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# Nazi Looted Art: View of a Dutch Square Through Time


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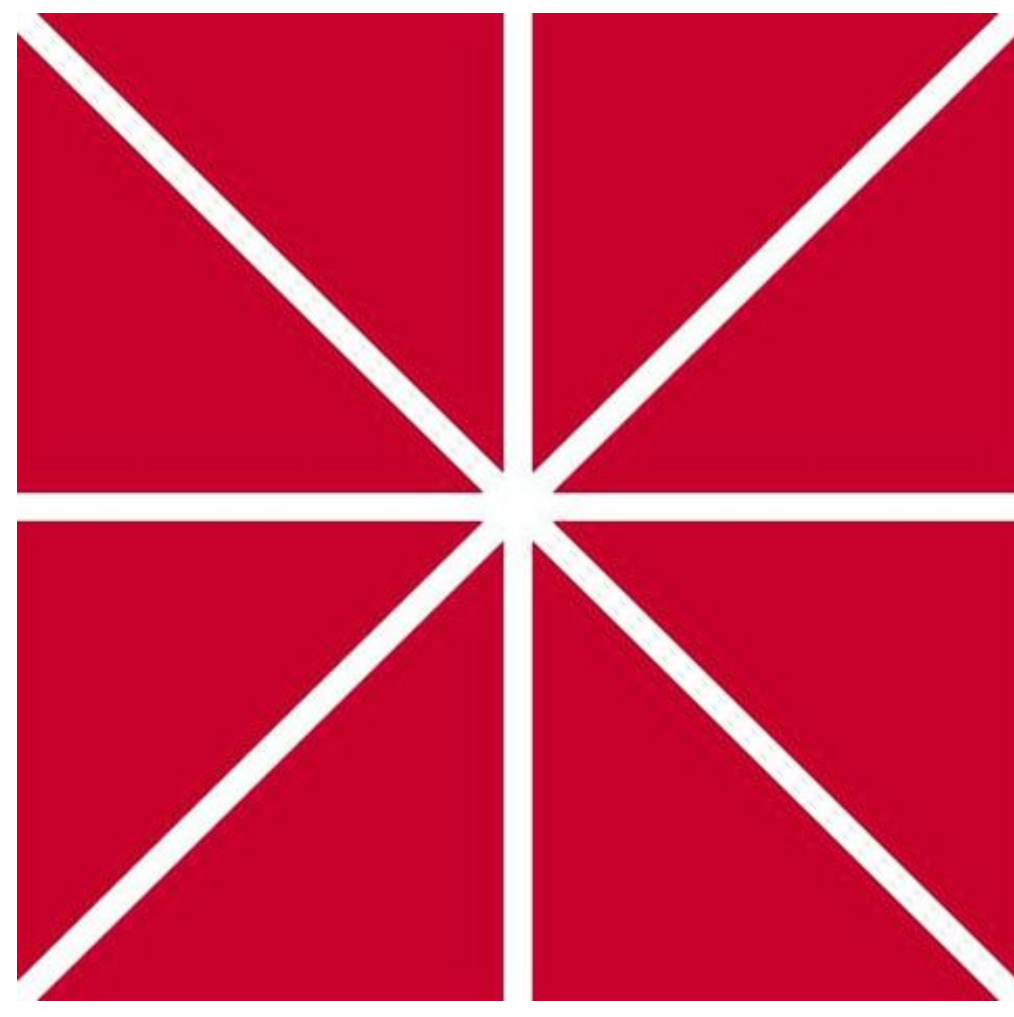
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# Nazi Looted Art: *View of a Dutch Square* Through Time

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## Thesis

Faults in the process for returning art stolen during WWII have prevented many families from reuniting with their stolen art. By tracking the history of the Kraus family's *View of a Dutch Square* through the restitution procedures in Bavaria, we show how the process has broken down and how families are affected.

## Abstract

After World War II, many Jewish families and their possessions were displaced or seized by German forces, only to resurface after the war. The case of the Kraus family and their painting, *View of a Dutch Square*, confiscated by the Nazis in 1941, raises particular questions about restitution laws. Our project traces the origin of the painting and displays how the restitution process fell apart when the Bavarian government, charged with the responsibility of returning stolen art to its rightful owners, failed to follow through on their commitment: even returning missing art pieces to the very Nazis who stole them. The current case brought by their grandson, John Graykowski, is an important example of how across Europe families have been devastated by the failed efforts to return works of art to their rightful owners.

## Data

- Gottlieb and Mathilde Kraus transformed their apartment into a museum to display their art collection in 1923
- Heinrich Hoffman, the father of Henriette von Schirach, bought *View of a Dutch Square* from the Jewish Removals of Secret State Police
- The Monuments Men returned the paintings to the Bavarian government on the conditions that the art would be returned to its rightful owners
- The Bavarian government attempted to return art to its rightful owners, however much of it went to a return sale and was bought by the Nazis who initially stole the art
- The Bavarian Parliament's Art Committee made a unanimous decision to create a report on works of stolen art and they housed *View of a Dutch Square* until it was sold to Schirach in 1963
- Cathedral Association of Xanten demanded a notarized list of Kraus heirs

**1941**

Gestapo Steals Kraus family's 160 piece collection

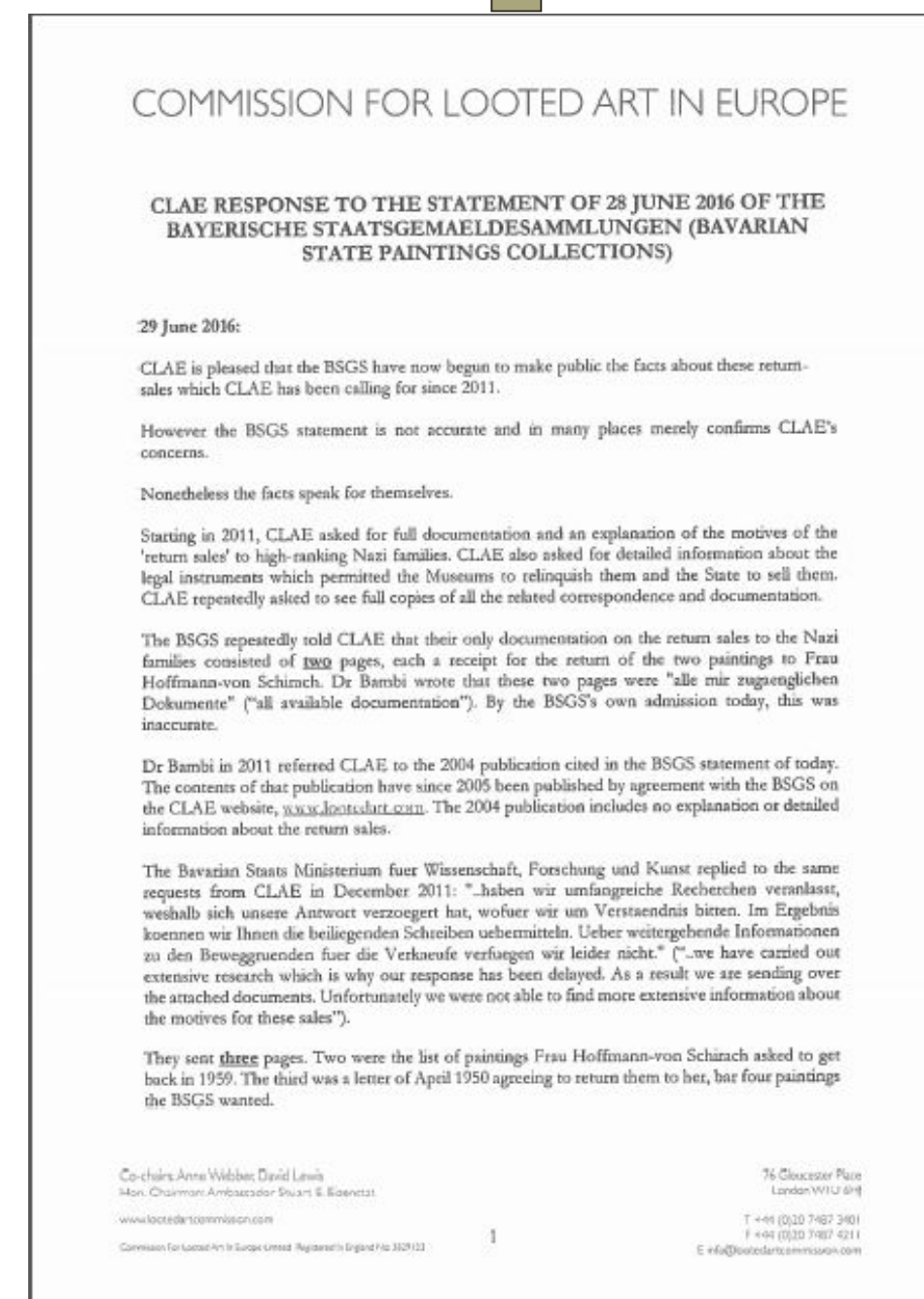


**Jewish Removals of Secret State Police**

Sold stolen works of art to Heinrich Hoffman and other Nazis and museums

**Present**

Case is at a standstill because the Cathedral has requirements that need to be met, however Graykowski claims that he has met those requirements and is now taking the Cathedral to court



**2009**

John Graykowski opens a case in association with CLAE to find the missing pieces from his grandparents' collection

**Marie Kraus**

Daughter of Gottlieb and Mathilde Kraus begins the efforts to retrieve the Kraus collection



**1963**

Henriette von Schirach sells the painting to Catholic Cathedral Association of Xanten

## *View of a Dutch Square*



Jan van der Heyden

**1945**

Monuments Men recovered stolen art and returned it to the Bavarian government



**1962**

Bavarian government does a return sale in which Henriette von Schirach buys *View of a Dutch Square*



## Conclusions/Unanswered Questions:

As we continue to research the fate of the *View of a Dutch Square*, we discover more loopholes and start to detangle the chaotic web that this painting is wrapped in. In pursuing this case, our hope is to better understand how the process of art restitution works. Art restitution goes beyond people searching for lost family heirlooms; they are looking for pieces of their family. We discuss the idea that art can have human qualities or that material objects can mean more to people sometimes than humans can. Many people who lost their possessions during the war felt this way because those pieces of art are the only connections they have left to their families. It should be a fundamental right to have all of one's belongings returned to one's possession if stolen, yet this is still not the case. John Graykowski and the others who are fighting for restitution deserve the opportunity to fair trials.

- Where did the Monuments Men find *View of a Dutch Square* at the end of WWII?
- What are the other pieces in the Kraus collection?
- Where was *View of a Dutch Square* made?
- When the Krauses fled Vienna did they leave their apartment open as a public museum or place their holdings in storage?
- Is there any documentation that proves that the Kraus family is the rightful owner of *View of a Dutch Square*?

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**Figure 1:** The flowchart above represents the data collected based on the movement of *View of a Dutch Square* throughout WWII to the present day case of John Graykowski. The photographs above correspond to the information prior to the photograph.

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