

The Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen return painting by Fritz Schider

On 14<sup>th</sup> September 2005, the General Director of the Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen (Bavarian State Collection), Prof. Dr. Reinhold Baumstark, returned the painting »Musical Entertainment« (Musikalische Unterhaltung) by Fritz Schider to Dr. Jost von Trott zu Solz. He received it on behalf of the heirs of Dr. Max Meirowsky, the Jewish art collector who had owned the picture in the period leading up to the Nazi regime.

In February 1937 – having been granted permission by the Bayerische Staatsministerium für Unterricht und Kultus (Bavarian State Ministry of Education and Culture) – the Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen acquired the painting and formally registered it as part of its collection under the inventory number 10328. In September 1936 the owner, Dr. Max Meirowsky, had offered it to the state along with nine other paintings, all of which he had been forced to give up - allegedly »due to lack of space «. This way, Dr. Meirowsky was able to avoid having the pictures sold off at a compulsory auction.

The painting shows a group of ladies being entertained while the gentlemen are listening to a young woman playing the piano. According to Dr. Max Meirowsky, the pianist is Schider's wife Linda who was the niece of the artist Wilhelm Leibl.

The Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen fully recognises its moral obligation to restore to their rightful owners those works of art and culture that were wrongfully removed from them. In the year 2000, it returned a picture by the painter Kalckreuth. And last year it handed back a painting by Hans Thoma to the legally entitled the heirs.

»It gives me particular pleasure that the provenance research undertaken with such vigour by the Bavarian State Collection has yet again enabled victims of the National Socialist dictatorship to reclaim what is rightfully theirs after all these years. At the same time, this event serves to remind us of the crimes committed by that regime.« These were the words of Prof. Reinhold Baumstark to mark the formal occasion of the painting being returned to where it belongs.