

Looted Art and the Art Market (Brussels, 11-12 Jun 26)

Royal Museums of Fine Arts of Belgium, Brussels, Jun 11–12, 2026

Registration deadline: Jun 1, 2026

Fenya Almstadt

Looted Art and the Art Market: Nazi Art Theft in Belgium, Europe, and Its Aftermath.

On 11-12 June 2026, the Royal Museums of Fine Art of Belgium will host an international conference entitled "Looted Art and the Art Market: Nazi Art Theft in Belgium, Europe, and Its Aftermath".

Bringing together provenance research, art market studies, and data science, this conference aims to advance an interdisciplinary framework for analyzing the movements of cultural objects and their connections to actors, institutions and power structures shaped by the Nationalist Socialist era and its aftermath.

The conference is organized in the context of the Belgian federal research project ProvEnhance (Enhancing the provenance data of the collections of the Royal Museums of Fine Arts of Belgium (RMFAB) since 1933. Scientific study, digital valorisation and narrative in context). Anchored in a dual research approach, the ProvEnhance project (<https://fine-arts-museum.be/en/research/research-projects/provenance>) simultaneously examines the trajectories of a selected group of artworks from the collections of the Royal Museums of Fine Arts of Belgium and the roles of key actors within the Belgian art market between 1933 and 1960, situating both within the broader dynamics of cultural dispossession and the post-war approach.

The first day of the conference will present case studies related to Belgium, shedding light on Belgian and German actors – both private as institutional - as well as on transnational transaction networks during the war.

The second day will focus on post-war restitution efforts, new archival insights, recent digital tools and methodologies, and ongoing research projects. Together, these contributions underscores the value of a transnational research perspective.

Programme

Day 1

Fates, Actors & Museum's Approaches (11 June)

8:45 Arrival & registration

9:15 Introduction

9:35 Session 1 - Belgian actors of the Art Market

Eléa De Winter – Mapping the Belgian Art Market 1933-1960: Antwerp and Brussels

Margaret M. Doyle, Ph.D. – The Galerie Fiévez: Auctions and Actors in the 1940s

Benoît Vanwijnsberghe – Ceci n'est pas un Holbein. Art dealers and forgers in the Wattecamps case

10:45 Q&A session 1

11:00 Coffee Break

11:30 Session 2 - Transnational networks

Anne Uhrlandt & Anne Labourdette – Identifying the Prodigal Son Tapestry: Potential and Challenges in a Cooperative Provenance Research of JDCRP & the Louvre

Geert Sels – Belgium is bigger than you thought. The consequences of the indirect transfers from Belgian art to nazi-Germany

Dr. Blandine Landau – The ideal rear base? Luxembourg and the plundering of Jewish art pieces during World War II

12:40 Q&A session 2

12:55 Lunch Break

13:55 Session 3 - Spoliations: Mechanisms and actors

Dr. Christina Kott – “Closely linked to the art trade”? The ‘German Kunstschutz’ and the Art Market in Belgium during Occupation

Louis Fortemps – From Sculptor to Propagandist: Ludwig Thormaehlen, the Referat Bildende Kunst of the Propaganda-Abteilung Belgien, and the Art Market in Occupied Belgium (1940–1944)

Julie Toussaint & Florence Cazenave – A Façade of Respectability: The Kunst Dienst, the Logistics of ‘Degenerate Art’ and Post-War Continuities

Klaudia Podsiadło – Film Heritage and Provenance Research: Archival Evidence from the Propaganda-Abteilung Belgien and comparative sources

15:25 Q&A session 3

15:40 Coffee Break

16:10 Session 4 - ProvEnhance museum's approaches

Dr. Anna Koopstra – The Case of Musea Brugge: Context, Considerations and Preliminary Results of WWII Provenance Research and the Collection of Paintings

Dr. Wannes Devos – Beyond the Fine Arts: Nazi Spoliation and the Royal Military Museum in Brussels

17:00 Q&A session 4 & closing of day 1

Day 2

Methods, Tools & New Approaches (12 June)

9:00 Arrival & Words of welcome

9:35 Session 5 - Afterwar efforts & archival research Part 1

Sophie Wittemans – Provenance research into seized/sequestered artworks in enemy properties

in 1944-1945. The case of the German Embassy in Brussels and beyond

Fenya Almstadt – Continuities of Dispossession: The Cases of Ernst Seegall and Jeanne Kleinberg in the Belgian Postwar Period

Emma Van Benthem – National interest or private loss : The post-war art management by the Inland Division of the Nederlands Art Property Foundation

10:45 Q&A session 5 Part 1

11:00 Coffee Break

11:30 Session 5 - Afterwar efforts & archival research Part 2

Anna Leckie & Amelie Ebbinghaus – From Neuwied to Cologne and back to the Owner: Following the Paper Trail for an Artwork confiscated at the Port of Antwerp

William Bran – Proactive Provenance Research into the NK Collection and its Transnational Connections

12:20 Q&A session 5 Part 2

12:35 Lunch Break

13:35 Session 6 - Digital methods & tools Part 1

Dr. des. Nora Jaeger & Jun.-Prof. Lucy Wasensteiner – The 'Red Flag Names' List: A Critical Analysis and its Relevance for Understanding Nazi Art Theft in Belgium

Ellis Dullaart MA – World War 2 Provenance Marks. A new branch of the Marks on Art Database

14:25 Q&A session 6 Part 1

14:40 Coffee Break

15:10 Session 6 - Digital methods & tools Part 2

Alexandre Leroux – From notes to data: structuring ProvEnhance

Dr. Margaux Dumas – Visualizing the Möbel-Aktion. Epistemological questions regarding archives and data

16:00 Opening up

Prof. Meike Hopp & Dr. Mattes Lammert – Connecting Provenance - A transnational Endeavour

16:15 Q&A session 6 Part 2 & Opening up

16:30 Keynote speaker

17:15 Closing of day 2

Registration

The conference will take place on 11-12 June 2026 in Brussels, at the Royal Museums of Fine Arts of Belgium. The conference language is English. Please note that no live streaming or recording of the conference will be provided.

The full conference programme may be consulted here: https://fine-arts-museum.be/uploads/news/files/looted_art_and_the_art_market_program_11_12

[_june_1_1.pdf](#) .

Participants are kindly requested to register before 1 June 2026 using the form available here: <https://forms.office.com/e/P0AJLXg3gJ> .

Contact email:

provenance@fine-arts-museum.be

Participation is free of charge, but prior registration is mandatory. Lunch is available for a fee on registration.

Reference:

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