



Kunstmuseum Bern – a foundation independent of the Swiss Confederation – appointed sole heir of Cornelius Gurlitt

General considerations

As the Kunstmuseum Bern confirmed in its media release dated 7 May 2014, it has been appointed as the sole heir of Cornelius Gurlitt. In the media release, it also notes that a large number of questions still remain to be answered in connection with the Gurlitt estate.

The Kunstmuseum Bern is a private-law foundation and as such is independent of the Swiss Confederation.

The decision whether or not to accept the estate of Cornelius Gurlitt lies with the Kunstmuseum Bern foundation.

The Washington Conference Principles on Nazi-Confiscated Art of 1998, which Switzerland has also adopted, provide that the provenance of all artworks linked to the issue of Nazi-looted art must be investigated in order that just and fair solutions can be achieved.

The role of the Swiss Confederation

The Swiss Confederation will ensure that any further steps taken are in line with international and national standards. It is in contact with the bodies concerned at the specialist level. In Switzerland, the responsibilities of the Contact Bureau on Looted Art of the Federal Office of Culture FOC are regulated as follows (www.bak.admin.ch/rk):

- Cases within the federal scope of competence:
The FOC is directly responsible only in cases that fall within the federal scope of competence (museums and collections of the Swiss Confederation as well as federal institutions).
- Enquiries within the scope of competence of other institutions or private individuals:
The Bureau stands ready to provide general information in respect of enquiries that fall within the scope of competence of other institutions or private individuals. It aims to offer an initial point of contact at federal level and to contribute toward a satisfactory solution in case of disputes.
- Centre of competence
The FOC maintains contact with foreign institutions and organisations that deal with the issue of looted art. It promotes the exchange of general information, thereby contributing to the networking of information, the identification of issues, and their resolution.

Bern, 13 May 2014, FOC