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**ONLINE DATABASE OF NAZI ERA LOOTED ART BOOSTED BY  
DIGITISED INFORMATION**

*Information on over 30,000 items widely accessible in a single website for the first time*

Swift-Find.com ([www.swift-find.com](http://www.swift-find.com)) announced today the official launch of the largest international online database of Nazi Era looted art - **the Swift-Find Looted Art Project** ([www.swift-findlootedart.com](http://www.swift-findlootedart.com)) - at a special reception at the House of Lords, hosted by Lord Janner of Braunstone QC.

With estimates of over 100,000 works of art looted by Nazis still unclaimed and estimated to be worth over £5,700 million, many families and European institutions are still seeking missing items. The Swift-Find Looted Art Project has been working closely with members of the art trade to digitise and upload their proprietary looted art information, making information on over 30,000 items widely accessible in a single website for the first time. Reporting and searching the database is provided free by Swift-Find to claimants and government agencies.

**Shauna Isaac, Director of the Swift-Find Looted Art Project** commented: "Auction houses and art dealers can check this online database to ensure items going up for sale have not been reported as looted - whether paintings, sculptures, drawings, or Judaica. This marks a substantial step forward in helping to identify and recover looted cultural property since it ensures, with their cooperation, an active monitoring of the dealing of valuable art through auction houses and dealers both in the UK and internationally."

The Looted Art Project is already working with a number of governments, museums and agencies throughout including Europe and the US including Austria, Poland, Hungary, Belgium and the Czech Republic. The database also provides access to other public databases from a single starting point - see paragraph \* below for details.

To overcome the limitations of traditional text-based databases searching, caused by differences in language, descriptions and spelling, Swift-Find.com incorporates sophisticated visual matching technology. This allows highly credible search results, even when an adequate description is not provided.

Swift-Find has been working closely with members of the art market to help protect against the unwitting trade of looted items. Swift-Find is working with Sotheby's to help digitise and place online data that they have gathered over the past ten years. Although the data provided by Sotheby's has always been publicly available (they have provided, for instance, access to their collection of catalogues from the Nazi era), the information has never before been gathered together in digital form. Once this information is online, it will be the first time that it is widely accessible.



**Lucian Simmons, Worldwide Director of Restitution at Sotheby's**, added: "The problem of identifying stolen or looted works of art is one with which we at Sotheby's - like so many others in the art world - are constantly concerned. We are delighted, therefore, to welcome Swift-Find into this very important arena, and we look forward very much to benefiting from their intelligent and rapid systems. In the course of our work over the last decade or so, the Restitution team at Sotheby's has amassed a wealth of archival material relating to war-time sales of looted works of art, and we are extremely glad that the team at Swift Find has been able to make good use of this. We have always keenly supported the work of the Art Loss Register, which Sotheby's helped found and who are the pioneers in this field. Now, with the advent of Swift-Find, we have another valuable resource on which we can draw in researching the provenance of works that come to the market."

**Lord Janner of Braunstone QC**, the host of the event commented: "I will be delighted to welcome the Swift-Find representatives and guests to the Palace of Westminster. It is a fine project which I most gladly support. The recovery of looted art is an important contribution to the survivors of the hideous horrors of the Holocaust"

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**Issued by Kelso Consulting on behalf of Swift-Find.**

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**Background information**

**Further background on art looting by the Nazis:**

While the Nazis were in power (1933-1945) they looted cultural property from every territory they occupied. This was conducted in a systematic manner with organisations specifically created to determine which public and private collections were most valuable to the Nazi Regime. Some of the objects were earmarked for Hitler's never realized Furhermuseum, some objects went to other high ranking officials such as Hermann Goering, while other objects were traded to fund Nazi activities. By the end of the war, the Third Reich amassed hundreds of thousands of cultural objects.



The Allies were aware of Nazi looting and made plans to restore the objects. After the war, they collected all the plundered artworks they could find and stored them in a Central Collection Point in Munich until they could be returned. It was agreed that identifiable works of art would be returned to the countries from which they were taken, and the countries could then return the objects to the proper owners. When the Munich collection point was closed in 1951, the owners of many of the objects had not yet been found.

Estimates state that 20% of Western art was looted by the Nazis and there are possibly over 100,000 items that have not been returned to their rightful owners. The events that took place 60 years ago affect the art market today. Holocaust survivors and their heirs are still searching for objects that were taken from them. Dealers, auction houses and museums are more careful about checking the provenance (ownership history) of objects that come up for sale in case they are looted. They can also check the Swift-Find real-time, on-line database to see whether the items have been reported looted or stolen.

#### **About Swift-Find.com**

Swift-Find is the on-line, real-time registry of new, used and stolen valuables and is a critical tool for auction houses, pawnbrokers, insurance, finance companies, law enforcement agencies and consumers to verify ownership, and to recover, claim for and replace valuable property. With the largest online database of stolen or looted art, antiques and collectibles, Swift-Find is part of the due diligence process for auctioneers throughout the UK, continental Europe and the United States - approximately 80% in value of the traditional auction market.

\*Swift-Find.com's new enhanced search engine facilitates user access to other publicly available data on items reported lost, stolen, looted or illegally exported from around the world. With just one search at Swift-Find, using its visual and/or text matching technology, a user is provided with a link to any search matches direct to the web site of the 3rd party source of that data. There are many such public databases around the World and it is, for example, already searching lostart.de (the database covering looted art from Germany), the Carabinieri (Italian police lost and stolen database), and Fedpol (The Swiss Federal Police).

Created by retail, insurance and hi-tech executives, Swift-Find is becoming the world's first on-line standard for checking the likely integrity of valuables in real time. For more information please visit: [www.swift-find.com](http://www.swift-find.com).