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on the Occasion of the Exhibition

KIRCHNER AND THE BERLIN STREET

at the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), New York
(August 3 - November 10, 2008)

The Story of Street Scene

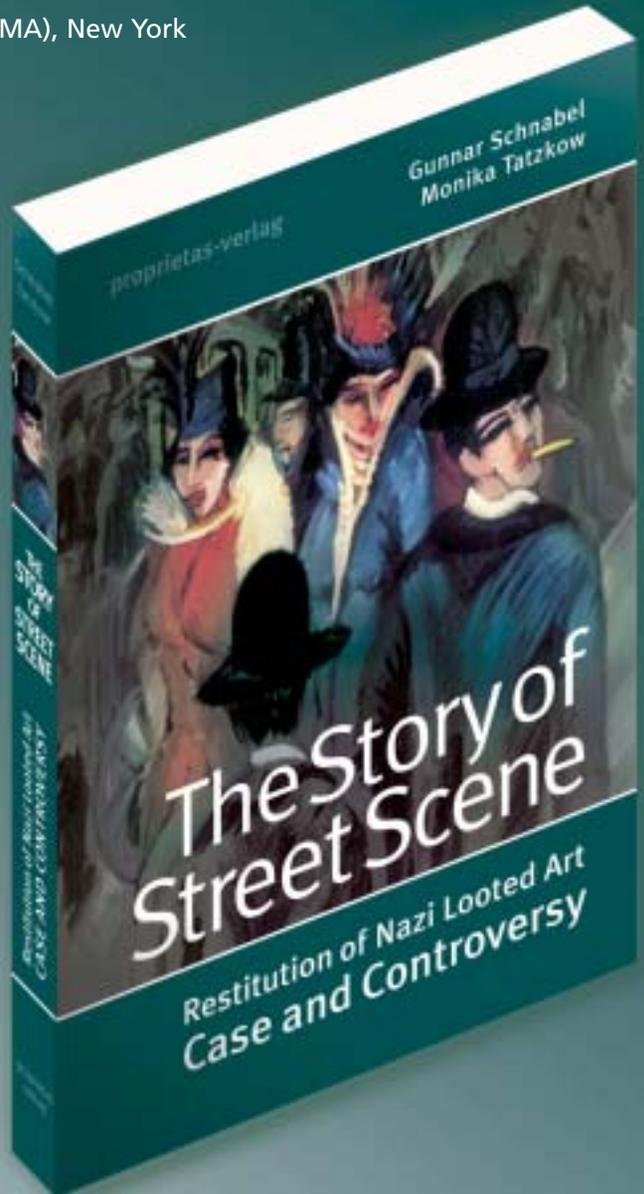
Restitution of Nazi Looted Art

Case and Controversy

In the fall of 2006,
a unique international
controversy exploded
around *Street Scene*,
Ernst Ludwig Kirchner's
Expressionist masterpiece.

Had the decision to
return the painting to the
daughter of its former
Jewish owner been moral
and correct?

Or was it a capitulation to
profit-seeking American lawyers
and their Jewish clients – a coup
that would bring fresh product
into an art market worth millions?



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The Story of Street Scene

Restitution of Nazi Looted Art

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About the book:

Based on scrupulous research, the authors tell the thrilling Story behind the Street Scene:

- Alfred Hess, the German shoe magnate, who during the Weimar Republic owned one of the best collections of German Expressionist art that ever existed.
 - His unique friendships with the most important Expressionist artists of the time – Feininger, Klee, Rohlfis, Schmidt-Rottluff, Pechstein, Heckel, Müller and others.
 - How transport to Switzerland at first kept much of the collection out of Nazi hands.
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- How the Nazis forced many works to be sent back to Germany, and how some of them were lost, including *Street Scene*.
 - Original written correspondence from E.L. Kirchner, the *Street Scene* artist, Carl Hagemann, the *Street Scene* purchaser, and other Kirchner experts – collectors and German art dealers who discussed the one-of-a-kind opportunities to acquire his works on the cheap in the Nazi era, from the “Jewish people who had to get out,” as Kirchner referred to them in 1936.
 - The postwar history of *Street Scene*, particularly the legal and factual impossibility for the Hess family to lodge a legal claim against the unknown private owner until the Washington Principles of December 1998 allowed for the restitution of the painting in 2006.
 - The basis for the restitution, explained in plain language by the authors, beginning with the London Declaration in January 1943 and including the Allied statutes on restitution from 1948-49, the German legal requirements for restitution and compensation from the 1950s, and the obligations that Germany adopted in 1998, which continue to determine the principles of restitution today.

The Story of Street Scene ends with a look back at the “Two-Year Battle Over the Painting’s Return,” (Bloomberg) the confrontation in the media between those for and against the restitution, the largest international controversy ever seen in the world of art restitution.

With this book, historian Dr. Monika Tatzkow and attorney Gunnar Schnabel, authors of *Nazi Looted Art: A Handbook of Art Restitution Worldwide*, have compiled the most up-to-date account of this gripping story based on a full year of independent research.

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ISBN 978-3-00-024710-1

Price USD 20,00 excl. shipping costs