

8 January 2013

The Company for Location and Restitution of Holocaust

Victims' Assets reveals:

Searching for hundreds of works of art stolen from Holocaust victims by the Nazis in Israeli museums

Dr. Israel Peleg, CEO of the Company for Location & Restitution of Holocaust Victims' Assets in Israel: "The Company is convening a historical "round table" deliberation tomorrow with museum representatives, for a joint effort to locate works or art stolen by the Nazis in order to reveal and return them to their rightful heirs"

Photo-Op Event

Unlike other countries around the world, the museums in Israel have not taken action toward identifying the looted works of art, publicizing them and locating their rightful heirs – despite Israel is a party to relevant international treaties

The Company for Location and Restitution of Holocaust Victims' Assets revealed today that museums in Israel may be holding hundreds of works of art which were stolen, confiscated and looted from Holocaust victims and which belong to their rightful heirs – the families of the victims.

For the first time ever, the Company is convening a historical "round table" deliberation with senior museums' staff and representatives of the Ministry of Culture in order to initiate a process aimed at revealing and returning the works of art to their rightful heirs.

The event will be open for photo-ops. Full details below.

During the years preceding WWII, thousands of pieces of modern and Jewish art were confiscated by the Nazi regime, denounced as being “degenerate art”. During the War and the German occupation, valuable art collections were systematically confiscated from Jews throughout Europe, including classical works of art, only to be traded or sent to museums, storage and the homes of senior Reich officials.

In an attempt to save as many works of art as possible, hundreds of looted artworks were sent to Israel after the war – paintings, sculptures, books and Judaic artifacts – all in special shipments, put together with the help of Allied Forces, organizations and independent art collectors throughout Europe.

Among the museums holding or assumed to be holding such works of art are: The Israel Museum, Tel Aviv Museum, Ein Harod Museum, The Ghetto Fighters' House (Itzhak Katzenelson Holocaust and Jewish Resistance Heritage Museum). **For the first time since the State was established, representatives of each of these museums will attend a discussion initiated by the Company for Location and Restitution of Holocaust Victims' Assets, aimed at triggering the museums to research the provenance of the works in their collections and identify looted pieces.**

In recent years, the many countries who signed the Washington Conference Principles (1998) and the Terezin Declaration (2009), began to work actively toward locating the owners of works of art. According to the international treaties, governments and museums are required to conduct provenance research, to act toward identifying and publicizing works of art confiscated by the Nazi regime and not returned to their owners, and to allocate the appropriate resources in these efforts.

While active efforts and budgeting were made throughout the world – including the publication of databases and studies, efforts to register, locate and catalogue information kept in archives, campaigns to locate the owners – at the same time Israeli museums took no systematic action toward locating the owners and heirs of these works of art. In Germany, the government established designated Federal organ for the matter; Canada, France and Holland allocated budgets of millions of Euro to the museums, earmarked toward provenance research.

A round table event, is scheduled to take place tomorrow, 9 January, at the Company for Location and Restitution of Holocaust Victims' Assets, 18 HaSivim St. (Tamar building, level 1), Petach Tikva.

The event will be open to photo-ops at 09:30

Please confirm participation by e-mail or phone

For further details: Mali Cohen Breier 052-6961625