

For Immediate Release
November 21, 2003

Press contact: Irene Laviña
Tel: +43 676 405 95 15
irenelavina@consultant.com

Sophie Lillie
WAS EINMAL WAR
A Handbook of Vienna's Plundered Art Collections

What happened to the art collections seized by the Nazis from Viennese Jews? Sophie Lillie's investigative handbook uncovers the fate of 148 significant collections, many pieces of which were considered lost.

Vienna, Austria – During the Nazi regime in Austria, thousands of artworks were seized from Vienna's Jewish families. Today, very few pieces have found their way back to their rightful owners and descendants, despite numerous recovery efforts and new restitution laws. Who were these collectors? What valuable pieces were expropriated? Where is the missing art now?

An Exceptional Portrait of Dispossessed Collectors and Lost Masterpieces

In WAS EINMAL WAR, art historian Sophie Lillie painstakingly uncovers the paths taken by some of the most important looted artworks owned by Jewish collectors. This exceptional handbook portrays the dispossessed collectors, presents original GESTAPO seizure inventories and identifies the whereabouts of works of art that have been considered destroyed or missing since the Third Reich.

148 exemplary private collections are presented in alphabetical order – the most famous of which are those of Rothschild, Gutmann, and Bondy – with more than 350 photographs of mostly previously unpublished material. Among the plundered art collections are collections of Old Masters such as Rembrandt and Tintoretto, 19th century paintings from Rudolf von Alt to Ferdinand Georg Waldmüller, and of Austrian modern art including works of Egon Schiele, Gustav Klimt and Oskar Kokoschka.

The Systematic Looting of Artwork

In 1938, Vienna witnessed the systematic destruction of the culture of the Austrian Jew. Austria was annexed in the "Anschluss" and the Nazi regime proceeded to carry out one of the most abominable crimes in history. The procedure was meticulously conceived – all Jewish property was registered with local authorities, heavily taxed and partly banned from export. All objects of "national interest" were confiscated.

Jews who managed a timely escape and expected to have their property forwarded to their places of exile were quite mistaken in this belief as even objects with export certificates were impounded. The refugees were deprived of Austrian citizenship and their assets forfeited to the Third Reich. Homes and their contents were "Aryanized" and their provenance gradually covered up.

In the course of annihilating the Jewish people, the Nazis could amass outstanding if expropriated pieces of art for the personal collection of Adolf Hitler and his officials. Objects that were not allocated to the planned "Führermuseum" or local museums were publicly sold through auction houses such as the Dorotheum or through art dealers where traces of their origin quickly disappeared. These are now in the possession of private individuals or of famous Austrian art institutions such as the Austrian Gallery at the Belvedere, the Albertina, the Kunsthistorisches Museum, and the Leopold Museum.

Laborious research into Nazi documents

Lillie invested years of extensive research matching official Nazi documents and seizure records with itemizations in auction or exhibition catalogs. The Nazis made precise inventories of the assets of the Jewish population. Government offices such as the revenue and immigration authorities, the GESTAPO and the Monuments Office and the so-called Vermögenverkehrsstelle documented the disseizin and the destruction of the lives of the Jewish people.

In the Dorotheum auction catalogs, the names of the original owners were omitted and the auctions of objects from "Aryanized" apartments were listed as "voluntary". The personalities of the portrayed Viennese Jews come to life as one reads the itemization of the collections of both valuable art and miscellaneous household objects. It is in the details of the machinery of expropriation and destruction that Lillie illustrates the tragedy that culminates in genocide.

A Landmark Publication

In 1998, 2 Schiele paintings were seized in New York as looted art. The ensuing public attention spurred the Austria government into enacting new restitution laws. The publication of WAS EINMAL WAR marks the 5th anniversary of the institution of those acts.

An indispensable reference book for collectors, curators and dealers, WAS EINMAL WAR is a landmark in provenance research as many descendants of Holocaust survivors are still waiting for the restitution of their legitimate property.

The biographical contextualization of the plundered art collections serves to preserve the last traces of a generation of dispossessed, displaced, and largely forgotten individuals, and to attempt to redress the dehumanization of the victims of the Holocaust. In this sense, WAS EINMAL WAR is, indeed, a memorial.

The Author

Sophie Lillie, born 1970 in Vienna. MA in Art History, Columbia University, 1995.

From 1995 to 2001, Sophie Lillie handled restitution claims for the Federation of Jewish Communities in Austria and headed their Holocaust Victims' Information and Support Center in Vienna.

Sophie Lillie

WAS EINMAL WAR

A Handbook of Vienna's Plundered Art Collections

1440 pages, 350 illustrations, hardcover

November 2003

ISBN 3-7076-0049-1

€69,- / SFr 113,-

Currently available in German

Published by Czernin Verlag, Vienna

Austria – 1080 Vienna, Piaristengasse 1

Tel. +43 1 512 01 32 Fax +43 1 512 01 32-15

E-mail office@czernin-verlag.com

www.czernin-verlag.com

**Index of Collectors represented in
"Was Einmal War"**

Abramowicz, Leon & Marianne
Altmann, Bernhard & Nelly
Amon, Hans & Helene
Anninger, Otto & Clara
Arens, Gustav
Askonas, Carl & Rosa
Auspitz, Stefan
Auspitz-Arteneegg, Theodor & Ella
Bachofen-Echt, Elisabeth
Beer-Hoffmann, Richard & Paula
Benedikt, Ernst & Irma
Bettelheim-Gabillon, Ludwig
Bittmann, Rudolf & Martha
Blauhorn, Josef & Gusti
Blitz, Malvine
Blitz, Wilhelm & Gertrude
Bloch-Bauer, Ferdinand & Adele
Blum, Victor & Alice
Bondy Oscar
Breuer, Julius & Paula
Brill, Otto & Livia
Buchstab, Julius & Margarethe
Cahn-Speyer, Paul & Mary
Czeczowiczka, Arthur & Irma
Czeczowiczka, Edwin & Karoline
Duschinsky, Georg
Egger, Ernst & Fanny
Egger-Möllwald, Lothar & Eveline
Eisler, Alfred & Valerie
Eissler, Hermann & Hortense
Engel, Hans & Lucie
Ephrussi, Viktor
Epstein, Charlotte
Epstein, Jehudo & Auguste
Ernst, Rudolf
Feitler, Alfred & Leonie
Felsövänyi, Gertrud
Fischel, Adele
Freund, Josef
Freund, Wilhelm
Friedmann, Hugo & Hilde
Gall, Hermann & Elsa
Gerngross, Paul & Martha
Gerngross, Robert & Frida
Geyer, Emil
Goldmann, David & Juliane
Gomperz Cornelia, Maria & Philipp
Grünbaum Fritz & Elisabeth
Grünwald, Karl
Gutmann, Rudolf & Marianne
Haas, Felix & Lise
Hecht, Leo & Helene
Heissfeld, Valerie
Hellmann, Wilhelm & Daisy
Herzberg, Franz & Marie Louise
Hirsch, Ernst & Martha
Hirsch, Fritz & Gertrud
Hochstim, Adolf & Hilda
Honig, Marie Valerie
Hupka, Josef & Hermine
Jellinek, Bruno
Kallir-Nirenstein, Otto & Franziska
Kantor, Siegfried & Irma
Karpeles-Schenker, Helene
Kaszab, Rosa
Ketschendorf, Irma
Klapholz, Benedikt & Emilie
Klinger, Norbert & Serafine
Kohn, Camilla
Königstein, Nettie
Kornfeld, Felix & Paula
Kraus, Gottlieb & Mathilde
Krausz, Wilhelm Viktor & Marianne
Krüger, Hans
Kuffner, Moriz & Elsa
Kuffner, Wilhelm & Camilla
Kulka, Adele
Kulka, Wally
Ladner, Oscar
Lanyi, Richard
Lasus, Hermine
Lederer, August & Serena
Lemberger, Rosa
Lieben, Mathilde
Lilienfeld, Leon & Antonie
Lindenbaum, Markus & Melanie
Lourié, Arthur & Marianne
Löhner, Fritz & Helene
Löri, Heinrich Arthur & Martha
Löw, Wilhelm & Franziska Fanny
Löwenstein, Oscar & Irma
Mahler-Werfel, Alma
Mandl, Fritz
Mautner, Stephan & Elsa
Meinl, Julius & Hansi Rose
Mendelsohn, Franz
Meyszner, Alice
Morgenstern, Max & Herta
Munk, Aranka
Neumann, Oskar & Therese
Neumann, Richard & Alice
Oppenheimer, Jella
Oppenheimer, Leopold & Lili
Pick, Ignatz & Gisela
Pick, Moriz & Irma
Pick, Otto & Katharina
Pollack, Ernst & Gisela
Pollak, Albert
Pollak, Robert & Adele
Popper-Podhragy, Ernst & Ilse
Popper-Podhragy, Leopold
Prager, Arthur & Agnes
Priester, Julius & Camilla
Priester, Leo
Quittner, Alfred
Redlich, Amalie
Redlich, Anton
Regenstreif, Paul & Therese
Reichel, Oskar & Malvine
Reichmann, Armin & Rosa
Reif, Heinrich
Reisinger, Andreas & Luise
Riedl, Franz & Anna
Rieger, Heinrich & Berta
Roden, Max & Sascha Kronburg
Rothberger, Heinrich & Ella
Rothberger, Moriz
Rothschild, Alphonse & Clarice
Rothschild, Louis
Ruhmann, Franz
Schiff-Suvero, Emma
Schoenberg, Gustav & Louise
Schüller, Ludwig & Gertrude
Schweinburg, Eduard & Gisela
Silberman, Elkan & Abraham
Simon, Josef & Louise
Singer, Marianne
Sonnenfeld, Alfred & Irmgard
Springer, Valentine
Steiner, Jenny
Stiasny, Paul & Nora
Terramare, Georg & Erna
Thorsch, Alfons & Marie
Trebtsch, Siegfried & Antonie
Unger, Friedrich & Anna siehe
Gustav Arens
Weiner, Alexander & Irma
Weinstein, Leopold
Winter, Josefina
Winterstein, Else
Wittgenstein, Paul
Wolff-Knize, Friedrich & Anna
Wooster, Frank & Mary
Zemlinsky, Alexander & Luise
Zsolnay, Paul von
Zuckerkindl, Fritz & Trude

Press Events

Sophie Lillie
WAS EINMAL WAR
A Handbook of Vienna's Plundered Art Collections

Czernin Verlag
invites members of the press
to the following events

Press Conference

Friday, November 28, 2003

11:00 AM

Venue:

Cafe Landtmann

Dr. Karl Lueger Ring 4

1010 Vienna, Austria

Book Launch

Wednesday, December 10, 2003

7:00 PM

Venue:

The Secession

Friedrichstrasse 12

1010 Vienna, Austria

Introduction:

Matthias Herrman, President of the Secession

Speakers:

Tom L. Freudenheim, Former Director of the Jewish Museum in Berlin, Consultant to the Smithsonian Institute in Washington, DC

Hubertus Czernin, Publisher

Marina Mahler, President of the Gustav Mahler Foundation

Press contact:

Irene Laviña

Laviña Consulting, Vienna/Austria

Tel: +43 676 405 95 15

Fax: +43 1 276 42 78

irenelavina@consultant.com