



Deutsches Historisches Museum

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Joined Press Release, 19 May 2010  
Deutsches Historisches Museum and  
BADV / Ministry of Finance

### **Provenance of artwork lost during WWII**

## **Donation ceremony to the German government of a photo-album of paintings destined for Hitler's Museum in Linz**

Yesterday the US citizen Robert Edsel handed over a photo-album with pictures of paintings destined for the art museum planned by Hitler in Linz, Austria to the German government. The donation ceremony of this album, which seemed lost for more than six decades, to the President of the BADV / Ministry of Finance Mr. Florian Scheuerle, took place in the German Historical Museum (DHM) in Berlin. The president of the German Historical Museum Foundation, Professor Dr. Hans Ottomeyer, accepted the album, which will be the twentieth volume of the original 31 photo-albums of the "Gemäldegalerie Linz", on permanent loan from the government to the museum, available to the public and scholars alike.

Robert Edsel is the founder of the Monuments Men Foundation for the Preservation of Art, whose aim it is to continue the work of the so called "Monuments Men", the members of the MFAA section (Monuments, Fine Arts, and Archives) during and after the end of the Second World War, by recognizing their achievements and making them known to a wider audience.

For that reason the cultural attaché of the Embassy of the United States in Berlin, Ms. Elizabeth A. Corwin, was present at the ceremony. Edsel brings visibility to the achievements of the Monuments Men and women, who were working to protect works of art and then return them to their countries of origin, by frequent lectures on the



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subject and through his recently published book “The Monuments Men”. In addition, the Foundation is pursuing its mission in supporting the return of works of art and documents stolen during the Second World War to their rightful owners (<http://www.monumentsmenfoundation.org/>).

The photo-album returned yesterday was found in May 1945 at the “Berghof”, Hitler’s house on the Obersalzberg in southern Bavaria by U.S. Army GI John Pistone, who took it back to the United States. It now returns to Germany after more than half a century. This was made possible thanks to Robert Edsel and the Monuments Men Foundation. The German Foreign Ministry and the German Representative for Culture and Media have actively supported this return.

The album represents a very welcome piece in the provenance research puzzle, which has been conducted by the BADV and its predecessor institutions responsible for works of art coming out of the former Nazi governments assets still in the Federal German Governments possession. With the help of this photo-album a number of paintings are now going to be verified even though the descriptions of these pictures were known and listed on the public “Sonderauftrag Linz” database provided by the DHM (<http://www.dhm.de/datenbank/linzdb/>), a cooperative effort of the German Historical Museum in conjunction with the Ministry of Finance (BADV), where they were accessible for research. A definite attribution of each single work is only possible now due to the numerous photographs of 19<sup>th</sup> Century artists – like Adolf Menzel and Carl Spitzweg – provided in this album, such as the study “Siesta at the Court of the Medici” by Hans Makart. This picture was restituted to its rightful owner by the German Government at the end of 2009.

We would be delighted if you would cover this story in your article or program.

Very best wishes,

Dr. Rudolf Trabold,

Dr. Ellen Händler

Press Officers