

Provenance is the study of the ownership history of works of art. Information about the provenance of an individual work of art can shed light on the historical, social, and economic contexts surrounding its production and subsequent disposition. While provenance research is an ongoing part of the scholarly work at Phoenix Art Museum, recent focus has been on information on prior-owners for all European paintings in Phoenix Art Museum's collection that were made before 1946. Just prior to and during World War II, many works of art came onto the international art market. Some of these works of art were nationalized-that is, confiscated-by the Nazi-controlled German government from museums and private collections. Fortunately, thousands of objects that had been seized by that government's systematic campaign of disenfranchising cultural elites and people of Jewish heritage were recovered by the Allied Forces after the war and returned to their original owners or their heirs.

In accordance with the American Association of Museums' (AAM) "Guidelines Concerning the Unlawful Appropriation of Objects During the Nazi Era" enacted in April 2001, Phoenix Art Museum is in the process of preparing and providing detailed downloadable provenance information for all of its European paintings made before 1946.

If you have questions about the ownership history of a particular work of art in Phoenix Art Museum's collection, please contact the Museum Director's Office at (602) 257-2123.

Resource Books

James Harithas, ed. *Paintings, Drawings and Sculpture in the Phoenix Art Museum Collection*. Phoenix, 1965.

Michael K. Komenecky and James K. Ballinger, eds. *Phoenix Art Museum Collection Highlights*. New York, 2002.

Stephanie Barron, ed. *"Degenerate Art": The Fate of the Avant-Garde in Nazi Germany*. Los Angeles, 1991.

Hector Feliciano. *The Lost Museum*. New York, 1997.

Michael Kurtz. *Nazi Contraband: American Policy on the Return of European Cultural Treasures, 1945-1955*. New York, 1985.

Lynn H. Nicholas. *The Rape of Europa*. New York, 1994.

Jonathan Petropoulos. *Art as Politics in the Third Reich*. University of North Carolina Press, 1996.

Jonathan Petropoulos. *The Faustian Bargain: The Art World in Nazi Germany*. New York, 2000.

Elizabeth Simpson, ed. *The Spoils of War: World War II and Its Aftermath. The Loss, Reappearance, and Recovery of Cultural Property*. New York, 1997.

Nancy H. Yeide, Konstantin Akinsha and Amy Walsh. *The AAM Guide to Provenance Research*. Washington, D.C., 2001.