

MEDIA RELEASE

Ottawa, ON, February 5, 2014 — Thanks to the support of the Department of Canadian Heritage via its Museums Assistance Program, the Canadian Art Museum Directors Organization (CAMDO) embarked last spring on a two-year project aimed at furthering Canadian efforts to build and disseminate Holocaust-era provenance information on Canadian public fine art collections.

CAMDO's "Holocaust-era Provenance Research and Best-Practice Guidelines Project" will develop best-practice guidelines that will empower Canadian institutions to understand and embrace their stewardship responsibilities in Holocaust-era provenance research, and to undertake their own research in the coming years. In addition, the CAMDO project provides leadership, resources and expertise to six participating art museums to enable them to build and publish new research on European paintings in their collections that may have been part of the mass theft or forced sale of Jewish assets during the Nazi era. In pursuing these goals, CAMDO joins international research efforts to aid potential claimants worldwide in their pursuit of restitution and justice.

The six participating museums are the Art Gallery of Ontario, Art Gallery of Windsor, McMaster Museum of Art, Royal Ontario Museum, University of Lethbridge Art Gallery, and Winnipeg Art Gallery.

Under the direction of CAMDO Past President and Board Member Dr. Josephine Mills, the research project will be led by Janet M. Brooke, Provenance Research Specialist, and Nancy Karrels, Research Assistant, who will conduct site visits to examine relevant paintings and documentation, pursue their investigations in libraries and archives in Canada and abroad, and develop best practice guidelines for dissemination. Research results will be posted on a searchable database. Significant support is provided by the National Gallery of Canada through its sharing of office space and research resources.

"Canada's art museums have long declared their will to pursue Holocaust-era provenance research," states Dr. Mills, "but in the absence of resources and expertise on the ground, most have been unable to move forward. With this funding, CAMDO can now support its members in joining this crucial international research effort."

Carol Podedworny, Director of the McMaster Museum of Art, affirms that "the availability of qualified external expertise in provenance research will bring new knowledge to our collection, and will empower us to disseminate our research worldwide."

The CAMDO project builds upon recommendations developed at the "Canadian Symposium on Holocaust-era Cultural Property," organized by the Canadian Museums Association and the Canadian Jewish Congress in 2001, and on a CAMDO needs-assessment survey conducted in 2007. Both called upon the federal government for support of Holocaust-era provenance research.

The Canadian Art Museum Directors Organization (CAMDO) is a professional network of peers – directors of public Canadian art museums and galleries – that advances knowledge and expertise among its members, finds solutions to shared challenges, and represents the sector on issues of national significance.

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