

Independent Commission SKKG

Independent Commission of the Stiftung für Kunst, Kultur und Geschichte
for Clarifying Claims Resulting from Nazi Persecution

Press Release

The Independent Commission SKKG opens its first proceedings to clarify the claims regarding the painting “Thunersee mit Blüemlisalp und Niesen” by Ferdinand Hodler

The Independent Commission of the Stiftung für Kunst, Kultur und Geschichte (SKKG) for the clarification of Nazi persecution-related claims has opened proceedings on the painting “Thunersee mit Blüemlisalp und Niesen” by Ferdinand Hodler. The work was previously owned by Martha Nathan, who was persecuted as a Jew by the Nazi regime. The Independent Commission SKKG examines whether there was loss due to Nazi persecution and, if so, will develop a just and fair solution.

The painting “Thunersee mit Blüemlisalp und Niesen” by Ferdinand Hodler, painted between 1876 and 1882, has been in the collection of the Stiftung für Kunst, Kultur und Geschichte (SKKG) since 1998. It previously belonged to the collection of Hugo Nathan (1861-1922) of Frankfurt am Main. His widow and sole heir, Martha Nathan, (1874-1958) was persecuted as a Jew by the Nazi regime. She fled Germany in 1937 to Paris and from there to Switzerland in 1939.

- With these proceedings, the Independent Commission SKKG is investigating whether the painting was seized as a result of Nazi persecution and whether there are any associated claims by legal successors of the former owner. This investigation is based on the research of the SKKG Provenance Research team, and is being carried out in accordance with the Rules of Procedure for the Independent Commission SKKG dated April 24, 2023.
- In early 2023, the SKKG board appointed the Independent Commission SKKG. The Commission is tasked with clarifying whether any of the foundation's cultural goods were lost between 1933 and 1945 due to Nazi persecution and, if so, developing a just and fair solution. SKKG has pledged to recognize the decisions of the Independent Commission SKKG as binding and to implement them.
- The Independent Commission SKKG maintains its independence and impartiality in the clarification of Nazi persecution-related claims. It orients itself mainly on the Washington Conference Principles of 1998, the Terezin Declaration of 2009, the ICOM Code of Ethics for Museums of 2004 and the Principles of the Stiftung für Kunst, Kultur und Geschichte (SKKG) in dealing with the loss of cultural goods due to Nazi persecution of January 10, 2023.

The decisions of the Independent Commission SKKG are published once the proceedings have been concluded. An obligation of confidentiality applies during the ongoing proceedings, therefore the Commission will maintain such confidentiality.

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For more information, please contact

Andrea F. G. Raschèr, President of the Independent Commission SKKG
Tel: +41 79 758 88 62; Mail: kommision@ukskkg.ch // www.ukskkg.ch

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Attachment: Photo of the painting «Thunersee mit Blüemlisalp und Niesen» by Ferdinand Hodler

Ferdinand Hodler (1853–1918), *Thunersee mit Blüemlisalp und Niesen*, 1876/1882, oil on canvas, 67.0 x 89.0 cm, inv. 01859, Stiftung für Kunst, Kultur und Geschichte, Winterthur. Photo: SKKG 2020. In shades of blue, the painting depicts the mountain range with Blüemlisalp and Niesen, with Lake Thun in the foreground. The signature "1876. F. Hodler" is included at the lower right edge of the painting.

