



Berlin, August 29, 2019

## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **SPK Restitutes Two Predella Panels from the Fuld Collection**

– Check against original text in German –

The Stiftung Preussischer Kulturbesitz (Prussian Cultural Heritage Foundation, SPK) restituted two medieval predella panels from the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin (National Museums in Berlin) to the heirs of the Jewish businessman Harry Fuld Sr. The museums bought the two panels from an art dealer in 1940.

The panels, which were exhibited in the Gemäldegalerie (Old Master Paintings) collection until recently, are the work of Giovanni di Paolo. Each panel depicts one scene from the life of St. Clare of Assisi (1194–1253): *The Investiture of St. Clare by St. Francis*, and *St. Clare Rescuing the Shipwrecked*, both circa 1455. Each panel measures approximately 20x30 cm.

Hermann Parzinger, president of SPK, said: “We restituted a late medieval alabaster relief from the Fuld collection in 2009 and in 2012 we returned two textile fragments. I am happy that the provenance of the two predella panels, which were probably among the most important works in the collection of Harry Fuld Sr., could be clarified and they could be returned to his descendants.”

Harry Fuld Sr. (Feb. 3, 1879–Jan. 26, 1932) was the founder and owner of H. Fuld & Co., a large firm that manufactured telephones. He owned an extensive, significant art collection. The businessman from Frankfurt died in 1932 leaving behind his wife, Lucie Mayer-Fuld, and two sons, Harry Fuld Jr. and Peter Harry Fuld. In his will, he ordered that his estate should not be distributed among his heirs until 1950. Since the Fuld family and the executors of the will were Jewish and persecuted after the Nazis came to power, the will could not be executed properly. The estate was settled prematurely. H. Fuld & Co. was Aryanized and the sons emigrated.

The two predella panels were bought in 1940 by the Berlin Museums for the Kaiser-Friedrich-Museum; the deal was closed by art dealer Carl Bümbling. Bümbling’s client is unknown. But the panels would not have been sold under such circumstances if the Nazis had not been in power. For this reason, SPK decided to return the panels in keeping with the 1998 Washington Principles.

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Press photos: <http://www.preussischer-kulturbesitz.de/newsroom/presse/pressebilder.html>

### **Harry Fuld's family**

H. Fuld & Co. was boycotted from the very beginning of Nazi rule, and the Jewish owners were forced to sell the company. Harry Fuld Jr. (1913–1963), a son from his father's first marriage, was no longer employed by the company either. He worked in Vienna for a few years before emigrating to England in 1937. For part of the war, he was deported to Australia as an enemy alien. As of 1943, he worked in London. The younger son, Peter (1921–1962), a son from Fuld Sr.'s second marriage, remained in Frankfurt until the school he attended requested that he leave. His mother sent him to Switzerland in 1937 and he later studied in London. During the war he was deported to Canada, where he finished his studies after being released from the internment center. Peter Harry Fuld returned to Europe in 1945, working in London and Frankfurt. Lucie Mayer-Fuld, who married Harry Fuld Sr. in 1926 and was his third wife, emigrated to France in 1939. As it was not possible to conclusively determine which of his heirs Harry Fuld Sr. left the predellas to, SPK and Fuld's descendants agreed to restitute the works to the joint heirs.

### **Restitutions to the heir of Harry Fuld Jr. in 2009 and 2012**

Thanks to the financial support of the Ernst von Siemens Kunststiftung, an art foundation, SPK was able to purchase the alabaster relief with Christ carrying the cross that it restituted in 2009. One of the most important late medieval depictions of Christ's passion, it is exhibited in the Bode Museum today. SPK and the heir, Magen David Adom UK, which supports Israel's only medical emergency service, were also able to come to an agreement about the two textile prints, making it possible for them to remain in the Kunstgewerbemuseum (Museum of Decorative Arts).

About the restitution of the alabaster relief:

<http://www.preussischer-kulturbesitz.de/pressemitteilung/article/2009/11/30/pressemeldung-stiftung-preussischer-kulturbesitz-restituiert-alabasterrelief-verbleib-in-der-berli.html>

<http://www.preussischer-kulturbesitz.de/newsroom/dossiers-und-nachrichten/dossiers/magazin-ns-raubkunst/fair-und-gerecht.html>



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Yearbook article on the restitution of the textile prints and the Fuld family history:

<http://www.preussischer-kulturbesitz.de/newsroom/mediathek/bilder/foto-detail/article/2019/08/07/media-der-weg-zweier-stofffragmente-durch-das-20-jahrhundert-ein-jahrbuchbeitrag-von-caroline-fli.html>