

# Provenance Research: History, Theory, Practice

Zagreb — 3 & 10 March 2023

Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, UniZg

Library Conference Hall



**ZagArtColl\_ProResearch**

Provenance Research on Artwork  
in Zagreb Collections

International workshop

## Provenance Research: History, Theory, Practice

Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

University of Zagreb

Library Conference Hall

Ivana Lučića 3, Zagreb

Friday, 3 March 2023 / Friday, 10 March 2023

### Workshop Programme Committee:

Ivan Ferenčak, Head Organizer

Strossmayer Gallery of Old Masters HAZU

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Strossmayer Gallery of Old Masters HAZU

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<http://zagartcoll.hazu.hr/>




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**HRZZ**  
Croatian Science  
Foundation





International workshop *Provenance Research: History, Theory, Practice*, organized within the research project *Provenance Research on Artwork in Zagreb Collections* (IP-2020-02-1356, ZagArtColl\_ProResearch) financed by the Croatian Science Foundation, aims at exploring the historical and theoretical framework for provenance research, current trends in research methodology and challenges posed to scholars and museum professionals.

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**Sophie Raux**

## **Since when provenance matters?**

Today, no one disputes that the provenance of a work of art is a key piece of information in determining its origin and helps to establish its authenticity as well as its symbolic and economic value. What seems obvious to us has not always been so. The workshop lecture will examine the process of maturation of the idea of provenance during the Ancien Régime, through different means: the appearance of the genre of collectors' gallery views, the appearance of the first engraved collections, the discourse on originality and origin held by the first thinkers on connoisseurship, and the increasing importance of the indication of provenance in sales catalogues. The aim is to address the following questions: from when is provenance considered to count? What factors contributed to the emergence of this awareness? What forms did interest in provenance take in visual production and artistic literature of the time?

Dr Sophie Raux is Professor of Early Modern Art History at Université Lumière -Lyon 2, and Director of the Laboratoire de Recherche Historique Rhône-Alpes (LARHRA) UMR CNRS 5190. Her research and publications focus primarily on early modern French, Flemish and Dutch art (painting, drawing and printmaking); history of art markets and collecting; circulation, consumption and promotion of images and art objects in the Low Countries (16th-18th centuries); social and cultural construction of art value during the Ancien Régime (notably, France in the 18th century); Digital Art History.

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**Ewelina Bednarz**

## **On the search for Dutch paintings from Polish collections**

Every work of art leaves a trace. Sometimes we start our research from a painting we have at hand, and sometimes from an entry in an inventory or a letter. The workshop lecture will address the search for Dutch paintings of Polish provenance, explain the process of verifying the authenticity of established contemporary provenance, and the efforts to track down a painting whose trace had already been lost in the 17th century. The practical aspect of the lecture will include highlighting the details instrumental for establishing the facts, as well as those that hindered the research process for months.

Ewelina Bednarz specializes in researching the presence of Dutch paintings in Polish collections before 1918. For several years she served as Polish/German archival researcher in the Jordaens van Dyck Panel Paintings Project. She collaborated in the project Museum in Polish remembrance culture: early museum institutions (up to 1918) towards digital museology and gained professional experience at the Sopot Auction House as Senior Specialist for Works of Art. She is currently completing her doctoral dissertation on Netherlandish maritime paintings of the 16th-18th centuries in Polish collections.

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**Lea Grüter**

**Between loss and absence. Provenance research on Nazi 'thefticide'\* of cultural objects at the Rijksmuseum Amsterdam**

Through various case studies, the lecture will provide insight into provenance research of Nazi-looted artefacts and its challenges at the Rijksmuseum Amsterdam. Since 2012, a team at the Rijksmuseum has been conducting in-depth provenance research on its collection objects. This project aims to determine the origin and whereabouts of as many objects as possible in the period between the Nazi rise to power in 1933 and the end of the Second World War in 1945. By doing so, the research project aims to consider whether any of these objects were expropriated within this timeframe. As custodians of the National Art & Cultural Heritage of the Netherlands, the Rijksmuseum plays a unique social role in this context. In addition to insights into the legitimacy of ownership, the research leads to further structural understanding of the crime of Nazi persecution, little-known individual narratives as part of a negated social plurality and findings on the institutional history of the museum itself. In deciphering the context and history of an object's transactions, it is thus becoming an increasingly important part of museum collection research.

\* Cotler, I., 1998. "The Holocaust, 'Thefticide' and Restitution. A Legal Perspective." In: *Cardozo Law Review*, vol. 20, 1998, pp. 601–23.

Lea Grüter has an academic background in French, art history, critical museology and cultural heritage studies. Since 2017, she works as a provenance specialist in a team of the Rijksmuseum Amsterdam, examining acquisitions after 1933. Lea Grüter's research as a museologist focuses on unquestioned social frameworks of memory and the production of forgetting within the discourse of Nazi-looted art restitution. In this context, she is particularly concerned with the role provenance traces and their absence played, play and could play in the writing, repetition, and possible reflection of socio-political and cultural memory narratives.

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**Dóra Sallay**

**Collecting the early Italian masters:  
provenance studies in Hungarian museums**

Thanks to a number of fortuitous historical circumstances, a significant number of early Italian panel paintings and detached frescoes have come to Hungarian public collections during the late nineteenth century. The Museum of Fine Arts in Budapest and the Christian Museum in Esztergom now hold a total of about five hundred of such works, but until recently little information was available on the detailed history of their provenance. The lecture will take a brief overview of the lecturer's research in this field over the last twenty years, with particular focus on methodological issues. It will present some aspects of the history of collecting and acquisition of the largest groups of artworks, such as Johann Anton Ramboux's collection, particularly rich in Sienese paintings, the Renaissance picture gallery of the Roman canon Raffaele Bertinelli, and the detached frescoes purchased by Károly Pulszky.

Dr Dóra Sallay is the curator of early Italian paintings at the Museum of Fine Arts in Budapest. Her primary research interests are Tuscan panel paintings and Central Italian detached frescos, including their technical and structural aspects, reception history and collecting. She is the author of various publications on collectors and buyers of early Italian art, such as Johann Anton Ramboux, Raffaele Bertinelli, Arnold Ipolyi, and Károly Pulszky. In addition to scholarly research, she is dedicated to the practical aspects of caring for old master paintings, and works closely with conservators, scientists, installation designers, registrars, editors, museum educators and information technologists at the Museum of Fine Arts.



## Friday, 3 March 2023

- 14:00      Opening remarks
- 14:15      Sophie Raux, Lyon  
Since when provenance matters?
- 15:30      Ewelina Bednarz, Gdańsk  
On the search for Dutch paintings from Polish collections
- 16:45      Break
- 17:15      Lea Grüter, Amsterdam  
Between loss and absence.  
Provenance research on Nazi 'thefticide' of cultural objects at the Rijksmuseum Amsterdam

## Friday, 10 March 2023

- 17:00      Opening remarks
- 17:10      Dóra Sallay, Budapest  
Collecting the early Italian masters: provenance studies in Hungarian museums

Each lecture will be followed by discussion.