 50, Restitution Branch, 24.2.1948; Juffinger, Plasser 2007, p. 115.

⁶⁸ Ibid. p. 116.

Commission and compensation transactions

In a letter to the district mayor dated 17 February 1945, Hinrichsen complained about the war-related loss of an antique frame for a Titian painting and the destruction of a painting by Johann Georg Ziesensis depicting Frederick the Great. The expert appraiser Fritz Rehbein has doubts, "Mr Hinrichsen had given this painting to the Gurlitt Gallery at 78 Kurfürstenstrasse for sale on commission, where it fell victim to the attack on the same day. Despite the predilection for paintings of Frederick the Great, the price of 14,000 being asked for it seems to me to be greatly inflated, even if one considers that both Hinrichsen's art dealership and the Gurlitt Gallery are among the most important in the local art trade, and that this plays a significant role in the pricing of the objects. Therefore I suggest compensation of 8-9,000 for the painting."⁶⁹

Both art dealers acted identically in their endeavours to obtain the highest possible compensation for themselves and, in Gurlitt's case, also in favour of aggrieved artists such as Clara Siewert and Eric Isenburger.⁷⁰ Various invoices in Hinrichsen's newly discovered Dresdner Bank account books from the years 1939 to 1945 also refer to business payments between him and Wolfgang Gurlitt and possibly also Hildebrand Gurlitt, but the hand-written references are only designated with the name "Gurlitt". When Lilly Agoston 1950 died in Aussee in 1950, Hinrichsen's wife Hortense sent a letter of condolence to the grieving Gurlitt.⁷¹

There are two paintings in the Salzburg Domquartier that found their way into the collections via Hinrichsen. Namely, a *Beweinung Christi* by Johann Michael Rottmayr from 1692 (Fig. 11) and the altarpiece *Himmelfahrt Mariens* (Fig. 12) by the Austrian painter Franz Anton Maulbertsch, which in 1944 came to Salzburg via Hinrichsen's mother-in-law Ludovica Kessler von Kestenach. In this case, Hinrichsen "only" acted as an intermediary. Maulbertsch's small sketch had previously been offered to the special representative Hermann Voss for the "Führer Museum" in Linz for an impressive 60,000 Reichsmarks. At Hinrichsen's request, Voss was to avert the imminent billeting of children in his villa. However, Hitler's special representative only wished to pay half the price and even questioned the authenticity of the work. The painting was finally returned to Hinrichsen in November 1943 and acquired by Friedrich Welz in January 1944 at the full price (!) for the Landesgalerie Salzburg. In 1954, Hinrichsen bequeathed an altarpiece entitled *Marientod mit Stifter Alexius Funck und seiner Familie* (Fig. 13) to the Belvedere.

Epilogue

Whether Welz, Hinrichsen or Gurlitt, these ambivalent, differently successful art dealer personalities and artist patrons always knew how to cleverly adapt to political circumstances through relationships and their elevated family status. They collaborated on many levels with the Nazi authorities and after the war with high-ranking politicians and officials. They seized numerous lucrative business opportunities that presented themselves and traded in looted art. The dealers bought and sold confiscated Jewish cultural assets or works from confiscations or forced sales in storage upon consignment. For example, files from the Salzburg Museum confirm lively commercial activities between the Salzburg Landesgalerie and Wolfgang Gurlitt regarding French purchases by Friedrich Welz. The whereabouts of seven prominent paintings and two drawings from the holdings of the Salzburger Landesgalerie, which were sold by the Galerie Welz to Gurlitt at high prices, specifically for 24,200 Reichsmarks, and include works by Cassatt, Lépine, Regnault, Henner, Baudry, Ribot

⁶⁹ OÖLA, Stb 3032, letter from Fritz Rehbein, expert appraiser, 17.2.1945.

⁷⁰ See the contribution from Alexandra Cedrino in this catalogue, pp. 226–236.

⁷¹ Condolence folder, privately owned, Germany.

and Bonington, remain unclear to this day.⁷² A planned swap deal in the summer of 1944 between Welz and Gurlitt involving six Schiele works from the collection of Dr Heinrich Rieger is also on file at the Salzburg Museum. The exhibits came from Welz's private collection.⁷³

Did Gurlitt withhold the 19th century works from his father Fritz's legendary collection, greatly desired by Hermann Voss, for tactical reasons and with an eye on Hitler's "Führer Museum"? Whatever the case, Hitler's special representative Hans Posse and, after him, Hermann Voss were comparatively patient with Gurlitt, the "magic prince"⁷⁴, who was permitted to take liberties to an astonishing degree. Gurlitt gained strategic advantages through his connection to the special commissioners and above all speculated on the post-war period.⁷⁵

After the war, Gurlitt repeatedly claimed that commission goods had been destroyed. In fact, however, he sold "recovered remainders" to interested bidders or the City of Linz in 1952/53 without consulting the still living owners and even passed on works within the family circle. He made many purchases for purely financial reasons and used his Aussee and Viennese networks to obtain favourably priced confiscated collections, as in the case of Aranka Munk and Oskar Reichel. Conversely, Gurlitt took entire contingents of works, fugitive property from Jewish artist friends such as Eric Isenburger, or estates on commission or as payment and thus helped the emigrating artist friends to flee or ease their plight. Ultimately, Gurlitt demonstrably saved the lives of persecuted, mostly Jewish employees and artists. After the end of the war, the "saviours of art", Welz in Salzburg, Gurlitt in Linz and Munich, founded new galleries and successfully continued to trade in art from the Salzkammergut until their deaths.

Due to his passion for art and not least because of his residence in Aussee, the "magic prince", Wolfgang Gurlitt, was able to "find a new home and new friends for the paintings in the Neue Galerie of the City of Linz, [to] help them regain a new, meaningful existence and effectivity".⁷⁶

⁷² Juffinger, Plasser 2007, p. 112ff.

⁷³ Ibid., p. 113f.

⁷⁴ In 1924 Oskar Kokoschka completed a drawing of his friend Wolfgang Gurlitt 1924 dressed as an oriental prince. This bore the dedication: "Wolfgang Ich war als Kind ein Zauberprinz nie werde ich sterben müssen Oskar".

⁷⁵ E-mail von Birgit Schwarz to the author, 4.12.2023.

⁷⁶ Wolfgang Gurlitt, "Foreword", in: *Malerei und Zeichenkunst des XIX. und XX. Jahrhunderts*, exhibition cat., Neue Galerie der Stadt Linz, founder Wolfgang Gurlitt, Linz 1948, p. 5.

Illustrations

Fig. 1: Logo of the Gurlitt publishing house, Alfred Kubin, *Phantasien im Böhmerwald*, 1951, Lentos Kunstmuseum Linz

Fig. 2: Oskar Kokoschka, *Wolfgang Gurlitt als Zauberprinz*, 1923, chalk lithography, 70.4 × 51.7 cm, "Wolfgang / Ich war als Kind / ein Zauberprinz / Nie werde ich sterben / müssen / Oskar", Museum im Kulturspeicher Würzburg, © Fondation Oskar Kokoschka; picture rights, Vienna 2024

Fig. 3: Oskar Graf, *EX LIBRIS WOLFGANG GURLITT*, around 1904, etching, photo: Reinhard Haider

Fig. 4: Wolfgang Gurlitt with Leopold Figl, the Austrian president, in Bad Aussee (original signature Figl), around 1949, family archive, photo: privately owned

Fig. 5: Lilly Christiansen-Agoston, workbook for foreigners, family archive, privately owned, photo: Ronald Gerhardt, Berlin

Fig. 6: Identity card No. 913, Lilly Christiansen, art expert, Bad Aussee, 20.7.1945, privately owned

Fig. 7: Opening of the Kubin exhibition on 31.5.1947, Wolfgang Gurlitt, Alfred Kubin (with drawing), adjacent right Mayor Ernst Koref, photo: Archiv der Stadt Linz

Fig. 8: The "Almhütte" on the Lenauhügel, Bad Aussee, photo: Elisabeth Nowak-Thaller

Fig. 9: The Gurlitt family home on the Lenauhügel, Bad Aussee, 1940s, family archive, photo: privately owned, Germany

Fig. 10: Gurlitt's villa on the Nikolaus-Lenau-Hügel in Bad Aussee, photo: Elisabeth Nowak-Thaller

Fig. 11: Johann Michael Rottmayr (1654–1730), *Beweinung Christi*, 1692, oil on canvas, 135 × 169.5 cm, DomQuartier Salzburg, © Residenzgalerie Salzburg, photo: Fotostudio Ulrich Ghezzi, Oberalm

Fig. 12: Franz Anton Maulbertsch (1724–1796), *Himmelfahrt Mariens*, sketch for the altarpiece of the Zisterzienser-Stiftskirche Zirc in western Hungary, oil on canvas, 77 × 43 cm, DomQuartier Salzburg, inv.-no. 112, © Residenzgalerie Salzburg, photo: Fotostudio Ulrich Ghezzi, Oberalm

Fig. 13: Wiener Neustädter painter, *Marientod mit Stifter Alexius Funck und seiner Familie*, around 1521/22, paint on fir wood, 151 × 94 cm, Belvedere Vienna, inv.-no. 4726

Sandra Sykora:

“...in view of our many years of good relations...”

Wolfgang Gurlitt and the Galerie Fischer, Lucerne

The text is an English translation of the original text “...in Anbetracht unserer langjährigen Beziehungen’... Wolfgang Gurlitt und die Galerie Fischer, Luzern” written in German language for the catalog of the exhibition “Die Reise der Bilder” [“The Journey of the Paintings”] pp. 262-271. Translation by John Cima.

What might have been going through Wolfgang Gurlitt's mind when he saw a portrait of himself again in Lucerne, Switzerland, in 1939? Did he remember the year 1917, when Lovis Corinth had painted him as a roughly thirty-year-old art dealer? Then he had been sitting in front of a large fireplace, dressed in a black suit and with a journal in his hand, his gaze focused and alert. Since joining the “Galerie Fritz Gurlitt” founded by his father¹ in the imperial capital of Berlin ten years earlier, he had modernised the dusty gallery and updated its programme with avant-garde artists.²

Moreover, the Berlin Nationalgalerie had taken in his portrait and both the painter and gallery owner had thus arrived on Germany's artistic Olympus.

However, in 1937 the National Socialists confiscated the portrait from the museum as “entartete” and together with 124 other objects from former German museum property, at the behest of the Reich Ministry of Propaganda sent it on a journey to Lucerne to be auctioned off on 30 June 1939 by the Swiss auctioneer Theodor Fischer at the city's Grand Hotel National.³ Gurlitt had also travelled to the auction.⁴

Whether or not Wolfgang Gurlitt and Theodor Fischer had met before is an open before the First World War. The Swiss, who was ten years older, had founded his own antiques shop in Lucerne in 1907 and the business records in the Galerie Fischer archives⁵ contain references to a longer stay in Berlin from 1911 onwards where Fischer may have worked for the Kunstsalon Paul Cassirer, one of Gurlitt's competitors.⁶ From 1913, it appears that Fischer

¹ For details regarding the family and biography of Wolfgang Gurlitt see Elisabeth Nowak-Thaller, “Leben und Wirken Wolfgang Gurlitts. Versuch einer Rekonstruktion”, in: Hemma Schmutz, id. (ed.), *Wolfgang Gurlitt Zauberprinz. Kunsthändler – Sammler*, exhibition cat., Lentos Kunstmuseum Linz, Munich 2019, pp. 33–60.

² Re. the exhibition programme of the Galerie Fritz Gurlitt see Katrin Schmidt, “Ausstellen – Eine Kunst für sich”. Die Galerie Fritz Gurlitt in Berlin (1880–1943)”, in: Schmutz, Nowak-Thaller 2019, pp. 153–160, here p. 153; Sonja Feßel, “Kunst leben. Expressionistische Wohnräume zwischen Kunstförderung, Galerieerweiterung und extravaganter Lifestyle”, in: Schmutz, Nowak-Thaller 2019, pp. 83–94.

³ Re. this auction see Sandra Sykora, “Gemälde und Plastiken moderner Meister aus deutschen Museen. Die Versteigerung “entarteter” Kunst durch die Galerie Fischer 1939”, in: Eva Reifert, Tessa Rosebrock (ed.), *Zerrissene Moderne. Die Basler Ankäufe „entarteter“ Kunst*, exhibition cat., Kunstmuseum Basel, Berlin 2022, pp. 111–124, with further references.

⁴ Wolfgang Gurlitt also met his cousin Hildebrandt in Lucerne. See Meike Hoffmann, “Alte Streite verbinden”. Hildebrand und Wolfgang Gurlitt”, in: Schmutz, Nowak-Thaller 2019, pp.65–70.

⁵ Re. the Galerie Fischer archive, which today is administered by the Galerie Fischer Auktionen AG, Lucerne, see fischerauktionen.ch/de/über-galerie-fischer/geschichte-der-galerie-fischer/, accessed on 24.11.2023. Unless otherwise disclosed in this essay, archived documents are to be found in the Galerie Fischer archive.

⁶ Nowak-Thaller 2019, p. 36.

ran his own antiques shop in Berlin's Wilhelmstrasse, which was closed down after the outbreak of the First World War, when Fischer returned to Switzerland.⁷ It is therefore quite conceivable that the paths of the two dealers crossed during Fischer's time in Berlin, especially as the Galerie Fritz Gurlitt, then located at Potsdamer Strasse 113,⁸ and Fischer's business were only a few kilometres apart.

While Wolfgang Gurlitt's Berlin gallery shut in 1931 owing to financial difficulties, Theodor Fischer rapidly developed his art and antiques business into a leading auction house that attracted international collectors and dealers to Lucerne. Consequently, the two men probably had little to do with each other. However, it is true that apart from the auction sales documents, no correspondence from the period before 1948 has survived in the archives of the Galerie Fischer in Lucerne and therefore contacts cannot be excluded. Nonetheless, had they co-operated as dealers, as a rule this could be traced in the accounts of the Galerie Fischer, but Wolfgang Gurlitt neither appears initially as a buyer, nor did he deliver objects to Galerie Fischer for an auction, or provide works on commission.

However, this was to change on the occasion of the auction of German museum property in Lucerne on 30 June 1939, as Gurlitt certainly subsequently acquired from Fischer the aforementioned portrait by Lovis Corinth⁹ and the portrait of *Mme Bailhache* by Karl Hofer, the latter apparently via detours in 1941.¹⁰ It is precisely in this year that the initial indications of co-operation, between Wolfgang Gurlitt and Fischer, albeit only indirect, can be found. At least according to the Fischer ledgers, their contacts over the next few years were via Lilly Christiansen (1894–1950). Gurlitt had become acquainted with the Hungarian-born woman in around 1920 as Lilly Agoston. She worked in his gallery in Berlin until 1931, when she took over the pro forma management of the newly founded “Kunsthandlung Fritz Gurlitt GmbH” and also acted as its owner. As under the NS racial laws, she was considered a “full Jew” she initially had to flee Berlin in March 1939. However, Gurlitt arranged a sham marriage for her with a Dane named Christiansen, which made her a Danish citizen, restored her freedom to travel and allowed her to return to Berlin.¹¹

⁷ Notes of Dr. Paul Fischer, handwritten on the occasion of the death of his father, Theodor Fischer, in 1957, Fischer family's private archive; as well as *Biographisches Lexikon verstorbener Schweizer*, Vol. 5, Zurich 1961, p. 229.

⁸ In the “Villa II”, which belonged to an ensemble named “Villas I-IV”, which was built between 1874 and 1876 by the architect Ernst Klingenberg (1830–1918). Re. the Potsdamer Strasse see the monograph Sibylle Nägele, Joy Markert, *Die Potsdamer Straße. Geschichten, Mythen und Metamorphosen*, Berlin 2011; and Feßel 2019.

⁹ Lovis Corinth, *Porträt Wolfgang Gurlitt*, confiscation inventory no. 12112, no. 31 in the Fischer catalogue from 30.6.1939. It was not sold at the auction, see the Galerie Fischer auction book, Lucerne. According to the database of the “Beschlagnahmeinventar 'Entartete Kunst’” of the Freie Universität Berlin, after the auction on 30 June 1939 the painting was in the possession of the Galerie Gurlitt in Berlin. To date, no evidence of the sale has been found in the Galerie Fischer archive.

¹⁰ Karl Hofer, *Mme Bailhache*, confiscation inventory no. 12086, no. 56 in the Fischer catalogue of 30.6.1939. According to the database “Beschlagnahmeinventar 'Entartete Kunst’” of the Freie Universität Berlin, the painting was with Bernhard A. Boehmer in Güstrow in June 1941, who is said to have acquired it for Theodor Fischer on 28.6.1941. In turn, Gurlitt bought the painting from him in 1941. According to the database, Gurlitt is also said to have purchased Lovis Corinth's *Selbstporträt als Nürnberger Landsknecht* from 1913, confiscation inventory no. 7282, from Fischer. Neither sale can be traced in the archives of Galerie Fischer.

¹¹ Information from Vanessa-Maria Vogt, “Lilly Christiansen und Wolfgang Gurlitt”, in: Schmutz, Nowak-Thaller 2019, pp 111–117.

Therefore, the first verifiable reference to the newly established cooperation in the Galerie Fischer's "Commissions Book 1938–1941 May" is not to Wolfgang Gurlitt, but

to "Frau Christiansen Lützowplatz 27 Berlin", who at that time is said to have lived at this address with numerous artworks owned by Gurlitt.¹² The first entry is dated 1 April 1941 and lists a work by "Koller"¹³ and a landscape by Calame,¹⁴ half of which belonged to Christiansen and half to Fischer. However, according to the entry at this point the works in the possession of the art dealer Carl Buemming (1899–1963) from Darmstadt, who represented the Galerie Fischer in Germany.¹⁵ On 19 August 1943, a painting¹⁶ of Christiansen's with a remarkably high value of 80,000 Swiss francs was deposited with Fischer. The further path of these works, which are only described fragmentarily, has yet to be deciphered. Moreover, the indication that Christiansen is said to have kept works of art worth 60,000 Swiss francs for Fischer in Copenhagen during the war also remains unsubstantiated.¹⁷

Within our context, the auction of September 1943¹⁸ is particularly interesting as the auction documents list "Theodor Fischer private" as the consignor of several objects,

including one work each by Wilhelm Balmer¹⁹ and Alexandre Calame,²⁰ as well as

Giovanni Segantini's *Der tote Held*, described according to the catalogue entry under lot number 1007 as a "self-portrait, nude, as a corpse laid out, caught by candlelight". However, in the auction documents the paintings can be found on a list containing various objects that are not attributed to Theodor Fischer, but to other persons. In the list, above the works of interest to us is written "Gemälde aus Deutschland" and below "Gurlitt".²¹ The owner was therefore not Theodor Fischer, but as will be shown later, Wolfgang Gurlitt.

¹² Ibid. p. 113.

¹³ Certainly Rudolf Koller, 1828–1905, possibly a winter landscape. The handwritten entry is only clearly decipherable with regard to "Winter [...]".

¹⁴ Alexandre Calame, 1810–1864, or his son Arthur, 1843–1919.

¹⁵ Esther Tisa Francini, Anja Heuß, Georg Kreis, *Fluchtgut – Raubgut. Der Transfer von Kulturgütern in und über die Schweiz 1933–1945 und die Frage der Restitution*, 2nd edition, Zurich 2016, Sp 149. At present, Carl (also Karl) Buemming remains largely unresearched.

¹⁶ "1 picture from Chateaubriand: "Bildnis der Philippina Wesserin", "Commissions book 1927–1943".

¹⁷ OSS Art Looting Investigation Unit, final report regarding the last mission in Europe, 10.6.1946–24.9.1946, S. 24, fold3.com/image/270022136, accessed on 4.12.2023. Apparently this reference came from the Swiss Clearing Centre and is said to originate from the Fischer account books. However, no corresponding evidence has yet been found in the Fischer archives.

¹⁸ *Grosse Kunstaktion in Luzern, Sammlung P. v. S. Zürich, Nachlass M., Genf, aus Basler und diversen Besitz, holländische Meister aus Sammlung Porgès, Paris [...]*, auction cat., Galerie Fischer, Lucerne, 9.–11.9.1943.

¹⁹ Wilhelm Balmer, *Landschaft mit zwei Mädchen, rechts vorn in Halbfigur an Gartenzaun stehend*, cat.no. 958.

²⁰ Alexandre Calame, *Berglandschaft, links Reiter, Hund und zwei Maultiere, rechts Felsen*, cat.no. 968.

²¹ "Lim.FR." is listed for each work, i.e. limits below which the works should not come under the hammer. Of the three works, only the Calame was sold at auction for 770 Swiss francs.

In the literature²² the objects were previously wrongly attributed to his cousin, Hildebrand Gurlitt, who is probably better known today. However, Fischer had no links to him, apart from the fact that he was instructed to send him eight unsold objects from the auction of 30 June 1939.^{23 24} In this specific case, Theodor Fischer had imported to Switzerland the three aforementioned works by Balmer, Calame and Segantini from Wolfgang Gurlitt and taken them on commission. This means that he acted as a party to the purchase contract and then settled the sale with Gurlitt. Although this was common practice in the art market, the import of these works would subsequently cause Fischer difficulties, as will be shown later.

Evidence exists of several contacts between Fischer and Christiansen in the following years. In 1947 he gave her a short-term loan²²⁵ and in 1947 and 1948 bought half-shares in various objects from her,²⁶ for which by the beginning of 1949 Fischer had not yet found buyers.²⁷ If Christiansen contacted Fischer in 1948 about her planned move from Austria to Switzerland, during which she also wanted to take numerous art objects with her,²⁸ cannot be determined on the basis of the sources in the Galerie Fischer archive. Correspondence that gives us a more precise impression of the contact between Christiansen and Gurlitt on the one hand and Fischer on the other has only survived from 1949 onwards. On several occasions,

²² The fact that they could not belong to Hildebrand Gurlitt becomes clear from the subsequent connection. In his monograph *Raubkunst – Kunstraub. Die Schweiz und der Handel mit gestohlenen Kulturgütern zur Zeit des Zweiten Weltkriegs*, Zurich 1998, (p. 180 regarding Segantini's *Der tote Held*) Thomas Buomberger did not differentiate between Hildebrand and Wolfgang Gurlitt and allocated all of the actions, which are to be found in the sources under "Gurlitt" to Hildebrand Gurlitt. Apparently, Wolfgang Gurlitt was unknown to Buomberger when he wrote his study.

²³ Letter from Fischer to Bernhard A. Boehmer from 24.4.1941, Schweizerisches Bundesarchiv, Schweizerische Verrechnungsstelle (1934–1978), Galerie Fischer (1938–1954), E7160-08#1968-28#390_2379635.

²⁴ State of research upon the publication of this article.

²⁵ On 30.6.1947, Fischer gave Christiansen a loan of 500 Swiss francs. In addition, the smaller sum of 51.86 Swiss francs was outstanding for several years. Both amounts were repaid at the end of 1947. "Customer accounts", "Miscellaneous 'C'", entry dated 1.1, 30.6. and 31.12. 1947.

²⁶ On 3.12.1947, Fischer bought a half-share in the work *Sitzende Frau* by "Maes" (probably Nicolaes Maes, 1634–1693) for 2,000 Swiss francs. "Journal" 1947, p. 91; on 4 and 14.12.1948 he acquired from Christiansen a half-share in the painting *Kinderspielplatz im Tiergarten Berlin* by Max Liebermann (object card inv. no. J 2308) and in "2 Tafeln von Meister von Frankfurt w/Attest von Friedländer". "Journal" 1948, p. 100.

²⁷ Letter from the Galerie Fischer to Wolfgang Gurlitt from 4.2.1949, correspondence 1949.

²⁸ See Voigt 2019, p. 115.

the two tried unsuccessfully to sell objects to or through Fischer.²⁹

On 14 February 1949, Christiansen sent a letter to Fischer from Bad Aussee, which she gave for delivery to the art dealer Dr Hans Fetscherin,³⁰ who was travelling to Switzerland. Amongst other things she asks, "Have you contacted the clearing office about my case? I thought you were going to be so kind as to carry out the clearance there on the basis of the information I sent you."³¹

In this letter, Christiansen is referring to proceedings that the Swiss Clearing Office (Schweizerische Verrechnungsstelle (SVSt))³² conducted against Theodor Fischer and the Galerie Fischer after the end of the war. The SVSt monitored the so-called clearing agreements that Switzerland had concluded with states including Germany, in order to guarantee bilateral trade and prevent the outflow of Swiss foreign currency to other nations.³³ In particular, the SVSt controlled the delivery of goods and the flow of money for imports and exports. For art dealers, who often traded across national borders, this meant a considerable administrative burden.³⁴ For objects exported to Germany, they had to try to either obtain hard currency or other objects in exchange, for which an application to the SVSt for an authorisation for "compensation transactions" was required.³⁵

In July and August 1946, the SVSt carried out an audit at the Galerie Fischer. The suspicion was that during the Nazi era Fischer had not correctly declared transactions with customers

²⁹ The letters mention a portrait of the "Queen Mother of Naples Maria Carolina" by Élisabeth Vigée-Lebrun, allegedly from the collection of Baron de Rothschild, Paris, and "sold in California by the previous owners" (postcard from Wolfgang Gurlitt to Fischer, 14.7.1949). Fischer took the painting on commission, but had been unable to sell it by February 1950 (letter from Fischer to Gurlitt, 2.2.1950). In addition, an unspecified "Portrait of a Woman by Manet", which a customer of Fischer's rejected as not authentic (letter from Fischer to Christiansen, 26.8.1949); a painting by Monet, also unspecified (letter from Gurlitt to Fischer, 2.10.1949); a "Portrait of a Gentleman by Manet", which a customer of Fischer's rejected as not authentic (letter from Fischer to Christiansen, 26.8.1949); a "gentleman's portrait" by Lovis Corinth, which belonged to one of Christiansen's clients in Zurich and which Fischer was also unable to sell; and the portraits of a Saxon nobleman by Boxberg and a Zurich patrician by Anton Graff (letter from Gurlitt to Fischer, 27.2.1950), in which Fischer had no interest (letter from Fischer to Gurlitt, 2 February 1950). Christiansen was interested in a drawing by Eugène Delacroix, but apparently did not buy it (letter from Fischer to Christiansen, 1.12.1949).

³⁰ See galerie20.smb.museum/kunsthandel/K18.html, accessed on 24.11.2023. Dr. Hans Fetscherin and Theodor and Dr. Paul Fischer became acquainted through Lilly Christiansen and subsequently cooperated on a small scale for a number of years.

³¹ Letter from Christiansen to Fischer, 14.2.1949, correspondence 1949.

³² See Martin Meier, "Schweizerische Verrechnungsstelle", in: *Historisches Lexikon der Schweiz (HLS)*, version from 28.10.2011, hls-dhs-dss.ch/de/articles/047125/2011-10-28/, accessed on 24.11.2023.

³³ Regarding clearing see Stefan Frech, *Clearing. Der Zahlungsverkehr der Schweiz mit den Achsenmächten* (publication of the Unabhängigen Expertenkommission Schweiz – Zweiter Weltkrieg, Vol. 3), Zurich 2001, summary in uek.ch/de/schlussbericht/Publikationen/Zusammenfassungenpdf/03d.pdf, accessed on 24.11.2023.

³⁴ Regarding the effects of obligatory clearing upon the art trade Francini, Heuß, Kreis 2016, pp. 57–59.

³⁵ In individual cases, applications could be made for exemptions from the clearing obligation. For example, at the request of the government of the German Reich Theodor Fischer obtained a clearing exemption with regard to the proceeds obtained for the "entartete" art from the auction of 30.6.1939. See Sykora 2022, p. 114.

in Germany to the SVSt. In its final report of 3 April 1950, in which it listed various events, the SVSt stated that in its opinion Fischer had “deliberately disregarded and circumvented the clearing regulations on various occasions”.³⁶ This report also mentions the paintings from Gurlitt that Fischer had offered at the auction in September 1943, but which the SVSt had found to be incorrectly authorised and imported as part of a compensation transaction with the aforementioned art dealer Carl Buemming.³⁷ As early as 1947, the SVSt noted in an internal letter:

"[...] Fischer therefore did not import for himself, but in the compensation in question imported paintings belonging to third parties. The situation is similar with the paintings by Segantini, Balmer and Walser, which allegedly belong to a Mrs Christiansen, a Danish national. As far as we can ascertain, however, Mrs Christiansen is not the owner of these paintings, but they also belong to Herr Gurlitt, who is on very friendly terms with Mrs Christiansen. Whatever the case, Fischer also imported these paintings on behalf of third parties and compensated them with his own export. [...]."³⁸

According to a letter from Christiansen to Fischer dated 10 March 1949, she had apparently travelled to Zurich in December 1948, made representations to the SVSt in person and had “pointed out that the matter would still be cleared up by you [Fischer]”. She once again asked Fischer “to settle the matter soon”.³⁹ However, the

proceedings dragged on and Fischer was unable to obtain the release of her paintings that Christiansen had requested. On the contrary, he had to undertake to

only dispose of the three paintings still in his possession only with the consent of the SVSt.⁴⁰ An additional complication was a measure passed by the Swiss Bundesrat (Federal Council) on 26 February 1946,⁴¹ according to which outstanding payments for goods of German origin that had been imported into Switzerland before the end of the war had to be made to the Swiss National Bank by 31 May 1946. As a result, Fischer would himself have had to pay 1,400 Swiss francs, which was the total value of the paintings officially imported in his own name. However, owing to the fact that the SVSt knew that the paintings belonged to Gurlitt and Christiansen, as an exception in a letter dated 21 August 1950 they permitted Christiansen to pay the sum into a Swiss blocked clearing account.⁴²

³⁶ Schweizerisches Bundesarchiv, Schweizerische Verrechnungsstelle (1934–1978), Galerie Fischer (1938–1954), E7160-08#1968-28#390_2379635, document 0000038, p. 9.

³⁷ This process also affected a painting by “Schramm” (possibly Viktor Schramm, 1865–1929).

³⁸ Letter from the “Spezialbüro” to the “Abteilung Deutschland-Export zuhanden von Herrn Prof. Stucki” from 30.9.1947 “Betr. Angelegenheit Galerie Fischer, Luzern / Dr. Hans Wendland”, Schweizerisches Bundesarchiv, Schweizerische Verrechnungsstelle (1934–1978), Galerie Fischer (1938–1954), E7160-08#1968-28#390_2379635, document 0000042.

³⁹ Letter from Christiansen to Fischer, 10.3.1949.

⁴⁰ Schweizerisches Bundesarchiv, Schweizerische Verrechnungsstelle (1934–1978), Galerie Fischer (1938–1954), E7160-08#1968-28#390_2379635, document 0000038, p.9.

⁴¹ Art.5 of the Bundesrat decree regarding payment transactions with Germany from 26.2.1946, BBl. 1946 I, pp. 566–571, amsdruckschriften.bar.admin.ch/viewOrigDoc/10035496.pdf?ID=10035496, accessed on 24.11.2023.

⁴² This becomes apparent from a letter from the SVSt to Fischer from 1.10.1952.

However, Lilly Christiansen died on 9 September 1950⁴³ without having made this payment and apparently Gurlitt also failed to reply to the SVSt's letters. In October 1952, the patience of the SVSt was exhausted and it once again trained its sights on

Fischer. It gave him the choice of either paying in the value of the paintings within a fortnight or organising their immediate sale.⁴⁴ Fischer then confirmed that the paintings would be included in the next autumn auction from 25 to 29 November "à

tout prix (at any price)".⁴⁵ At the end of the year, the SVSt enquired about the result of the auction⁴⁶, and on 5 January 1953 Fischer announced that the "Deutscher Romantiker" and the landscape by Balmer had been sold. However, no one could warm to Segantini's *Toten Helden*, which he had offered at 500 Swiss francs and "in view of the unpleasant subject", it had not even been possible to find a buyer for

200 francs. "But in order to settle this matter," Fischer continued, "We would be prepared to take the painting for 200 Swiss francs."⁴⁷ Both the SVSt⁴⁸ and, weeks later, Gurlitt agreed to this proposal⁴⁹, and Fischer immediately paid the proceeds from the sales and his own purchase price into a blocked account held by Gurlitt, informed the SVSt and commented, "We now hope that for us this matter is settled."⁵⁰

At the auction in November 1952, a winged altarpiece, in which Fischer had acquired a half-share from Christiansen in 1948, was also sold.⁵¹ In March 1952, Gurlitt had already attempted to persuade Fischer to take over the entire altar and give him a "Kokoschka painting" in return. Apparently Gurlitt returned to this proposal after the auction, as the aforementioned auction statement sent to him by Fischer states: "In exchange [for the auction proceeds] he took over: painting by Kokoschka O.: Self-Portrait."⁵² This is probably the *Selbstporträt mit erhobenem Pinsel* from 1913, which had been in Fischer's possession since 1934⁵³ and since then had travelled widely, namely for exhibitions in London,

⁴³ Voigt 2019, p. 116.

⁴⁴ Letter from the SVSt to Fischer from 1.10.1952.

⁴⁵ Letter from Fischer to the SVSt from 6.10.1952.

⁴⁶ Letter from the SVSt to Fischer from 30.12.1952.

⁴⁷ Letter and auction invoice from Fischer to the SVSt from 5.1.1953. The related objects were the catalogue no. 2448, Balmer; no. 2188 (hammer price 450 Swiss Francs), "Deutscher Romantiker" (hammer price 20 Swiss Francs) and no. 2531, Segantini.

⁴⁸ Letter from the SVSt to Fischer from 21.1.1953.

⁴⁹ Letter from Gurlitt to Fischer from 3.3.1953.

⁵⁰ Letter from Fischer to the SVSt from 3.3.1953.

⁵¹ Auction invoice from Fischer to Gurlitt from 7.1.1953. The net proceeds (hammer price less commission) amounted to 3,825 Swiss francs.

⁵² Letter from Gurlitt to Fischer from 24.3.1952.

⁵³ [oskar-kokoschka.ch/de/1020/1170/Selbstbildnis%20\(mit%20emporgehaltenem%20Pinsel\)](https://oskar-kokoschka.ch/de/1020/1170/Selbstbildnis%20(mit%20emporgehaltenem%20Pinsel)), accessed on 24.11.2023, today in the in the Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen, Dusseldorf. It comes from the collection of Fritz Hess, Berlin and was offered in an auction of the Kunstsalon Paul Cassirer and the Galerie Fischer on 1.9.1931 as no. 32 in the catalogue, but was unsold (digi.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/diglit/cassirer1931_09_01, accessed on 24.11.2023). Initially, Fischer took a large number of objects that failed to find a buyer on commission and then purchased them from Hess on 18.12.1934. "Commissions book 1924–May 38", p. 134.

Amsterdam, Basel, Zurich, Berlin and Cologne. Gurlitt lent it to a Kokoschka exhibition at the Neue Galerie der Stadt Linz / Wolfgang-Gurlitt-Museum in August 1951.

The relationship between Gurlitt and Fischer then cooled noticeably. In April 1953, Wolfgang Gurlitt asked Fischer for three paintings, which he wished to exhibit at the opening of his new gallery in Munich.⁵⁴ Dr Paul Fischer, Theodor's son, would have been "very happy to accommodate him" in view of the many years of good relations", but the paintings were needed for his own purposes, which is why he did not make them available to Gurlitt. Only in 1957 did a painting that Gurlitt had acquired from Fischer once again travel from Lucerne to Munich.⁵⁵

⁵⁴ Including Hans von Marées' *Pidoll*, letter from Dr. Paul Fischer to Gurlitt from 23.4.1953.

⁵⁵ Namely Max Slevogt's *Landschaft mit Bäumen u. Weg*, "Journal", 6.6.1957, p. 30.

Gregory Hahn, Karolina Hyży: Hiding the Works 1933: Eric Isenburger's *Salzburg*¹

The text is an English translation of the original text "Versteckte Kunst 1933. Eric Isenburger's Gemälde Salzburg" written in German language for the catalog of the exhibition "Die Reise der Bilder" ["The Journey of the Paintings"] pp. 271-280. Translation by the authors.

Eric Isenburger's cityscape of Salzburg (fig. 1) predates his long friendship with gallerist Wolfgang Gurlitt and the beginning of his years as refugee – perhaps by only a matter of months. Until recently, when it was acquired at auction, the painting's whereabouts were unknown. It is unrecorded in Isenburger's own hand-written inventory. It is also not among the hundreds of drawings, paintings and etchings that Isenburger, either in collaboration or cahoots with Wolfgang Gurlitt, reported as missing, stolen, confiscated or otherwise lost;² and there are no references to it in correspondence, interviews or reviews other than the one cited here in translation. Moreover, the physical examination that the acquisition made possible, including x-rays, has coaxed no clues from the canvas, stretcher or gilded frame about its origin. The painting is signed atop the glaze at the bottom left; in the two surviving photographic prints it is not signed at all.

Isenburger trained originally as a graphic artist at Frankfurt's *Kunstgewerbeschule* in the early 1920s and pursued his goal to become a painter on his own. The influence of printmaking, in particular his experimental treatment of canvases as though they were plates for monotypes lying flat on a work table, is especially discernible in his cityscape of Salzburg. Backgrounds are laid down and wiped, rubbed and dabbed; compositional elements are highlighted or nuanced using the tips of brush handles, palette knives, razor blades and finer tools. The silhouette of Salzburg's old town emerges from a background of shades of blue and black. The lines on the canvas, which correspond to the inner edges of the stretcher bars beneath them and form a type of frame within a frame, are the results of wiping the painting's various layers outwards. Such lines could not occur on the unyielding surface of a plate.³ In some places, especially behind the tops of the tallest towers, it is easy to see how the buildings were painted over them. The vantage point for the unknown sketches is today an overgrown path along the old *Basteiweg* on the *Kapuzinerberg* – high, but not too high, above the right bank of the

¹ This essay extends our 2017 biography of Eric (originally "Erich") and Julia Isenburger and marks the beginning of a closer investigation of their time in Sweden. See: Hahn, Gregory and Karolina Hyży, "Jenseits des unwiederbringlichen Augenblicks: Bemerkungen zur Lebensgeschichte von Eric und Julia Isenburger"/"Beyond the Irretrievable Moment: Background Notes on Eric and Julia Isenburger" in *Von Frankfurt nach New York: Eric und Julia Isenburger*, ed. Susanne Wartenberg, pp. 19-125. Petersberg: Michael Imhof Verlag, 2017.

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² See: Hahn, Gregory. "Zeuge, Sachverständiger, Freund: Wolfgang Gurlitt und der Exilmaler Eric Isenburger" in *Wolfgang Gurlitt Zauberprinz Kunsthändler – Sammler*, ed. Hemma Schmutz, Elisabeth Nowak-Thaller, pp 217-228. LENTOS Kunstmuseum Linz/Hermer Verlag GmbH, München, 2019.

³ The left stretcher bar has been shifted inwards by approximately one centimeter at some later stage. The overlapping left side of the canvas was then pulled tight and reattached.

Salzach (fig. 2). Running through the painting's center at a diagonal, the three arcs of the *Mozartsteg*, a footbridge inaugurated in 1903, are scraped out down to the surface of the canvas, as are the roofs and building outlines in the foreground and distance. The Salzach is here a turbulent stream with swirling eddies.

Great architectural liberties are taken including omissions, distortions and the interplay of forms in a very selective palette of colors. The painting frames Salzburg Cathedral on the left and the Franciscan Church on the right while remaining sufficiently true to life for the skyline between them to be named in its parts: the Carillon tower, the outlined tip of the copula of the church of St. Peter's Abbey, the two towers of the Cathedral with the Cathedral's gable and the ghost of the Abbey's baroque tower behind, finally the spire of St. Michael's. There is no awe-inspiring *Hohensalzburg* against a backdrop of snow-capped mountain peaks. There are instead only the traces of a very personal engagement with the city by someone who was not just simply passing through – someone who, to paraphrase Hugo von Hofmannsthal's famous essay on the Salzburg Festival, has walked across the bridge into the very heart of Europe.

By style and technique, *Salzburg* dates from 1931 at the earliest – the year in which Isenburger and his wife, Julia (Elenbogen), a Polish-born dancer, concluded their two years as newlywed bohemians in the attics of Vienna and moved to Berlin where Julia began her association with Margarete Wallmann's Dance Group. In August 1931 and 1932, she appeared at the Salzburg Festival as a member of the corps de ballet and in one case as soloist in various Wallmann choreographies. Assuming that Eric was with her in Salzburg, it is likely that the painting's sketches were made during one of these sojourns.

December 1932 is the latest time frame for the painting's completion. *Salzburg* was quite likely among those many paintings that caught Wolfgang Gurlitt's eye in private viewings in the Isenburgers' apartment and studio at Paulsbornerstrasse 77 in Berlin-Halensee. Gurlitt had discovered him in October that same year.

"Salzburg" in the Galerie Gurlitt in Berlin

In January 1933, *Salzburg* was shown for the first time in Isenburger's high-profile exhibition at the Galerie Gurlitt in Berlin – and it was still on the wall with all of his other paintings when Hitler became Chancellor. No primary sources exist from this exhibition other than prints of three photographs.⁴ One shows a single gallery wall with seven paintings in a symmetrical arrangement with small, illegible tags. The others are full-frame prints of two paintings with tags that can be read easily. "Salzburg" was number 1 and "Portrait of Frances Cowles" was number 13 in the hanging order (figs. 4, 5). Cowles, an actress, appears in Isenburger's *Refugee's Address Book* – a primary source of exceptional importance that records the

⁴ The Isenburger archival portions IAN (Isenburger Archive Neuburg) and IAO (Isenburger Archive Ossining) have been merged in the Isenburger Collection maintained in the German Exile Archive 1933-1945 at the German National Library in Frankfurt am Main. The Neuburg catalog numbers are maintained here as "IAN" followed by a filing designation. Berlin [Galerie Gurlitt] (no. 1-2) IAN Ph (I) 1932 [*sic* 1933]; Salzburg (no. 1-2) IAN Ph. (I) 1931 (1931/1932); Frances Cowles IAN Ph (I) 1932/4.

movements of 29 paintings and many important people in a world in flux.⁵

The exhibition rocketed Isenburger to short-lived stardom and provoked the ire of his Nazi enemies who were suddenly free to do as they wished after Hitler became Chancellor. Gurlitt, who served as a witness in Isenburger's post-war claims against Germany, described two distinct forces that had targeted him: politically active circles and envious national socialist-oriented artist colleagues vehemently set on getting rid of him.⁶ The specific threat that forced Eric and Julia to drop everything and flee to Paris at Gurlitt's urging on 31 March 1933, the day before the nationwide boycott of Jewish businesses, remains unclear. In an interview carried out in English by renowned exile scholar John M. Spalek (New York, 1986), Isenburger recalled a passage (in German) from painter and S. A. *Sturmbannführer* Otto Andreas Schreiber's attack in the Nazi press. "There you see who gets the full-year gallery contracts: a Jewish painter, Erich Isenburger, who's well-off enough to frame all of his paintings in gold and put on a fireworks display of pictures."⁷ Clearly, Schreiber was among the second group of enemies. But what about the ambiguous first group? Eric's brother, Herbert, claimed that Eric had told him in 1932 that "he belonged to an organization which was openly fighting the Hitler movement" and that that was the reason for their flight.⁸ If true, this might explain why so prominent a Nazi opponent in New York exile as Berlin's Albert Grzesinski is included so conspicuously in bold, dark purple handwriting in Isenburger's *Refugee's Address Book*. The events in Berlin, Gurlitt writes, "resulted not only in his [Isenburger's] losing everything he owned, but that afterwards my gallery, as the business place of the artist's agent, was raided in order to confiscate everything by the painter that could be found there."⁹

⁵ "Refugee's Address Book" is our internal designation for the earliest and most important primary source in the entire Isenburger Collection – ten pages of chronologically recorded addresses and telephone numbers stretching from Berlin in 1933 to New York in the early 1940s as entered into the following tattered volume: *Philologen-Jahrbuch (Kunzes Kalender) für das höhere Schulwesen Preussens*, Hg. OStR Dr. Simon, Jg. XXXVIII, Schuljahr 1931-32, erster Teil. Breslau: Verlag des Philologen-Jahrbuches (Trewendt & Granier Verlag), 1931. Isenburger Collection, IAN K 1931-0. As Isenburger notes on the volume's title page, it was first used as a notebook in 1932. It also contains a record of costs for rent, electricity and repairs at Paulsbornerstrasse 77 in Berlin from July 1932 to 12 June 1933 and a handwritten list of 29 paintings labeled in pencil "1932-35 Stockholm, Sweden".

⁶ For a detailed treatment of the events in Berlin, see: Hahn and Hyży 2017, pp. 63-70.

⁷ Eric Isenburger, *Audio interview by John M. Spalek*. 3 June 1986. Cassette 155. The John M. Spalek Collection. M. E. Grenander Department of Special Collections & Archives at the State University of New York, Albany. Schreiber was a leading figure in the National Socialist German Student Union in Berlin [*NSDStB*, *Nationalsozialistischer Deutscher Studentenbund*] and contributor to the Nazi press. He is profiled in a list of "Nazi Criminals and Beneficiaries in Art" [*Naziverbrecher und Nutznießer in der Kunst*] compiled by the Allies. See: R 9361/V – 137289, Sammlung Berlin Document Center (BDC): Personenbezogene Unterlagen der Reichskulturkammer (RKK), Bundesarchiv Berlin. Efforts to wash him clean posthumously were still underway as recently as May 2019 during the colloquium "*Unbewältigt? Ästhetische Moderne und Nationalsozialismus. Kunst, Kunsthandel, Ausstellungspraxis*" (Berlin, 16-18 May 2019).

⁸ Typescript datable to 1939-1941. Isenburger Collection, IAN P "Pässe, Papiere, Reiseunterlagen, usw." The typescript refers to Herbert and Anne (née Landsman) Isenburger's visit to Europe during the summer of 1932. Herbert had become a U. S. citizen in May of that year. The typescript is not free of errors and hyperbole and may have been intended to assist Eric's and Julia's emigration to the U. S. A. from France.

⁹ Unnotarized statement by Wolfgang Gurlitt, Munich, 5 March 1969 [D9-D10]. *Entschädigungsamt* Berlin. The statement was initially submitted by Gurlitt to Isenburger's attorney Robert Schlesinger. It is one of two

But Isenburger did not lose “everything he owned” as Gurlitt claimed. The paintings exhibited in Berlin were not confiscated, but rather shipped outside of Germany. At least three are known to have traveled to Paris early on where they were exhibited with French titles at the 1933 *Salon des Tuileries* and in the special show presented at the *Salon d’Automne* by the *Comité Français Pour la Protection des intellectuels juifs Persécutés*.¹⁰ In June of 1934, three paintings appeared with English titles in the *Exhibition of German-Jewish Artists’ Work* in London¹¹ – most probably shipped there from Paris and returned to Paris afterwards. A third European capital emerges in John Spalek’s Isenburger interview. „The best paintings, the ones that were exhibited at Gurlitt”, as Isenburger explained, had all been shipped to Stockholm and, once there, he “did not let them come back to Germany.”¹² Today, several of them on their original stretchers, including *Salzburg*, carry the inbound Swedish customs stamp and the date “7 December 1934” (fig. 6). They had been hidden away at an unknown location for nearly two years after the end of the Berlin exhibition.

“Salzburg” in the *Galerie Moderne* in Stockholm

Three weeks after the customs stamp date, *Salzburg* next turns up in Isenburger’s first exhibition in the *Galerie Moderne* in Stockholm (fig. 7-10). It is painting number 14 in the Swedish catalog. Even though the original names of the paintings are unknown (since there is no such catalog for the Gurlitt exhibition), it is possible to at least begin reconstructing Isenburger’s exhibition at the *Galerie Gurlitt* by bracketing off those works known to have been painted afterwards. These are paintings number 20 to 31 in the Swedish catalog. With the exception of painting number 7, the portrait of Swedish actress and director Karin Carlson, paintings 1 through 19 stem from Isenburger’s 1933 show in Berlin. This group includes the paintings from the Paris and London exhibitions which were apparently sent to Stockholm from Paris. Stockholm-based photographer and photojournalist Anna Riwkin, herself a former dancer, along with her brothers Josef and Aminodov helped the Isenburgers gain a foothold in Stockholm. The Isenburgers had met Riwkin in Paris in the summer of 1933. Sixteen of Riwkin’s photographs of dancers were included in *La Danse et le mouvement: Exposition internationale de photographie* in Paris (November 1933 – January 1934).¹³ Eric and Julia were no strangers to Riwkin’s camera (fig. 11, 12). But what and where in Stockholm was the *Galerie Moderne*? It appears to have escaped art history.

A Brief History of the *Galerie Moderne*

On 30 May 1928, architect Sven Wallander, writer Einar Rosenborg, Britt Jolin (née von Zweigbergk, the first wife of the painter Einar Jolin) along with attorney and chess aficionado Folke Rogard and his first wife Greta Marie-Louise Rogard (née Santesson) founded the

attachments to Schlesinger’s letter to the *Entschädigungsamt* Berlin of 6 April 1962 [D6]. LABO Berlin, Entschädigungs-Akte Reg.-Nr. 262136. Original quotation in German.

¹⁰ *La jeune femme au divan* was shown at the 11th Salon des Tuileries (20 May – 9 July 1933). *Portrait de femme* and *Portrait Julia* were presented at the Salon d’Automne (1 November – 10 December 1933).

¹¹ The paintings exhibited in London were *Lady Sitting*, *Composition* and *Lady Standing*. For more about this exhibition, see fn. 26.

¹² Eric Isenburger, *Audio Interview by John M. Spalek*.

¹³ Although photographs of Julia are not listed in the exhibition catalog (*Les Archives internationales de la Danse, Paris, 1933*), a single photograph of her does appear in a short Stockholm newspaper article published in March 1934 devoted to Riwkin as the sole Swedish participant in that exhibition. “Dans och Rörelse.” *Svenska Dagbladet*, 11 March 1934, p. 9.

“*Galleri Svensk Konst AB*”.¹⁴ Its address was Sturegatan 26 in Stockholm – a space that had been vacated by the *Svensk-franska konstgalleriet*.¹⁵ Three months after it was founded, the *Galleri Svensk Konst AB* changed its name to “*AB Galleri Modern*”.¹⁶ When an art critic for the *Svenska Dagbladet* quipped in a review of the gallery’s first show that the “*Galerie Moderne* or *Galleri Modern* as one calls it in Swedish [*Galerie Moderne eller Galleri Modern, som man försvenskat namnet*] made a successful start with its opening on Saturday,” it was impossible to have anticipated that the innocent-sounding similarity would soon mark a legal distinction.¹⁷

The *Galleri Modern* entered into a rental agreement with the Royal Dramatic Theater [*Kungliga Dramatiska Teatern AB*] on the Nybroplan in July of 1930,¹⁸ renovated a substantial amount of ground floor and basement space within two months and celebrated its first vernissage at this new location on 24 September (fig. 13). The location could not have been more central and, since it was also open during intermissions, the gallery stood to benefit from a very select public.¹⁹ A new chapter began in August 1931 when art historian Margit Risberg²⁰ joined the company, changed the name back to “*Galleri Svensk Konst AB*” and liquidated the company. Simultaneously, she founded a *new* company at the same location with the fashionably French spelling “*Galerie Moderne AB*” – now with a restaurant and confectionary.²¹

But the *Galerie Moderne* did not survive long in the Risberg constellation. The new owners appear in the minutes [*protokoll*] of 15 May 1934. These are art historian Signe Schultz²² and second husband Richard Schultz, Alice Enderlein and husband Bertil Enderlein, and Miss Astrid Schultz.²³ Signe Schultz and Alice Enderlein (both née Brovall) were sisters. Exhibitions ran on a 2-week cycle. Counting from its most celebrated exhibition of works by Fernand Léger in September 1934, exhibitions by Jurgen Wrangel, Bo Beskow, Britta Stenström-Rogberg,

¹⁴ Corporate charter (*Bolagsordning*) entered into the registry on 9 July 1928. Corporate records for company number 26968. All corporate records cited below are in the holdings of the Swedish National Archives [*Riksarkivet*], Stockholm. All passages from Swedish sources have been translated by the authors.

¹⁵ Not only paintings travel. Archives do as well. The archives of the *Svensk-franska konstgalleriet* are today at the Getty Research Institute in Los Angeles.

¹⁶ Minutes (*Protokoll*) 25 August 1928. Entered into the registry on 7 September 1928. Corporate records for company number 26968.

¹⁷ K. A. “En ny modern konstsalong.” *Svenska Dagbladet*, 23 September 1928, p. 16.

¹⁸ Lease (*Hyreskontrakt*) 10 July 1930. Royal Dramatic Theater [*Kungliga Dramatiska Teatern*] archives, Stockholm.

¹⁹ “Nord och söder i en Svanesång: Stig Hertzma-Ericsons utställning, den sista i Galleri Modern vid Sturegatan.” *Aftonbladet*, 12 September 1930, 8; Z. “Konstvernissage i själve Dramaten. Galleri Modern har flyttat, Jurgen Wrangel förste utställare.” *Aftonbladet*, 24 September 1930, p. 3.

²⁰ Obituary. *Svenska Dagbladet*, 11 August 1998, 19.

²¹ Corporate charter (*Bolagsordning*) entered into the registry on 12 October 1932, Corporate records for company number 31500. Exterior photographs by Gustaf Wernersson Cronquist at the *Stockholm Exhibition 1930* show that the name „Galerie Moderne” was already in use prior to its founding as an AB. See: digitaltmuseum.se/011014982401/galerie-moderne-stockholmsutstallningen-1930, accessed on 9 January 2024.

²² Obituary. *Dagens Nyheter*, 13 October 1960, p. 23.

²³ Minutes (*Protokoll*) 15 May 1934. Entered into the registry on 13 July 1934. Corporate records for company number 31500. The commercial inactivity for the first quarter of 1934 is noted in the auditor’s report in §5.

Finnish sculptor Jussi Mäntynen and a 3-week collective exhibition by Tord and Kjell Leander-Engström together with Frans Michael Kempe followed in succession. Eric Isenburger's first Stockholm exhibition – the first exhibition at the *Galerie Moderne* by a German-Jewish refugee– then closed the old year and ushered in the new one of 1935.

Risberg, who stayed on in an unclear managerial role into the spring of 1936,²⁴ and Louis Hahne (Signe Schultz's son from her first marriage who himself later became a gallerist) are the only persons from the circle of the *Galerie Moderne* recorded in Isenburger's *Refugee's Address Book*. Alice Enderlein appears in the *Galerie Moderne's* minutes as of 1937 under her new name as Baroness Alice Lagerbielke with second husband Baron Magnus Lagerbielke. They were married only a few days after Isenburger's second *Galerie Moderne* show opened (19 December 1936 – 7 January 1937). Lotte Laserstein's portraits of Baroness Alice and her sister Signe Schultz are well-known works. Laserstein exhibited at the *Galerie Moderne* in the winter of 1937-1938.

Swedish Press Coverage

It was specifically the designation as a "German-Jewish refugee" that the 32-year-old Isenburger worked to counter in Stockholm. In his first press interview ever, published under the title "German Painter's Visit" on 28 December 1934, the day before the *Galerie Moderne* show opened, the *Exhibition of German-Jewish Artists' Work*, in which he and 85 other persecuted German-Jewish artists had been represented, is given only as "a German group exhibition"²⁵ – which, of course, is not wrong, but it is only partially true.²⁶

In preparing his own German translations of the Swedish reviews, Isenburger systematically edited things out. The phrase "a German painter who has been forced to transplant himself to Paris" in a review by Gustaf Näsström became "a German painter who lives in Paris".²⁷ There is also a revealing collaborative translation of Ragnar Allberg's column "Konst" from the Swedish journal *Scenen: tidskrift för teatern* showing Isenburger's handwritten changes beginning with striking out the original Swedish description of him as "the German (Jewish?) Paris refugee Erich Isenburger" and replacing it with "the Paris-based".²⁸ It was in this taking

²⁴ See: Galerie Moderne, Stockholm, Korrespondens med Göteborgs konstförening, 1933-1936. H 186:82. University of Gothenburg Library [Göteborgs Universitetsbibliotek].

²⁵ Tysk Målarvisit". *Svenska Dagbladet*, 28 December 1934, p. 9.

²⁶ Indeed, it is this precarious London exhibition held in the Oxford Street showrooms of a commercial paint manufacturer (5-20 June 1934) and not the exhibition entitled *Twentieth Century German Art* at the New Burlington Galleries in London in 1938 that is rightful claimant to the distinction of having been the first presentation of modern German art in Great Britain. See: Hyży, Karolina. 2020. "The *Exhibition of German-Jewish Artists' Work* at Parsons' Galleries London (1934): The Lost Exhibition." Master's thesis. University of Buckingham. The exhibition, curated by Wiesbaden refugee gallerist Carl Braunschweig and art historian Franz Landsberger, presented works by artists who were at the time in Berlin, elsewhere in Germany, the United Kingdom, Paris, Amsterdam, Luxemburg, Switzerland, Spain and Palestine.

²⁷ Gustaf Näsström. "Tysk artist i Galerie Moderne". *Stockholms Tidningen*, 2 January 1935. The source is a clipping in the Isenburger Collection, IAN ZR (I), 1935/1-3. The original Swedish text reads: "en tysk målare, som tvingats omplantera sig i Paris". Isenburger's translation is: "ein deutscher Maler, der in Paris lebt".

²⁸ Ragnar Allberg. "Konst: Laurin – Isenburger – Hjortzberg – Emond – Nordberg – Konstronden fortsätter". *Scenen: tidskrift för teatern*, 1935, Nr. 3, 30. The typescript with hand corrections is in the Isenburger Collection, IAN ZR (I) 1935/5. The original Swedish text reads: "den tyske (judiske)? Paris-flyktingen Erich Isenburger". In Isenburger's German version this became: "der in Paris ansässige".

charge of an identity narrative that some of Isenburger's paintings had already been given French titles on their stretchers in pencil. "*Salzburg*" became "*Vue de la ville Salzbourg*".

Some Swedish reviews must have been unbearable for Isenburger to read. Adolf Hallman, for example, recognizes that Isenburger's work "is almost a kind of graphics. His paintings are produced using glazes atop the wet surfaces of which he draws figures," but then likens them to "the marbled or veined serving platters and charcuterie counters made by decorators."²⁹ A critic signing with the initials "H. W-n" finds "a freer, more rewarding palette [...] in such paintings as 'A Fishing Harbor in Marseilles' [number 24, *En fiskarhamn vid Marseille*], the stylized forest landscape 'Richmond' [number 28], the suggestive view of 'Salzburg' [number 14] and some very subjective but captivating motifs from London," but concludes nevertheless by suggesting that "Isenburger wants to evoke a profound and mysterious genius, but this body of work is doomed to sterility."³⁰ "If one is to characterize the art of the German-Parisian painter Erich Isenburger," Gotthard Johansson writes, "[...] one has to resort to foreign words: *mondant morbid*. A few decades ago, one would have said *fin de siècle* [...]"³¹ There was one critical voice, however, that of Gustaf Näsström, that stood out from all the rest. He welcomed the international air of Isenburger's work and reflected about the exhibition's future influence on Swedish painting. Isenburger's "technical bravura is so captivating that one at first forgets to question what might lie behind this peculiar artistic magic. It entails a communication of a subtle and quite challenging nature [...] An art for art's sake, rootless and often bizarre, but with an undeniable sophistication."³²

The Journey Continues

Immediately after the Stockholm exhibition closed, the *Galerie Moderne* sold *Salzburg* to its first owner, the prominent physician, art collector and founder of the Rilton Chess Cup Dr. Tore Rilton. Accompanied by a full provenance, the painting now hangs on an exhibition wall for the third time in its history where it bears silent testimony for all of the persecuted artists of the Nazi era who were forced to hide their own works.

²⁹ Adolf Hallman. "Erich Isenburger i Galerie Moderne." *Aftonbladet*, 3 January 1935, p. 4.

³⁰ H. W-n. "Erich Isenburger i Galerie Moderne." Unidentified clipping. Isenburger Collection, IAN ZR (I) "*undatiert*". Not indexed in the *Svenska dagstidningar* database of the Swedish National Library [*Kungliga Biblioteket*] in Stockholm. The London paintings (all from 1934) are "Richmond" [number 28] "London Bridge" [number 30], "Church in London" [*Kyrka i London*, number 31] and perhaps *I grönt* ["In the Green", number 27]. Their whereabouts are unknown.

³¹ G. J-n. [Gotthard Johansson]. "Erich Isenburger." *Svenska Dagbladet*, 5 January 1935, p. 10.

³² Näsström.

Annett Büttner:

The art dealer Johannes Hinrichsen, Berlin – Altaussee

The text is an English translation of the original text “Der Kunsthändler Johannes Hinrichsen, Berlin - Altaussee” written in German language for the catalog of the exhibition “Die Reise der Bilder” [“The Journey of the Paintings”] pp. 281-289. Translation by John Cima.

Although Johannes Hinrichsen (1884–1971) was one of the suppliers for the art collections of Hermann Goering and Adolf Hitler, to date there have been virtually no works of scholarship published regarding him or his company. Amongst other factors this desideratum is due to the lack of an estate and a company archive, the older parts of which were burnt in Berlin during the war. However, research in numerous archives and in Hinrichsen's private sphere has now made sources accessible that at least allow a biographical sketch about him and the history of his art business.¹

The sculptor

Johannes Hinrichsen was born on 28 February 1884 in the North German provincial town of Schleswig, the son of an elementary school teacher.² He was the third of four children and grew up in secure, but not overly prosperous circumstances. His parents lived in rented accommodation and his family background gave no hint of his later career as an art dealer. He attended the “Realgymnasium” in Schleswig and graduated in 1900 with the “Mittlere Reife” (intermediate school leaving certificate) after which he began an apprenticeship as a woodcarver in Flensburg. In addition to artistic subjects, he also took “bookkeeping” and “calculation” classes, which may have proved of use to him in his subsequent professional art dealings. After completing his training, Hinrichsen returned to Schleswig at the end of January 1904 for a short time, but left for Berlin as early as April 1904. In the imperial capital he first completed his military service in 1905/06 and then continued his education at the Dresden School of Arts and Crafts and the Berlin Academy.³ From 1908 he worked as a sculptor in Berlin⁴ and some of his works have survived. These include the architectural sculptures on the “Weinhaus Huth”, which was built in 1910/11 and is one of the few remaining old buildings on the Potsdamer Platz (Fig.1 and 2). According to Hinrichsen's own account, during World War One, he was constantly at the front.⁵

¹ This article is based on the following publication: Annett Büttner, “Der Kunsthändler Johannes Hinrichsen”, in: *Transfer*, Edition 2, 2023, pp. 90–107. The essay forms the basis for this contribution. Amongst the newly discovered sources are four of Hinrichsen's account ledgers. They have been handed over to the Zentralarchiv für deutsche und internationale Kunstmarktforschung (ZADIK) in Cologne and will soon be made publicly available in digital form.

² Information regarding Johannes Hinrichsen's dates, addresses and family relationships from the Kreis- und Stadtarchiv Schleswig.

³ See questionnaire of the Reichskammer der Bildenden Künste from 14.10.1935 (entry stamp), in: Landesarchiv Berlin (LA Berlin), archive of the Reichskammer der Bildenden Künste, Landesleitung Berlin, A Rep. 243-04, No. 3494 PA Hinrichsen.

⁴ Until the mid-1920s, Hinrichsen was registered in the Berlin address book as a sculptor. Also see Berlinische Galerie, Konvolut Kunstarchiv Werner J. Schweiger, Inventarnummer BG-WJS-M-1,34, sammlung-online.berlinischegalerie.de (Enter in the search field: BG-WJS-M-1,34), accessed on 16.7.2023.

⁵ See questionnaire 1935.

The art dealer

From the beginning of the 1920s, Johannes Hinrichsen was active in the art trade in Berlin without having the appropriate training. His first verifiable art dealer position came in 1921 with the exhibition management of the “Künstlerhaus” in Berlin's Bellevuestrasse.⁶ The numerous art shops and galleries in the vicinity made the location a promising address for Hinrichsen's entry into the art trade, which in any case held out the hope of more lucrative prospects than his previous existence as an artist. In 1927, as the sponsor of the “Künstlerhaus”, the “Verein Berliner Künstler” felt compelled by economic constraints to rent out its exhibition rooms. This offered Hinrichsen an opportunity to set up his own art business there. At the end of May 1927, he opened the exhibition *Die schaffende Frau in der bildenden Kunst* (“Creative Women in the Fine Arts”) for which he had invited what he considered to be the twenty most important female representatives of contemporary art, including the painters Annot [Anna Ottonie Krigar-Menzel], Charlotte Berend-Corinth, Käthe Kollwitz, Sabine Lepsius, Paula Modersohn-Becker, Augusta von Zitzewitz and the sculptors Ilse Fehling-Witting, Emy Roeder, Renée Sintenis and Milly Steger.⁷ The presentation was unanimously well received by the press throughout the Reich.

Shortly afterwards, “the newly emerged Kunsthandlung Johannes Hinrichsen [...] appeared before the public with an exhibition of the painter Bruno Krauskopf and the sculptor Josef Thorak, as well as the gallery's range between old masters, Romantics and Impressionists between Adolph Menzel, Heinrich Zügel, Wilhelm Trübner to Lovis Corinth, Max Liebermann and Max Slevogt”.⁸ Hinrichsen thus initially concentrated on contemporary, but not avant-garde artists. At the turn of the year 1927/28, Paul Lindpaintner (1883–1969) joined Hinrichsen's company.⁹ With his entry into the business, the gallery “J. Hinrichsen/P. Lindpaintner. Antiquities, Paintings, Sculpture” turned more towards old art. Moreover, whereas Hinrichsen had previously focused his range on bourgeois circles and modern art, the gallery now also catered for the tastes of aristocratic and upper middle-class clients. Striking in this respect is the exhibition *Gotische Bildteppiche, gotische Plastiken, gotische Tafelbilder* (“Gothic Tapestries, Gothic Sculptures, Gothic Panel Paintings”) in the spring of 1928, in which the well-known embroidered tapestries from Wienhausen Abbey in Lower Saxony dating from the 14th and 15th centuries were shown as loans, supplemented by objects for sale from private ownership.¹⁰ The exhibition was also commercially successful.

⁶ See *ibid.*; *Handbuch des Kunstmarktes: Kunstadressbuch für das Deutsche Reich, Danzig und Deutsch-Österreich 1926*, Berlin 1926, pp. 344, 346, [doi.org/10.11588/diglit.52375](https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:hbz:5:1-63888-p0331-9), accessed on 16.7.2023; Helmut Börsch-Supan, “Der Verein Berliner Künstler im neunzehnten Jahrhundert”, in: *ibid.* (ed.), *Verein Berliner Künstler. Versuch einer Bestandsaufnahme von 1841 bis zur Gegenwart*, Berlin 1991, pp. 9–44, here p. 44.

⁷ Archive of the Akademie der Künste, Berlin: Ilse-Fehling-Archiv 403, 414, 417.

⁸ Berlinische Galerie, Konvolut Kunstarchiv Werner J. Schweiger. The internal quote comes from *Der Cicerone*, Edition 12, June 1927, p. 389.

⁹ See Ines Rotermund-Reynard, “Lindpaintner, Paul”, 2021, agorha.inha.fr/detail/183, accessed on 16.7.2023; Roswitha Juffinger, Gerhard Plasser, *Salzburger Landessammlungen 1939–1955*, Salzburg 2007, pp. 114–116; also see LA Berlin, Reichskammer der bildenden Künste, A Rep. 243-04- 5310 personal file P. Lindpaintner; LA Berlin, A Rep. 342-02-24325 Lindpaintner trade register file. Lindpaintner, who liked to add d'Almeida, the maiden name of his aristocratic mother, to his own was a cavalry officer, professional tennis player and amateur art dealer and moved in upper class and noble circles. In March 1925 he also opened an art and antiquity dealership in the house of the “Verein Berliner Künstler”.

¹⁰ See Johannes Hinrichsen, Paul Lindpaintner, *Ausstellung gotische Bildteppiche, gotische Plastiken, gotische Tafelbilder: 7. Januar bis 11. März. 1928*, Berlin 1928.

According to Hinrichsen himself, it represented his breakthrough in the art trade through which he “entered completely different waters.”¹¹ It opened up access to the highest art-loving and affluent social circles at home and abroad.

In spite of this success, Hinrichsen acted cautiously from an economic viewpoint and was well aware of the risks of the business. Apart from a secretary, the company had no employees and Hinrichsen himself transported some of the works of art he exhibited and offered by car. The art dealer did not participate in the auction trade. One focus was on sculptures, for which, as a trained sculptor Hinrichsen had a special flair. However, from the few sources available it is difficult to discern a clear trading profile such as a concentration on one style. Instead, it seems as if Hinrichsen was oriented primarily towards the market and traded in everything that could be resold as quickly as possible and promised a profit.

The profiteer

After the National Socialists came to power, Hinrichsen adapted very quickly to the new circumstances. In 1935, as prescribed, he became a member of the “Reichskammer der bildenden Künste” (Reich Chamber of Fine Arts).¹² Around 1934, the Hinrichsen art dealership moved into its own premises on the ground floor of Bellevuestrasse 5, where it had 355 m² of exhibition and office space. Hinrichsen continued to work there in an office partnership with Lindpaintner and they even shared a secretary.¹³ Lindpaintner was networked throughout Europe. He had already opened a branch in Lucerne in 1930, and on an unknown date, another in London. From 1941 to 1944 he lived in Paris and travelled to other German-occupied territories. He also continued to work with Hinrichsen when he set up a new domicile in Austria at the end of the 1930s. Indeed, Lindpaintner practically constituted the foreign department of Hinrichsen's art dealership.

At no point was Hinrichsen a member of the NSDAP, yet his clientele included Reichsmarschall Hermann Goering.¹⁴ They had known each other at least since the spring of 1933, when the art historian Moritz Julius Binder (1877–1947) was an advisor to both Goering and Hinrichsen.¹⁵ In the 1930s, Goering had bought a Lucas Cranach the Elder *Lasset die Kindlein zu mir kommen* (“Let the Little Children Come to Me”) and two altar wings

¹¹ Letter from Hinrichsen to his parents dated 10.3.1929 (private family archive).

¹² See questionnaire 1935.

¹³ Luise Sack worked for both dealers, see LA Berlin A Rep. 342-02-18711 Hinrichsen trade register; LA Berlin A Rep. 243-04, No. 5310 Reichskammer der Bildenden Künste, PA Lindpaintner; Bundesarchiv Koblenz, B 323/437 French restitution applications, p. 238, questioning of Luise Sack 12.11.1947, the entire Lindpaintner procedure pp. 214–294; also see Berlinische Galerie, Konvolut Kunstarchiv Werner J. Schweiger; Juffinger, Plasser 2007, p. 116.

¹⁴ See questionnaire 1935 regarding NSDAP membership; Juffinger, Plasser 2007, p. 115; with respect to the Goering art collection see Ilse von zur Mühlen, *Die Kunstsammlung Hermann Göring. Ein Provenienzbericht der Bayerischen Staatsgemäldesammlung*, München 2004, p. 121, 164, 245, 247 f., 262, 279; Angelika Enderlein, Monika Flacke, Hanns Christian Löhr, *Die Kunstsammlung Hermann Göring, Einleitung*, dhm.de/datenbank/goering/dhm_goering.php?seite=18, accessed on 16.7.2023. This Deutsches Historisches Museum database registers seven hits regarding the prior owner Hinrichsen.

¹⁵ See Günter Haase, *Die Kunstsammlung des Reichsmarschalls Hermann Göring. Eine Dokumentation*, Berlin 2000, p. 101; regarding Binder compare duesseldorf.de/fileadmin/Amt41Zoll/kulturamt/pdf/Provenienzforschung/Dossiers_zu_80_Akteurinnen_des_Kunstmarktes.pdf, pp. 11–12, accessed on 16.7.2023.

with St. Barbara and St. Catherine by the Master of the Pflöck Altar, from Hinrichsen.¹⁶ The altar can be traced to the possession of Baron von Miltitz from 1851 to 1935 and was auctioned off to Hinrichsen from the Miltitz collection at Paul Graupe's on 27/29 May 1935. In March 1938, Hinrichsen sold the panels to Hermann Goering.

After the end of the war, in the Goering Report the Americans wrote about Hinrichsen, "Hinrichsen had been very close to Goering in the early days of the collection when Binder was the chief adviser. He is said to have quarrelled with the Reichsmarschall at the beginning of the war. His business partner was never quite sure from which of the two a purchase was being made."¹⁷ However, the rift between Hinrichsen and Goering cannot have been profound, for there is evidence that business relations continued into the 1940s.¹⁸ Via the art dealer Walter Bornheim (1888–1971) and others, further works of art previously in Hinrichsen's possession also found their way into the Goering collection.¹⁹ During the Nazi era, Hinrichsen also traded in cultural items that had been seized as a result of persecution.²⁰ Due to these activities, he was included on the ALIU (Art Looting Investigation Unit) Red Flag Names list after the war, "Hinrichsen, Johannes. Alt Aussee, Austria, Villa Wassermann. Former partner of Lindpaintner and an early buyer for Goering. Close contact of Bornheim, through whom he sold objects to the Goering Collection."²¹

Contrary to what has been assumed to date, Hinrichsen was also involved in several purchases for the art collection initiated by Adolf Hitler ("Sonderauftrag Linz").²² He met with the Special Representative for the establishment of the "Führermuseum", Hermann Voss (1884–1969), and his advisor Gottfried Reimer (1911–1987) in Vienna and was visited by them in Altaussee to view the artworks on offer. Contacts with the buyers also ran through his

¹⁶ Mühlen 2004, pp. 120–121; regarding Cranach the Elder *Lasset die Kindlein [...]* compare Haase 2000, p. 101. However, Haase gives 1941 as the year for both purchases.

¹⁷ Cited in: Mühlen 2004, p. 247. The "Goering Report" is the "Consolidated Interrogation Report No. 2: The Goering Collection" of the Office of the Strategic Services (OSS) Art Looting Investigation Unit APO 413 of the US Army of 15.9.1945 together with appendices. The original is in the National Archives, Washington, Classification C-8-A-25783 Art and Art Objects – All Nations 1945–1946, discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/details/r/C11645687, accessed 2.2.2023.

¹⁸ In 1941 Hinrichsen and Lindpaintner offered a statue of Maria Magdalena to Goering. Compare Rotermund-Reynard 2021, Section "Die Galerie Hinrichsen"; compare also Mühlen 2004, pp. 120–121.

¹⁹ See Haase 2000, pp. 249–253; proveana.de/de/link/act10003857, accessed on 16.7.2023.

²⁰ See e.g. search and find reports in the Lostart database of the Deutsche Zentrum Kulturgutverluste and by Proveana: lostart.de/de/Verlust/415037; lostart.de/de/Fund/220165; proveana.de/de/link/act10000862; proveana.de/de/link/evt10000012, all accessed on 16.7.2023.

²¹ OSS (USS Office of Strategic Services) Art Looting Intelligence Unit (ALIU) Reports 1945–1946 and ALIU Red Flag Names List and Index, 1946, lootedart.com/MVI3RM469661, accessed on 16.7.2023.

²² Here the statements by Juffinger that Hinrichsen was not active as part of the "Sonderauftrag Linz" are to be contradicted, compare Juffinger, Plasser 2007, p. 116, 163 Note 625. Löhr also sees Hinrichsen as not being the supplier. Compare Christian Löhr, *Das Braune Haus der Kunst. Hitler und der "Sonderauftrag Linz". Kunstbeschaffung im Nationalsozialismus*, Berlin 2016. References to deliveries by Hinrichsen under: Bundesarchiv B 323/136: Ankäufe für den "Sonderauftrag Linz" aus dem deutschen und österreichischen Kunsthandel und Privatbesitz, Vol. 8, pp. 161–174, compare archivportal-d.de/item/QH3LRNVWRH3DUBCK23CHPTNVOTT63VOE, accessed on 16.7.2023.

business partner Lindpaintner.²³ However, a sales negotiation that he conducted in 1943 on behalf of his mother-in-law, Ludovica Kestner von Kestenach (1872–1959), with the buyers of the “Sonderauftrag Linz” failed because of his high price demands. The work in question was the oil sketch *Maria Himmelfahrt* by Franz Anton Maulbertsch (1724–1796), which was finally purchased by Friedrich Welz (1903–1980) for the Landesgalerie Salzburg (Fig. 3).²⁴

On the other hand, it is known that Hinrichsen helped at least one emigrant Jewish family to rescue their works of art abroad and also used his personal contacts to Goering for this purpose.²⁵ Whatever the case, his adaptability to the new political conditions paid off in the form of steady economic growth, although from 1939 onwards he operated his business mainly from Altaussee in Austria.

The Austrian

As early as 1927, the married couple Hinrichsen had regularly spent their summers in Altaussee (Styria) and since the annexation of Austria to Germany, the place was increasingly patronised by prominent Nazis. These felt secure in the remote area and the mystically exaggerated “Alpenfestung” and in many cases settled in the villas of Jewish owners, which had been expropriated or sold under pressure.²⁶ In June 1938, Hinrichsen succeeded in acquiring the “most beautiful property far and wide”, a villa with a view of the lake, surrounded by a large plot of land.²⁷ Erected in 1869, the house has a remarkably interesting history, which here can only be briefly outlined. It was built by Cécile von Andrian-Werburg, née Meyerbeer (1836/37–1931), the daughter of the composer Giacomo Meyerbeer. Her son Leopold von Andrian-Werburg (1875–1951), a well-known lawyer, diplomat and writer, took over the house in 1913.²⁸ Then via the brief owner, Salomon von Deventer,²⁹ it passed to the writer Jakob Wassermann (1873–1934) in 1924. He gave the property its name, “Villa Wassermann” (Fig. 4), which is still used by the local population today. After his sudden death in 1934, von Andrian-Werburg reacquired the property in a foreclosure in 1935. However, after the invasion of Austria by German troops, as a Jew and political opponent of the Nazis he no longer felt safe and emigrated to Brazil.³⁰ Prior to that, on 10 June 1938 he sold the villa to Hinrichsen for RM 60,000, who thus profited from these circumstances.³¹ An attempt at restitution by von Andrian-Werburg after 1945 failed and he only received compensation.

²³ Rotermund-Reynard 2021.

²⁴ Juffinger, Plasser 2007, pp. 119–121.

²⁵ This refers to the first class art collection of the Koppel family from Berlin, compare Hans H. Lembke, *Leopold Koppel. Investor und Wissenschaftsmäzen. Einfluss und Macht eines Financiers im Hintergrund (1854–1933)*, Wiesbaden 2020, pp. 680–681, 690–691.

²⁶ Marie-Theres Arnbom, *Die Villen im Ausseerland. Wenn Häuser Geschichten erzählen*, Vienna 2021, pp. 9–11.

²⁷ Ibid., p. 161.

²⁸ Regarding Andrian-Werburg compare Ursula Prutsch, Klaus Zeyringer, *Leopold von Andrian (1875–1951). Korrespondenzen, Notizen, Essays, Berichte*, Vienna/Cologne/Weimar 2003.

²⁹ Regarding the person see editionhansposse.gnm.de/wisski/navigate/32593/view, accessed on 29.10.2023.

³⁰ See Arnbom 2021, 156–164; Martin Th. Pollner, “Leopold von Andrian-Werburg und Victor Karl Hammer in Altaussee (Part 4)”, in: *Alpenpost*, 12.12.2014, issuu.com/alpenpost/docs/alpenpost_10_2014/20, accessed am 16.7.2023.

³¹ See Juffinger, Plassner 2007, p. 114.

With the intensification of the bombing raids on Berlin, Hinrichsen steadily moved the centre of his personal life to Austria. From there he continued to run his art dealership. However, his secretary, Luise Sack, remained in the business premises in Berlin and kept him up to date with events. He did not come into close contact with the local inhabitants in Altaussee.

The storage of art objects in the nearby salt mine affected Hinrichsen only indirectly. For example, he briefly kept works in his villa in order that they could be photographed prior to being put into storage.³²

Hinrichsen was not the only German art dealer to settle in Aussee during the war. For example, in 1940 he was followed by Wolfgang Gurlitt (1888–1965), who with his family moved to Bad Aussee from Berlin. A business connection between Hinrichsen and Gurlitt can be proven indirectly, at least during their time in Berlin. From 1938, Gurlitt's company was located at Kurfürstenstrasse 78, very close to Hinrichsen's dealership. The building was destroyed in a bombing raid on 23 November 1943. Hinrichsen had deposited a painting by Johann Georg Ziesenis, *Brustbild Friedrich des Großen* (Portrait of Frederick the Great), there for sale on commission and in February 1945 demanded compensation for the work from the German Reich.³³

In April 1945, Hinrichsen's Berlin business premises were destroyed by bombs with the result that from then on, he continued his art trading activities exclusively in Altaussee.³⁴ He had previously had a large part of the artworks transported to Austria, although differentiating between private property and trade objects may be difficult. After the end of the Second World War, the American counterintelligence unit CIC and other billetings used some of the rooms in Hinrichsen's villa during which, according to his information, valuable art possessions were damaged.³⁵ In 1948, he attempted to return his villa to his exclusive private use with the help of the Province of Upper Austria and the Austrian Federal Monuments Office BDA. The American authorities believed his statements that the works of art were his private property for the purpose of art trading. James A. Garrison, Chief of the RD&R Division (Reparations, Deliveries, and Restitutions), had Hinrichsen's property lists checked and considered the veracity of the statements as being at least feasible: "[...] 2. As you will see from this list, H. Hinrichsen claims to have acquired all this property legally before the war. H. Hinrichsen has obviously always been a rich man and internationally known as an art dealer. His claim may therefore be true. The BDA informs us that H. Hinrichsen enjoys an excellent reputation and is generally regarded as a man of unimpeachable conduct and a perfectly correct art dealer and collector."³⁶ Thanks to Hinrichsen's good relations with the Austrian authorities, his efforts were successful and he was soon able to again enjoy sole disposal over his villa. He had already received Austrian citizenship on 15 July 1946.³⁷ He continued to run his art business from Altaussee until the

³² Archiv des Bundesdenkmalamtes (BDA) Wien, K22_M05 transports and storage of the Institut für Denkmalpflege 1944, letter of the advisor to the "Sonderauftrag Linz", Gottfried Reimer, to the head of the Institut für Denkmalpflege Vienna dated 31.5.1944.

³³ LA Berlin, A Rep. 243-04, No. 3494, personal file on Johannes Hinrichsen: expertise by Fritz Rehbein for war losses, 17.2.1945.

³⁴ See Bundesarchiv Koblenz, B 323/437 French restitution applications, 228, 238, interrogation of Luise Sack 12.11.1947. According to her statements all of the artworks and business documents were destroyed by fire.

³⁵ Archive of the BDA Vienna, K37-2_PM Hinrichsen, pp. 61–66 List of sculptures, glass windows and arts and crafts from 12.12.1947, which were already placed in safe keeping by the Bundesdenkmalamt in Linz in 1942.

³⁶ Archive of the Bundesdenkmalamt Vienna, Kt 37-2_PM Hinrichsen, Bl. 50, letter from Garrison to the office of the Military Government for Germany (US) dated 24.2.1948.

³⁷ Oberösterreichisches Landesarchiv: citizenship file Johannes Hinrichsen, Stb 3032.

1960s. In 1964, the magazine *Weltkunst* paid tribute to him in a short article on his 80th birthday.³⁸

Johannes Hinrichsen died on 30 March 1971 in Altaussee, and his grave has been preserved to this day. The Reichmann bookshop in Vienna purchased his library, including an extensive collection of auction catalogues.³⁹ The villa, which contained only a few works of art, was sold by the heirs in 1983 after the death of the widow and since then has changed hands several times.

Summary

Johannes Hinrichsen was an ambivalent personality. He underwent an unusual professional development from sculptor to agile art dealer. His intuition for the art market, negotiating skills and flexibility in political matters were helpful. He was not a National Socialist, but an opportunist, a fellow traveller who knew how to adapt skilfully to external circumstances. This included doing business with Nazi leaders such as Hitler and Goering, trading in cultural assets seized as a result of persecution and buying a house from a Jewish emigrant. The personal integrity emphasised in several quarters, contrasts with his unquestioning collaboration with the Nazi authorities and his seizing of every business opportunity. Many aspects of his activities such as the foreign transactions he conducted through his business partner Lindpaintner, still require further research.

³⁸ See O. A., "Johannes Hinrichsen 80 Jahre alt", in: *Weltkunst*, No. 5, 1964, p. 138.

³⁹ The Kunstarchiv Werner J. Schweiger in Vienna purchased numerous annotated auction catalogues from this offer, compare Berlinische Galerie, Konvolut Kunstarchiv Werner J. Schweiger.

Illustrations

Fig. 1 Sculptures on the Weinhaus Huth building (Büttner)

Fig. 2 Detail of the sculptures on the Weinhaus Huth building (Büttner)

Fig. 3 Franz Anton Maulbertsch (1724–1796), *Himmelfahrt Mariens*, sketch for an altar painting for the Cistercian Abbey in Zirc, western Hungary, oil on canvas, 77 x 43 cm, DomQuartier Salzburg, Residenzgalerie

Fig. 4 The “Villa Wassermann” at Fischerndorf 48, Altaussee, which Hinrichsen purchased in 1938 (Literaturmuseum Altaussee, Altaussee Fi 48, undated)

Fig. 5 Johannes Hinrichsen with dog (private archive, undated)

Fig. 6 Photo of the interior of Johannes Hinrichsen’s villa (private archive, undated)

Annett Büttner:

The art dealer Johannes Hinrichsen and Max Liebermann's painting *Kartoffelernte* (Potato Harvest)

The text is an English translation of the original text “Der Kunsthändler Johannes Hinrichsen und Max Liebermanns Gemälde Kartoffelernte” written in German language for the catalog of the exhibition “Die Reise der Bilder” [“The Journey of the Paintings”] pp. 290-296. Translation by John Cima.

In the 1930s, the art dealer Johannes Hinrichsen (1884–1971), who operated in Berlin and Altaussee, maintained particularly close contacts with the Düsseldorf Kunstmuseum under the direction of Dr Hans Wilhelm Hupp (1896–1943).¹ In the course of this relationship, Hinrichsen not only sold artworks, but also assisted in the disposal of works by Jewish artists from museum holdings. A concise example of a resultant long “journey of a painting” is presented below.

The painting *Kartoffelernte* is one of Max Liebermann's (1847–1935) early major works and has a turbulent provenance history. It was painted in 1875 during the artists pre-Impressionist phase under the influence of the Barbizon School of Painting, which was located south of Paris.² In the catalogue raisonné it even bears the title *Kartoffelernte in Barbizon*.³ Following his training in Weimar; Liebermann lived in Paris from 1873 to 1878, where he studied the works of Jean-François Millet (1814–1875), one of the main representatives of this artist colony. In 1884, Liebermann moved from Munich to Berlin and on this occasion he gave the painting to his friend, the artist Johann Sperl (1840–1914).⁴ At the latest, the painting then passed from the Sperl collection into that of the Berlin art dealer Paul Cassirer (1871–1926) in 1906.⁵ Subsequently, the Düsseldorf museum director Dr Karl Koetschau (1868–1949) bought it in 1913, as one of the first acquisitions for the newly founded Kunstmuseum.⁶ The painting had already been exhibited several times prior to its purchase, including at the International Art Exhibition in Venice in 1897, the Gurlitt Gallery in Berlin in 1899, the Düsseldorf International Art Exhibition in 1904 and the Berlin “Jahrhundertausstellung” in 1906.⁷

¹ Annett Büttner, “‘Es ist mir gelungen, dies Bild über die Kriegsjahre zu retten ...’. Der Kunsthändler Johannes Hinrichsen und Max Liebermanns Gemälde *Kartoffelernte*”, in: *Düsseldorfer Jahrbuch*, Vol. 93, 2023, p. 247–272.

² Nicole Roth, “Max Liebermann, Die Kartoffelernte”, in: Stiftung Museum Kunstpalast (ed.): *Die Sammlung Museum Kunstpalast Düsseldorf. Ausgewählte Werke aus den fünf Abteilungen Skulptur und Angewandte Kunst, Gemädegalerie, Moderne Kunst, Graphische Sammlung, Glasmuseum Hentrich*, Düsseldorf 2011, p. 127; Matthias Eberle, *Max Liebermann 1847–1935. Werkverzeichnis der Gemälde und Ölstudien*, Vol. 1: 1865– 899, Munich 1995, pp. 82–85.

³ Ibid., p. 82.

⁴ Roth 2011, p. 127.

⁵ In 1906, 1907 and 1912, Paul Cassirer offered it for sale and in 1903 it was already exhibited in his art salon, whether as part of his collection or as a trade item cannot be established from the literature. Compare Eberle 1995, p. 82.

⁶ Archive of the Museum Kunstpalast Düsseldorf (MKP), painting and sculpture inventory GG HS4, pp. 12–13, consecutive No. 40, Inv. No. 624.

⁷ Eberle 1995, p. 82.

After the work survived the First World War in Düsseldorf unscathed, in 1924 it temporarily fell victim to theft. Together with seven other paintings, it disappeared from the museum rooms in the night of 29 to 30 September.⁸ The thieves were utterly ruthless and cut the canvases out of the frames. Afterwards, the perpetrators took their loot to the Netherlands and stored it at a forwarding agency in Amsterdam. However, the police were able to arrest them in Amsterdam on 4 October. A newspaper reported that they were “two professional burglars, who specialise in the theft of valuable works of art”.⁹ The two Germans called themselves Schmidt and Schulz and provided information about the storage location of the paintings. After the robbery, Koetschau had immediately informed the art dealer Frederik Muller in Amsterdam and asked for the theft report to be passed on to the Dutch art trade. On 13 October 1924, he was able to give the all clear, “You will have heard through your newspapers that thanks to the fast-working police, the criminals were caught very quickly and the paintings could also be recovered.”¹⁰ The painting *Kartoffelernte* then had to be remounted on a second canvas.

For the time being the painting's location seemed secure. But this was to change in 1933 with the transfer of power to Hitler's NSDAP. In the years that followed, because he was Jewish Liebermann's works in museums were increasingly stored in magazines, or even removed.¹¹ From the mid-1930s, the Düsseldorf museum also attempted to sell works by Liebermann. At first, Hupp's efforts focused on Liebermann's painting *Badende Knaben* (Bathing Boys) from 1900, which Koetschau had acquired from the Flechtheim Gallery in 1926.¹² As early as February 1937, Hupp began negotiating with several galleries, but the planned swaps initially fell through. This was due to the deterioration in the sales opportunities for works by Jewish artists. After the central *Entartete Kunst* exhibition in Munich, which opened on 19 July 1937 and was subsequently shown as a travelling exhibition in many German cities, uncertainty increased in museum circles as to what could still be exhibited at all.¹³ It was not until June 1938 that the painting *Badende Knaben* was finally exchanged with the Gemälde-Galerie Carl Nicolai in Berlin.¹⁴

Initially, Hupp wanted to keep the *Kartoffelernte*, as in his opinion it was “a really good work” by the artist.¹⁵ However, at a meeting of museum directors in Berlin in August 1937, “Reichserziehungsminister” (Reich Education Minister) Bernhard Rust ordered works by

⁸ Stadtarchiv Düsseldorf (StAD), Sign. 0-1-4-3848, pp. 242–245.

⁹ Author unknown, “Die Düsseldorfer Gemäldediebe verhaftet”, in: *Rheinisches Volksblatt*, No. 235, 6.10.1924, p. 2

¹⁰ StAD, 0-1-3-18123, pp. 711–717, here ue. 715 letter from Koetschau to the art dealership Frederik Muller from 13.10.1924.

¹¹ Gesa Jeuthe, “Die Wertschätzung der deutschen Kunst. Zur Preisentwicklung der Werke von Max Liebermann und Emil Nolde”, in: Maïke Steinkamp, Ute Haug (ed.): *Werke und Werte. Über das Handeln und Sammeln von Kunst im Nationalsozialismus* (documents from the “Entartete Kunst” research unit, Vol. 5), Berlin 2010, pp. 3–21.

¹² *Badende Knaben*, 1900, oil on canvas, 113 × 152 cm, today Stiftung Stadtmuseum Berlin / Märkische Museum, Inv.-No. GEM 92/14, sammlung-online.stadtmuseum.de/Details/Index/167491, accessed on 19.10.2023.

¹³ Kathrin DuBois (ed.), 1937. *Die Aktion “Entartete Kunst” in Düsseldorf*, exhibition cat., Stiftung Museum Kunstpalast Düsseldorf, Düsseldorf 2017. This action largely involved the removal of artworks for formal reasons, an attack on the modern per se.

¹⁴ StAD, 0-1-4-3777, pp. 727–729, 733–773.

¹⁵ StAD, 0-1-4-3748, p. 249, note from Dr. Hupp from 14.4.1937.

Liebermann to be taken down.¹⁶ Numerous museums in Germany followed this call and parted with at least 35 of Liebermann's works by exchanging or selling them. Hupp now also felt compelled to remove all of the artist's works from the collection. After preliminary verbal negotiations, on 22 March 1938 Johannes Hinrichsen made a first written offer of an exchange of the *Bildnis Architekt Anton Wingen* by Wilhelm Leibl (1844–1900), for the *Kartoffelernte*, other works of art and a cash payment of RM 35,000.¹⁷ Hupp had previously thought about the painting by Leibl in 1936/37 and therefore it must have already been in Hinrichsen's possession at that time¹⁸ when he demanded a price of RM 65,000. Like all representatives of realistic painting, Leibl enjoyed great popularity during the Nazi era and in the interim, the painting had even been considered as a gift for Hitler by an unnamed commission, as Leibl was considered to be Hitler's favourite painter.

As a precaution, Hupp asked Count von Baudissin at the Reich Ministry of Science, Education and National Culture on 28 March 1938 for his opinion regarding such an exchange deal.¹⁹ Baudissin promptly gave his approval, once again underlining his stated political line and advising Hupp to make the transaction, "I have removed Liebermann from the National Gallery and I have also strongly advised the Austrian National Gallery in Vienna to take Liebermann down. You know that I removed him in Essen long ago. For me, the treatment of the Liebermann case is a purely political matter. Liebermann is of no value to you in the magazine. If you have an opportunity to exchange him at a favourable price, I can only recommend it. Apart from anything else, there are more works by Liebermann in German museums than could ever be regarded as responsible."²⁰ With regard to the financial valuation of the Liebermann painting, Hupp consulted the former director of the Nationalgalerie in Berlin, Dr Eberhard Hanfstaengl (1886–1973). Hanfstaengl estimated the possible sale value at around RM 20,000, but recommended the inclusion of a passage in the contract that in the event of higher sales proceeds would secure a share for the museum.²¹ Following lengthy internal deliberations by the authorities, on 12 June 1938 the contract was drawn up accordingly and the painting was handed over to Hinrichsen.²²

In January and February 1939, the city of Düsseldorf enquired as to whether Hinrichsen had sold the *Kartoffelernte* and, if so, for what price, and whether this would result in additional claims upon it. Hinrichsen had in fact been unable to sell the painting, but stated that he had

¹⁶ Compare Christoph Zuschlag, "'Freiwillige' Abgaben moderner Kunst durch deutsche Museen nach 1933", in: Tanja Baensch, Kristina Kratz-Kessemeier, Dorothee Wimmer (ed.), *Museen im Nationalsozialismus: Akteure – Orte – Politik*, Cologne/Weimar/Vienna 2016, pp. 223–234, here p. 231.

¹⁷ Compare StAD, 0-1-4-3776, p. 359, letter from Hinrichsen dated 22.3.1938. It deals with the Wilhelm Leibl painting, *Bildnis Architekt Anton Wingen*, 1867, oil on wood, 78.2 × 49.5 cm, MKP. M 4519, which today is in the Museum Kunstpalast. In addition, three Swabian figures of saints and an Asian carpet are agreed as exchange objects.

¹⁸ See StAD, 0-1-4-3774, pp. 461–469, including a letter from Hupp dated 8.3.1937. The provenance of the picture has yet to be finally clarified.

¹⁹ StAD, 0-1-4-3826, pp. 49–52. From January 1934, the convinced National Socialist, Dr. Klaus Graf von Baudissin (1891–1961), was the Director of the Folkwang-Museum in Essen. In 1937/38 he briefly held the additional parallel post of the Head of the Office of National Culture in the Reich Ministry of Science, Education and National Culture. Compare Ernst Klee, *Das Kulturlexikon zum Dritten Reich. Wer war was vor und nach 1945*, Frankfurt am Main 2009, p. 31f.

²⁰ StAD, 0-1-4-5309, p. 73 letter from Baudissin dated 31.3.1938.

²¹ StAD, 0-1-4-5309, pp. 77–78, reply from Hanfstaengl dated 12.4.1938.

²² StAD, 0-1-4-5309, pp. 97–99 and pp. 158–160.

exchanged it for a painting by the Italian painter Jacopo Amigoni (1682–1752).²³ Unfortunately, it is not clear from his letters who the exchange partner was. Correspondence between the city of Düsseldorf and Hinrichsen about the transfer of possible additional proceeds from the sale of the Amigoni continued until 1950.²⁴ In response to the regular enquiries made to Hinrichsen as to whether the work had already been sold, in a letter dated 15 September 1944 he suddenly replied that the Amigoni had not been sold, but that the Liebermann had.²⁵ This also did not go unnoticed in Düsseldorf, with the result that from August 1945 onwards consideration was given to the repossession of the *Kartoffelernte* or the payment of the contractually due difference from possibly higher sales proceeds from the Amigoni, which had legally taken the place of the Liebermann. Liebermann was seen as being fully rehabilitated and the value of his works were linked to the period before 1933. Direct negotiations with Hinrichsen commenced after the resumption of postal traffic with foreign countries in the summer of 1946. In his reply from 9 August 1946, he states that the exchange of the Liebermann for the Amigoni had been carried out in Switzerland in 1939, but names are again not mentioned. The art dealer's statements are sometimes confusing and difficult to follow. However, as opposed to the correspondence with his former contact Hupp, the economic interests are now more clearly pronounced, although the tone remains friendly. Hinrichsen had to try to rebuild the business relations with the Düsseldorf art collections and at the same time fend off the city's financial demands. Since a profitable sale of the Amigoni painting in the post-war period seemed impossible to all the parties involved, the negotiations finally came down to the re-acquisition of Liebermann's painting. The sum of DM 35,000 demanded by Hinrichsen in December 1949 was rejected by the city of Düsseldorf as far too high and therefore at the beginning of 1950 the matter came to a temporary standstill.

Hinrichsen had had the painting *Kartoffelernte* back in his possession since December 1949 and had lent it to the Kunstmuseum. Hinrichsen highlighted his achievements in this regard in a letter, "When Jewish painters were no longer allowed to be exhibited during the Hitler era, I took over Liebermann's 'Kartoffelernte' in exchange for a painting by Leibl [...]. [...] I managed to save this painting through the war years."²⁶ In fact, this can only be seen as an embellishment, since according to Hinrichsen's own statements, the painting was not in his possession from February 1939 to December 1949, but in an unknown location in Switzerland.

In 1952, new purchase discussions began, in the course of which it was possible to reduce the amount now demanded by Hinrichsen from DM 15,000 DM to DM 12,000. At its meeting on 5 June 1952, the Cultural Committee decided to repurchase the work under these conditions.²⁷ During a personal visit to Düsseldorf, Hinrichsen agreed, albeit reluctantly, to the reduction of the purchase price.²⁸ In purely financial terms, he had indeed not engineered a bargain with this transaction. Since 12 September 1953 at the latest, the work has once again been the property of the Städtische Kunstmuseum Düsseldorf.²⁹ Its whereabouts

²³ Compare StAD, 0-1-4-5309, pp. 107–115; 0-1-4-3779, pp. 363–365.

²⁴ Detailed source information is available in Büttner 2023.

²⁵ Compare StAD, 0-1-4-5309, pp. 138 and 143.

²⁶ StAD, 0-1-4-5306, p. 1099, letter from Hinrichsen dated 21.5.1953.

²⁷ StAD, 9-1-0-94, p. 343, minutes of a "Kulturausschuss" (Culture Committee) meeting from 5.6.1952.

²⁸ StAD, 0-1-4-5306, p.1127, note of the custodian Meta Patas from 15.6.1953.

²⁹ MKP, inventory register GG HS 19, Inv.-No. M 5019.

between 1939 and 1949 remain unclear. A fate shared by the painting with numerous other works by Liebermann.³⁰

³⁰ Meike Hopp, "Ein Fass ohne Boden? Provenienzforschung zu Max Liebermann", in: Lucy Wasensteiner, *ibid.*, Alice Cazzola (ed.), *Wenn Bilder sprechen. Provenienzforschung zu Max Liebermann und seinem Netzwerk*, Heidelberg 2022, p. 36–55, doi.org/10.11588/arthistoricum.1118, accessed on 16.7.2023.

Illustrations

Max Liebermann (1847–1935), *Die Kartoffelernte*, 1875, oil on canvas, 108,5 x 172 cm, sign. and dat. bottom r.: M. Liebermann 75, Inv.-Nr. M 5019, Kunstpalast, Düsseldorf (© Kunstpalast – Horst Kolberg – ARTOTHEK)

Theft report of the “Museen-Verband” (Museum Association) from 2.10.1924 (Stadtarchiv Düsseldorf, Sign. 0-1-4-3848, p. 245).

Letter from the art dealer Johannes Hinrichsen dated 21.5.1953 (Stadtarchiv, Sign. 0-1-4-5306, S. 1099)

Wolfgang G. Eckel: Wolfgang Gurlitt and Theodor Friedrich. A Bad Aussee network

The text is an English translation of the original text "Wolfgang Gurlitt und Theodor Friedrich. Ein Netzwerk in Bad Aussee" written in German language for the catalog of the exhibition "Die Reise der Bilder" ["The Journey of the Paintings"] pp. 72-79. Translation by John Cima.

An overview of Wolfgang Gurlitt's networks in Bad Aussee

In 1940, Wolfgang Gurlitt's wife Käthe Gurlitt and ex-wife, Julia Gurlitt, acquired the property Reitern 38¹ located on the high plateau above the village of Bad Aussee on the road from Bad Aussee to Bad Ischl. The purchase included a villa and its furnishings. Moreover, Gurlitt's mistress Lilly Agoston, later with the pro forma married name Christiansen, was also repeatedly in Aussee from 1940 onwards.² In 1943, Wolfgang Gurlitt moved both his place of residence and gallery, including his paintings, to Bad Aussee. With the villa on Lenauhügel in Lerchenreith, he then quickly integrated himself into the local "high society" in Bad Aussee and found the useful and important contacts. Today, Gurlitt would probably be described as a gifted networker. Following the end of the war, the relationships that he used before and throughout the years of conflict to expand his collections and relocate them to Aussee were adapted with lightening speed to the new circumstances and rulers, and now he was on the side of the victors. It was this flexibility that formed the basis of his business prior to, during and after the war.

After the National Socialists came to power in Germany in 1933, Gurlitt offered his services as an art dealer to Jewish collector friends in order to allegedly safeguard their treasures from the Nazis. Nevertheless, until the end of the war, with the help of his cousin Hildebrand Gurlitt, he was equally enthusiastic about serving the National Socialists, especially for the "Sonderauftrag Linz". For example, in the course of interrogations by the American intelligence services, he later successfully presented buying trips to Alsace during the war as family excursions, for which he supposedly only had Hermann Voss issue him with attestations for reasons of convenience. However, more detailed investigations have since refuted these claims and it has been proven that in fact he did make purchases.³

¹ Property listed in the Bad Aussee KG Reitern land register, entry no. 38 and house number Reitern 38, according to the Bad Aussee/Altaussee/Grundlsee house directory 2006, p. 58, as the "Lenauhügel" villa owned by Eduard and Gertraud Guggi, as well as Orlando and Teresa Cedrino (descendants of Gurlitt and gallery owners in Munich).

² Christa Zöchling, "Kunstsammler Cornelius Gurlitt und seine Verbindungen zu Österreich", in: *profil*, 6.5.2014, profil.at/gesellschaft/kunstsammler-cornelius-gurlitt-verbindungen-oesterreich-374910, accessed on 13.11.2023.

³ Walter Schuster, *Die „Sammlung Gurlitt“ der Neuen Galerie der Stadt Linz*, unpublished manuscript, Linz 1999, p. 27f.

After the war, one could quickly find Gurlitt as a supporter of the new rulers in Bad Aussee, who provided him with connections to the mayor of Linz, Dr Ernst Koref, and through him to Vienna and hence Austrian citizenship and the Neue Galerie in Linz. Owing to a Jewish grandmother, his family background as a “quarter Jew” and laterally emphasised “victim role”, assisted his exoneration by his Austrian helpers and the acquisition of citizenship on 12 December 1946⁴ which was aided by his new network comprised of Albrecht⁵ Gaiswinkler und Koref. Moreover, as opposed to his willingness to be of service to those in power, when it came to researching the provenance of various works in his possession, Gurlitt's behaviour in the 1950s was somewhat dismissive or even elusive.

The example of engineer Theodor Friedrich provides an excellent illustration of Gurlitt's wartime network and its “subsequent use” in the following years, before he found a new post-war supporter in Gaiswinkler, who was temporarily a Socialist Party member of parliament from 19 December 1945 to 8 November 1949.

Theodor Friedrich and the Obertressen 1 property

The property at Obertressen No. 1, or Altausseer Strasse 1, was originally part of the “Alpenheim” sanatorium, which the Jewish doctor Dr Josef Schreiber launched in 1883. His first sanatorium (later the Elisabeth Home) in the valley of the River Altausseer Traun had opened in 1869 and was sold in 1873, after which Dr Schreiber was contractually bound to wait ten years before being permitted to open another sanatorium in Aussee. On 22 June 1873, he already bought new land at the foot of the “Sonnenhang” and expanded the property by 1887 to include meadowland between the Altausseer Strasse and the River Traun. He built the several detached buildings of the “Alpenheim” sanatorium on the eastern section of the property along the road from Aussee to Altaussee and the entire ensemble thus extended from today's house number 79 (Villa Bernina, Dr Schreiber's former private home) in the north-west to the current house number 347⁶ and the road up the “Sonnenhang”.

After Dr Schreiber's death, the Schreiber family was only able to retain the property and the business for a short period and the individual buildings and parts of the site were sold off separately. On 28 October 1926⁷ Ing. Theodor Friedrich inherited the property Obertressen 1⁸ following the death of his mother Eleonore (v.) Friedrich, a landowner's widow from Mainz

⁴ Ibid. p. 39.

⁵ Albrecht Gaiswinkler was born on 29 October 1905 in Bad Aussee and baptised the following day as Albert (Albertus Magnus). Until his enlistment in the Wehrmacht in 1943 and his landing as an agent of the British SOE (Special Operations Executive) in the Salzkammergut in 1945, he lived under the name Albert Gaiswinkler in Graz-Eggenberg at various addresses as a health insurance official.

⁶ Wolfgang G. Eckel, *Wienseer. Die Beziehungen zwischen Wien und Aussee und ihre Auswirkungen auf die österreichische und europäische Entwicklung am Beispiel des Elisabeth-Heimes in Praunfalk und seiner Geschichte*, Vienna 2015, p. 20ff.

⁷ Bad Aussee parish, death records, 1926, page 266, serial no. 63.

⁸ The land of the former “Alpenheim” property was located on the border between the municipalities of Grundlsee (cadastral municipality [KG] Obertressen) and Markt Aussee, from 1913 Bad Aussee. Owing to the incorporation of KG Obertressen into the municipality of Bad Aussee in the course of the merger and the separation of the municipalities during National Socialist rule, the KG boundaries were altered. The address Altausseer Strasse 1 remained in Obertressen, while Altausseer Strasse 10, the remainder of the “Alpenheim”, became part of KG Bad Aussee.

am Rhein, who had owned the site. By this time, the house had already been separated from the sanatorium ensemble and after several changes of ownership, in 1928 the neighbouring, former sanatorium with the house number 10 became the "Alpenhof" hotel owned by the market town of Bad Aussee.

In the years prior to the "Anschluss" of Austria, it would appear that Friedrich struggled with serious financial problems. He is mentioned in the municipality files in connection with the filing of a fraud complaint by the Munich-based "Verlag für zeitlichen Fortschritt" on 21 November 1936:

"On 29 November 1935, Friedrich had our foreign language teaching material in English sent to him on a 4-week rental basis by means of a signed registration form. [...] Judging by his conduct, it can be assumed that he was neither willing nor able to fulfil his obligations from the outset, but instead was only interested in gaining an unlawful financial advantage. [...]"⁹

A short time later, the local police in Aussee were able to seize the books from Friedrich and return them to the publisher. A second case, namely an auction procedure for 1,500 schillings, against, "Theodor Friedrich, real estate dealer in Obertressen 1 near Bad Aussee" had only just closed.¹⁰ However, as early as March 1937, the next enquiry followed and on this occasion it came from the "Alpenländischer Kreditorenverband – Zweigstelle Linz a/d Donau", regarding the whereabouts of "Theo Friedrich".¹¹

A severe shock for the Friedrich family was probably the fire at the neighbouring "Alpenhof" in the night of 29–30 January 1945. This had been purchased from the municipality in 1939 by the tax authorities of the German Reich and operated as a rest home for civil servants:

"At about 5 a.m. [on 30 January] a fire broke out in the Hotel "Alpenhof" in Bad Aussee, Altausseerstrasse, and burned it to the ground. The Wehrmacht had been using the hotel as a military hospital. The cause of the fire is assumed to have been the careless handling of fire when thawing a water pipe. Damage approx. 200,000 RM."¹²

For a lengthy period after the war, the municipality first attempted to obtain compensation for the costs of clearing away the ruins of the fire and then to have the entire site transferred to it as allegedly forcibly sold German property. However, as the sale in 1939 had been voluntary, the demand for restitution was rejected. Finally, in 1961 the municipality had to repurchase the property, which it divided into plots and sold off from 1965 onwards.

The Altausseer Strasse 1 property remained in the possession of the Friedrich family and after Theodor Friedrich's death in 1949 his widow Margarethe inherited a quarter of the land, while the remainder passed to his son Bernhard.¹³ Over the years shares were redistributed amongst the family and the history of the "Villa Friedrich", as the older residents of Bad Aussee called it, finally came to an end in 1975, when it was sold in two stages to new owners.¹⁴

⁹ Steiermärkisches Landesarchiv (StLA), Aussee, market and municipality, K714, no. 357/37.

¹⁰ Ibid. no. 116/37.

¹¹ Ibid. no. 881 of the market municipality Bad Aussee from 11.3.1937.

¹² Chronicle of the Bad Aussee gendarmerie post, 30.1.1945.

¹³ Bad Aussee land register, folio 114 (B), transfer from the Obertressen municipality land register entry number 139 from 25.4.1950, no. 142.

¹⁴ Bad Aussee land register, folio 117 (B), ordinal number 4 from 26.3.1976.

Theodor Friedrich as a real estate agent

After the National Socialists took control of Austria and Bad Aussee, Friedrich experienced an economic upturn as a real estate agent and manager of the “aryanised” properties on behalf of the Gestapo. After the war, Friedrich described in a letter accompanying a list of properties, that “[t]he list [...] was compiled by the Gestapo at the time and only included properties that had been forcibly aryanised. Under administration I also had villas and estates from other judicial districts, mainly located in Bad Ischl, Attersee Mondsee and Wolfgangsee.”¹⁵ This letter to the Upper Austrian provincial administration from November/December 1945 was stamped, “Officially authorised real estate mortgage and administration office Th. G. Friedrich” and it was Friedrich’s close relationship with the new rulers from 1938 onwards, which, following the move and relocation of his gallery to Aussee in the summer of 1943, also made him interesting for Gurlitt.

Wolfgang Gurlitt’s role in the National Socialist art trade system

In the investigations of the American art departments, the military secret service CIC (Counter Intelligence Corps) and the OSS (Office of Strategic Services), Gurlitt’s actions were repeatedly portrayed in different ways. Initially, in comparison with his younger cousin Hildebrand Gurlitt, he was rated as insignificant. For example, in an enquiry by the “Art Looting Investigation Unit of the OSS” regarding Hans Posse, in line with his statements, Gurlitt’s stays in Strasbourg with an accreditation from Hermann Voss are categorised, as “private trips for family matters”.¹⁶

On behalf of the Director and Special Representative for Linz, on 11 October 1943 in Dresden Dr Gottfried Reimer issued the approval for the search for paintings in Alsace for the New Art Museum in Linz, whereby the addenda “[the success] to be verified” is often overlooked.¹⁷ Later, lists of paintings documenting Gurlitt’s ongoing business relations with the Reich Chancellery were indeed compiled¹⁸ and they included purchases made by the Reich Chancellery in the period from 27 April 1940 (Theodor Hackert, *Italienische Landschaft mit Wasserfall*) to 21 September 1943 (Ferdinand von Rayski, *Hasentreibjagd* (Rabbit Hunt)).

Theodor Friedrich and the storage of Wolfgang Gurlitt’s paintings

On 2 October 1943, Wolfgang Gurlitt wrote to the Regional Director of the Reich Chamber of Fine Arts in Berlin, Artur Schmidt, asking for his support:

“[The matter] in question concerns the rooms that I rented here in Bad-Aussee a considerable time ago for the salvage of works of art. The owner of these rooms, Ing. Theodor von Friedrich, Altausseeerstr. 1, requires a confirmation stating that the two rooms let to me are used to store prestigious works of art and cultural property and that they be retained for the purpose of salvage is of importance and significance. [...] I also wish to mention that, in addition to items from my gallery, I have also taken in important objects from colleagues in the art trade, from private owners, etc. This requested letter is needed as proof, because here in Bad-Aussee rooms are again being confiscated on a large scale [sic]. [...]

¹⁵ Oberösterreichisches Landesarchiv (OÖLA), NSV inventory 78b, property and land matters, determination of the owners 1945–1946, Friedrich property list.

¹⁶ National Archives and Records Administration, Washington D.C. (NARA), M1782, Reports by the Art Looting Investigation Unit of the OSS, p. 51ff.

¹⁷ NARA, M1941 Roll0013 ID1560051, Ardelia Hall Collection OMGUS-HQ, p. 106.

¹⁸ NARA, correspondence Fahrig-Huth, 1950–1951, Wolfgang Gurlitt list, p. 1f.

With best regards and “deutschem Gruss”,
s/Wolfgang Gurlitt¹⁹

As early as 4 October 1943, Theodor Friedrich was issued with the requested confirmation under reference BK/VII KA7 S-T:

"According to a special decree of the Führer, valuable cultural property must be relocated and secured [sic] outside the Reich's capital. The objects placed in your two rooms by my member, the art dealer Wolfgang Gurlitt from Berlin, and other art dealers and private individuals are cultural property of national value; your rooms have therefore been made available for a purpose of importance to the war effort.

I request that this letter be submitted to the relevant authorities.

I.A. signed Schmidt²⁰

On 8 October, Gurlitt expressed his thanks for this confirmation and once again closed with “deutschem Gruss”.²¹ In this connection it is often emphasised that Gurlitt would never have signed with “Heil Hitler”. However, from a historical perspective “deutscher Gruss” is an equivalent.²² It was used in public with an outstretched right arm and the words “Heil Hitler” were only added when necessary.

The Alpenhof fire as inspiration for a family solution to the provenance issue

After the war, the aforementioned burning down of the “Alpenhof”, which lay adjacent to the location of Wolfgang Gurlitt's paintings and documents in storage with the Friedrich family, probably gave him a brilliant idea. Whenever provenance enquiries could no longer be substantiated by means of acquisition chains, he would refer to the burnt documents in his Berlin gallery, as exemplified below by the “Traversi case” from the Löwenstein Collection.²³ Likewise, paintings that were the object of questions were often described as having perished in this fire. Moreover, Wolfgang Gurlitt was not alone in using this tactic. A short time later, Hildebrand Gurlitt, his younger cousin, also employed the same argument in connection with a fire at his Dresden gallery and a large number of the allegedly destroyed paintings were subsequently discovered in the possession of his son Cornelius in Salzburg and Munich and currently await more detailed research.

The end of the war and Gurlitt's new networks

With the appearance of the Americans on 8 May 1945, the last actual day of hostilities in Europe, Taskforce Pearson of the 3rd US Army came to Altaussee to collect the Hungarian crown jewels and instead found the art deposits in the Altaussee salt mine.²⁴ An event, which ushered in a rapid change to the situation in Ausseerland.

¹⁹ NARA, M1941 Roll0013 ID1560051, Ardelia Hall Collection OMGUS-HQ, p. 103.

²⁰ Ibid. p. 104.

²¹ Ibid. p. 105.

²² See e.g. Schuster 1999, p. 29.

²³ The aforementioned letter confirming the storage with the Friedrich family from October 1943 shows that the paintings and documents were already in Ausseerland at this time. The bombing of the gallery on the Kurfürstendamm in Berlin during November 1943 and the loss of documents there is thus chronologically dubious.

²⁴ Ralph E. Pearson, *En route to the Redoubt. A Soldier's Report as a Regiment goes to War. [...]*, Chicago 1957, p. 214ff.

Albrecht Gaiswinkler, a former health insurance official in the city of Graz, who was born in Aussee, had defected to the Americans during his war service and acted, albeit completely unsuccessfully, as an agent of the British secret service SOE, now took over the administration of Ausseerland on behalf of the 3rd US Army.²⁵ From this juncture onwards, he acted as a "US military administrator" or "government representative" and was sometimes also referred to as a "provisional district governor" until he was elected to parliament in Austria's first post-war national elections on 19 December 1945.

One of Gaiswinkler's measures was to include in his administration all the Reich Germans he deemed useful and fill key positions with these and other persons who were dependent upon him. Apart from his appointed helpers, who ranged from the financial advisor Edmund Winnicki and the tourism expert Emil Oesterley, to the entire symphony orchestra of the German Reich Broadcasting Corporation, Gaiswinkler also employed the artistic stars and starlets present in Ausseerland in 1945 in order to achieve the greatest possible public impact for himself.

It is therefore not surprising that in the minutes of the first meeting of the Aussee Festival Weeks on 16 August 1945, which Gaiswinkler convened, Wolfgang Gurlitt appears on the list of participants alongside the original invitees.²⁶ These consisted of Peter Kreuder, Wolfgang Börner, Nico Dostal (who did not attend), Rudolf Forster (who sent his apologies), Hans Gilge, Mr Karsten (correct: Walter Kasten, who then appears in the minutes), Kienzle (correct: Kienzl, widow of the composer Wilhelm Kienzl), Emil Oesterley, Edmund Winnicki and Franz Kahls.²⁷ In September 1945, the Festival Weeks took place for the first time, with the former German Reich Radio Orchestra of the "Reichsrundfunk Bruckner Stift St. Florian" becoming the new "Ausseerland Symphony Orchestra". Both the Kurhaus in Bad Aussee's Kurpark and the no-longer existent movie theatre in the Bahnhofsstrasse, which is now the "Bunte Perlen" kindergarten at number 237, served as festival venues in 1945.

Two years later, in 1947, a follow-up project, the "Musikfestwochen der Jugend", which was originated by Emil Oesterley, who had already been involved in the 1945 Festival Weeks, took place and Wolfgang Gurlitt returned to participate by exhibiting pictures from his Neue Galerie der Stadt Linz in Aussee. The exhibition of the Lentos Kunstmuseum Linz, the successor institution to the Neue Galerie, in the Kammerhofmuseum in Bad Aussee, as part of the European Capital of Culture Salzkammergut 2024, is based upon this episode.

Apart from the activities in 1945, which he accompanied until September, Gurlitt was also involved in Gaiswinkler's major, albeit never realised, arts and crafts schemes. At a meeting on 13 August 1945, as an addition to the official activities of the Ausseerland municipality, it was decided to establish a separate arts and crafts department within the Siedlungs- und Fremdenverkehrs A.G. Ausseerland (in foundation), Gaiswinkler's pet economic project. Gurlitt's secretary Walter Kasten, who later became his deputy and successor in Linz, was to be the managing director of this division, while Gurlitt himself was to serve on the division's Board of Trustees together with Gaiswinkler, a certain Mr Klimitsch and a delegate from Ausseerland A.G.²⁸

²⁵ Elisabeth Lebensaft, Christoph Mentschl, „Are you prepared to do a dangerous job?“ *Auf den Spuren österreichischer und deutscher Exilanten im britischen Geheimdienst SOE* (Österreichisches Biographisches Lexikon – publication series, Vol. 12), Vienna 2010, p. 145ff.

²⁶ StLA, Aussee, market and municipality, K 714, BH Ausseerland record, no. 124ff., file note from 18.8.1945 regarding the meeting on 16.8. signed Winnicki.

²⁷ StLA, Aussee, market and municipality, K 714, BH Ausseerland record, no. 82.

²⁸ StLA, Aussee, market and municipality, K 714, BH Ausseerland record, no. 61f.

Gurlitt also pursued long-term plans for an "artists' colony" and in August 1945, he sent a letter with his concept to the municipality and the all-powerful "government commissioner Gaiswinkler":

"The Gurlitt Gallery and the Gurlitt publishing house are not only committed to promoting Austria and the Aussee region through exhibitions and publications, but also wish to contribute to attracting productive and interesting people to Aussee as guests by creating and building four guesthouses – the HOUSES OF FRIENDSHIP."²⁹

In his concept, Gurlitt suggested "Haus Gurlitt", "Haus im Hof", "Haus Herbert Eulenberg" and "Haus Emil Waldmann" as house names. This project did not leave any further documentary traces, although the future spa director of Bad Aussee, Emil Oesterley, later founded an artists' colony in his "donkey farm" after having already accommodated numerous artists there during the war.

Gaiswinkler's move to the national parliament in November 1945 also meant that his relationship with the mayor of Linz, Ernst Koref, in the club of Social Democratic members of parliament became useful to his Aussee acolyte Gurlitt. In the following year, Koref intervened with the Minister of the Interior, Oskar Helmer, in favour of granting Gurlitt citizenship, and Koref was also instrumental in supporting the foundation of the Neue Galerie of the City of Linz, despite growing reservations on the part of Linz's municipal officials.

Involvement of the Friedrichs in Gurlitt's art business

After the war, Wolfgang Gurlitt remembered his former partners for one last time. In the course of investigations by the American authorities into "aryanised" works of art and collections that had been sold under duress, Gurlitt received several enquiries. For example, the painting *Klöppelstube* by Gaspare Traversi from the Löwenstein Collection was the subject of questions relating to the Löwenstein family's restitution claims by Dr Erika Zeiss from the Collecting Point Munich. Gurlitt already stated at the beginning,

"[...] that the Italian painting owned by Ms Christiansen was created by the painter Gaspare Traversi, Naples 1752–1769 (period of his activity there). It is a painting of the largest format, depicting a sewing or lace-making room with many people. Would you be so kind as to let me know what applications might need to be made to have the paintings returned to the heirs [Christiansen-Agoston had died in September 1950]."³⁰

Here, too, the concealment of provenance evolved into a system. The next time Zeiss asked about the Traversi painting, Gurlitt stated on 23 June 1951 that it had last been owned by Lilly Christiansen-Agoston and had been sold to Hermann Voss for Linz by Ing. Friedrich, Margarete Friedrich' husband. On the original of this letter, the numbers "Linz 2973" and "No. 9199" are already handwritten, probably by the Collecting Point Munich, next to the Traversi picture. The claim that all of the gallery's documents in Berlin had been destroyed applies equally to other pictures.³¹ Gurlitt had stated previously on 11 May 1951 that all of his documents had been burnt in Berlin in November 1943, although according to his correspondence concerning the rooms at Friedrich's, at least a large part of the gallery's holdings had been moved to Aussee prior to this date.

²⁹ Ibid. no. 23.

³⁰ NARA, Ardelia Hall Collection, M1946, Roll0003, page 103, letter from 28.5.1951 – Gurlitt to Dr Zeiss.

³¹ NARA, Ardelia Hall Collection, M1946, Roll0003, page109, letter from 23.6.1951 – Gurlitt to Dr Zeiss.

Moreover, a few days before this letter from Gurlitt to Zeiss, the latter had already established that, according to Margarete Friedrich's statement, she had merely arranged the sale in June 1943 because at that time her husband did not possess a licence.³²

These letters marked the end of Gurlitt's recorded relationship with the Friedrich family. However, the method that Gurlitt had developed to justify or conceal provenance was nonetheless quite clear and involved references to deceased owners from his network and burnt documents for paintings that appeared in the collections for Linz, or were subject to reclamation by Jewish families, as in this case the Löwenstein family, as well as works from the Morgenstern collection.

³² NARA, Ardelia Hall Collection, M1946, Roll0003, page 122, letter from 19.6.1951 – Dr Zeiss to Gurlitt.

Illustrations

Fig. 1: The actual Villa Gurlitt on Lenauhügel in winter, which has long since been sold.
Photo: Eckel 2015

Fig. 2: Especially in foreign media, the subsequently built, adjacent bungalow is often shown instead of the actual Villa Gurlitt. The descendants of the Gurlitt family sold this bungalow much later than the villa. According to unverified information given to the Lentos by the granddaughter, Alexandra Cedrino, the sale took place between 2015 and 2017. Photo: Eckel 2015

Fig. 3: The Hotel Alpenhof, formerly the Alpenheim Sanatorium, before the fire in 1945. Behind the three-storey main building on the Altaussee Strasse at the bottom right-hand edge, the house Obertressen or Altaussee Strasse 1, which still exists today, can be seen on the left. Picture: Eckel Collection

Fig. 4: The Kurhausplatz in the 1940s with the central Kurhaus. On the left is the Cafe Vesco arcade, which in 1945 housed the headquarters of the “US military administration” and the first floor office of the subsequent Member of Parliament, Albrecht Gaiswinkler. Picture: Kammerhofmuseum Bad Aussee.

Fig. 5: The former spa theatre and in 1945 Bad Aussee cinema owned by Mr Stöger, which became the festival theatre of the Aussee Festival Weeks in 1945. The inscription “Kur-Theater” can still be seen on the pediment, although the building had already been converted into a cinema. Picture: Kammerhofmuseum Bad Aussee

07 "CAUSA MUNK"
THE STORY OF
"POOR MITZERL"
DRAMA AND
CRIMINAL CASE

Michael John: Drama and a criminal case. The Munk family, their pictures and furniture

The text is an English translation of the original text "Drama und Kriminalfall. Die Familie Munk, ihre Bilder und das Mobiliar" written in German language for the catalog of the exhibition "Die Reise der Bilder" ["The Journey of the Paintings"] pp. 313-323. Translation by John Cima.

In line with a predilection of the imperial era, some 150 Jews acquired villas or single-family homes in the Bad Ischl and Bad Aussee area, one of which was the property of Aranka Munk.¹ The Munk family once belonged to the cream of Jewish society, but was subject to personal tragedies, which included the suicide of the daughter Maria ("Ria") in 1911, the separation of the husband and wife and the death of a granddaughter at the age of four. Part of the criminal case relates to the fact that the Jewish villas in the Salzkammergut were "Aryanised" from 1938 onwards, or in other words, the owners were robbed. The Villa Munk and its furnishings, including "a valuable Klimt painting", were confiscated and the 79-year-old Aranka Munk and her daughter Christine ("Lola") Kraus were deported and died in the Holocaust. After the end of the war, the painting *Frauenbildnis (Ria Munk III)* was in the possession of the art dealer Wolfgang Gurlitt and there are no indications of a legal asset transfer. In 1956, the City of Linz bought the painting and it was exhibited in the Neue Galerie and Lentos municipal museums. It was restituted in 2009.²

Aranka Munk was born Aranka Pulitzer in Budapest in 1862 and came to Vienna in 1882 in the course of her marriage. She was related to Joseph Pulitzer, the American publisher and founder of the Pulitzer Prize. Aranka Munk lived in Vienna for the longest period of her life and the siblings, Aranka Munk, Sidonie ("Serena", Hungarian Szerena) Lederer, Jenny Steiner and their families, who all came from the Jewish Pulitzer family, can be described as a networked group. They owned a large art collection, including works by Klimt and Schiele³ and the youngest of the sisters, Szerena Lederer (1867–1943), was arguably instrumental in building the relationship of the Pulitzer/Politzer, Steiner and Lederer families to the Viennese art scene in general, and Gustav Klimt in particular. Prior to 1938, the Lederer Collection was

¹ This contribution is an update based on: Michael John, *Gutachten zur Causa Gustav Klimt, Frauenbildnis (Ria Munk III) unvollendet, (around 1917/18), oil on canvas, 180x90 cm. Kunstmuseum Lentos Linz Inv. No. 149, 12. March 2009*, 143 pages (commissioned by IKG Vienna), as well other texts. This report and that from Sophie Lillie provided a basis for the return of the painting. In the meantime, a series of in-depth texts have resulted, see in particular: Sophie Lillie, *Klimt's Women Collectors. The Pulitzer Sisters Szerena Lederer, Jenny Steiner and Aranka Munk*, univ. diss., Vienna 2015; in addition see: Leopold Emmerich Walkner, *Jüdisches Leben im steirischen Salzkammergut – eine Spurensuche. Die Menschen. Die Häuser. Die Geschichte und die Geschichten dazwischen*, univ. diss., Vienna 2017; Marie-Theres Arnbom, *Die Villen vom Ausseerland. Wenn Häuser Geschichten erzählen*, Vienna 2021. Many thanks are due to Leopold Walkner, Anton Strobl, Elisabeth Nowak-Thaller as well as to Wolfgang Quatember and Nina Höllinger from the Zeitgeschichte Museum Ebensee for their advice.

² See Michael John, "Die 'Connection', Bad Aussee – Berlin – Linz. Kunsthandel mit Folgen", in: Eva Blimlinger, Monika Mayer (ed.), *Kunst sammeln, Kunst handeln*, Vienna/Cologne/Weimar 2012, pp. 101–118; also, "Ein Mann, drei Orte, ein Netzwerk. Der österreichische Gurlitt", in: Hemma Schmutz, Elisabeth Nowak-Thaller (ed.), *Wolfgang Gurlitt. Zauberprinz. Kunsthändler – Sammler*, exhibition cat., Lentos Kunstmuseum Linz, Munich 2019, pp. 325–341.

³ See Tobias G. Natter, *Die Welt von Klimt, Schiele und Kokoschka. Sammler und Mäzene*, Cologne 2003, pp. 111–139 and p. 294.

one of the most important private collections in Vienna and the ties with Klimt were prolonged. Szerena Pulitzer, who was still unmarried at the time, was prominently depicted in his 1888/89 painting *Zuschauerraum im alten Burgtheater* (Auditorium in the old Burgtheater). In his portrait of Viennese society, Klimt also included Szerena's sisters Aranka Munk and Irma Politzer, their husbands, and last but not least, Adam Politzer, a physician and renowned professor. Moreover, Adam Politzer employed Gustav Klimt's brother, Ernst, as an illustrator for his reference works.⁴

Aranka Munk lived in the manner customary for women from the affluent middle classes at that time. She did not pursue a profession, but instead organised the household, was socially and culturally active, travelled and took cures in spas such as Baden, Bad Ischl and elsewhere. She visited Budapest frequently and in 1906 participated in an exhibition on the art of cooking.⁵ In 1911, she travelled with her daughters, Ria and Lola, to Miramare, where she was later joined by her husband, the banker Alexander Munk. The family celebrated Ria's engagement, but this was eventually dissolved and in December 1911 a heartbroken Ria took her own life. The family's obituary read, "Von tiefen Schmerzen gebeugt" ("Bowed down by deep pain").⁶ At Aranka's request, Gustav Klimt was commissioned to create a posthumous portrait. Klimt struggled with this task and therefore Frau Munk, who wished to see her daughter immortalised, approached the painter in person. In 1912/1913, Gustav Klimt recorded on postcards, "Am glad at having shaken off Frau M. with her daughter portrait until autumn" and further, "The Munk portrait is already a painful, sore point. I can't finish it!"⁷

Aranka Munk, who from 1913 was separated from her husband Alexander, bought the house at Marktleite 78 in Bad Aussee in 1916 and stayed there in spring and summer. She now lived in more modest circumstances and seclusion. She appears in the Bad Aussee address directory along with her relative and neighbour Ervin (Erwin) Alberti, born Politzer, who lived partly in Budapest as a businessman and partly in a villa in Bad Aussee (Marktleite 196). From 1936 onwards, Aranka Munk had to take increased care of her daughter, Lola Kraus, who had suffered several personal calamities.⁸ At the time of the National Socialist takeover in 1938, Aranka was already 75 years old and as documents show, overwhelmed by the decree on the registration of Jewish property and the harassment and persecution of the National Socialists.

From May to August 1938, Aranka Munk was in Bad Aussee and in line with the "Nürnberger Rassegesetzen", she and her daughter Lola Kraus, who were now living together, were defined as Jewish. The NS property registration file showed that apparently Aranka Munk had failed to grasp the seriousness of the situation. In an initial registration she merely declared parts of her assets, but not the house, property, furniture and the small collection of paintings in Bad Aussee. This can be explained by her being subjected to duress and threatening circumstances. On 28 June 1938, in response to related warnings, she wrote from Bad Aussee to the "Vermögensverkehrsstelle" (Property Transaction Office) in Vienna: "I believed I had to register my family home here in Aussee, but I have been told by the municipality that [sic] this has to be completed with you. It has 5 rooms, kitchen, adjoining

⁴ See Sophie Lillie, *Was einmal war. Handbuch der enteigneten Kunstsammlungen Wiens*, Vienna 2003, p. 777f.

⁵ *Pester Lloyd*, 5.2.1906, p. 46.

⁶ *Neues Wiener Abendblatt*, 29.12.1911, p. 8.

⁷ Quote from Alfred Weidinger (ed.), *Gustav Klimt. Kommentiertes Gesamtverzeichnis des malerischen Werkes*, Munich/Berlin/London/New York 2007, p. 225.

⁸ See Arnbom 2021, p. 44.

rooms, I do not let. [...] I owe no one either in Vienna or here in Aussee and have always paid my taxes etc. on time. Yours humble servant, Aranka Munk.”⁹

The further correspondence in which she was instructed to sell her securities was answered by Aranka Munk as follows and once again, she was clearly unaware that the now competent authorities were in Linz, “However, I must confess that I completely fail to understand [your letter] and do not know anyone here who could explain it to me or help me with it. I do not know anyone in Linz [...] I only know that if I suddenly have to sell all these papers, which have been lying there for so many years – I will certainly suffer a very great loss. Why does this have to be the case? I have been financed by my sisters for many years; have never touched these papers – saved them for my daughter [...] After receiving your letter I wanted to go to Vienna immediately, but unfortunately my feet are swollen. I will soon go there and see you at once, and you will explain to me what I am to do.”¹⁰

In the Ausseerland, the “Anschluss” had immediate results that were no different to those in the rest of Austria, with jubilation amongst large parts of the population and arrests. The gendarmerie reports from Altaussee provide an impression of these events that is probably close to reality. The seizure of power and arrests are described, and there was surprise at the high level of approval that continued right up to the “Volksabstimmung” (referendum) on 10 April 1938. “In Altaussee this very big event found an unexpected echo.” Indeed, in the former “Marxist stronghold” there were only four votes against.¹¹ Repressive measures against Jews were also initiated quickly, whereby with regard to “Aryanisations” the so-called “Salzkammergut-Erlass” (Salzkammergut Decree) applied for the time being. This was a special regulation, which originated in Bad Ischl and foresaw a separate procedure with a special levy for the Salzkammergut because in May 1938 the Ausseerland was still annexed to the “Gau Oberdonau” (Upper Austria).¹²

Overall, the “Aryanisation” process dragged on for a longer period. In October 1938 the “Gendarmeriechronik Altaussee” (Altaussee Gendarmerie Chronicle) noted, “At the same time, the work of Pg. Ing. Henel [Haenel] from Bad Ischl also began, who as the “Arisierungskommissär” (Aisation Commissioner) has been entrusted by the “Gauleitung” with the task of transferring Jewish properties into Aryan hands. Eager buyers flocked to Altaussee from all directions, even from Graz, Vienna and Linz, with the intention of acquiring a villa cheaply. However, after some time, the Reich government decided that all [sic] Jewish affairs were to be centralised and the intended purchases were halted. Units of the secret state police have appeared in Linz [...]”¹³ In fact, with regard to “Aryanisation”, an internal Nazi conflict had unfolded and it became apparent that in the Bad Aussee - Bad Ischl area, “Aryanisation” could certainly also be interpreted as a social process. Wilhelm Haenel, a former landlord and NSDAP representative, and Franz Konrad, a lawyer, who lived in Bad Ischl, played important roles in this procedure.¹⁴ Documents show that not only properties, villas and other real estate were the focus of economic interest, but also furniture and smaller, less valuable objects. The

⁹ Oberösterreichisches Landesarchiv (OÖLA), inventory IKG Linz, asset report (VA) 35305, Aranka Munk, Letter from Aranka Munk to the “Vermögensverkehrsstelle” (VVSt), 28.6.1938.

¹⁰ Ibid., Munk to VVSt, 16.8.1938.

¹¹ “Gendarmeriechronik Altaussee”, quote from Anton Strobl, *Die Jahre im Heimatgau des Führers. Eine regionalhistorische Dokumentation zur NS-Zeit im Ausseerland*, Bad Aussee 2013, p. 126.

¹² See Daniela Ellmauer, Michael John, Regina Thumser, “Arisierungen”, *beschlagnahmte Vermögen, Rückstellungen und Entschädigungen in Oberösterreich*, Vienna/Munich 2004, pp. 391–395.

¹³ Quote from Strobl 2013, p. 73.

¹⁴ See Ellmauer, John, Thumser 2004, pp. 381–398 and Nina Höllinger, “Vermögensentzug (“Arisierungen”) an Liegenschaften in Bad Ischl”, in: *betrifft widerstand*, July 2009, pp. 19–25.

aim was self-enrichment. In principle, the “Gau” leadership sympathised with such intentions for as “Gauleiter” Eigruber wrote with regard to the cause Munk, “I must insist [...] and not only for reasons of public opinion policy, on a disposal of furniture and household effects from Jewish property that takes into account the needs of the less affluent sections of the population”.¹⁵

According to a notification from the Linz/Danube headquarters of the Gestapo dated 23 November 1938, the house at Marktleite 78 in Bad Aussee was confiscated in favour of the Austrian State and the seizure of the property was recorded in the land register on 25 November 1938. “The Jewish woman therefore no longer has any right of disposal”, was confirmed by the “Vermögensverkehrsstelle” (Property Transaction Office) in February 1939¹⁶ and it is certain that third parties occupied parts of the villa in the period from 1939 to 1941.

In the interwar period, Hermann Schiestl (1860–1946) undertook paid caretaker tasks and errands at both summer villas, probably also due to their geographic proximity. He had keys to both houses and was also officially regarded as the caretaker.¹⁷ In the event of the absence of the villa owners, instructions about what needed to be done were issued by letter. Some twenty letters from the Nazi period (and in Alberti's case also from the immediate post-war period) have been preserved and were subsequently in the private possession of his grandson Ernst Schiestl (1933–2016).¹⁸ These communications show that there was a trusting relationship between the caretaker, Hermann Schiestl, his son Johann and the house owners Aranka Munk and Ervin Alberti. Aranka Munk's letters during the years from 1939 to 1941 are quite personal and also partly reveal both her personal state of mind and ever-increasing social and economic hardship. Hermann Schiestl must have replied, otherwise the posting of some letters cannot be explained.¹⁹ The letters constitute a source regarding Aranka Munk's situation, the state of the house in Bad Aussee and the existence of Gustav Klimt's portrait of Ria Munk. Aranka Munk was justifiably most concerned about her property and the paintings in the house, but she did not realise that she no longer had any right of disposal.

Apparently in view of her financial problems, in May 1939, she was still contemplating “renting out the villa to the Aryan party”. In October of the same year, she reports that her apartment in Vienna had been terminated and she has no money at her disposal. Furthermore, in March 1941, more than two years after the confiscation of the house and the seizure of her property, Aranka Munk clearly still failed to understand the situation and in order to pay off her debts planned to sell items from the house to which she no longer had access. She writes to Hermann Schiestl's son Johann “Keep the suitcase and its contents and do not give them to the villa.” The letter from 10 November 1940 documents the huge significance of the pictures in the house for Aranka Munk, at the heart of which is “Das Bild” (The Painting), the portrait of “poor Mitzerl”, her deceased daughter Maria (Ria). She writes, “I am very afraid that the Holwöger [sic] heat the bedroom, this fireplace is not good at all – I am worried that it smokes – and the picture of the poor Mitzerl – which has no glass – suffers from it – please write to me about it.”

¹⁵ Quote from Arnbom 2021, p. 48.

¹⁶ OÖLA, VA-35305, letter from the VVSt to the Gmunden Oberdonau Tax Office, 15.2.1939.

¹⁷ OÖLA, Finanzlandesdirektion (FLD), Bad Aussee Bürgermeister to Gmunden Tax Office, Zl. 123/2, 20.7.1942.

¹⁸ Conversations and interviews between the author and Ernst Schiestl took place on 3.11., 12.11., 14.11.2008 and 6.3.2009 in Bad Aussee

¹⁹ The letters were made available in the course of research. Copies are in the possession of the author. The letters are part of the report from 2009. In addition, a statement made by Ernst Schiestl regarding the facts of the case was submitted as evidence, with his wife, Brigitte Schiestl, b.1936 as a witness, 14.11.2008.

The letter concludes with the thought, “Perhaps it would be best to take the picture down and put it in Lola’s room – please be very careful as it has no glass.”²⁰

On 22 December 1940, Aranka Munk wrote another letter in which she sends Christmas greetings, expresses her worries about the couple staying in her home and again refers to her paintings in the house: “You can imagine how upset I am. [...] Yes – how did they manage that? I beg of you – go and look often to make sure they take care of everything.[...] That nothing happens to the pictures [...] I hope that you enjoy very pleasant holidays – and look after the dear house as you have done up to now. It is my only consolation that it is under your protection [...] Yours sincerely, Aranka Munk.”²¹ Elsewhere, she clearly demonstrates major anxiety regarding her property and finally also writes, “I already owe you [Hermann Schiestl] a lot. Show no one the villa.”²²

In October 1941, Aranka Munk and her daughter Lola were deported to Łódź (“Litzmannstadt Ghetto”), where they died shortly afterwards. Her daughter Christine “Lola” Kraus (1900–1942) also fell victim to the Holocaust.²³ The house in Bad Aussee along with its artistic contents and furniture were definitively declared “forfeited” by the Nazi regime.²⁴ As recalled by Ernst Schiestl, the “Klimt painting” was seen by his family and thus also by him personally during visits to the Villa Munk in 1942.²⁵ Various authorities also soon became interested in the property and the works of art that it contained. For example, on 7 July 1942 “Gaukonservator” Franz Juraschek wrote to Justus Schmidt, the curator at the Gaumuseum in Linz, “The Villa Munk in Bad Aussee has become Reich property. As you know, among other things, Frau Munk owned the valuable portrait of a lady by Gustav Klimt. [...] I also found 2 portraits by Gustav’s brother, Ernst Klimt (insignificant) and two interesting drawings by Fernand Khnopff should the Gaumuseum be interested in acquiring such pieces [...]”²⁶ Moreover, on 30 November 1942, Herbert Seiberl, head of the “Zentralstelle für Denkmalschutz” (Central Office for the Protection of Monuments) in Vienna, informed Justus Schmidt, the “Kulturbeauftragte für Oberdonau” (Cultural Commissioner for Upper Danube), “I take the liberty of drawing your attention to the [...] art objects, in particular an unfinished painting by Gustav Klimt. [...] I recommend that you make timely efforts to acquire the items under consideration.”²⁷ In addition, there was a valuable Aubusson carpet in the house, which was sold to the “Sonderauftrag” of the Führer’s Chancellery.²⁸

²⁰ Letter from Aranka Munk to Hermann Schiestl, 10.11.1940; see also report 2009, pp. 94–97.

²¹ Letter from Aranka Munk to Hermann Schiestl, 22.12.1940; see report 2009, pp. 98–99.

²² Ibid., p. 17.

²³ Lillie 2003, pp. 777–778.

²⁴ Archive of the Republic (AdR) 06, FLD File 14148, re. Aranka Munk, letter from the Gestapo Vienna to the Oberfinanzpräsident (OFP) (Head Financial President) Vienna, Niederdonau, 19.10.1942.

²⁵ Statement by Ernst Schiestl, witnessed by Brigitte Schiestl, 14.11.2008, copy in the possession of the author; see report 2009, p. 111f.

²⁶ Oberösterreichisches Landesmuseum (OÖLM), Gaukonservator Franz Juraschek to Justus Schmidt, Gaumuseum Linz, 8.7.1942.

²⁷ Archive of the Bundesdenkmalamt (BDA), box 10, folder 12, Posse correspondence, letter from Herbert Seiberl to Heinrich Justus Schmidt, page 25.

²⁸ AdR06, FLD 14148, letter from Dr. Gottfried Reimer, Staatliche Gemäldegalerie Dresden, to the OFP Vienna-Niederdonau from 17.9.1943, page 220.

Under not fully explained circumstances, the (unfinished) *Frauenbildnis* then came into the possession of the Berlin art dealer Wolfgang Gurlitt, who lived in Bad Aussee.²⁹ He had been looking for possibilities to serve the “Sonderauftrag Linz” and profit from works of art. He wrote to the “Sonderbeauftragte” (Special Representative) Hermann Voss, “I wish to draw your attention to the fact that in Bad Aussee, in a house that is to be sold, there are a few pictures that might be something for Linz. There is also supposed to be a beautiful Kremser-Schmidt there. The owner of the house is Hungarian and half-Aryan [...]” Gurlitt went on to write that he would like to view the pictures, “on your behalf and in your interest” and Voss was certainly interested.³⁰ The “half-Aryan” referred to was Ervin Alberti, Aranka Munk’s neighbour and relative.

What happened after the death of Aranka Munk and her daughter in the course of the Holocaust was described by Marie-Theres Arnbom in a moving essay, “In Litzmannstadt ist man Inländerin” (In Litzmannstadt, one is a local), which refers to the fact that after the death of mother and daughter, various authorities and offices had a dispute about who could now profit from the property.³¹ The talk is of “resettlement”, “transfer” and “voluntary emigration” in the wake of the Holocaust. The internal debate led to an immense production of files, which ended with one authority getting its way, which in this case was the “Zentralstelle für jüdische Auswanderung” (Central Office for Jewish Emigration) in Vienna. Forthwith there were several applicants for the property of the Holocaust victim and in 1943 the couple Hermann and Ruth Maria Kobbe “aryanised” the villa.³² Furniture, pictures, carpets, art objects were distributed to various places, the “Heimathaus” received a share, as did a recreation home for tax officials and the Municipality of Bad Aussee. After the war the following note was found, “The crates [sic] etc. are the property of the municipality, as long as Jews do not report that they have been taken from them. Many things have also been returned to the Jews by the local authority, namely the clock, the leather armchairs and a chest, which were seized from the Jews by the Nazis at that time.”³³

Even after the end of NS rule, Hermann Schiestl and his son Johann enjoyed the trust of the survivor Ervin (Erwin) Alberti (1891–1964), who had been deported to Mauthausen. The following letter extract shows this, “Thank you very much for your detailed report [...]. It was with the deepest regret that I learned the news of your father’s passing. He was an old, loyal friend and his death has truly touched me painfully. [...] Unfortunately, I cannot report anything positive about my family. My brother Leo, whom you must have known well, was killed in Mauthausen, my younger brother Franz, here in Budapest. [...] Unfortunately, my poor, good wife was also deported by the Nazis and died near Auschwitz.” Furthermore, Ervin Alberti writes, “Now I turn to you, dear Mr Schiestl, with the request that you [...] obtain an inventory of the fittings, in order to enable you to prevent the removal of the furnishings.”³⁴ It was not without reason that the letters from Aranka Munk and Ervin (Erwin) Alberti are pervaded by a

²⁹ Regarding the person, see Walter Schuster, “Facetten des NS-„Kunsthandels“ am Beispiel Wolfgang Gurlitt“, in: Gabriele Anderl, Alexandra Caruso (ed.), *NS-Kunstraub in Österreich und die Folgen*, Innsbruck/Vienna/Bozen 2005, pp. 212–226; John 2012, pp. 101–118; John 2019, pp. 325–341; see general Schmutz, Nowak-Thaller 2019.

³⁰ Federal archive Koblenz, Treuhandverwaltung von Kulturgut, box 323/134, folder 28, No. 144, Hermann Voss to Wolfgang Gurlitt, 25.6.1943.

³¹ See Arnbom 2021, pp. 42–50.

³² FLD (research document) letter from the OFP Wien-Niederdonau to the OFP Oberdonau, Linz, 10.3.1943.

³³ Bad Aussee Town Council, protocol Bad Aussee, 4.3.1949.

³⁴ Letter from Ervin Alberti, Budapest to Johann Schiestl from 12.3.1946. Private possession of Ernst Schiestl, Bad Aussee.

concern that no furnishings or valuables be removed from the houses.

The most valuable item in the Villa Munk, the painting by Gustav Klimt, already reappears in 1946 on a list from Wolfgang Gurlitt, who was able to move his art collection from Berlin to Bad Aussee during the Second World War and then in 1946 offered this collection to the province of Upper Austria and subsequently to the City of Linz, where the painting was exhibited in 1948. It is conceivable that the Kobbe couple sold the painting to Wolfgang Gurlitt, who lived in Bad Aussee and, as a shrewd art collector and art dealer, could have heard about it. Whatever the case, he lived nearby and had demonstrably searched for art objects.³⁵ However, there are other possible ways in which the painting may have come into Wolfgang Gurlitt's possession. For example, via the art experts Justus Schmidt and Herbert Seiberl, who definitely knew about the art collection in the Villa Munk, as did the "Landeskonservator" Franz Juraschek. Seiberl lived in Bad Aussee after the Second World War and was in close contact with Wolfgang Gurlitt.³⁶

What is clear is that the heirs filed an application for restitution against the "aryanisers" of the villa, Hermann and Maria Kobbe. In the application to the "Rückstellungskommission" (Restitution Commission) in December 1949, the applicants (the heirs of Aranka Munk) also made the following allegations against the respondents, the Kobbes. "The respondents not only acquired the property in question, but also the valuable movables in the house. Apart from the furnishings, there were numerous pictures, including that by Klimt, and the Blgier [Belgian] Knop [Khnopff], as well as carpets and objects d'art."³⁷ The Kobbes denied knowing anything about the whereabouts of the movables and the restitution file states that, "Nothing is known about the fate of the looted objects in the years 1943–1945".³⁸ To some extent this was to remain the case to this day, as the whereabouts of some of the paintings (Ernst Klimt, Khnopff, etc.) remain undiscovered.

In the post-war period, the art dealer Wolfgang Gurlitt and his activities appeared suspicious to the Styrian authorities and Department 14 of the "Ministerium für Vermögenssicherung" (Ministry for Asset Protection). On 6 July 1949, Department 14 applied for the appointment of a public administrator for Gurlitt's art collection and one was subsequently selected and installed on 10 December 1949.³⁹ The Ausseer Land had been reincorporated into Styria in 1948 and after Gurlitt's collection was placed under public control massive interventions took place on the part of the governor of Upper Austria and the mayor of the city of Linz. They wished to bring the valuable collection to Upper Austria at a reasonable price and their efforts were rewarded. The ministry suspended the public administration in Bad Aussee⁴⁰ and the concrete sales negotiations between Gurlitt and the City of Linz could be resumed.

³⁵ Interview with Christine Bahar, b. 1941, Bad Aussee, on 12.11.2008; interview with Ernst Schiestl, b. 1933, Bad Aussee on 12.11.2008.

³⁶ See John 2019, p. 333.

³⁷ Steiermärkisches Landesarchiv (STLA), Rk 477/49, application to the Restitution Commission, Landesgericht ZRS Graz, December 1949, page 3.

³⁸ Ibid., resolution.

³⁹ AdR 06, BMFVS, Dept. 35, Gurlitt Wolfgang, file 106101-6/49, Dr. Nester, summary from 15.12.1949.

⁴⁰ See John 2019, p. 334f.

The successful art dealer was a multifaceted personality, who himself had a (partly) Jewish family background, as did his Jewish partner, who was able to conceal her identity throughout the NS era.⁴¹

The subsequent events are known and have been both researched and the subject of a number of publications. The City of Linz considered buying the painting *Frauenbildnis (Ria Munk III)* from Gurlitt and Walter Schuster was the first to find a handwritten note in an inspection report on which it was noted: “Klimt Jewish property! Reservation until clarification!”⁴² Gurlitt had offered this painting to the city of Linz a total of four times and on three occasions the sale collapsed owing to the unresolved ownership situation. Then, in 1956, the city purchased it after the deadlines for claims under the 3rd Restitution Act had expired. However, following a political decision-making process, in 2009 the painting was restituted to the heirs by means of a resolution of the City Council.⁴³ The mayor of Linz from 1988 to 2013, Franz Dobusch, found clear words at the time, “If [a] painting was part of some type of criminal loot, the city cannot keep it.”⁴⁴

During that period, the City of Linz also transferred the ownership of pictures out of “moral considerations”.⁴⁵ In the justification for the restitution of a painting by Schiele for example, it was stated: “The moral problem stems from the legal basis for restitution and the practice of restitution in the post-war period. From today’s perspective, the practice often employed in numerous cases at that time [...] cannot be described as reparation, but rather as a subsequent legalisation of the injustice suffered during the Nazi regime.”⁴⁶ In Austria and Germany, the permeation of this opinion into the legal system and public consciousness, as well as that of those interested in art on a broader level, has been a prolonged process that has continued right up to the present day.⁴⁷

⁴¹ See Elisabeth Nowak-Thaller, “Leben und Wirken Wolfgang Gurlitts. Versuch einer Rekonstruktion”, in: Schmutz, *ibid.* 2019, pp. 33–60; Walter Schuster, *Die “Sammlung Gurlitt” der Neuen Galerie der Stadt Linz*, Linz 1999, pp. 9–14; See Vanessa-Maria Voigt, “Lilly Christiansen und Wolfgang Gurlitt”, in: Schmutz, Nowak-Thaller 2019, pp. 111–117.

⁴² Schuster 1999, p. 65.

⁴³ See John 2019, p. 339.

⁴⁴ *Kronen-Zeitung*, 22.4.2009, p. 15.

⁴⁵ Walter Schuster (ed.), *Nationalsozialismus. Auseinandersetzung in Linz. 60 Jahre Zweite Republik*, Linz 2005, p. 166.

⁴⁶ City of Linz press release 17.12.2002.

⁴⁷ For example, this is demonstrated by the recent cancellation of the auction of the jewellery of the late museum founder Heidi Horten by Christie’s auction house. The millionaire had inherited her fortune from the Nazi-incriminated “department stores’ king” Helmut Horten, who had profited enormously from “Aryanisation”. Cf. “Horten estate burdened with Nazi legacy reason for auction stop at Christie’s”, in: *Der Standard*, 1.9.2023, derstandard.de/story/3000000185191/1213-winklerhermaden-rosa-ns-erbe-aus-horten-nachlass-grund-fuer-auktionsstopp-bei-christies, accessed on 6.9.2023.

Franz Smola:

Gustav Klimt's *Bildnis einer Dame* in the Galleria Ricci Oddi in Piacenza. A "hidden" portrait of Ria Munk?

The text is an English translation of the original text "Gustav Klimts Bildnis einer Dame in der Galleria Ricci Oddi in Piacenza. Ein 'verstecktes' Porträt von Ria Munk" written in German language for the catalog of the exhibition "Die Reise der Bilder" ["The Journey of the Paintings"] pp. 323-331. Translation by John Cima.

At present, there are three paintings by Gustav Klimt in Italian collections. Two of these were bought by public authorities during the artist's lifetime, namely *Die drei Lebensalter der Frau*, acquired by the Italian Ministry of Culture and now in the Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Moderna e Contemporanea in Rome,¹ and *Judith II (Salome)*, which was purchased at the IX Biennale in 1910 by the city of Venice, where it still remains in the Musei Civici.² While today these two paintings number among Klimt's most popular works, there is a third picture by the artist in another Italian collection that was little known in the past but has now also become famous owing to the special events of recent years. This is the portrait *Bildnis einer Dame* in the Galleria d'Arte Moderna Ricci Oddi in Piacenza.

The Giuseppe Ricci Oddi art collection

Klimt's *Bildnis einer Dame* was one of the works that the master had always retained and was thus in the artist's studio at the time of his death in February 1918.³ The Viennese art dealer Gustav Nebehay, who was responsible for the sale of the works in Klimt's estate, presented the portrait together with eighteen other paintings by the artist in an exhibition organised at the Bristol Hotel in Vienna in 1919⁴ where Luigi Scopinich, a painter and art dealer living in Milan, purchased it. Six years later, in 1925, Scopinich sold the work to the art collector Giuseppe Ricci Oddi (1868–1937), who lived in Piacenza. Ricci Oddi was an aristocrat who during his lifetime amassed an extensive art collection, consisting of some three hundred paintings and

sculptures, mostly by Italian artists of the 19th and early 20th centuries. In 1926, Klimt's painting was joined in Giuseppe Ricci Oddi's collection by another work of the Viennese artist in the shape of a late drawing of a man.⁵ Prior to this, in 1924 Ricci Oddi dedicated his collection to the city of Piacenza and began to have a spacious gallery building constructed

¹ Tobias G. Natter (ed.), *Gustav Klimt. Sämtliche Gemälde*, Cologne 2012, no. 168.

² Ibid. no.182.

³ Fritz Novotny, Johannes Dobai, *Gustav Klimt*, Salzburg 1967 (2nd edition 1975), no. 176 and no. 204; Alfred Weidinger (ed.), *Gustav Klimt. Kommentiertes Gesamtverzeichnis des malerischen Werkes*, Munich/Berlin/London/New York 2007, no. 240; Natter 2012, no. 227; Gustav Klimt Database / Klimt-Foundation, Vienna, gkdb.link/4542-3130, accessed on 29.9.2023.

⁴ *Gedächtnis=Ausstellung Gustav Klimt*, exhibition cat., Kunsthandlung Gustav Nebehay, Vienna, Wien 1919; Gustav Klimt Database / Klimt-Foundation, Vienna, gkdb.link/8890-3864, accessed on 29.9.2023.

⁵ Gustav Klimt, *Kopf eines alten Mannes*, 1917/18, pencil on paper, 46 × 30,5 cm, Galleria d'Arte Moderna Ricci Oddi, Piacenza, inv.no. 159, pub. in: Gabriella Belli, Elena Pontiggia (Hg.), *Klimt. L'uomo, l'artista, il suo mondo*, exhibition cat., Galleria d'Arte Moderna Ricci Oddi, Piacenza, XNL Piacenza. Centro d'arte contemporanea, cinema, teatro, musica, Piacenza, Milan 2022, no. VI.13, p. 245.

at his own expense.⁶ This building, which had more than 25 rooms, was designed by architect Giulio Ulisse Arata using the remains of a former monastery and opened in 1931.⁷

A miraculous recovery

On 22 February 1997, during preparations for an exhibition that was to have included Klimt's *Bildnis einer Dame*, the painting vanished from the museum.⁸ A few days later, the frame of the picture was found in the museum's attic and in the months and years that followed, intensive searches were made for the painting, but without success. Then, completely unexpectedly, 22 years later, on 10 December 2019, the painting was found rolled up in a plastic bag in a niche on the outer wall of the garden belonging to the museum. The reappearance of the work was just as mysterious as its disappearance and to this day, the exact circumstances surrounding its theft and subsequent restitution remain unexplained.⁹

First version of a picture entitled “Backfisch”

In 1996, just before the spectacular theft that took place in 1997, the then 18-year-old grammar school student and later art historian, Claudia Maga, discovered that there was an earlier version of Klimt's portrait under the visible layer of paint. She reported her findings to the director of the Galleria Ricci Oddi, Stefano Fugazza, who then had the portrait subjected to X-ray examinations, which confirmed that it had been painted over. Klimt had evidently painted over the picture himself at a later date. Fortunately, the first version is known from a colour illustration published in 1918 as part of an article written by Franz Servaes in the art magazine *Velhagen & Klasings Monatshefte*, which appeared under the title *Backfisch*.¹⁰ The photo shows the half-length portrait of a young lady dressed in the latest fashion (Fig. 1). Her wide-brimmed, dark hat and the plaited stole wrapped around her neck are striking. A dark blue silk scarf is thrown loosely over her light-coloured dress and has slipped down low from her shoulders. The young lady is depicted in profile and in a slightly forward leaning posture. Her gaze is turned towards the viewer and her mouth is slightly open. Klimt has painted the background in a single colour, green, whereby the application of paint appears rather agitated and patchy.

The title *Backfisch* should be understood in a more literary sense and may allude to young girls, who in many respects are still characterised by a certain inexperience. A picture with such an unusual title appears only once in catalogues published during Klimt's lifetime. Namely, within in the context of a one-man show by Klimt, which took place from November to December 1910 at the Galerie Miethke in Vienna.¹¹ At this time, the Galerie Miethke, under its artistic director, the painter Carl Moll, was the sole representative for the sale of

⁶ See riccioddi.it/la-collezione/, accessed on 29.9.2023.

⁷ See riccioddi.it/la-storia-delledificio, accessed on 29.9.2023.

⁸ Rossana Bossaglia, Stefano Fugazza (ed.), *Da Hayez a Klimt. Maestri dell'Ottocento e Novecento della Galleria Ricci Oddi*, exhibition cat., Palazzo Gotico, Piacenza, Milan 1997.

⁹ Lucia Pini, „Il *Ritratto di signora* di Klimt della Galleria d'Arte Moderna Ricci Oddi. Storia e vicende su suolo italiano“, in: Belli, Pontiggia 2022, pp. 77–81.

¹⁰ Franz Servaes, “Gustav Klimt”, in: *Velhagen & Klasings Monatshefte*, year. 32, edition 9, 1918, pp. 21–32, picture p. 32. Here, 1912 is given as the date of the work, which is based on an error. In fact, Klimt had already painted the picture in 1910.

¹¹ *Gustav Klimt*, exhibition cat., Galerie H. O. Miethke (Palais Nákó), Vienna 1910, no. 7; Gustav Klimt Database / Klimt-Foundation, Vienna, gkdb.link/5553-9693, accessed on 29.9.2023.

Klimt's works and during the exhibition eight paintings and a large number of drawings by Klimt were displayed.¹²

Some contemporary reviews of this exhibition also went into greater detail regarding the painting *Backfisch*.¹³ For example, Armin Friedmann from the *Wiener Zeitung*, wrote the following about the work, "The *Backfisch* will one day be just like that. Just wait and see. It justifies the ugliest of hopes."¹⁴ What Friedmann was thus suggesting is that as soon as she becomes an adult, the girl in the painting would become as attractive as the woman in Klimt's *Damenbildnis in Rot und Schwarz*.¹⁵ This picture was also part of the exhibition and the author previously describes in eloquent terms the beauty and sensual charisma of its subject.

Some of the works on display at the Salon Miethke had been shown a few months earlier at the spectacular Klimt special exhibition held from April to October 1910 as part of the IX Venice Biennale. Almost all of the 22 Klimt paintings presented in Venice have since been identified¹⁶ and only in one case were there lingering doubts. These related to the painting identified in the Biennale catalogue bearing the title *Giovanetta (Bildnis eines jungen Mädchens)*.¹⁷ However, Sandra Tretter and Peter Weinhäupl recently convinced with arguments by which they identified this portrait as being the painting *Backfisch*.¹⁸ Consequently, the work may even have been completed the year before, in 1909, as was the case with many of the other works that Klimt exhibited for the first time in Venice. Finally, *Backfisch* was also displayed at the *Großen Kunstausstellung* in Dresden, where Klimt was represented with ten paintings.¹⁹ This was probably one of the two works listed in the catalogue only as *Porträt, Ölgemälde*.²⁰

"Bildnis einer Dame" after the picture was painted over

As already mentioned, for unknown reasons Klimt painted over the portrait *Backfisch*. In doing so, the sweeping hat disappeared completely and instead the subject was given a dark, pinned-up hairstyle. The braided stole was also removed, and the young woman's shoulders and back are now covered with a shawl made of a thin, light-coloured textile patterned with flowers. The intense green of the background remains largely untouched. The

¹² Author abbrev. st., in: *Neues Wiener Tagblatt*, 25.11.1910, p. 18; author abbrev. A. F. S. [Adalbert F. Seligmann], "Kunstausstellungen", in: *Neue Freie Presse*, 28.11.1910, pp. 1–2; "Plein-air", "Kunstnachrichten", in: *Wiener Sonn- und Montags-Zeitung*, 28.11.1910, p. 7.

¹³ Author abbrev. st. 1910; author abbrev. O. F., "Krankhafte Kunst", in: *Deutsches Volksblatt*, 10.12.1910, p. 1; Armin Friedmann, "Bildende Kunst", in: *Wiener Abendpost*, supplement to *Wiener Zeitung*, 1.12.1910, pp. 1–2.

¹⁴ Friedmann 1910, p. 1.

¹⁵ Natter 2012, no. 176.

¹⁶ Maria Vittoria Marini Clarelli, "Klimt alla Biennale di Venezia", in: *ibid.*, Franz Smola, Sandra Tretter (ed.), *Klimt. La Secessione e l'Italia*, exhibition cat., Museo di Roma, Palazzo Braschi, Rome, Rome 2021, pp. 237–238.

¹⁷ *IX. Esposizione Internazionale d'Arte della Città di Venezia*, exhibition cat., Biennale di Venezia, Venice 1910, no. 21; Gustav Klimt Database / Klimt-Foundation, Vienna, gkdb.link/8055-8436, accessed on 29.9.2023.

¹⁸ Sandra Tretter, Peter Weinhäupl, "viaggi in Italia di Klimt: una fonte di ispirazione per la sua arte", in: Clarelli, Smola, Tretter 2021, pp. 17–33, here p. 28.

¹⁹ Pini 2022, p. 79.

²⁰ *Große Kunstausstellung Dresden*, exhibition cat., Städtischer Ausstellungspalast, Dresden, Dresden 1912, no. 1834 or 1835; Gustav Klimt Database / Klimt-Foundation, Wien, gkdb.link/4032-7621, accessed on 29.9.2023.

face probably also reflects almost the original state of the first version. After this revision, however, the painting no longer retained its former title, but was henceforth labelled *Bildnis einer Dame* (Fig. 2).

When exactly Klimt overpainted the picture is not known. However, on the basis of some indications, it is possible to narrow it down to the year 1917, or even as early as the end of 1916. The aforementioned article by Franz Servaes in the magazine *Velhagen & Klasings Monatshefte*, which contains an illustration of the first version of the painting, is already a posthumous tribute to Klimt's life and work and was therefore only written after the master's death. Amongst other points, the article refers to the fact that the illustrations it contains were taken from a publication about Klimt, which was currently in preparation and would be issued by the publishing house of Hugo Heller in Vienna.²¹ This publication, which actually appeared a short time later and is known in research as the so-called "Heller-Mappe", consists of texts by Hermann Bahr and Peter Altenberg and contains 50 colour collotype prints with gold overlays, collotype prints and heliogravures of selected Klimt paintings in the form of a loose-leaf portfolio.²² The plates came from a folder that the Galerie Miethke had already published in cooperation with the Staatsdruckerei between 1908 and 1914, and Moriz Nähr presumably took the photographs at that time.²³ In 1918, the Hugo Heller company bought the folder from Miethke, acquired the related publishing rights and republished the "Mappe".²⁴ This means that at the latest the painting *Backfisch* was photographed in 1914 and therefore Klimt could only have started the overpainting after this date.²⁵

It is likely that the painting *Backfisch* was still in its original state on 7 December 1916 because is the date shown on a receipt confirmation issued by the Galerie Miethke and signed by Klimt for *Backfisch* and four other paintings.²⁶ Apparently, the gallery had borrowed the painting from Klimt's studio for exhibition or sales purposes and returned it on that day. Possibly the portrait did not appeal to the taste of a customer, and this may have been precisely the reason why Klimt painted over the work.²⁷ Under these circumstances, Klimt could even have reworked *Backfisch* in December 1916 or during 1917.

With this overpainting, Klimt clearly adapted the work to match the aesthetic of his latter portraits. It is therefore no coincidence that he removed the dark, braided stole from the sitter in *Backfisch* and exposed her neck, as particularly in his late portraits of women, Klimt showed a conspicuous preference for this part of the body. Striking examples in this regard are provided by the portraits *Wally* (destroyed in 1945)²⁸, *Die Freundinnen II* (destroyed in

²¹ "The publication of the fourteen pictures included in this work takes place with the kind permission of the Hugo Heller & Cie company in Vienna as the publisher of "Gustav Klimt-Werkes", in: Servaes 1918, plate. p. 21.

²² Kunstverlag Hugo Heller (ed.), *Das Werk von Gustav Klimt*, Vienna/Leipzig 1918.

²³ Hugo Othmar Miethke (ed.), *Das Werk Gustav Klimts*, Vienna 1908–1914.

²⁴ I would like to thank Sandra Tretter from the Klimt-Foundation, Vienna, most sincerely for the detailed information regarding the origin of the Heller portfolio. The Klimt-Foundation is currently heading a research and publication project that deals with the bibliophile editions published during Klimt's lifetime.

²⁵ However, an illustration of the *Backfisch* painting is not contained in either of the portfolios published by Miethke and Heller.

²⁶ Gustav Klimt to the Galerie H. O. Miethke, letter from 7.12.1916, Wienbibliothek, H. I. N 159 215, quoted in: Natter 2012, p. 503, no. 172.

²⁷ As assumed by Tobias Natter, see Natter 2012, p. 634.

²⁸ Ibid. no. 224.

1945)²⁹ and *Dame mit Fächer* (privately owned)³⁰ in which the master placed a special emphasis upon the sitter's neck.

In one of his last, unfinished works, it seems as if Klimt is almost repeating the composition of *Backfisch / Bildnis einer Dame*. The painting *Damenbildnis in Weiß* from the Belvedere collection in Vienna shows a virtually identical, half-length portrait of a woman, also bent slightly forwards and with her face turned towards the viewer (Fig. 3).³¹ The same thin fabric with a floral pattern that Klimt had repainted in *Backfisch / Bildnis einer Dame* falls from her shoulders. However, in the painting *Damenbildnis in Weiß*, the sitter's broad smile and her exaggeratedly white-painted complexion give her face a strangely mask-like character.

A "hidden" portrait of Ria Munk?

The young woman depicted in the painting *Backfisch / Bildnis einer Dame* unmistakably shows very individual facial features, which were obviously of such importance to Klimt that, as opposed to the remaining parts of the picture, he did not overpaint them and thus left them unaltered. Consequently, the spontaneous question arises as to whether here Klimt has depicted a very specific person. However, neither the title nor contemporary commentaries provide any clues as to the identity of the sitter.

The work *Backfisch* undoubtedly belongs to the large group of Klimt's portraits that could be described by the term "women of fashion". In these portraits, the sitters play the role of elegant models advertising the latest clothing such as spectacular headwear, elegant coats or similar accessories. The fashionable character of these depictions is usually emphasised in the titles, such as *Damenbildnis in Rot und Schwarz* or *Der schwarze Federhut*. These criteria apply equally to the painting *Backfisch*, which also shows a strikingly fashionably dressed young woman and has a title that tends to refer to her social status, but not to her person.

Unsurprisingly, in the case of all of these "women of fashion" the focus is not on the sitters themselves. Rather, for the most part Klimt made use of professional mannequins of which he is known to have employed large numbers. The names of these models can hardly be traced. Moreover, in isolated cases, it can also be proven that Klimt depicted personalities such as actresses, who were well known in contemporary Viennese society, but whose names are never mentioned in the titles of the pictures.³² However, there are no known cases of Klimt depicting persons from the bourgeoisie or from his circle of family and friends in these fashion portraits.

In this respect, Elisabeth Nowak-Thaller's hypothesis, which she has been pursuing for some time, that in the painting *Backfisch*, she recognises a portrait of Ria Munk, is most

²⁹ Ibid. no. 225.

³⁰ Ibid. no. 237.

³¹ Ibid. no. 238.

³² See: Franz Smola, "Il Ritratto di signora di Gustav Klimt della Galleria Ricci Oddi: origine e motivi", in: Belli, Pontiggia 2022, pp. 69–75, especially. pp. 70–73. In addition, at the second international Gustav-Klimt-Symposium, which took place on 23–24 march 2024 in the Villa Toscana in Gmunden, the author gave a lecture on Klimt's images of "women of fashion", which will be subsequently published in the conference transcript.

remarkable. (Fig. 4).³³ Above all, her observation is based upon a comparison of the painting with Klimt's full-length unfinished *Frauenbildnis Ria Munk III*.³⁴

This is the posthumous portrait of Ria Munk, the daughter of Aranka and Alexander Munk, which was painted by Klimt in 1917. Aranka Munk was the sister of Serena Lederer, the wife of August Lederer, and the Lederers were known to be among Klimt's most important collectors. Ria Munk ended her young life on 28 December 1911 at the age of just 24, presumably due to her unhappy relationship with the writer Hanns Heinz Ewers. Klimt painted her on her deathbed immediately after her death (Fig. 5).³⁵

Ria Munk's parents subsequently commissioned Klimt to create a large-format posthumous memorial painting of the deceased and this work, which Klimt was no longer able to complete and actually ended up in the possession of Aranka Munk.

It is undeniable that there are certain physiognomic similarities between the works *Backfisch* and *Frauenbildnis Ria Munk III*. Above all, the distinctive, slightly curved nose, but also the softly curved lips and the striking almond shape of the eyes can be found in both depictions (Figs. 6, 7). Indeed, it would be tempting to theorise that the portrait *Backfisch*, painted around 1910, is of the then 23-year-old Ria Munk.

However, it is not only the painting *Backfisch / Bildnis einer Dame* that bears astonishing similarities to *Frauenbildnis Ria Munk III*, but equally the aforementioned *Damenbildnis in Weiß*, which was also unfinished. With the help of x-ray examinations, Stefanie Jahn, the Head of the Restoration Department at the Belvedere in Vienna, has been able to establish that Klimt also overpainted this picture. For example, he subsequently altered the lady's hairstyle, as her coiffeur was originally flatter, but extended further back. The facial features were also originally different and thus the strangely mask-like smile was the result of a later overpainting by Klimt (Figs. 8, 9, 10).

The hairstyle that emerges in the X-ray light and the facial features that were initially applied are surprisingly similar to the facial features that Klimt captured in *Frauenbildnis Ria Munk III*.³⁶ Moreover, when by photomechanical means the original contours of *Damenbildnis in Weiß* are superimposed onto the contours of the face and head in *Frauenbildnis Ria Munk III*, not only the size of the image but also many of the contour lines are in both cases largely identical (Figs. 11, 12).³⁷

Owing to these formal similarities, it would be reasonable to assume that *Damenbildnis in Weiß* was initially a study for *Frauenbildnis Ria Munk III*. The study-like character of *Damenbildnis in Weiß* is also emphasised by the painting technique of the picture. The canvas has no priming whatsoever, a circumstance that would seem to be entirely unusual for Klimt, who otherwise regularly primed his paintings.³⁸ Klimt may only have decided to continue working on this painting at a later stage, which is why he then added the subsequent overpaintings noted above.

Therefore, as tempting as it is to see a portrait of the unfortunate Ria Munk in the painting *Backfisch*, and despite the fact that this thesis is supported by the aforementioned technical

³³ The author wishes to thank Elisabeth Nowak-Thaller, Chief Curator and Deputy Director of the Lentos Kunstmuseum Linz, most sincerely for the enlightening discussions on this topic.

³⁴ Natter 2012, no. 236.

³⁵ Ibid. no. 195.

³⁶ Ibid. no. 236.

³⁷ Sincere thanks are due to Stefanie Jahn, the Head of the Restoration Department of the Belvedere, Vienna, for this information.

³⁸ A friendly pointer from Stefanie Jahn, the Head of the Restoration Department of the Belvedere, Vienna.

evidence, considerable doubt nonetheless arises. After all, it is difficult to imagine Klimt painting a portrait of a person from wealthy bourgeois circles, with whose family he was also personally well acquainted, that does not bear the sitter's name. It also seems unlikely that the public and art critics would have failed to notice such a quasi "hidden" portrait and thematise it in some way. And if it were a portrait of Ria Munk, it would be surprising that the painting did not also become the property of the Munk family. Therefore, a solution to the riddle of the person depicted in *Backfisch / Bildnis einer Dame* must remain unanswered.

Illustrations

Fig. 1: Gustav Klimt, *Backfisch*, ca. 1910, oil on canvas, 68 × 55 cm, Galleria d'Arte Moderna Ricci Oddi, Piacenza

Fig. 2: Gustav Klimt, *Backfisch*, 1916/17, oil on canvas, 68 × 55 cm, Galleria d'Arte Moderna Ricci

Fig. 3: Gustav Klimt, *Damenbildnis in Weiß*, 1917/18, oil on canvas, 70 × 70 cm, Inv.-No. 4286 Belvedere, Vienna Oddi, Piacenza

Fig. 4: Gustav Klimt, *Frauenbildnis Ria Munk III*, 1917, oil on canvas, 180 × 90 cm, Lewis Collection

Fig. 5: Gustav Klimt, *Ria Munk auf dem Totenbett*, 1912, oil on canvas, 50 × 50.5 cm, privately owned, USA, Photo: Courtesy of Richard Nagy Ltd., London

Fig. 6: Gustav Klimt, *Frauenbildnis Ria Munk III*, detail, 1917, oil on canvas, 180 × 90 cm, Lewis Collection

Fig. 7: Gustav Klimt, *Bildnis einer Dame*, detail, ca. 1910, reworked 1916, oil on canvas, 68 × 55 cm, Galleria d'Arte Moderna Ricci Oddi, Piacenza

Fig. 8: Gustav Klimt, *Damenbildnis in Weiß*, detail, 1917/18, oil on canvas, 70 × 70 cm, Inv.-No. 4286, Belvedere, Vienna

Fig. 9: Gustav Klimt, *Damenbildnis in Weiß*, 1917/18, oil on canvas, 70 × 70 cm, Inv.-No. 4286, Belvedere, Wien. Infrared image. The change to the hairstyle can be seen in the dark sections of the picture. Photo: Restoration Dept., Belvedere, Vienna

Fig. 10: Gustav Klimt, *Damenbildnis in Weiß*, 1917/18, oil on canvas, 70 × 70 cm, Inv.-No. 4286, Belvedere, Wien. X-ray image, which renders the original composition of the hair and facial features visible. Photo: Restoration Dept., Belvedere, Vienna

Fig. 11: Gustav Klimt, *Frauenbildnis Ria Munk III*, detail, 1917, oil on canvas,, 180 × 90 cm, Lewis Collection

Fig. 12: Superimposition of the outlines of the head from Klimt's *Ria Munk III* with the X-ray of the *Damenbildnis in Weiß*. Graphics: Stefanie Jahn, Restoration Dept., Belvedere, Vienna