

RESTITUTION REPORT #1: *Zwei Reiter am Strand*, Max Liebermann



Zwei Reiter am Strand nach links was originally in the personal collection of David Friedmann, a wealthy Jewish collector.¹ By 1939, however, his collection was seized by the Nazis and forcefully sold at a local German auction house.² It was then bought by Dr. Cornelius Muller Hofstede who was personally sold it Hildebrand Gurlitt, one of Hitler's "degenerative" art dealers.³ *Zwei Reiter am Strand* would then remain within the Gurlitt family's private collection for generations. Though the Monuments did confiscate the work for restitution, they found no evidence of a previous Jewish owner and returned it to the Gurlitts soon after.⁴ In 2013, the German police raided the Gurlitt flat, of which was

¹ "Reiter am Strand / Riders on the beach," Lost Art Database, accessed Nov 8, 2023, www.lostart.de/en/Fund/477892.

² Lost Art Database, "Reiter am Strand."

³ "The first painting to be sold from Cornelius Gurlitt's trove of art," Archeology Newsroom, last modified May 25, 2015, www.archaeology.wiki/print-article/?print=87802.

⁴ "The Nazi Seizure of the "Two Riders on the Beach" Painting," University of Glasgow, accessed Nov 9, 2023, www.futurelearn.com/info/courses/art-crime/0/steps/11896.

televised. The painting on the wall in the background was instantly recognizable as *Zwei Reiter am Strand*.⁵ David Toren, the heir of Friedmann, quickly filed a provenance claim⁶ and soon after it was restituted in full.⁷ David Toren immediately put it up for auction at Sotheby's where it sold for 2,924,572 USD, far exceeding its estimate of 548,847 - 862,474 USD.⁸

RESTITUTION REPORT #2: *Paysan brûlant de mauvaises herbes* / Boer. onkruid verbrandend, Vincent Van Gogh



Originally given to his own mother, Van Gogh's *Paysan brûlant de mauvaises herbes* made its way through several individual collectors and auctioneers until it ended up

⁵ University of Glasgow, "The Nazi Seizure."

⁶ "Provenienzbericht der Taskforce 'Schwabinger Kunstfund' zu Max Liebermann 'Reiter am Strand' / 'Zwei Reiter am Strand,'" LootedArt, last modified July 25, 2014, www.lootedart.com/web_images/pdf2016/TFK_2014-07-25_Schlussbericht_Liebermann_Reiter_am_Strand.pdf.

⁷ Lost Art Database, "Reiter am Strand."

⁸ "(#27) Max Liebermann," Sotheby's, accessed October 27, 2023, www.sothebys.com/en/auctions/ecatalogue/2015/impressionist-modern-art-evening-sale-115006/lot.27.html.

consigned to Jacques Goudstikker.⁹ A well-known Jewish fine arts dealer, Goudstikker fled Amsterdam following the Nazi invasion—leaving behind close to a thousand works in inventory.¹⁰ By July 1940, *Paysan brûlant de mauvaises herbes* was "transferred" to Alois Meidl, a notorious Nazi dealer.¹¹ However, in the 1990s, the Goudstikkers family renewed interest in legal proceedings and released a full digital version of the black inventory notebook.¹² On page 78, "Boer. onkruid verbrandend" is recorded.¹³ Last bought at a US auction in 1989, it was either voluntarily restituted by the private collector, or paid for partially through its then-upcoming sale that took place in 2019 at Sotheby's.¹⁴ Two museums (Drents Museum and the Van Gogh Museum) partnered to buy *Paysan brûlant de mauvaises herbes* for 3,140,000 USD, far exceeding its very conservative estimate of 500,000- 800,000 USD.¹⁵

⁹ "(#118) Vincent Van Gogh," Sotheby's, accessed Nov 8, 2023, www.sothebys.com/en/auctions/ecatalogue/2019/impressionist-modern-art-day-n10148/lot.118.html.

¹⁰ "Reclaimed: Paintings from the Collection of Jacques Goudstikker," The Jewish Museum, accessed October 27, 2023, thejewishmuseum.org/index.php/exhibitions/reclaimed-paintings-from-the-collection-of-jacques-goudstikker.

¹¹ "Card 73329, Boer. onkruid verbrandend," Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg, accessed Nov 8, 2023, https://www.errproject.org/jeudepaume/card_view.php?CardId=73329.

¹² The Jewish Museum, "Reclaimed."

¹³ Jacques Goudstikker, *Black Inventory Notebook*, https://s3.amazonaws.com/tjmassets/exhibition_pdfs/Akte-38-Blackbook.pdf

¹⁴ Martin Bailey, "For sale: two Van Gogh paintings come up at Sotheby's New York next week," *The Art Newspaper*, last modified Nov. 8, 2019, <https://www.theartnewspaper.com/2019/11/08/for-sale-two-van-gogh-paintings-come-up-at-sothebys-new-york-next-week>.

¹⁵ Martin Bailey, "Two Dutch museums join forces to buy rare, \$3m Van Gogh painting at Sotheby's New York," *The Art Newspaper*, last modified Nov. 19, 2019, <https://www.theartnewspaper.com/2019/11/14/two-dutch-museums-join-forces-to-buy-rare-dollar3m-van-gogh-painting-at-sothebys-new-york>.