

**Gurlitt: Status Report Part 2  
Nazi Art Theft and its Consequences**

19.04 – 15.07.2018

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19.04 – 15.07.2018

## **1. General information**

### **Duration of the exhibition**

19.04. – 15.07.2018

### **Curator of the exhibition**

Dr. Nikola Doll, Head of Provenance Research Kunstmuseum Bern

### **With the generous support of**



### **In cooperation with**

BUNDESKUNSTHALLE



### **Ticketpartner**



### **Next exhibition**

Gurlitt: Status Report at the Gropius Bau in Berlin

14.09.2018 – 07.01.2019

An exhibition organised by the Bundeskunsthalle in Bonn and Kunstmuseum Bern

## 2. The exhibition

The finding of some 1'500 art works from the estate of the German art dealer Hildebrand Gurlitt also drew attention to the role of the art trade in the systematic plunder of European Jews. A Europe-wide plundering raid followed the radicalisation of the persecution policy and the expanse of the Nazi sphere of control.

«Gurlitt: Status Report Part 2. Nazi Art Theft and its Consequences» shows selected art works from the estate of Hildebrand Gurlitt. The works on display are around 120 paintings, sculptures, prints and drawings whose origins have so far not been conclusively proven, and some of which are therefore suspected of being looted art. In terms of an inventory, the Kunstmuseum Bern takes the trove as an opportunity to place Gurlitt's art deals in the historical connection of the National Socialist ostracism and the genocide of the Jewish population in Europe. Particular attention is focused on the circumstances of the acquisition of individual art works and the fates of their former owners.

One chapter is devoted specifically to the restoration policy after the end of World War II. In the «provenance research workshop», with reference to case studies an understanding of challenges and methods of research is provided.

### Art dealer under National Socialism

Hildebrand Gurlitt quickly established himself as an art dealer. He built on existing relationships with collectors, gallery-owners, artists and museums and presented a varied programme of exhibitions in the spaces of his gallery in Hamburg-Rotherbaum.

When artists, art dealers and collectors in his immediate environment were ostracised as «Jewish» and increasingly stripped of their rights by Nazi legislation, Gurlitt managed to expand his field of business. He bought art from persecuted collectors who were forced by the loss of their livelihood and by compulsory payments to the regime to put their possessions on sale, often below their market value.

### Art trade, theft and the formation of taste

Art was a central part of the Nazi reign. Adolf Hitler and Hermann Göring had already started to build up their private collections in the early 1930s. Other Nazi party leaders followed their example, thus symbolically demonstrating their rank and their increase in power. They took their bearings from an artistic canon that had formed towards the end of the 19th century.

As the Jewish population were stripped of their rights, the regime gained access to their property. After Austria was incorporated into the German Reich, the targeted confiscation of Jewish art collections began – a practice that was later extended to the occupied countries.

### The Paris art market (1940–1944)

After the capitulation of France on 30 June 1940, Adolf Hitler issued an order for art works in the possession of the French state and in private collections to be seized. French art dealers of Jewish extraction had to surrender the business management of their galleries to «Aryan» administrators, and were thus effectively expropriated. German art dealers, like Hildebrand Gurlitt, were excepted from the ban on exports of cultural assets belonging to the French government. They bought works in France for German museums and international collectors or sold them to art dealers in third countries. The «Degenerate Art» campaign had left large gaps in museum collections, which were to be compensated for by new acquisitions.

The art market reacted to the high demand for high-quality works and Paris underwent a boom. Documents confirm the high prices of the works, for the sale of which Gurlitt received a commission of 5%.

In the «Gurlitt art trove» today there are many works of French provenance. In the case of the majority of these works the circumstances of their acquisition cannot yet be adequately reconstructed.

### Restitution

Since the discovery of the «art trove», six works from Gurlitt's legacy have been identified as looted art. Four of these have so far been restituted to the legal heirs of the injured parties: in 2015 Max Liebermann's painting «Zwei Reiter am Strand» (Two Riders on the Beach) was restituted to the heirs of David Friedmann. Matisse's painting «Femme assise» (Seated Woman) by 2015 was given back to the heirs of Paul Rosenberg in 2015. In 2017 came the restoration of Adolph Menzel's drawing «Inneres einer gotischen Kirche» (Interior of a Gothic Church) to the inheritors of Elsa Helene Cohen. The painting «La Seine, vue du Pont-Neuf, au fond le Louvre» (The Seine, view from Pont-Neuf, the Louvre at the back) by Camille Pissarro was restored to the heirs of Max Heilbronn in 2017. Currently restitution processes are under way for the drawing «Das Klavierspiel» (Playing the Piano) by Carl Spitzweg and the painting «Portrait de jeune femme assise» (Portrait of a Seated Young Woman) by Thomas Couture.

### Studio Provenance Research

The «Gurlitt art trove» initially became famous in the media as a lost «Nazi treasure». But after a short time quite different questions arose: Where do these art works come from? Under what circumstances did Hildebrand Gurlitt acquire them? This is where provenance research begins. The term «provenance» refers to the history of the ownership of something. Provenance research investigates the origins of art works, and the conditions under which they were owned.

The provenance of the works in the «Gurlitt art trove» has been under investigation in Germany since 2013. From 2013 until 2015 the «Schwabinger Kunstfund» (Schwabing art trove) task force reconstructed the instances when the works changed hands. Since 2015 the research has continued within the context of «Projekt Provenienzrecherche Gurlitt» (Gurlitt Provenance Research Project). In spite of large-scale research, in many cases it has proved impossible to trace all of the conditions of ownership of the works.

### 3. Biography of Hildebrand Gurlitt

#### 1895

Hildebrand Gurlitt is born 15 September as the last of three children in Dresden. His father, the architect and art historian Cornelius Gurlitt (1850–1938), is a professor at the Königlich Sächsische Technische Hochschule in Dresden; thanks to his publications on architecture, he is still a name in the field of art history today. Hildebrand's grandfather, Louis Gurlitt (1812–1897), was a successful landscape painter. His grandmother, Elisabeth (1823–1909), from the Jewish Lewald family, was the sister of the author Fanny Lewald.

#### 1914

After the beginning of World War One (1914–1918) Hildebrand Gurlitt volunteers for the front.

#### 1917

Hildebrand Gurlitt returns to Dresden after being wounded several times. Recovered he is deployed in the military administration's press department at Vilnius in Lithuania. He becomes head of the art section and decides to work in the field of museums in the future.

#### 1919

Hildebrand Gurlitt starts studying art history in Frankfurt am Main, but transfers to the Friedrich Wilhelm University in Berlin just one year later. After graduating he returns to Dresden, where he becomes an assistant at the Technische Universität Dresden's Baugeschichtliche Sammlung (Architectural History Collection).

#### 1923

Hildebrand Gurlitt marries the dancer Helene Hanke (1895–1968).

#### 1925–1931

Hildebrand Gurlitt is appointed director of Museum in Zwickau. He restructures the entire collection and uses the style of the Bauhaus as inspiration in designing the interior and promotional material.

In Zwickau, Hildebrand Gurlitt designs a varied exhibition programme aimed at reaching a wide audience. However, his main interest is contemporary art. He brings the avant-garde into the museum by putting on several solo and group exhibitions. Purchases of expressionistic works arouse serious protest from Nazi circles in the town. The National Socialist group the Militant League for German Culture (Kampfbund für deutsche Kultur) strikes a particularly harsh tone. Despite support from esteemed and important individuals of the German museum world, Gurlitt loses his position.

#### 1931–1933

As the managing director of the Kunstverein in Hamburg he resumes his work as an exhibition organizer. The following year, the Kunstverein opens a branch that not only displays art, but also sells it. For Gurlitt, who had known how to use his position in Zwickau for commercial dealings, this opens the door from museum to art market.

By having the flagpole on the building of Hamburg's Kunstverein removed, Hildebrand Gurlitt disobeys the order that all public buildings must fly the swastika flag on 1 May. This act of civil disobedience once again attracts disapproval of the National Socialists. By resignation he avoids being dismissed. He works now as a full-time art dealer.

**1935**

Hildebrand Gurlitt founds the Kunstkabinett Dr. H. Gurlitt in new premises on Alte Rabenstrasse 6 in Hamburg Rotherbaum. Following the adoption of «Nürnberger Rassegesetze» he is considered a «Mischling zweiten Grades» (seconddegree half-caste).

**1937**

He puts the Kunstkabinett Dr. H. Gurlitt into his wife's name.

In the course of the action «Degenerate Art» works of modern art are confiscated in German museums and publicly defamed in an exhibition. The established «Kommission zur Verwertung der Produkte entarteter Kunst» (Commission for the Utilization of Degenerate Art) continues the confiscations until 1938. In total, more than 20'000 works of Expressionism, Abstraction, Dada and socially critical works as well as works of left and Jewish artists are removed from German museums.

**1938–1941**

Hildebrand Gurlitt advertises himself at the Reichspropagandaministerium as an art dealer for the works that were confiscated as «degenerate». Gurlitt gets to work on these and on the major collections of prints that are also to be sold off, proving himself to be a skilful dealer. Contrary to his remit, Hildebrand Gurlitt also secretly sells works to German collectors.

**1939**

In June 1939, Hildebrand Gurlitt travels to Lucerne, where he participates in the famous Fischer gallery sale at which the most prestigious works of «Degenerate Art» are auctioned off.

**1940**

Hildebrand Gurlitt constantly expands his sphere of operations to France, Belgium and the Netherlands. In the occupied territories he acquires artwork which he is then able to sell to German museums and collectors. Paris is his most frequent destination. He makes purchases without regard for the source of the works.

**1942**

Gurlitt's flat in Hamburg is destroyed during an air raid. The family returns to the parental home in Dresden, where the art dealership will have a temporary base over the following years.

**1943**

On the French art market Hildebrand Gurlitt becomes the successor to Karl Haberstock regarding the purchases of artwork for the Linz Art Gallery, the so called «Führermuseum».

**1945**

The Gurlitts' property in Dresden burns down in the February air raid that destroys much of the city. The family flees with a lorry containing artworks and head west. They experience the end of the war in the Upper Franconian village of Aschbach. Gurlitt's artworks are confiscated by the American occupying forces. Some of them are taken to the Allies' Central Collecting Point (CCP) in Wiesbaden. In December 1950 the art collection is returned

Gurlitt is questioned by the Americans working for the Monuments, Fine Arts and Archives (MFAA) programme. The protocols prove that he remained silent about those things that could have incriminated him, and that he prevented the return of many artworks by giving incorrect provenances. In addition, he successfully keeps part of his collection hidden from the Allies.

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**1948**

Exonerated as a «Follower» of the Nazi regime, Hildebrand Gurlitt continues his earlier work as an exhibition organizer.

**1956**

Hildebrand Gurlitt is seriously hurt in a traffic accident. The 61-year-old dies from his injuries a few days later.

#### 4. Chronology of the «Gurlitt Art Trove»

##### September 2010

The Bavarian Public Prosecutor's Office started an investigation against Cornelius Gurlitt on suspicion of tax evasion following a customs inspection on the train from Zurich to Munich.

##### February/March 2012

Cornelius Gurlitt's Munich apartment was searched and the artworks discovered in it confiscated.

##### November 3, 2013

A report in the news magazine *Focus* made the «Schwabing art trove» public. Many of the works were believed to be Nazi plunder. It turned out that the information on the size and value of the cache of artworks was greatly exaggerated.

##### November 2013

The Federal Republic of Germany and the Free State of Bavaria set up the «Schwabing Art Trove Taskforce.» This international team of specialists began with the research on the provenances of the artworks. In the following weeks the works confiscated from Gurlitt were published in the database [www.lostart.de](http://www.lostart.de).

##### February 2014

Cornelius Gurlitt was represented by a court-appointed custodian and a team of lawyers. His legal representatives announced that further artworks had been found in Gurlitt's house in Salzburg.

##### April 2014

Cornelius Gurlitt signed an agreement with the Free State of Bavaria and the Federal Republic of Germany on the further procedures to be taken in regard to the art trove. In it he agreed to have the provenance of the artworks investigated by the «Schwabing Art Trove Taskforce» and gave his consent to returning the works that proved to be Nazi-looted art to the descendents of the rightful owners.

##### May 6, 2014

Cornelius Gurlitt died aged 81 years in Munich. On the following day, on May 7, 2014, the Kunstmuseum Bern Foundation was informed that Hildebrandt Gurlitt had appointed it as his sole beneficiary in his last will and testament.

##### November 21, 2014

Ms. Ute Werner, Cornelius Gurlitt's cousin, contested the will.

##### November 24, 2014

The Kunstmuseum Bern decided to accept the legacy after six months of consideration.

##### March/April 2015

The Probate Court in Munich decided that Cornelius Gurlitt's last will and testament was valid. Ute Werner filed a complaint on behalf of part of the family.



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**May 2015**

Two works in the legacy could be restituted to their rightful owners: Max Liebermann's painting *Two Riders on the Beach* was returned to the descendents of David Friedmann. Henri Matisse's painting *Femme assise* was restituted to the descendents of Paul Rosenberg.

**January 14, 2016**

The «Schwabing Art Trove Taskforce» submitted its final report. Subsequently the investigation of ownership and origins of the artworks was taken over by the project «Gurlitt Provenance Research» of the German Center for Lost Cultural Property.

**December 15, 2016**

The Higher Regional Court in Munich rejected Ute Werner's appeal against the decision of the Probate Court in Munich and acknowledged the Kunstmuseum Bern as the legal beneficiary. With this decision the Kunstmuseum Bern and the Bundeskunsthalle in Bonn could intensify their preparations for the planned exhibitions.

**February 20, 2017**

Adolph von Menzel's drawing *Interior of a Gothic Church* was returned to the descendents of Elsa Helene Cohen.

**May 2017**

Camille Pissarro's painting *La Seine, vue du Pont-Neuf, au fond le Louvre* was restituted to the heirs of Max Heilbronn.

**Since November 2017**

The Kunstmuseum Bern and the Bundeskunsthalle in Bonn are showcasing the works from the Cornelius Gurlitt legacy for the very first time, so the public has access to the works and can learn about the history of the people involved.

## 5. Restituted works and quotations

### **Max Liebermann**

«Zwei Reiter am Strand», 1901,  
72 x 92,50 cm  
Restituted to the descendants of David  
Friedmann in May 2015  
[www.lostart.de/DE/Fund/477892](http://www.lostart.de/DE/Fund/477892)

### **Henri Matisse**

«Femme assise», 1921  
Oil on canvas, 55,4 x 46,5 cm  
Restituted to the descendants of Paul  
Rosenberg in May 2015  
[www.lostart.de/DE/Fund/477894](http://www.lostart.de/DE/Fund/477894)

### **Adolph Menzel**

«Inneres einer gotischen Kirche», 1874  
Graphite on paper, 20,1 x 12,6 cm  
Restituted to the descendants of Elsa Helene  
Cohen in February 2017  
[www.lostart.de/DE/Fund/478264](http://www.lostart.de/DE/Fund/478264)

### **Camille Pissarro**

«La Seine, vue du Pont-Neuf, au fond le Louvre»,  
1902, Oil on canvas,  
46,5 x 38,5 cm  
Restituted to the descendants of Max Heilbronn  
in May 2017

### **Marcel Brühlhart, Vice-President of the Umbrella Foundation Kunstmuseum Bern – Zentrum Paul Klee**

*The Kunstmuseum Bern is now closer to the German approach to the Washington principles. We are not just confining our efforts to cases of downright confiscation. Instead, what is important is whether the artwork was appropriated as a result of national-socialist persecution. It might have also been the case that it was not taken from the owners but that they gave it away, for instance under pressure, and then our demands are less stringent in regard to the burden of proof than it is usually the case in Switzerland.*

### **Günter Winands – Ministerial Director and Representative of the Federal Government Commissioner for Culture and the Media in Germany**

*It is constantly stated that only six artworks could be definitively identified as looted art. Each time I answer by saying that just a single piece of art would be worth all the research effort, because behind every individual work that has been identified as looted art and that is restituted is the fate of a human being, whom we can pay tribute to in this way.*

### **Marcel Wormser – President of the Société des Amis de Georges Clemenceau, Paris**

*For me, lending support to his granddaughter is part of perpetuating the memory of George Mandel. We (the Société des Amis de Georges Clemenceau) have various opportunities that call for thinking about George Mandel, defending his actions, explaining what he did and why, telling people about him and keeping his memory alive. Each year we attend the service commemorating his murder in the woods of Fontainebleau. Regarding the restitution of the painting by Thomas Couture from the «Gurlitt Art Trove» we extend our moral support to his granddaughter and assist her with advice – in the spirit of Georges Clemenceau. Beyond this, Clemenceau was a person for whom two things were paramount – one was certainly freedom (...) and the other was justice. Clemenceau found any aggression toward and persecution of the weakest among us – the isolated individual and outcast – by the state or the world's powerful intolerable.*

## 6. Short Biographies of the Members of the Advisory Board

### Esther Tisa Francini

The historian Esther Tisa Francini (born in 1972) has been responsible for the Archive and Provenance Research Department at the Museum Rietberg in Zurich since 2013. Since 1998 she has been dealing with the history of the international, and above all, Swiss art market, Nazi looted art, and the trajectories of non-European artworks. Together with Anja Heuss and Georg Kreis, she wrote the groundbreaking publication «Fluchtgut – Raubgut. Der Transfer von Kulturgütern in und über die Schweiz und die Frage der Restitution (Flight Goods – Stolen Goods. The Transfer of Cultural Goods into and via Switzerland and the Question of Restitution)». She curated the exhibition *Von Buddha bis Picasso. Der Sammler Eduard von der Heydt* (From Buddha to Picasso. The Collector Eduard von der Heydt) (2013 in Zurich, 2015 in Wuppertal), and in 2016 she managed the show *Dada Afrika. Dialog mit dem Fremden* (Dada Africa. Dialogue with the Other) (cooperation project, Zurich and Berlin in 2016, Paris in 2017/18) together with Michaela Oberhofer and Ralf Burmeister.

### Gilbert Lupfer

Gilbert Lupfer (born in 1955) studied art history, history, and empirical science of art at the University of Tübingen and the FU Berlin. He gained his doctorates in 1995, qualified as a professor in 2002, and has been an adjunct professor of art history at the TU Dresden since 2007. Since 2002 he has been employed at the Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden (Dresden State Art Collections). In 2008, he was put in charge of the provenance research project «Daphne» and since 2013 he has been heading the Department of Research and Academic Cooperation. On 1 April 2017, he was appointed academic chairman of the Stiftung Deutsches Zentrum Kulturgutverluste Magdeburg. He has contributed publications on topics such as 19th and 20th century architecture, museology and museum history as well as provenance research.

### Uwe M. Schneede

Uwe M. Schneede (born in 1939) studied art history, literature, and classic archaeology at the universities of Kiel and Munich. He is a professor emeritus of modern art history and was the director of the Hamburger Kunsthalle until his retirement in 1991. From 2008 until 2014 Schneede was the chairman of the advisory board of the Department of Provenance Research as well as the academic chairman of the newly established Deutsches Zentrum Kulturgutverluste (German Lost Art Foundation) in Magdeburg from 2015 until 2017. «Die Geschichte der Kunst im 20. Jahrhundert: Von den Avantgarden bis zur Gegenwart» (The History of Art in the 20th century: From the Avant-gardes to the Present) (2010) and «Museum 2000 - Erlebnispark oder Bildungsstätte (Museum 2000 – Amusement Park or Educational Institution)» (2000) are among Uwe M. Schneede's numerous publications. He curated an array of exhibitions and published the accompanying catalogues.

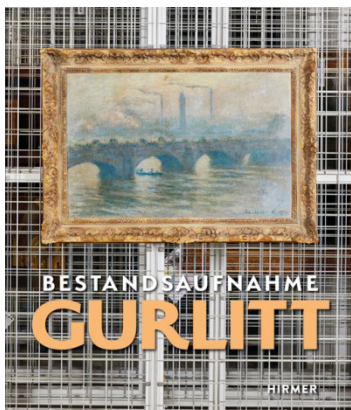
**Hermann Simon**

After obtaining his Abitur at a grammar school with Latin and Greek on his curriculum, Hermann Simon (born in 1949), studied history and orientalia at the Berlin Humboldt University. He went on to do a postgraduate degree in Prague and a doctorate in Berlin. From 1975 until 1988 Hermann Simon was employed at the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin (Berlin State Museums) before being appointed founding director of the Stiftung Neue Synagoge Berlin- Centrum Judaicum (New Synagogue Berlin Foundation – Centrum Judaicum), which he headed until 2015. His publications are dedicated to numismatic topics and the history of Jews in Germany. He managed numerous exhibitions and published the accompanying catalogues. He is the editor of the series «Jüdische Miniaturen (Jewish Miniatures)» and «Jüdische Memoiren (Jewish Memoires)».

**Shlomit Steinberg**

The art and theatre historian Shlomit Steinberg (born in 1957) started her career at the Israel Museum in the early 1980s. Since 2014 she has been working there as the Hans Dichand Senior Curator of European art. From 2014 until 2016, Steinberg was a member of the international Gurlitt Taskforce. Her extensive list of publications includes *Orphaned art: looted art from the Holocaust in the Israel Museum* (exhibition catalogue 2008). *License to Paint: French Academic Art in the 19th Century* (2017), *Francisco Goya: Daydreams and Nightmares* (2016), *Looking for Owners: Custody, Research, and Restitution of Art Stolen from France during World War II*, a cooperation project with the national museums of France (2008), and *Orphaned Art: Looted Art from the Holocaust in the Israel Museum* (2008) are among the exhibitions she curated.

## 7. Accompanying volume published for the exhibition



### **Gurlitt: Status Report**

#### **With an introduction by**

Alain Berset, The Swiss Federal Council

Monika Grütters, Federal Government Commissioner for Culture and the Media

#### **With a preface by**

Nina Zimmer, Director Kunstmuseum Bern – Zentrum Paul Klee

Rein Wolfs, Director Bundeskunsthalle

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## 8. Supporting program of the exhibition

### **Panel: Black Box Gurlitt**

Tuesday, April 24, 2018, 7 p.m.

Panel discussion with Catherine Hickley, journalist, and Susan Ronald, author. Moderation: Julia Albrecht. The authors of three monographs about Gurlitt discuss their research, sources and perspectives on the art dealer and museum director Hildebrand Gurlitt with the filmmaker and lawyer Julia Albrecht.

### **Series: Kunst und Religion im Dialog**

Sunday, April 29, 2018, 3 p.m. – 4 p.m. Magdalena Schindler (Kunstmuseum Bern) in dialogue with Hanna Kehle (Katholische Kirche Religion Bern) about selected works from the collection

### **Lecture: Christian Fuhrmeister, Zentralinstitut für Kunstgeschichte, München**

Tuesday, June 05, 2018, 6 p.m. Trade – Players – Works. The moral charge of modernity after 1945. Lecture in the series «Provenienzforschung - warum und wozu?» organized by the Kunstmuseum Bern, the Bern University of the Arts and the Institute of Art History University of Bern.

### **Adult education course**

Wednesday, April 25, May 02, 09 and 23 2018, 3 p.m. – 4 p.m.,  
Second course: Wednesday, June 06, 13, 20, 27 2018, 3 p.m. – 4 p.m.  
Bookings required: Volkshochschule Bern:  
T 031 320 30 30, [info@vhsbe.ch](mailto:info@vhsbe.ch)

### WORKSHOP FOR CLASSES

#### **Moderne Kunst im Nationalsozialismus**

(Modern Art in National Socialism)  
A confrontation with Hildebrand Gurlitt as an art dealer, the topic looted art and the exhibited works  
From Tuesday to Friday at  
9 a.m.\*

#### Introduction for teachers

Tuesday, May 1, 2018, 6 p.m.\*  
Wednesday, May 2, 2018 2 p.m.\*

\* Bookings required:

T +41 31 328 09 11

[vermittlung@kunstmuseumbern.ch](mailto:vermittlung@kunstmuseumbern.ch)

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ÖFFENTLICHE FÜHRUNGEN

**Sonntag, 11h:**

22., 29. April, 06., 13., 20., 27. Mai,  
03., 10., 17., 24. Juni,  
01., 08., 15. Juli 2018

**Dienstag, 19h:**

24. April, 01., 08., 22. Mai,  
05., 12., 26.\* Juni, 03. Juli 2018  
\* mit der Kuratorin Nikola Doll

**Visites guidées en français**

Dimanche, 20 mai 2018, 11h30  
Mardi, 19 juin et 10 juillet 2018, 19h30

**Public guided tours in English**

Sunday, May 27, 11:30pm  
Tuesday, June 26, 7:30pm

**Tandem tours**

Tuesday, July 03, 2018, 19h30  
With Nikola Doll, curator of the  
exhibition, and Oliver Meier, swiss  
radio and television SRF

**Studio Provenance Research:  
Where does our artwork come  
from?**

Presentation of current examples  
from the collection of the  
Kunstmuseum Bern  
Tuesday, May 15 / June 12, 2018,  
6 p.m.  
Friday, June 22, 2018, 12h30

**Literary Tour with  
Michaela Wendt**

Sunday, May 06, 27, June 17, 2018,  
1 p.m. – 2 p.m.

Limited capacity,  
no reservations possible