



# Press Release

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## **The Return of Cultural Property Seized as a Result of Nazi Persecution – The First Recommendation of the Advisory Commission**

The Advisory Commission for the Return of Cultural Property Seized as a Result of Nazi Persecution, Especially Jewish Property, made its first recommendation today in Berlin. During a meeting at the Representation of the German Land of Saxony-Anhalt, which was chaired by Professor Dr Jutta Limbach, the Commission recommended that the German Federal Government restitute three paintings by Karl Blechen and a watercolour by Anselm Feuerbach to the heirs of the married couple Julius and Clara Freund.

The recommendation is based on the following facts: Julius Freund, a Jewish man who was persecuted by the National Socialist regime, owned a comprehensive collection of art, which also contained the paintings in question. Towards the end of 1933, he moved his collection to Switzerland in order to protect it from being taken by the National Socialists. In 1939, Julius Freund and his wife Clara, who had both since become destitute as a result of National Socialist persecution, emigrated to London. Following Julius Freund's death in 1941 and given her financial situation, Clara Freund felt compelled to sell the collection at auction at Galerie Fischer in Lucerne, Switzerland, in 1942. The aforementioned pieces of artwork were acquired at this auction by Hans Posse, Adolf Hitler's Special Commissioner for the construction of the so-called "Fuehrer Museum" for Hitler in Linz, Austria. Following the end of the war, the paintings were secured by the Allies and given to German museums as a loan from the German Federal Government as pieces of artwork that could initially not be classified. At a later stage, these pieces were listed as lost art in the Internet database [www.lostart.de](http://www.lostart.de) in order to identify the rightful claimants.

(...)

The heirs of Julius Freund, represented by Dr Jost von Trott zu Solz, a lawyer from Berlin, requested that the four pieces of artwork be returned to them, given that the sale of the pieces was necessary solely as a result of financial difficulties that were exclusively due to National Socialist persecution.

The responsible German Federal Office for the Settlement of Open Property Issues rejected the restitution, denying the connection between the persecution and the sale of the pieces.

The main task of the Advisory Commission is to act as a mediator in disputes between the German Federal Government, as well as other public institutions or establishments, and the former owners of the cultural property or their heirs, if both sides of the dispute are in favour of this. The Commission can then provide a morally justified recommendation to resolve the conflict. The honorary members of the Commission are the retired German President, Dr Richard von Weizsäcker, the former President of the German Federal Parliament, Professor Dr Rita Süßmuth, the former President of the Federal Constitutional Court of Germany, Professor Dr Jutta Limbach, the art historian Professor Dr Thomas Gaehtgens, the philosopher Professor Dr Günther Patzig, the philosopher of law Professor Dr Dietmar von der Pfordten, the historian Professor Dr Reinhard Rürup and the philosopher Professor Dr Ursula Wolf. The Koordinierungsstelle für Kulturgutverluste (*Coordination Office for Lost Cultural Assets*) ([www.lostart.de](http://www.lostart.de)) is the administrative office of the Commission and a port of call for claimants.

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