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Work in the field of art restitution

In 1998/99, the Art Restitution Law (Federal Law on the Restitution of Art Objects from the Austrian Federal Museums and Collections, Federal Law Gazette I 181/1998) granted the National Fund of the Republic of Austria for Victims of National Socialism a mandate for the disposition of "heirless" art objects under public ownership, using the proceeds for the benefit of the victims of National Socialism.

Such disposition takes place in the event that no person can be traced who would be entitled to the restitution of objects unlawfully acquired in conjunction with the Nazi regime and held in the museums and collections of the Federal Republic and the City of Vienna.

Art database

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Art Database of the National Fund

Before the disposition of art objects, all avenues are exhausted in the attempts to find persons possibly entitled to restitution. To achieve this, the National Fund assists the art restitution committees of the Republic and the City of Vienna in their search for heirs. The National Fund has run a comprehensive art database since October 2006, containing information on over 9,000 objects in public collections and museums of the Republic and the Provinces, and from the University of Vienna Library. It allows victims of Nazi art confiscation or their descendants to carry out a targeted search for seized objects which are suitable for restitution.

Disposition of "heirless" art objects

Objects whose owners can no longer be ascertained are transferred to the National Fund for disposition. The National Fund uses the proceeds from the disposition to benefit the victims of National Socialism who were not eligible to receive the gesture payment.