

WORCESTER ART MUSEUM

Worcester Art Museum and Clark University's Strassler Center host free symposium on art restitution and the Holocaust

Worcester, MA—October 5, 2021—An October 14 symposium, “[Art Restitution and the Holocaust: A Symposium on Current Research and Educational Resources](#),” takes a many faceted look at the recovery of stolen art, in particular the vast array of art treasures stolen by Nazis during World War II.

Co-sponsored by the Worcester Art Museum (WAM) and the [Strassler Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies](#) at Clark University, this free, one-day series of virtual presentations brings current and relevant information to anyone interested, including scholars and educators. Special sessions are also planned for K–12 teachers. This symposium coincides with WAM's exhibition, [What the Nazis Stole from Richard Neumann \(and the search to get it back\)](#), on view through January 16, 2022.

Speakers from museums and universities will look at the scope and scale of art theft during the Holocaust; the complexities of how stolen art is recovered; how curators and others research and discover the provenance of missing and recovered art; how K–12 teachers can find and use resources on these topics, and how they can bring classroom discussions around to the art itself. Register at:

<https://6230a.blackbaudhosting.com/6230a/tickets?tab=3&txobjid=59cc3b25-c618-493e-b2b0-9ede64e85e64>

Strassler Center Executive Director Mary Jane Rein, Ph.D., who was instrumental in organizing the symposium, describes the Holocaust as a vast criminal enterprise that included theft on a grand scale. “A symposium on this subject gives WAM the opportunity to address these wrongs on behalf of the museum community and harkens back to the important work of the Monuments Men, among them George L. Stout, a former director of WAM from 1947-1954,” says Rein.

In the aftermath of World War II, Stout's mission was to rescue stolen art. In fact, George Clooney's character in the 2014 movie, “The Monuments Men,” was loosely based on Stout, who went on to build a distinguished record in the advancement of art conservation in this country.

Museums around the world must grapple with these complex issues on a regular basis. Marnie Weir, director of education and experience at WAM, says the symposium is a good way to look at the studies, experiences, and relevance around the recovery of confiscated art. “Now more than ever it is critical to ensure such narratives are brought to life and widely shared,” she says. Few Holocaust survivors remain to tell their stories.

Symposium schedule and speakers

12:30–12:45 p.m.

**Claire Whitner, PhD, Director of Curatorial Affairs and the James A. Welu Curator of European Art
Worcester Art Museum**

Claire Whitner will discuss WAM's exhibition, *What the Nazis Stole from Richard Neumann*, and how Richard Neumann's heirs located works from the family collection and loaned them to WAM.

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12:45–1:30 p.m.

Sam Sackeroff, Lerman-Neubauer Assistant Curator

The Jewish Museum

During World War II, untold numbers of artworks and pieces of cultural property were stolen by Nazi forces. After the war, an estimated one million artworks and 2.5 million books were recovered. Many more were destroyed. Sam Sackeroff will present the Jewish Museum's new exhibition, *Afterlives: Recovering the Lost Stories of Looted Art*, organized by himself and Darsie Alexander, Susan and Elihu Rose Chief Curator. *Afterlives* follows the paths taken by works of art across national borders, through military depots, and in and out of networks of collectors, looters, ideologues, and restitution organizations.

1:45–2:30 p.m.

Victoria Reed, PhD, Sadler Curator for Provenance

Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

Victoria Reed will explain the detailed work of provenance research, and how international laws and research have progressed over time. She will also provide a look at current international legal cases in restitution and the global work being done in this area.

1:45–2:30 p.m.

Dustin Tenreiro, Senior Program Associate

Facing History Facing Ourselves

Dustin Tenreiro will talk to teachers about *What the Nazis Stole from Richard Neumann (and the search to get it back)* as a stepping stone to talking about the Holocaust. He will provide educators with resources to use in the classroom and will focus on ways to incorporate art into the discussion. Works stolen, artists listed as "degenerate" by the Nazis, and survivor art will also be discussed.

2:45–3:30 p.m.

Lisa Silverman, PhD, Associate Professor, Department of History

University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

Lisa Silverman will share information gathered while researching Central European Jews and their property and the connection to the restitution of looted art after the Holocaust. She will look at the Neumann collection in light of the Austrian restitution, drawing on such examples as the "Woman in Gold" painting of Adele Bloch-Bauer and the efforts of photographer Dora Kallmus/Madame d'Ora to reclaim her and her sister's house in Austria.

2:45–3:30 p.m.

Robin Stein, author of *My Two Cities*

Steven Schimmel, Executive Director, Jewish Federation of Central MA

Robin Stein will share how local Holocaust survivor Hanni Myer's escape from Vienna in 1938 and eventual settlement in the Boston area inspired her to create a book for youth to share this history. Stein and Myer have worked together to visit schools and share the lessons of war, tolerance, and immigration with a new generation. Steven Schimmel will speak about the primary sources and resources he has used to teach youth about the Holocaust.

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3:45–4:30 p.m.

**Jonathan Petropoulos, PhD, John V. Croul Professor of European History
Claremont McKenna College**

Jonathan Petropoulos will speak about his recent book, *Göring's Man in Paris: The Story of a Nazi Art Plunderer and His World*. Bruno Lohse (1911–2007) was one of the most notorious art plunderers in history. Appointed by Hermann Göring to Hitler's art looting agency in Paris, Lohse went on to help supervise the systematic theft and distribution of more than 30,000 artworks, taken largely from French Jews, and to assist Göring in amassing an enormous private art collection. After his death, dozens of paintings by Renoir, Monet, Pissarro, and others, were found in his Zurich bank vault and adorning the walls of his home. Petropoulos spent nearly a decade interviewing Lohse and continues to serve as an expert witness for Holocaust restitution cases. Here he tells the story of Lohse's life, offering a critical examination of the postwar art world.

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Generous support for this exhibition is provided by the Jewish Federation of Central Massachusetts and anonymous donors. Additional support is provided by the Strassler Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies at Clark University, PEACE Fund GWCF, Marlene and David Persky, Carol and Michael Sleeper, Dr. and Mrs. Herbert Dean, Dr. Shirley S. Siff, Johanna D. Drooz Yoffie and Alan S. Yoffie and Carol Seager.

Related exhibition programming is supported by the Amelia and Robert H. Haley Memorial Lecture Fund. The exhibition is sponsored by Fallon Health.

About the Worcester Art Museum

The Worcester Art Museum creates transformative programs and exhibitions, drawing on its exceptional collection of art. Dating from 3,000 BC to the present, these works provide the foundation for a focus on audience engagement, connecting visitors of all ages and abilities with inspiring art and demonstrating its enduring relevance to daily life. Creative initiatives—including pioneering collaborative programs with local schools, fresh approaches to exhibition design and in-gallery teaching, and a long history of studio class instruction—offer opportunities for diverse audiences to experience art and learn both from and with artists.

Since its founding in 1896, the Worcester Art Museum has assembled a collection of 38,000 objects: from the ancient Near East and Asia, to European and American paintings and sculptures, and continuing with works by contemporary artists from around the world. WAM has a history of making large scale acquisitions, such as its Medieval Chapter House, the Worcester Hunt Mosaic, its 15th-century Spanish ceiling, and the Flemish *Last Judgment* tapestry. In 2013, the

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Museum acquired the John Woodman Higgins Armory Collection, comprising two thousand arms and armor objects. It continues to commission and present new works, such as 2019's exhibition, [*With Child: Otto Dix/Carmen Winant*](#). For more information about the Worcester Art Museum, visit worcesterart.org.

The Worcester Art Museum, located at 55 Salisbury Street in Worcester, MA, is open Wednesday through Sunday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Admission is \$18 for adults, \$14 for seniors 65+ and for college students with ID. Admission is free for Museum Members and children ages 0-17. On the first Sunday of each month, admission is free for everyone. Museum parking is free. Tickets may be purchased in advance at worcesterart.org.

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