



# BAYERISCHE STAATSGEMÄLDESAMMLUNGEN

## MEDIA INFORMATION

Munich, 19 October 2023

### TWO BAROQUE PAINTINGS REUNITED

After an adventurous odyssey '**Landschaft italienischen Charakters**' (**Landscape of Italian Character**) **by the Austrian painter Johann Franz Nepomuk Lauterer** (1700–1733, inv. no. 5258) is to be returned to the collection of the Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen after more than 70 years. There, the painting, that was reported missing after World War II and was added to the database of the German [Lost Art](#) Foundation in 2012, will be reunited with its counterpart ([BStGS, inv. no. 5259](#)).

The two landscape paintings, which complement each other in terms of motif, originally came from Neustift Monastery near Freising, were exhibited in branch galleries in the 19th century and at the Schaezlerpalais Augsburg in the early 20th century. From 1924 onwards they were displayed in the picture gallery in the palace in Bayreuth, a branch of the Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen.

After the outbreak of the war in 1939, the museums and branch galleries of the Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen and all paintings were successively evacuated to various safe locations, some of them historical buildings such as Neuschwanstein Castle or Herrenchiemsee, in the surrounding region of Upper Bavaria, to protect them from bombardments. The removal of works was based on priority lists and the new locations managed from a conservation and security point of view so as to safeguard the artworks in the best possible way. The same applies to all the documentation created for the new storage sites that has been preserved to this day in the form of numerous meticulously compiled lists. Nevertheless, there is no evidence to suggest that the missing painting by Lauterer was removed from Bayreuth and its whereabouts remained unknown ever since the beginning of the war. The possibility existed that it had been looted.

The first official **search announcements** for this painting by the Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen were made in inventories published between 1965 and 1973, without however any clues being generated as to its subsequent whereabouts. In 2011, the painting, having disappeared without trace, resurfaced on the American art market. At that time it was offered to the Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen for purchase. Negotiations for its return with the descendants of an American soldier in the occupation forces failed, however, and all trace of the painting was lost for a second time. From 2012 onwards, the painting, along with almost 700 other search requests from the Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen, could be found on the Lost Art database with a picture and a description of the circumstances surrounding its loss.

In 2022, the missing painting turned up again in the USA. It was identified as the lost landscape by Lauterer by the lawyer Christopher A. Marinello, the founder of Art Recovery International, New York, in cooperation with his German colleagues, the lawyers Dr. Mara Wantuch-Thole and Dr. Ewald Volhard in Berlin. In order to ensure its orderly and lawful restitution, Christopher A. Marinello called in the FBI (Federal Bureau of Investigation) and the Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen were contacted.

With the support of the Federal Foreign Office and the Consulate General of the Federal Republic of Germany Chicago, the restitution of the painting was arranged. At the end of October 2023, the painting will be returned to its counterpart held in the collection of the Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen in Munich.



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The Bavarian State Minister for Science and Arts, Markus Blume, on the occasion of the restitution, emphasises how: "I am delighted that an art treasure that was believed to have been lost is coming back to Bavaria: the return of the painting by Johann Franz Nepomuk Lauterer to the Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen is not only an act of historical justice, but also an expression of the appreciation of our cultural heritage. In particular, I would like to thank the American FBI and all those who participated in the return of the painting on the American and German sides."

Christopher A. Marinello, CEO and the founder of Art Recovery International says: "This restitution would not have been possible without the swift action of the FBI Art Crime Team."

The Director General of the Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen, Prof. Dr. Bernhard Maaz: "First of all, I would like to thank the FBI for their tremendous support. I am very grateful for the work carried out by the law firms, especially Christopher Marinello, for his altruistic commitment and research to identify and retribute the work. The entire process owes much to his so very selfless, independent initiative and we are extremely pleased with the outcome. Further thanks are due to the German Foreign Office and to the Consulate General in Chicago, in particular, where this long story has found a happy end."

Michael Ahrens, Consul General of the Federal Republic of Germany Chicago: "The Consulate General of the Federal Republic of Germany Chicago was happy to facilitate the exchange between FBI Chicago and Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen / Bavarian State Painting Collections, when it learnt about the restitution project. It is an honor to receive representatives from the FBI's Art Crime Team and Bavarian State Painting Collections here in the German Consulate today on the occasion of the official handover of the painting."

Robert W. Wheeler Jr., Special Agent in Charge of the FBI Chicago Field Office: "The FBI's Art Crime Team has been bringing home stolen art for almost twenty years, and their dedication has led to the recovery of more than 20,000 artifacts valued at hundreds of millions of dollars. It is a pleasure to be able to return this painting to its rightful home at last, and we thank everyone who partnered with us to make this success possible."

Dr. Bernd Ebert, Head of the Dutch and German Baroque Painting Collections: "The reuniting of Lauterer's complementary landscapes is a real stroke of good fortune. A presentation of the restored companion works is planned for the near future."

## THE PAINTER AND HIS WORK

Johann Franz Nepomuk Adam Lauterer (1700–1733) was active in his native city of Vienna between about 1715 and 1733 where he had been trained by the landscape painter Josef Orient (1677–1747). Lauterer's Italianate landscapes were inspired by those of the Dutch painter Nicolaes Berchem (1621/22–1683) who was active mainly in Haarlem and Amsterdam. 'Landscape of Italian Character' is a counterpart to a painting on panel of the same dimensions (17.8 x 25.9 cm) with complementary motifs, depicting a landscape with travelers and shepherds at a ford in a river (BStGS, inv. no. 5258). Both paintings together form a broad panoramic landscape. In addition to the two works mentioned, four other paintings on canvas by the artist that came to Munich from the Zweibrücken gallery in 1799, are also held in the Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen.



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Press pictures will be available upon request at [presse@pinakothek.de](mailto:presse@pinakothek.de) from Monday, 23 October 2023.

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