



Newsletter Cultural Goods World War II

In this *Newsletter*, we will inform you about activities of the Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands (RCE) in the area of cultural heritage objects which were looted, confiscated or sold under duress in the Netherlands before or during the Second World War. We will also refer to interesting information from the organizations with which we closely collaborate, such as the Restitutions Committee and NIOD, Institute for War, Holocaust and Genocide Studies.

NK Collection Research Team Expanded

Six young researchers got started at the Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands (RCE) in September. They are part of the team that will focus over the coming years on renewed and supplementary provenance research of objects in the Netherlands Art Property Collection (NK collection) and will make the relevant information and data accessible for the long term. In addition, efforts will be made to draw attention to the NK collection and the provenance research, and to provide information about the restitution policy, through the use of additional communication and activities.

The RCE hopes that by expanding the team, the NK collection will be given a significant boost with the aim of gaining even more insight into

the provenance of objects and enabling the handling of more restitution requests, as a result of which possessions can be returned to their rightful owners and heirs.



PHOTOGRAPH BY RUBEN SCHIPPER

NK Collection Research Intensification Team at the National Collection Centre.

A Fragile Past: Meissen Porcelain

On the advice of the Restitutions Committee, the Minister of Education, Culture and Science decided in December 2019 to have 107 object groups of Meissen porcelain returned to the heirs of Dr Franz Oppenheimer. The objects bear silent witness to the poignant history of Franz Oppenheimer and his family. To their flight from Germany to Austria in 1936, and then to the United States in 1938. Oppenheimer sold the pieces to finance this, so it was a sale under duress.

Supervisory Committee for Provenance Research

The independent committee announced previously by the Minister of Education, Culture and Science for the supervision of research has now been appointed. The committee oversees the quality of past and future research and assesses whether it meets the standard required in order to determine the provenance of objects from the NK collection as accurately as possible. In concrete terms, that means that it checks whether the right steps are taken and the right archives are consulted during the research. Of course the emergence of new archives or insights may lead to modifications being made to the research, which are then discussed with the committee. The committee consists of Prof. Rudi Ekkart

Jug with lid, Meissener Porzellan Manufaktur (ca. 1720 - ca. 1725) from the Oppenheimer collection. [More information about the object.](#)



PHOTOGRAPH FROM THE RIJKSMUSEUM AMSTERDAM

In September 2021, the heirs had 117 pieces auctioned at Sotheby's in New York. More than half of the collection was purchased by the Rijksmuseum, as a result of which it was re-acquired by the museum. Under the title 'A fragile past', the museum created an [exhibition](#), a [film](#) and a [podcast](#) telling this extraordinary story.

You can read the Restitutions Committee's [advisory report](#) and [press release](#) here.



PHOTOGRAPH BY RUBEN SCHIPPER

The supervisory committee with Henrike Hövelmann, Christiaan Ruppert, Gerdien Verschoor and Rudi Ekkart (from left to right).

(chair), Henrike Hövelmann MA, Dr Christiaan Ruppert and Gerdien Verschoor MA. They will be introduced to you in this newsletter. In this issue, you can [get acquainted](#) with Rudi Ekkart and Henrike Hövelmann.

Two Restitution Decisions in August

State Secretary for Culture and Media Gunay Uslu took two restitution decisions in August. The first was for the return of the drawing *The Marriage of Tobias and Sara* by artist Pieter Coecke van Aelst to the heirs of Arthur Feldmann (1877-1941). In so doing, she followed the advice of the Restitutions Committee which found it sufficiently plausible that the collector had lost the drawing involuntarily on 15 March 1939 when the Gestapo raided the Feldmann home in Brno and confiscated all of the family's possessions, including the art collection.

You can read the Restitutions Committee's [advisory report](#) and [press release](#) here.

The second decision concerns a request for the return of 26 objects from the NK collection by several heirs of a shareholder in the Lisser & Rosenkranz Bank. The objects were property of the bank when it was wound up in April 1940,

after which it sold the objects. Ultimately falling into the hands of the Nazi regime, the objects were recuperated from Germany after the war. Closer examination led to the Restitutions Committee's advice to deny the request. You can read the [Restitutions Committee's advisory report](#) here.



PHOTOGRAPH FROM THE RIJNSMUSEUM AMSTERDAM

The Marriage of Tobias and Sara, a drawing by Pieter Coecke van Aelst (1540-1545), pen and fitch brush in brown

Joint Property

During the [Museum acquisitions from 1933](#) research project, eleven 17th century [majolica plates](#) from the collection of Museum Boijmans van Beuningen were identified as having a possible connection to looting, confiscation, sale under duress or other suspicious circumstances.



PHOTOGRAPH BY AAD HOOGENDOORN

Simon Goodman, an heir of the Gutmann family

The museum and the heirs decided to request a binding opinion from the Restitutions Committee. However, in-depth research failed to turn up any information as to the plates' whereabouts between 1933 and 1955. Due to the fact that an involuntary loss of property could not be established, the museum and the heirs entered into a dialogue with each other. They decided to divide the eleven plates between them. Six majolica plates will be returned to the family, whilst the other five have been put on display in Depot Boijmans van Beuningen, where the story of the Gutmann family and the Gutmann collection is told.

Due to this [joint approach by the museum and the heirs](#), the Restitutions Committee has decided that a binding opinion is no longer needed.

Piece Returned to Heirs Following Discovery of New Clues

An additional piece found during the *Museum acquisitions from 1933* project to have wartime history requiring closer examination was the painting *Murnau with a Church* by Kandinsky. The painting has been part of the collection of Eindhoven's Van Abbemuseum since 1951. An [earlier request](#) from the Stern-Lippmann heirs was rejected in 2018, because it could not at that time be established that the painting had fallen out of the possession of their grandmother/great-grandmother during the Nazi regime. Recent research has unearthed various clues that do, however, make that plausible. The Municipality of Eindhoven will therefore return the painting to the heirs of Johanna Margarethe Stern-Lippmann (1874-1944).

The rationale for this decision is explained in the [Restitutions Committee's advisory report](#) and the [press release](#).



PHOTOGRAPH BY PETER COX, EINDHOVEN

Murnau with a Church by Wassily Kandinsky.

Subscriptions

Would you like to stay informed of developments in the area of cultural heritage objects and restitutions in relation to the Second World War? You can [subscribe to the newsletter here](#).

PUBLISHED

- > [Newsletter of Network of European Restitution Committees on Nazi-Looted Art](#)
The latest issue of the European Network of Restitution Committees newsletter was published in September. It can be read on the website of the Restitutions Committee.
- > [2021 Annual Report of the Restitutions Committee](#)

Questions or submit a request?

Are you looking for information on restitution or the NK collection? To facilitate restitution requests, the RCE is the primary contact for potential interested parties, collection managers and curators as regards restitution policies, procedures, and provenance research. Researchers can ask for advice on provenance research, and be referred to existing archives and organizations that may be of help. The RCE itself publishes information on its [website](#), where you can also find information on how to submit a restitution request. Interested parties, museums, researchers, students and others can email their questions to: restitutie@cultureelerfgoed.nl.

We are glad to be of service.