

Press Information

Provenance Research

A Just and Fair Solution Reached by Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen and Professor Curt Glaser Heirs



Left: Max Pechstein, White House, 1910, Watercolour and pencil, 14x11 cm © Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen
 Center: Max Pechstein, Meadow Valley, 1911, Watercolour and pencil, 15x10 cm © Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen
 Right: Prof.Dr. Curt Glaser, 1920er Jahre, photo and © Munch Museet

After having undertaken comprehensive historical research regarding two watercolors by Max Pechstein from the former collection of Professor Curt Glaser, the Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen (Bavarian State Painting Collections) and the heirs of Professor Curt Glaser have reached a just and fair solution in accordance with the principles of the 'Washington Conference' as well as the 'Joint Declaration of the Federal Government, the Federal States and the National Associations of Local Authorities on the tracing and return of Nazi-confiscated art, especially Jewish property', dated December 14, 1999.

Professor Glaser, a medical doctor, famous art historian, art critic, author of many important texts and books on art and art history, as well as a notable art collector, worked for Berlin museums since 1909 until he became director of the Berlin National Art Library in 1924. Prior to that, he had achieved great distinction while working for the Kupferstichkabinett (Galley of Prints) in Berlin.

With the Nazis' rise to power, he was persecuted because he was Jewish. Prior to his forced retirement in September 1933, the Nazis suspended Glaser as an unwanted and persecuted Jewish museum director from his position as director of the National Art Library already before the enactment of the 'Law for the Restoration of the Professional Civil Service' (Nazi law forbidding Jews from holding German civil servant positions). As a result of the loss of his position and due to Nazi persecution, Glaser had no professional or personal future in

Nazi-Germany. In June 1933, he emigrated, together with his second wife who was also Jewish, to the United States via stopovers in France, Switzerland, Italy, and Cuba. He died in Lake Placid, New York in 1943. Prior to his forced departure from Germany, he had to sell a large part of his art collection, his apartment furniture, as well as his art library at the Intern. Kunst-und Auktionshaus GmbH (09.05.1933) and Max Perl (18./19.05.1933) auction houses. This took place immediately before and after Nazi book burnings in May 1933.

The two Max Pechstein watercolors were acquired by the Berlin Nationalgalerie at the Max Perl auction on May 18 and 19, 1933. After they were confiscated in connection with the "Degenerate Art" campaign, the couple Sofie and Emanuel Fohn, acquired them in an exchange transaction in 1939. In 1964, they donated them to the Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen together with other artworks.

The Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen recognizes that Professor Curt Glaser was a victim of Nazi persecution. They regard the auction sale of his art library and his art collection, including the two Pechstein watercolors at the above mentioned Max Perl auction house, as a loss due to Nazi persecution. The Glaser heirs' restitution claim is acknowledged as being well-founded.

The heirs accepted the request of the Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen that the artworks remain in their collection. Both parties therefore agreed that the two Pechstein watercolors will remain in the collection of the Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen and that the heirs will receive adequate compensation.

Further information is available under T 089 23805-280 or via Email at presse@pinakothek.de

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