



Lost Lives, Lost Art: Jewish Collectors, Nazi Art Theft and the Quest for Justice

Melissa Muller

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From 1933 on Jewish collectors were under extraordinary pressure from German official and unofficial sources to surrender their priceless collections. Collectors reluctantly agreed to one-sided sales of masterpieces at ludicrously low prices in exchange for a precious exit permit for themselves or a member of their family. This book traces the dispersal of these collections and follow the fate of the collectors. Inevitably, their collections were confiscated by German officials (Jacques Goudstikker), sold by Nazi party member art dealers (Cassirer) or seized for state collections (Bloch-Bauer). Following the war Allied officials made little effort to retrieve these paintings, concentrating their resources on art removed from museums, churches, and palaces. But the collector s heirs continued to pursue the return of their patrimony, and over the past twenty years have won a number of key court decisions in Europe and the US leading to the restitution of some of the lost art. For every victory, such as the return to the Bloch-Bauer heirs of their family s confiscated Klimts, are defeats and obstinate stonewalling by museums and collectors, who insist that the art was legally acquired in good faith. Monika Tatzkow, historian and NATO research Fellow, is a worldwide leading authority in art-restitution matters . Her research lead to the first art-restitution based on the Washington Principles ever, her expertise regularly influences German High Court, e.g. in the Swiss Gold" decision

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