



**European conference**

**Paris**

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

# Program



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



Frédérique Dreifuss-Netter, Chairwoman of the CIVS

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examined by the *Spoliation Advisory Panel*

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examined by the *Kunstrückgabebeirat*

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### Discussion with the Jewish Claims conference and the Beratende Kommission

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and the *C/VS*

**18:00** Get together



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**Dr. Neal Spencer** is Deputy Director for Collections & Research at the Fitzwilliam Museum, which is the lead partner of the University of Cambridge Museums (UCM) and Botanic Garden. Neal is strategic lead for the Museum's research, impact and collections development, and manages the curatorial, research, collections management and documentation teams.

Co-chair of the University's Collections-Connections-Communities Strategic Research Initiative and co-director of Cambridge Visual Culture, he initiates and supports research collaborations with the wider University of Cambridge and beyond.



**Melina Wolman** heads the Paris litigation team of the multinational law firm Pinsent Masons. She assists French and international clients in France and abroad in complex cross-border disputes.

As a recognized expert in the art market, Melina represents a wide range of clients in their art law disputes. She has gained an international reputation on highly known cases in France and abroad in assisting despoiled families to recover art looted during WWII, in France, Germany, Switzerland and New York.

She is also a member of the Art & Law Institute, a French think-tank connecting key actors of the art world to discuss professional, legal and tax topics.



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## A claim brought by the heirs of Robert Bing to the Spoliation Advisory Panel

The restitution claim was submitted by the heirs of Robert Bing, represented by Mondex Corporation, a company specialising in the recovery of looted artworks.

The claim is based on:

- A meticulously documented provenance, tracing the painting's ownership from Courbet to Robert Bing.
- A file from the German Federal Archives in Koblenz (B323-267), which confirms the seizure of a painting described as "Courbet, Waldlandschaft" at Bing's Paris address.
- Identification of the work as entry D24 in *Beyond the Dreams of Avarice* by Nancy H. Yeide, an authoritative catalogue of the Goering collection.
- Evidence that the painting resurfaced in London in 1951, sold by Swiss art dealer Kurt Meissner to the gallery Arthur Tooth & Sons, and subsequently donated by the Reverend Eric Milner-White to the Fitzwilliam Museum in memory of his father.

The Fitzwilliam Museum was first notified of the spoliation claim in July 2021. Upon receiving the claim, the museum promptly launched a provenance investigation. It acknowledged that at the time of acquisition in 1951, standard due diligence practices were limited. There was little reason to suspect any issue, particularly given that the donor, Dean Milner-White, was a distinguished Anglican clergyman and generous benefactor who had contributed around 50 paintings to public institutions in the UK.





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There are two Panel chairs, The Rt Hon Sir Donnell Deeny and The Rt Hon Sir Alan Moses and eight members. The following areas of experience and backgrounds are represented on the Panel - legal, museums, economics, moral philosophy, fine art and the history of Europe during the Nazi-era.

## Tasks and Powers

The Panel's proceedings are an alternative to litigation, not a process of litigation and the Panel will therefore take account of the moral strength of the claimant's case and whether any moral obligation rests on the institution.

- the return of the object to the claimant, or
- the payment of compensation to the claimant, the amount being in the discretion of the Panel having regard to all relevant circumstances including the current market value, but not tied to that current market value, or
- an ex-gratia payment to the claimant, or
- the display alongside the object of an account of its history and provenance during and since the Nazi era, with special reference to the claimant's interest therein.

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## The Abraham Nijstad case

### Sale of paintings under duress by Abraham Nijstad

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

During the Second World War, many Jewish art dealers in the Netherlands faced persecution and spoliation under Nazi occupation. Abraham Nijstad was forced by the Nazis to purchase artworks on the Dutch



Abraham Nijstad in 1942

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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



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

## The *Restitutie*commissie

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

### Restitutions Committee

#### History of the Restitutions Committee

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

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

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

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









For more information about the Assessment Framework go to:

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



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

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



### *Related organisations*

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

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



**Expert Centre Restitution of the NIOD:**

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

### **To contact the Restitutiecommissie**

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

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## Panellist



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## A collection of art objects spoliated from Saul Juer

Originally from Galicia, Saul Juer (1877-1944) settled in Vienna around 1885, becoming part of the local Jewish community. In 1904, he married Helene Kanner, with whom he had two daughters. Juer was a respected entrepreneur; in 1902 he became co-partner in his father Osias Juer's meat sales business, which operated a market stall in Vienna's 3rd district. By 1906, he had assumed sole ownership of the enterprise.

Beyond his professional life, Saul Juer was a passionate art collector. Over the course of more than thirty years, he assembled a rich and diverse collection, including ceramics, Judaica, engravings, drawings, and paintings, showing his taste and deep appreciation for cultural heritage.

However, following the *Anschluss* in March 1938, Saul Juer, like many Austrian Jews, became a target of Nazi persecution. In the wake of the swift “Aryanisation” policies that followed, he lost his market stall and livelihood as early as April 1938. With payments from debtors abruptly halted, he was forced to dissolve his business in June 1938. In an effort to meet his financial obligations, Juer was compelled to begin selling off his cherished art collection.

Among the known transactions, Juer offered a selection of militaria-themed objects to the Vienna *Heeresmuseum* (Museum of Military History) in August 1938. The acquisition, brokered through the dealer Blasius Fornach, comprised 572 items, including lithographs, oil paintings, and ceramic figures, and was finalized in January 1940. A further oil painting, submitted to the museum in June 1941, remained in its holdings despite not being officially purchased. As the military focus of these items did not fully represent the breadth of Juer's original collection, it is believed that he was forced to sell additional pieces (paintings, ceramics, and objects of precious metal) through other channels, including to the art dealer Friedrich Welz and the Dorotheum, the latter under compulsion via anti-Jewish property laws.



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



In November 2022, the Art Restitution Advisory Board recommended to the Federal Minister of Defence that 564 presently traceable pieces be transferred to Saul Juer's legal successors. Following the minister's acceptance of this recommendation, further research by Mathias Lichtenwagner revealed that Steve Glauber is the rightful recipient of the restitution.

In an interview conducted in Vienna in May 2025, which is due to be shown at the conference, Steve Glauber discusses his experience of the restitution process with the two researchers and the head of the Commission for Provenance Research.

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**Commission for Provenance Research  
and Art Restitution Advisory Board**

In Austria, provenance research and art restitution concerning collections owned by the Republic of Austria are carried out by two bodies.

- The Commission for Provenance Research at the Federal Ministry for Housing, Arts, Culture, Media and Sport is responsible for investigating Austrian federal museums and collections, proactively searching for objects confiscated during Nazi persecution that have come into the possession of the Republic of Austria. The Commission also conducts research into the legal successors of those entitled to restitution.
- The Art Restitution Advisory Board makes decisions based on the information provided in the Commission for Provenance Research's reports. The Board submits its decisions to the Federal Minister responsible for the respective collections, recommending how to proceed with the objects in question (whether to grant or refuse restitution).

## History

Following the seizure of two Egon Schiele paintings from the Leopold Collection at MoMA in New York in early 1998, an event which attracted widespread media attention, the Austrian Minister of Culture at the time set







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<https://provenienzforschung.gv.at/en/empfehlungen-des-beirats/beschluesse/>

Lexicon of Austrian Provenance Research:

<https://www.lexikon-provenienzforschung.org/en/>

Based on research conducted by the Commission for Provenance Research, the Art Restitution Advisory Board currently meets three to four times a year.

On this basis, around 66,300 objects, including paintings, drawings, prints, sculptures, objects of applied art, folk art, books, scientific and technical



Subparagraph 2 concerns assets that are legally owned by the state today but were previously the subject of a legal transaction that was deemed invalid under the 1946 Annulment Act (Nichtigkeitsgesetz). The Advisory Board therefore regularly consults the judgements of the Austrian restitution commissions in its recommendations, particularly with regard to the Third Restitution Act of 1947. This applies to the vast majority of cases, since transfer of ownership by a persecuted person after the 'Anschluss' in March 1938 is considered confiscation, also if, in addition to seizures by the Gestapo and other Nazi authorities, a household was for example dissolved and individual items were sold in preparation for escape or forced resettlement.

Subparagraph 2a explicitly extends the scope of subparagraph 2 to include Nazi confiscations and other legal transactions or acts that took place in the territory of the German Reich outside the present Republic of Austria between 30 January 1933 and 8 May 1945.

Subparagraph 3, which has been less relevant in practice until now, refers to objects that were not returned to their original owners at the end of restitution proceedings and became the property of the state as 'abandoned goods'.

Section 1(2) states that, in the case of Section 1(1), Subparagraph 1a, any compensation paid by the State to acquire an object must be repaid (valued) before restitution. Conversely, payments made under Section 2b of the Federal Law on the National Fund of the Republic of Austria for Victims of National Socialism are not to be refunded.





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Germany

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

### Panellists



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



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

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For over 20 years, the German Advisory Commission on the return of cultural property seized as a result of Nazi persecution (commonly known as the *Beratende Kommission NS-Raubgut*) has reviewed 25 restitution cases.

While many restitution decisions in Germany are resolved either through settlements or by the competent regional cultural authorities, the *Beratende Kommission NS-Raubgut* plays a crucial role by examining particularly complex or disputed cases. As an independent body from the federal government, the *Beratende Kommission NS-Raubgut* has dealt with a wide range of cases. Its recommendations are closely watched and often publicly discussed.

Composed of respected individuals, including judges, university professors, political figures, and experts in looted art, the Commission has, over the past two decades, worked with a consistent commitment to the complex and difficult questions arising in cases of Nazi looted art.

The conversation between Prof. Dr. Tegethoff and Rüdiger Mahlo will address the broader issue of Germany's moral and political responsibility regarding the looting of art by the National Socialist regime and its collaborators.

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Established in 1951 by representatives of 23 major international Jewish

Since negotiations began in 1952, the German government has paid

Over 68 years later, the Claims Conference continues to engage annually with



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



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**The books of Henry Torrès**  
***Commission for the Restitution of***  
***Property and the Compensation of***  
***Victims of Anti-Semitic Spoliation***  
**(CIVS)**

more than two hundred books  
scattered across Germany have  
finally found their owners

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**Dominique Torrès** is the grand-daughter of Henry Torrès and one of his two heirs in title. Ms. Torrès is a journalist, reporter and author. She is best known for her work on modern slavery: Dominique Torrès is also founder of the Committee Against Modern Slavery.

*« Who was my grandfather, Henry Torres? First of all, he was a great lawyer, a brilliant orator. He appears in the foreground of the antisemitic poster for the infamous 1941 exhibition "The Jews and France." He is best known—and will likely always be remembered—for securing the acquittal of a young man, Samuel Schwartzbard, who had planned and carried out the killing of the man responsible for the Ukrainian pogroms, right on Boulevard Saint-Michel. He managed to get him acquitted, and his closing argument remains a landmark in French law schools. It is an absolutely extraordinary plea, worth reading and rereading.*

*But no one speaks of Henry Torrès better than his friends. Robert Badinter: Henry is a character in his book The Execution. And Joseph Kessel wrote magnificent pages about him in the introduction to Henry's book Les Accusés – Hors Série. He also made him a character in his novel Le tour du malheur. I'd also like to say that Joseph Kessel was such a loyal friend that he held Henry's hand and helped him financially to live out the rest of his days.*

*I'd like to take this opportunity to thank you all for the extraordinary work you've done in bringing these books back home. It is fundamentally important, on principle. Of course, that's why you did it—for the principle. It's not necessarily the literary quality of the books that matters most, but the fact that you spent all that time searching for them and bringing them back to where they belonged. It is an act of justice. I'm truly sorry not to be with you today, and I sincerely thank you from the bottom of my heart. »*











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

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

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Liberté  
Égalité  
Fraternité

**Commission pour la restitution  
des biens et l'indemnisation  
des victimes de spoliations antisémites**

1995: *Acknowledgment of the responsibility of French authorities in the persecution of Jews*

On 16 July 1995, on the commemoration of the Verdun HIV Roundup of 16 July 1942, French President Jacques Chirac acknowledged that the French authorities were partly responsible for the persecution of the Jewish community during the Occupation. Since then, the public authorities have considered compensating the material damage suffered by the Jewish community in France.

In 1997, the French government created the Mattéoli Study Mission on the Spoliation of French Jews also known as the "Mattéoli Mission". This working

In 1997, the French government created the Matteoli Study Mission on the Spoliation of French Jews also known as the "Mattéoli Mission". This working group conducted a thorough investigation into the confiscations of property and all valuables in France occupied by the Nazis resulting from the Anti-Semitic Legislation, including legislation on persons deported from France. The working group produced an exhaustive 3,000-page report that included recommendations for the government to repair these wrongs promptly and decisively. One such recommendation was that the government establish a body charged with examining claims that were submitted by the victims of the Anti-Semitic legislation passed by France under the Nazi occupation.











At the request of the person concerned or on its own initiative, the Commission issues an opinion on the existence of spoliation and the circumstances in which it occurred concerning:

- Cultural property likely to have been spoliated as a result of anti-Semitic persecution perpetrated both by the French State between 10 July 1940 and 24 August 1944 and by the occupying forces, with a view to reparation of the losses resulting from this spoliation;
- Cultural property likely to have been spoliated between 30 January 1933 and 8 May 1945, in the context of the anti-Semitic persecutions perpetrated by Nazi Germany, by the authorities of the territories it occupied, controlled or influenced and by the French State between 10 July 1940 and 24 August 1944;
- The collections of the Museums of France belonging to non-profit-making private legal entities, acquired through donations and legacies or with the support of the State or a local authority;
- Cultural property likely to have been spoliated in the context of anti-Semitic persecution between 30 January 1933 and 8 May 1945, recovered and inventoried on completion of the operations of the Artistic Recovery Commission, with a view to its restitution or, failing that, any appropriate reparation measure.

**Cultural properties** can include:

- works of art, paintings, sculptures, photographs, decorative art objects, etc.
- books and manuscripts, personal archives, historical or religious manuscripts, etc.
- craft objects, items with cultural or artisanal value, such as carpets, antique furniture, religious objects.
- objects of significant heritage value: this can include museum pieces, antiques, or any objects of exceptional value due to their history, provenance, or uniqueness.

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## Ministry of Culture

It was established in April 2019 by ministerial decree, following a request by the Prime Minister during the commemoration of the Vel' d'Hiv on 22 July 2018, in which he called for "doing better" in the area of research and restitution of artworks looted from Jewish families.

M2RS continues the work previously carried out by the Department of French Museums under the Directorate-General for Heritage and Architecture of the Ministry of Culture in the field of provenance research and restitution.

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## notes

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



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