

PRESS RELEASE



Ladies and gentlemen, dear colleagues,

The Stiftung Wilhelm Lehmbruck Museum has returned Emil Nolde's painting "Frauen im Blumengarten" (Women in a Flower Garden) to the heirs of the former owners. Please feel free to publish the contents of this press release or contact me if you have any questions.

With best wishes,

Andreas Benedict

Below please find a press release by the Lehmbruck Museum dated 11.07.2017:

Emil Nolde's painting "Frauen im Blumengarten" (Women in a Flower Garden) restituted

The Stiftung Wilhelm Lehmbruck Museum has returned Emil Nolde's painting "Frauen im Blumengarten" (Women in a Flower Garden) to the heirs of its former owners. In 2004, the heirs of the Jewish collectors Eduard and Rita Müller who were residents of Dresden first submitted a claim for restitution to the Lehmbruck Museum. The Board of Trustees of the Stiftung Wilhelm Lehmbruck Museum decided, during the tenure of current museum director, Dr. Söke Dinkla, to apply for funding for provenance research at the then Arbeitsstelle für Provenienzforschung (Agency for Provenance Research), Berlin, today Deutsches Zentrum Kulturgutverluste (German Lost Art Foundation), Magdeburg. The research was conducted by Facts & Files, Historisches Forschungsinstitut Berlin (Institute of Historical Research Berlin). The conclusion was that the painting was unequivocally identified as belonging to the Müller collection and as confiscated by the Nazis through persecution. The Board of Trustees of the Stiftung Wilhelm Lehmbruck Museum consequently decided in November 2015: "The Stiftung Wilhelm Lehmbruck Museum recognises that the painting *Frauen im Blumengarten* by Emil Nolde was confiscated through Nazi persecution, so that restitution is required according to the stipulations of the Washington Declaration."

Eduard Müller had been killed at the Auschwitz concentration camp in early 1942. Shortly afterwards, Rita Müller made an attempt to flee the country which she financed by selling, among other things, Nolde's painting. But she, too, was captured by the Nazis and suffered the same fate as her husband. Their son managed to emigrate from Prague in 1938. Now the painting has been returned to the two collectors' great-grandchildren.

The conclusion of this restitution claim is an important step, says Sören Link, Lord Mayor of the City of Duisburg: "It has been my heartfelt wish that we find a fair and just solution in compliance with the Washington Declaration. This cannot redress the wrongs of the past but we have now done everything in our power."

Thomas Krützberg, Head of Cultural Affairs of the City of Duisburg, has played a significant role in the talks concerning the restitution since he assumed office in 2013: "I feel relief as we are returning the painting to its rightful owners. The fact that this has been such a long road is due to the responsibilities of the Museum as a custodian of public property. Ultimately, the historical facts are the determining factor for the return of the painting."

Museum director Dr. Söke Dinkla "sees a historical responsibility for the Museum to conduct in-depth research into the historic expropriation of the Jewish population and to restitute works in our collection which, like Nolde's *Blumengarten*, were confiscated through Nazi persecution. I am therefore happy that the Board of Trustees has authorised me to follow the principles of the *Washington Declaration, the Terezin Declaration and the declaration of the Federal Government, the Federal States and the National Associations of Local Authorities on the tracing and return of Nazi-confiscated art, especially Jewish property*, of December 1999".

The date of release and content of this press release are consistent with an agreement reached between the Lehmbruck Museum and the representatives of the heirs.

Illustrations authorised for publication with the following caption: Emil Nolde, "Frauen im Blumengarten", 1916, @ Nolde Stiftung Seebüll, photographer: Britta Lauer.

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