

Gurlitt Art Trove

The Kunstmuseum Bern and the Cézanne family have come to an agreement over the artwork «La Montagne Sainte-Victoire»

The Kunstmuseum Bern and the Cézanne family have come to an agreement over the artwork «La Montagne Sainte-Victoire». Executed by Paul Cézanne in 1897, the painting is part of the Cornelius Gurlitt legacy and probably the most famous piece in the art trove. This painting will now remain in the possession of the Kunstmuseum Bern, which the Cézanne family has acknowledged as the rightful owner. While it is not a piece that was stolen by the Nazis, it became the subject of discussion owing to a gap in the provenance. In exchange, the Kunstmuseum Bern has granted the Cézanne family the right to exhibit, on a regular basis, the painting at Musée Granet in Aix-en-Provence, Cézanne's home town. This will be regulated by a long-term loan contract. Thus an amicable settlement could be reached without any money changing hands.

The painting belongs to Cézanne's famous body of works depicting Montagne Sainte-Victoire, comprising over 40 paintings and an additional 40 watercolours that feature this motif. Until 1940 the Cézanne family was the owner of this painting in the Gurlitt art trove. Not only when Hildebrand Gurlitt obtained the work remains unclear, the circumstances of its acquisition are equally obscure. A gap in the provenance could not be filled even after the Gurlitt Provenance Research Project Report was published, although it is not a piece of Nazi looted art according to the information currently available.

The Cézanne family (represented by Philippe Cézanne) and the Kunstmuseum Bern (represented by Marcel Brühlhart Delegate of the Umbrella Foundation and Director Nina Zimmer) are delighted in reaching this agreement over a difficult matter.

The Kunstmuseum Bern expresses its indebtedness to Winfried Bullinger and Katharina Garbers-von Boehm. The Cézanne family extends its sincere thanks to its consultants Jutta von Falkenhausen and Walter Feilchenfeldt. Everyone involved worked together to find this ideal solution, which forgoes the customary monetary exchange in cases such as this. Instead the problem was solved on the basis of mutual trust and in the spirit of partnership and cooperation.

In conjunction with the exhibition *Gurlitt: Status Report; Part 2 Nazi Art Theft and Its Consequences*, the painting will be first on show in the Kunstmuseum Bern's provenance research studio – as of today – together with the documentation of the artwork's provenance history. Subsequently it will be exhibited in the context of the museum's collection. In the foreseeable future it can also be viewed as a loan at the Musée Granet.

«This solution is in the spirit of Franco-Swiss friendship and partnership, enabling two major museums, the Kunstmuseum Bern and the Musée Granet in Aix-en-Provence, to exhibit a masterpiece by our grandfather Paul Cézanne for the benefit and pleasure of a hopefully large audience.»

Philippe Cézanne

Cézanne at the Kunstmuseum Bern

With «Portrait de l'artiste au chapeau à large bord» (1879–80), the Kunstmuseum Bern owns a major self-portrait of Cézanne's along with a still life and a landscape painting. With the addition of one of the famous paintings from the Sainte-Victoire series, Cézanne has become a notable focal point in the museum's collection.

Respondents

Philippe Cézanne, Representative of the Cézanne family

Jutta von Falkenhausen, Advocate, Office K 61 Berlin

Marcel Brülhart, Delegate of the Umbrella Foundation Kunstmuseum Bern – Zentrum Paul Klee

Nina Zimmer, Director Kunstmuseum Bern – Zentrum Paul Klee

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Further information**The Gurlitt Provenance Research Project Report**

https://www.kulturgutverluste.de/Content/06_ProjektGurlitt/_ORE/Cezanne_ORE_532974.pdf?__blob=publicationFile&v=14

Musée Granet in Aix-en-Provence

<http://www.museegranet-aixenprovence.fr/nc/accueil.html>

The media documentation and press pictures are available for download online at
www.kunstmuseumbern.ch/press.