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Art historians at Berlin's Freie Universität have been able to identify 24 works from the Mosse Collection and to discover the location of eight of these works

MARI-Online Portal is a database to make research results accessible to scholars, museums, and the general public

In March 2017 the research project MARI (Mosse Art Research Initiative) was begun at Berlin's Freie Universität. The goal of the project is to reconstruct the art collection of the German-Jewish publisher Rudolf Mosse (1843–1920), consisting of thousands of pictures, sculptures, design objects, books, and antiques, and to investigate the location of the works that were confiscated by the Nazis.

Even after just the first half of the funding phase –the entire project will last from March 1, 2017 to February 28, 2019 –MARI is able to show impressive results. Within just a year, research has been done on 115 works, and reliable traces of 68 works have been found; with the launch of MARI-Online, information on 31 of these works is being made available to the public for the first time, 24 of these works have been clearly identified, eight of them located. For each work included in the database, all information on the sources and extant literature that have contributed to the research is also accessible. The eight works that have been identified and found include Emil Jakob Schindler's *Dichter Wald im Frühling* (Dense Forest in the Spring), which is now located at Vienna's Belvedere: on the basis of the MARI research, the Austrian Commission for Provenance Research has already suggested the restitution of the painting. Other works that have been located include the paintings *Durch Nacht zum Licht* (Through Night to the Light) by Jozef Israëls (Tel Aviv Museum, Israel), *Blondes Bauermädchen am Fenster* (Blonde Peasant Girl at the Window) by Anders Zorn (private collection), and *Schlittschuhläufer* (Winter) by Carl Melchers (Arkell Museum, Canajoharie, New York).

In addition, important findings have been made regarding Rudolf Mosse's acquisition strategies and those of his son-in-law Hans Lachmann-Mosse, an aspect that had hardly been explored until now. Hans Lachmann-Mosse administered and expanded the Mosse art collection after his father-in-law's death together with his wife Felicia, Mosse's biological daughter of a relationship out of wedlock that the Mosses had adopted. The close analysis of the floor plans of Mosse-Palais at Leipziger Platz, where a large part of the art collection was kept and accessible to the public, and a comparison with the information provided in the three collection catalogues that were published have provided a foundation for researching the history and location of individual works. The complex chain of events surrounding the Nazis' dismantling of the Mosse corporation could be traced out in more detail: mistaken assumptions about the company's purported economic difficulties before 1933 and the confiscation of the family's property after 1933 could be rectified. New sources were also found pertaining to the confiscation of the art collection in 1933 and the auction in 1934.

About MARI

The Mosse Art Research Initiative is a unique public-private partnership in this context. Project partners include not only the Mosse community of heirs and Berlin's Freie Universität, but other institutions that have already been doing research on Rudolf Mosse, have restituted objects to the community of heirs, or support the project, including Kulturstiftung der Länder, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin – Stiftung Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Stiftung Jüdisches Museum Berlin, and Landesarchiv Berlin. Other cooperating institutions include: Staatliche Kunsthalle Karlsruhe, Referat für Museumsangelegenheiten der Stadt Köln/ Provenienzforschung, Museum Wiesbaden, Museum der Stadt Worms, and Institut Mathildenhöhe Darmstadt. The research project is funded by the Deutsche Zentrum Kulturgutverluste in Magdeburg and the Mosse Art Restitution Project. The project at Berlin's Freie Universität is directed by Prof. Dr. Klaus Krüger (Kunsthistorisches Institut) with Dr. Meike Hoffmann as coordinator. Hoffmann is a researcher at the Kunsthistorisches Institut, Freie Universität Berlin, and an internationally renowned provenance research expert.

Rudolf Mosse (1843–1920)

The German-Jewish publisher, art collector, and philanthropist Rudolf Mosse was one of the most influential figures of the Berlin economic elite in Imperial Germany and the beginning of the Weimar Republic. The Mosse family, who published the *Berliner Tageblatt* – a leading left-wing liberal daily newspaper – was forced to flee from Germany after the Nazis took over power. Originally trained as a bookseller, in 1867 Rudolf Mosse founded an advertising agency in Berlin, called the *Annoncen-Expedition Rudolf Mosse*. Advertising was just beginning to develop in Germany at the time, and Mosse's agency quickly became one of the most important suppliers of advertising. Within five years it had more than 250 branches in Germany and abroad. In partnership with his brother-in-law Emil Cohn, Mosse expanded his business by founding a publishing house and publishing around 130 journals as well as numerous popular newspapers, including the *Berliner Tageblatt* (1872), the *Berliner Morgen-Zeitung* (1889), and the *Berliner Volks-Zeitung* (1904). The *Mossehaus*, built at the beginning of the 20th century in the historical publishing quarter in Berlin-Mitte, still testifies to the great significance of Mosse's publishing corporation. In addition to his publishing work, Mosse had many interests and was known for his philanthropic work. Together with his wife, he founded the Emilie und Rudolf Mosse-Stiftung, an interconfessional educational institution for orphaned children in Wilmersdorf near Berlin (now a district of the city). Today, there are two memorial plaques in honor of him and his wife on the landmarked building on Mecklenburgische Straße. At the beginning of the 1880s, as a well-to-do man, he had a house built in the center of Berlin on Leipziger Platz 15. A neo-baroque three-story palace, it was designed by the Jewish architects Gustav Ebe and Julius Benda. There he built up a collection of art including several thousand works. In artists' circles, it was known as the "Mosseum." Around 1910, Mosse opened it to the public. Mosse's favorite artists included Oswald Achenbach, Ludwig Knaus, Wilhelm Leibl, Franz Lenbach, Adolph Menzel, Max Liebermann, Eugen Bracht, Hans Thoma, and many others who, as representatives of early 20th century realism, became important figures in art history in Germany. In addition to paintings and sculptures, Mosse also collected crafts, furniture, textiles, Egyptian antiquities, Benin bronzes, and East Asian literature as well as valuable manuscripts and rare books. After Rudolf Mosse died in 1920 and a few years later was followed by his wife Emilie (1851–1924), their adopted daughter Felicia (1888–1972) inherited the entire estate. Shortly after the National Socialists seized power, they liquidated the financially struggling business empire and drove the Lachmann-Mosse couple with their three children Rudolf (1913–1958), Hilde (1912–1982), and George (1918–1999) into exile. Objects that after emigration were now left without owners were handed over to a trusteeship that was managed by Karl Haberstock, who was soon to build up a career as an art dealer under the Nazis. On May 29 and

30, 1934, the exhibited part of Mosse's collection and the interior furnishings were auctioned off by Rudolph Lepke's auction house at Rudolf Mosse's city residence in Berlin. A week later, the Berlin auction house Union auctioned off the possessions of Felicia and Hans Lachmann-Mosse at their villa on Maassenstraße 28. Most of this collection, which was already world-renowned in the Weimar Republic, is considered lost today.

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- <http://mari-portal.de>
- Download: www.preussischer-kulturbesitz.de/newsroom/presse/pressebilder.html



Gari Melchers, "Winter", 1880/1900, Arkell Museum, Canajoharie/New York, © Arkell Museum, Canajoharie/New York