



# Newsletter

## Cultural Goods World War II

In this *Newsletter* we present information on Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands (RCE) activities regarding cultural goods in the Netherlands that were stolen, confiscated, or sold under duress before or during World War II. We also refer to other information of interest offered by organizations we closely work with, such as the Restitutions Committee and the NIOD Institute for War, Holocaust and Genocide Studies.

### God appearing to Abraham at Sichem painting to be returned to Herman Hamburger heir

At the same time, State Secretary Gunay Uslu decided in November that the painting *God verschijnt aan Abraham te Sichem* (God Appearing to Abraham at Sichem) by Nicolaes (Claes) Moeyaert, should also be restituted. Thereby adopting the recommendation of the Restitutions Committee. Research has shown that the Jewish art dealer and collector, Herman Hamburger, had acquired the work by Moeyaert in 1936. Because Hamburger remained abroad during the occupation, the German authorities declared his property in the Netherlands to be 'foreign assets'. This enabled the *Dienststelle Mühlmann*, a German looting organization, to obtain the artwork in 1941 through a forced sale. The *Dienststelle Mühlmann* sold and



PHOTO: RCE

*God appearing to Abraham at Sichem* by Nicolaes Moeyaert

then delivered the painting to Germany for Hitler's Führermuseum. After the war the painting was recovered to the Netherlands and included in the Netherlands Art Property Collection (NK Collection). Here you can read the [Herman Hamburger recommendation](#) and the [press release](#) of the Restitutions Committee (in Dutch).

### Watercolour to be returned to heirs of Jacob Lierens

In November the State Secretary for Culture and Media, Gunay Uslu, decided to return the watercolour *De tantes gaan op reis* (The aunts go on a journey) by Alexander Hugo Bakker Korff (1881) which is in the National Art Collection, to the legal successors of Jacob Lierens. Uslu therefore followed the recommendation made by the Restitutions Committee that considered it sufficiently likely that the Jewish art collector, Jacob Lierens (1877-1949), involuntarily lost possession of the watercolour as a result of circumstances directly related to the Nazi regime. The Committee reached this conclusion further to an investigation by the Expertise Centre for the Restitution of Cultural Goods and World War II (ECR) which showed that the watercolour owned by Lierens was auctioned on 8 July 1941. It is likely that its sale was related to measures taken by the occupying forces against Jewish citizens and was prompted by a need for survival. As a result of these measures Lierens was unable to continue his business himself and was deprived of income and assets, forcing him to sell part of his art collection. Here you can read the [Lierens II recommendation](#) and the [press release](#) of the Restitutions Committee (in Dutch).



PHOTO: RIJKSMUSEUM TWENTHE

*The aunts go on a journey* by Alexander Hugo Bakker Korff

### Book selection

The RCE has one of the largest book collections in the Netherlands in the field of cultural heritage. The themes of looting, recovery and restitution are also covered, of course. A number of books now less readily available in the trade are also part of this collection, such as *Betwist bezit* (Disputed ownership) by Eelke Muller and Helen Schretlen and *De plunderaars* (The Looters) by Anders Rydell. A series of books in this field will shortly be added to the collection, including: *Roof* (Robbery) and *Berooid* (Destitute), both by Gerard Aalders, and *Monuments Man* by James J. Rorimer. The RCE library is open to all during the opening hours of the building at Smallepad 5, in Amersfoort.

## In Pursuit of Provenance

In Pursuit of Provenance is a monthly blog about the provenance research carried out on objects from the Netherlands Art Heritage Collection (NK Collection). This collection consists of objects which were returned to the Netherlands after World War II, such as paintings and works on paper, as well as furniture and ceramics, among other things. By giving a major boost to the research we hope to find new provenance details. The September blog describes an [oak vine cabinet](#), October is devoted to the [painting Gezicht op Rhenen](#) (View of Rhenen) and November is about a [spruce wood chest](#).



Spruce wood chest,  
9.5 x 17.7 x 11.6 cm, NK622

## Cultural Goods 1933-1945 Thesis prize

The Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands will be awarding a prize in 2024 for the best master's thesis in the field of Cultural Goods and World War II. This incentive prize for research talent in the field will enable finalists to fund a development path of their choice. A sum of € 3,000 is attached to the first place and € 1,000 to the second and third places. Information can be found on [our website](#) about the judging criteria and method of submission.

## NEWS IN BRIEF

- > **Restitutions Committee Annual Report 2022**  
The Restitutions Committee published its [Annual Report for 2022](#) in September which provides a summary of developments and the recommendations made in 2022.
- > **Secretary Else van Sterkenburg leaving**  
Else van Sterkenburg has decided to end her work as Secretary to the [Restitutions Committee](#).
- > **Origins Unknown now also in English**  
An [English version](#) of the Origins Unknown website was launched in late September.
- > **New members of the Restitution Committee**  
On November 24, 2023, former State Secretary for Culture and Media, Gunay Uslu, appointed Mr. Dr. Jeroen Euwe and Mrs. Annemarie Marck as members of the Restitution Committee. In doing so, she follows the advice of the independent appointment advisory committee chaired by H. Troostwijk.
- > **International conference**  
The Taboo in Cultural History conference, made possible by the RCE, will take place on February 1 and 2, 2024. The [international conference](#) aims to reflect on the concept of taboo in relation to cultural heritage in the context of colonialism and National Socialism and their resonance in society.
- > **The NRC podcast creators 'Hier hing een schilderij'** visited the RCE to find out more about the NK collection and its research. [Listen here.](#)



Siebe Weide and Susan Lammers on stage in the Glazen Zaal

## Restitution policy 25 years on

We are celebrating the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Netherlands' restitution policy on cultural objects and World War II this autumn. The RCE is marking the occasion with a number of activities. These were [launched](#) on Wednesday 6 September with a meeting in the *Glazen Zaal of the Portugese Synagoge* in The Hague (Glass Hall of the Portuguese Synagogue). More will follow in 2024, when RCE will be organising four roundtable discussions in the spring about the restitution policy in practice, covering themes such as legal redress and the future of provenance research. We will conclude with a symposium in September 2024. For further information and registration details please keep an eye on our website.

## Questions or submit a request?

Are you looking for information on restitution or the NK collection? To facilitate restitution requests, the RCE is the primary contact for potential interested parties, collection managers and curators as regards restitution policies, procedures, and provenance research. Researchers can ask for advice on provenance research, and be referred to existing archives and organizations that may be of help. The RCE itself publishes information on its [website](#), where you can also find information on how to submit a restitution request. Interested parties, museums, researchers, students and others can email their questions to: [restitutie@cultureelerfgoed.nl](mailto:restitutie@cultureelerfgoed.nl).

We are glad to be of service.

## Subscriptions

Would you like to stay informed of developments in the area of cultural heritage objects and restitutions in relation to the Second World War? You can [subscribe to the newsletter here](#).