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Lostart-ID: 478167: Final research report for Odilon Roche (formerly attributed to Auguste Rodin)

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Odilon Roche (formerly attributed to August Rodin)

Nue agenouillée vue de dos/ Kneeling female nude from the back c. 1890(?)

Pencil and watercolour on paper, 281 x 226 mm¹

on recto: signed in pencil at lower right: "A Rodin"

on verso: inscribed in pencil at upper left: "44"

¹ Per measurements in Condition report 23.4.2105: Zustandsprotokoll KAH Bonn Reg.-Nr. 0554

Note: Edge of right bottom paper is snipped: According to expert Christina Buley-Uribe's report,² possibly due to the fact that an O.R red stamp (mark of Odilon Roche) was cut off. The size of the stamp measuring 4 x 5mm³ reaffirms this hypothesis.

Provenance:

(...)

By latest 28 April 1944: with Raphaël Gerard, Paris (per Gurlitt Papers)

After September 1953: Hildebrand Gurlitt, Dusseldorf (per Gurlitt Papers)⁴

By descent to Cornelius Gurlitt, Munich/Salzburg

From 6 May 2014: Estate of Cornelius Gurlitt

Introductory remarks

Rodin was a prolific draughtsman, producing some 10,000 works on paper,⁵ and the female nude constitutes a significant number thereof. In consequence, the final identification of a particular drawing or watercolor needs to rely on the following: A. measurements (which unfortunately are missing from many records, complicating the process of identification), B. medium (works on paper are often under "*Zeichnung* / drawing" even when watercolor highlights are used). The final identification thus is often complex.

Forgeries of Rodin

According to the expert report submitted by Christina Buley-Uribe,⁶ fake Rodin drawings proliferated and were sold by the hundreds, explaining the presence of forgeries in collections in France and Germany. In her view, this explains the presence of two fake drawings she identified in the Gurlitt trove: LostArt 478415 and 478167.

Furthermore, during WWII the dealers Rudolf Melander Holzapfel and André Schoeller sold fake Rodin drawings to the Folkwang Museum in Essen. Schoeller's certificates, along with Jean Cailac's served as expert authentications of Rodin for auctions at the Hôtel Drouot in Paris between WWI and WWII and during the German occupation. Neither Schoeller nor Cailac were aware of the forgeries. She thus deduces that it is highly probable that H. Gurlitt bought most of the Rodin drawings through André Schoeller.

Christina Buley-Uribe in her report attests to the fact that in this watercolor Rodin's characteristic hand in drawing is not apparent.⁷ Rather she attests to the characteristics of the Rodin's forger Odilon Roche. Roche was primarily a merchant of art supplies and antique furniture before he became an agent of the Musée Rodin as early as 1919. Many fakes made by Roche were bought between WWI and WWII.

² Buley-Uribe, C., Provenance research report on works attributed to Auguste Rodin. Paris 2017. The researcher checked sources on Rodin and his followers/forgers in the following archives: Archives de l'Hôtel Drouot, Paris, Archives Nationales, Paris, Galerie Sagot - Le Garrec, Paris (Private archive), Institut national d'histoire de l'art, Paris (French sale catalogues), Les Archives Municipales de Nancy, Mémorial de la Shoah Archive, Paris (Centre de Documentation), Ministère des Affaires étrangères, Archives diplomatiques, Paris, Musée d'Orsay, Paris (Documentation de la conservation), Musée Rodin, Paris (Archives).

³ Lugt, Frits. *Les Marques de Collections de Dessins & d'Estampes*. 1st ed., Amsterdam: Vereenigde Drukkerijen, 1921; supplement, The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1956. www.marquesdecollections.fr/detail.cfm/marque (September 2017); nos 4685, 4686, 4687, 2007e.

⁴ attachment 1. Gramlich, J. Quellendokumente zu Paper I5, Muenchen 2015; Dok. 2

⁵ <http://www.musee-rodin.fr/fr> (October 2017)

⁶ Buley-Uribe, Loc. cit.

⁷ Ibid.

Furthermore, according to her report the drawing does not match any of Galerie George Petit's sale of 1933, where 158 drawings forged by Odilon Roche were sold as Rodin's.

The team asserts this observance by the expert, however it only bears secondary relevance as to the provenance research, as the buyers might have been unaware of this forgery, and so were the looters.

Primary sources:

Hildebrand Gurlitt's Business records reveal an abundance of transactions involving the acquisitions and sales of Rodin works on paper.

Rodin /Lenthal:

Book 1

Abbildung vorhanden

Book 2

Abbildung vorhanden

Book 3

Abbildung vorhanden

Book 4

Abbildung vorhanden

Akt (Nude) Z (drawing) is listed as being purchased on June 20, 1942, from J. Lenthal. After the research conducted regarding all 41 items attributed to Jean Lenthal in Gurlitt's ledger, the conclusive decision was reached that the listing is fraudulent. A letter written by Jean Lenthal to Gurlitt on August 8, 1947 exposed the fraudulent entry. In this letter, Lenthal requests to provide him with an affidavit regarding the fact that H. Gurlitt asked Jean Lenthal to pose as the seller, although Lenthal had never seen or owned these items, at the end of 1942 or beginning 1943.⁸ The reasoning for the request at the time was allegedly that the proprietors were unwilling to provide H. Gurlitt with the necessary sales documents. In retrospect and consideration of further knowledge pertaining to H. Gurlitt's ledger, and in light of other dubious entries in the ledger, serious questions regarding the provenance indicated are to be raised, specifically as to why Gurlitt refrained from listing the original owner as provenance. As no measurements are indicated in the ledger, and the particulars of medium are limited to "Drawing" the identification of this particular drawing remains complex.

Further listings of Rodin in the H. Gurlitt ledger are:

Book 1 : Acquisitions

⁸ Letter Jean Lenthal to Hildebrand Gurlitt, Aug. 21, 1947, in: NL Cornelius Gurlitt Salzburg, K.1

1938, April 4

Abbildung vorhanden

1941, Sept. 11

Abbildung vorhanden

1941, Sept. 22

Abbildung vorhanden

1942, June 20 (no single item price)

Abbildung vorhanden

1942, Aug. 3 (no single item price)

Abbildung vorhanden

1942, Dec. 11

Abbildung vorhanden

Summary Book 1 acquisitions: 8 Rodin drawings pertaining to LostArt 468167 by medium or/and subject are listed as bought by H. Gurlitt between April 1938-December 1942 from the following dealers:

- Galerie Commeter, Hamburg
- A. Bosch, Amsterdam
- J. Lenthal, Paris, (proven fraudulent)
- E. Ader, Paris

With the limited information provided in the ledger, only the following entries are addressed:

June 20, 1942, Akt (J. Lenthal); Jewish Parisian art dealer. Arrested during Nazi Germany occupation on September 27, 1943. Deportation to Auschwitz in May 1944, transfer to Sachsenhausen in November 1944, enlisted to a secret money forging operation, liberated in Ebensee, April 1945. After the liberation, he returned to Paris where he resumed his art dealership and prewar contacts with H. Gurlitt.⁹

August 3 1942, Frauenakt (Theo Hermsen); Dutch art dealer, active in Paris since 1939, important dealer on the art market during the occupation, central figure for export licenses within the Parisian art dealer network, acted as agent for Raphael Gerard and André Schoeller. One of Hermsen's most important German customers was Hildebrand Gurlitt, as buyer for Linz and the German museums.¹⁰

Dec 11 1942, Frauenakt (E. Ader); A French merchant, an important auctioneer of the inter-war period for Hôtel Drouot, worked with Germans during the occupation of France. Contacts with Karl Haberstock, Hildebrand Gurlitt and Theodor Hermsen.¹¹

Book 1 sales:

⁹ See Final report Jean Lenthal, appendix; November 2015

¹⁰ http://www.lostart.de/Content/051_ProvenienzRaubkunst/DE/Beteiligte/H/Hermsen,%20Theo%20Jr..html
(October 2017)

¹¹ http://www.lostart.de/Content/051_ProvenienzRaubkunst/DE/Beteiligte/A/Ader,%20%C3%89tienne.html
(October 2017)

1939, Sept. 24, line 375

Abbildung vorhanden

1941, Sept. 12, line 611

Abbildung vorhanden

1942, Jan. 7, line 684

Abbildung vorhanden

1942, March 14, line 762

Abbildung vorhanden

1943, Jan. 4, line 1042

Abbildung vorhanden

Abbildung vorhanden

1943, June 6, line 1171

Abbildung vorhanden

1943, July 27, line 1183 (no single item price)

Abbildung vorhanden

Summary book 1 sales: Taking the June 20 acquisition date into account, only the following sales were approached:

Jan 4 1943, Frauenakt (Carl Neumann): Carl Neumann was a textile manufacturer from Zittau and a German art collector for whom H. Gurlitt acquired art in Paris.¹² Dr. M. Hoffman asserts that items from the Viau sale of Dec 1942, bought by H. Gurlitt, were sold to Carl Neumann.¹³

June 6, 1943: *Passant Akt*, sold to a passer-by.

July 27, 1943, Akt, (Dr. Göpel): Art historian, worked since 1942 under Hans Posse and Hermann Voss for Linz in the Netherlands, France and Belgium. Played a major role in the looting of the Adolphe Schloss collection. Main contact persons: Vitale Bloch (Netherlands), Wüster, Wandl, Holzapfel (Paris).

Book 2 Acquisitions and sales:

1938, April 4

Abbildung vorhanden

1938

Abbildung vorhanden

1941, Sept. 22

Abbildung vorhanden

¹² Hoffmann, Meike und Nicola Kuhn. *Hitlers Kunsthändler*. Muenchen 2016. p. 218

¹³ Ibid. p. 262

Abbildung vorhanden

1942

Abbildung vorhanden

1943

Abbildung vorhanden

1943, Nov. 17

Abbildung vorhanden

Abbildung vorhanden

Stuck-in page

Abbildung vorhanden

Summary Book 2: Reiterating transactions recorded in book 1.

New information: Theo Hermsen, sum total of acquisition 68.000 in Nov. 17 1943, including 2 Rodin nudes, with no further information provided. Sold to the *Kunstverein Koeln* for 90,000 on Dec 23, 1942.

Book 3 Acquisitions and sales:

1942

Abbildung vorhanden

1943

Abbildung vorhanden

Summary Book 3

Lists the Jean Lenthal acquisition of June 20, 1942, as sold to Dr. **E Göbel (Göpel)**, Referent für Sonderfragen, Den Haag, on Aug 3, 1942 for 2,500.

Lists the **Theo Hermsen** acquisition of November 17, 1943, as having been sold to the Kunstverein Köln.

Dr. Johannes Gramlich's report on Gurlitt's connections in Paris¹⁴

¹⁴ Gramlich, J.: Paper I: Informationen aus dem Nachlass Cornelius Gurlitts zu Hildebrand Gurlitts Netzwerk in Frankreich, München 2015, p. 12f

The Gurlitt ledger reflects the importance of Hermsen as seller to H. Gurlitt in Paris. Hugo Engel made the connection between the two. The letters found in the H. Gurlitt correspondence reveal this business relationship to be part of the Linz special contract.

Letter by Theo Hermsen to H. Gurlitt

Letter dated November 17, 1943 Paris, provides a list for export permit, of items acquired by H. Gurlitt to be transferred to Germany.¹⁵ Corresponding with accuracy to lines 1522, 1523 in book 2, including two Rodin Nudes. The letter details the specific sums paid for each of the 17 items and additional information on the particulars of the Rodin drawings.

- Rodin Nu Aquarelle, carton 28 x 18 cm, 30,000 Ffr. measurements do not match LostArt 468167
- Rodin Nu Dessin sur papier, 20,000 fr. The nude is categorized in the ledger as a drawing, and it should be noted that watercolour medium sometimes is identified as such. However, it remains a questionable reference to LostArt 468167.

It is thus unlikely that these export licences pertain to Lost Art ID: 478167.

Liste Gerard:¹⁶

The machine typed list, dated Paris, April 28, 1944 and signed by art dealer Raphael Gerard details works of art originating with this dealership and apparently bought by H. Gurlitt. Helene Gurlitt arranged for the transfer of the items from this list to Germany in 1953 through her children Cornelius and Benita. The Gerard sale in 1944 presumably related to the fact that after 1945 his dealership ceased to be active. However, H. Gurlitt and R. Gerard kept their relationship active after the war with meetings taking place in Switzerland.

In total, 78 items were sold by R. Gerard to H. Gurlitt.

On Sept 22, 1953, a great number of these works were transferred to Dusseldorf. A bill by Pierre Renevey attests to the fact that items were taken out of their frames for transportation¹⁷, while 26 remained in Paris.¹⁸

Conclusions:

A watercolor by A. Rodin, Nude Woman, was transferred to Duesseldorf in 1953. The drawing originates with the Gerard sale to Gurlitt in 1944. As the number 44 is inscribed on verso of the watercolour, the notion that **LostArt 468167** and **No. 44** on the so called Gerard list are linked, is highly likely. The provenance has been adapted accordingly.

To be noted: R. Gerard does not appear in the Gurlitt ledger; the reason may have been the reluctance of Gurlitt to reveal his true source of acquisition. This reaffirms the fact that the ledger needs to be taken with reservations for fraudulent or misleading entries.

Photograph

¹⁵ Attachment 3. Ministère des Affaires étrangères, Archives diplomatiques, Paris: Achats allemands en France, nos. 209SUP/824 [n.d.] [?]; Demandes de licences d'exportation, nos. 209SUP/869 [17 November 1943]

¹⁶ attachment 1. Gramlich, loc. cit. Dok. 1

¹⁷ Gramlich, loc. cit. Dok. 7

¹⁸ Bundesarchiv Koblenz, N 1826/46, fol. 1 ff.

In the estate of Cornelius Gurlitt, more than 2400 photographs of artworks were found. In parts, they contain statements of authenticity on verso or other annotations. The writing on verso of the corresponding photograph for the work in questions reads:

“The watercolour in the photograph is an authentic work by Rodin, Paris January 27, 1944. André Schoeller, expert”¹⁹

It is likely that Schoeller issued the authenticity certificate on request by R. Gerard or Hildebrand Gurlitt himself, prior to the sale of items from Gerard’s gallery to H. Gurlitt, reaffirming that this item originated with this dealer.

The the American Art Looting Intelligence Unit states:

Schoeller, André. Paris, 13 rue de Teheran. Well known expert in French 19th century painting. President of the Art Editors Syndicate and appraiser for the Hotel Drouot. Appraised paintings confiscated by the ERR. Sold extensively to Wüster, Brueschwiler and Lohse.²⁰ Address: 13 Rue de Teheran, Paris. Expert in modern painting said to be collaborator. An opportunist and a gambler, probably rather unscrupulous.²¹

Dr. J. Gramlich assesses that Adolf Wuester, Victor Mandl and André Schoeller were closely in contact pertaining to art trade in occupied Paris.²² The Salzburg documents revealed 90 photographs of authenticity certificates he has provided for Gurlitt’s private collection, most of them issued 1943-44.²³ Unfortunately, no documents pertaining to Schoeller’s authenticity statements are preserved. Documents, preserved in the Archives in Paris, of his dealings, which were investigated after the war, were checked without results for the object in question.²⁴

On verso of the photograph, a handwritten annotation in pencil might read: “Strohlin”. This annotation can be found on other photographs of artworks in the Gurlitt trove, Lost Art IDs: 478167, 532957. It might refer to Alfred Strölin (1871–1954) who was a publisher and art dealer of German origin with residence in France. Due to the lack of documentation for Strölin, no further information on his possible dealings with Gurlitt, Schoeller or Gerard could be established.²⁵

Archival sources:

The following databases were checked:

- The ERR database of art objects plundered at the Jeu de Paume lists several possible matches for Rodin works.²⁶

¹⁹ Attachment 4. Photograph 2.2_F210_Rodin_Nu[...]478167_V

²⁰ <http://lootedart.com/aliu-long> (October 2017)

²¹ <https://www.fold3.com/image/270228> (October 2017)

²² Gramlich, loc. cit. p. 14

²³ Gramlich, loc. cit. p. 15

²⁴ Court documents were checked at the Archives de Paris and Archives Nationales.

²⁵ The following intranets for the name were checked: Archives de Paris, Archives Nationales, Archives diplomatiques, Paris.

It is also possible that the inscription might read: „Stoecklin“. Max Stoecklin was known to be part of a group of interconnected dealers involved in the trade of looted art in Paris. A newspaper article on the return of looted art to the Austrian Jewish art collector Richard Neumann mentions Max Stoecklin as a Swiss national who had been interned for theft before the German occupation. He escaped from his imprisonment, and after the capitulation of Paris ran a warehouse of Jewish stolen property, together with the criminal turned Gestapo collaborator, Henri Louis Chamberlin. Sources on the latter: Anton, M.: Rechtshandbuch Kulturgüterschutz und Kunstrestitutionsrecht Bd. 2, Berlin 2010, p. 641. Feliciano, H.: The Lost Museum; New York 1995, p. 132.

²⁶ Cf.

https://www.errproject.org/jeudepaume/card_advanced_search.php?Solr_Query=&Solr_OwnerId=&Solr_C

- The Répertoire des Biens Spoliés files reveal 7 entries for Rodin drawings. Designated nos. 3522 and 3529 on p. 154 reveal these items as coming from a number of Parisian Jewish collectors, and title and medium as similar to LostArt 468167 (attachment 2).

Research into the above mentioned losses was conducted without further results regarding a possible (or definite) match, as the information preserved on the looted collections and individual items is scarce.²⁷

Several possible matches from the lists above could be ruled out, as dimensions and/or description were not a match.²⁸

Conclusion:

General titles and partial description of medium of looted items recorded in the ERR registry and in the Répertoire do not allow proven match with Rodin works on paper in the Gurlitt Cache specifically with **LostArt # 468167**.

Further names and documents:

General documentation in relation to Hildebrand Gurlitt and his acquisitions in France was checked, however without a match.

The work was neither kept at the Central Collecting Points.

Monographs with no reference to LostArt 478167

L. Bénédite: Rodin. New York 1927.

Catalogue des tableaux modernes. Collection Georges Bernheim. Auct. cat. Galerie Jean Charpentier, Paris 1935.

B. Champigneulle: Rodin. New York 1980.

J. Cladel: Rodin. New York 1937.

A. E. Elsen: The Drawings of Rodin. London 1972.

A. E. Elsen: Rodin. New York 1963.

A. E. Elsen (ed): Rodin Rediscovered. Washington 1981.

Exposición Rodin. Exh. cat., Museo nacional de Bellas Artes, Buenos Aires 1934.

W. H. Hale (ed): The World of Rodin. New York 1978.

D. Jarrassé: Rodin – A Passion For Movement. Paris 1995.

C. Lampert: Rodin. Sculpture & Drawings. London 1986.

A. le Normand-Romain: Auguste Rodin: dessins et aquarelles. Paris 2006.

S. Parmiggiani (ed): Auguste Rodin. Exh. cat. Palazzo Magnani, Milan, 14 June–31 August 2003.

P.-L. Renié (ed): Figures d' Ombres. Exh. cat. Musée Goupil, Bordeaux, 10 May–10 August 1996.

[ollectionId=&Solr_ErrId=&Solr_Artist=rodin&Solr_ArtTypeId=247&Solr_CardTitle=nu*&Solr_CardDesc=&Solr_ObjectBibliography=&Solr_ObjectPostConfiscationHistory=&Solr_ObjectArchivalSource=&Solr_Attribute 4 b=&Solr_Attribute 5 b=&Solr_Attribute 9 b=&Solr_Attribute 14 b=&Solr_Attribute 41 b=&Solr_Attribute 45 b=&Solr_Attribute 13 b=](#) and search terms: „akt“.

²⁷ The losses from the following collectors could not be ruled out: Henry Claude Hirsch, Claude Raphael, Leonce Bernheim, Roger Stora, Henry Claude Hirsch.

²⁸ The losses from the following collectors could be ruled out Jean Louis Dreyfus, Alphonse Kann, Yves Lyon.

Résumé du Catalogue des Tableaux Modernes [...] Coll. de M. Z., Galerie Georges Petit, Paris 8-9 December 1917.

Rodin. Exh. cat. Museum Tel Aviv 1967.

Rodin. L'accident / l'aléatoire. Exh. cat. Musée d'Art et d'Histoire, Genève 2014.

P. Sollers: Auguste Rodin. Munich 1987.

G. Talpir: Auguste Rodin. Tel Aviv <n.y.>.

V. Thorson: Rodin Graphics. San Francisco 1975.

Further literature checks, without a match:

Aquarelles par Rodin. Auct. cat., Galerie Georges Petit, Paris, 27–28 October 1933.

Buley-Urbe, Christina. "Du vrai et du faux: Les dessins de Rodin du fonds du musée d'Orsay," pp. 77–89. In: *La Revue des musées de France: Revue du Louvre*. No. 1, Paris: Réunion des musées Nationaux, 2014.

Conclusions:

The fact that August Rodin's oeuvre includes thousands of drawings, many of them nudes, makes the identification of a particular watercolour or drawing an almost impossible mission, as titles do vary. Lack of details or visual information as well as the high probability that this work is a forgery by Odilon Roche add to the challenge.

Owing to the statement of authenticity, dated 27 January 1944, it seems highly likely that LostArt 478176 was acquired in Paris during the Occupation, probably through Raphael Gerard and/or André Schoeller. It remains unclear whether at the time Gerard and/or Gurlitt owned or co-owned these works, whether they had been placed on commission, or indeed simply deposited with Gerard. In 1953, some of these works were shipped to Gurlitt in Dusseldorf, while others remained with Gerard until 1957 (at Gurlitt's cost). No further provenance information was found on this artwork, thus looting can neither be ascertained nor ruled out.

Die Provenienz des Werkes konnte trotz intensiver Forschung nicht lückenlos aufgeklärt werden, d.h. das Kunstwerk ist weder erwiesenermaßen noch mit hoher Wahrscheinlichkeit NS-Raubkunst noch frei von NS-Raubkunstverdacht. Es wurde nach aktueller Einschätzung allen Rechercheansätzen nachgegangen. Das Werk muss demnach in die Kategorie „ungeklärt“ [=nach Ampelsystem: gelb] eingestuft werden.²⁹

Disclaimer

The research that goes into establishing the provenance of a work of art usually requires complex work that often lasts many years. Researchers have to reconstruct events that took place many decades ago. Often, the only sources of vital clues stem from third parties who do not always represent and assess the facts in a manner that is beyond all doubt. Despite the short period of time in which it was compiled, this report is nevertheless the result of utmost care in research, combined with great professional expertise. The following provisions therefore apply:

- a) The investigation revolved exclusively around the question of the origin and chronology of ownership of the artwork described in the report. No liability will be accepted for:

²⁹ Angleichung der Projektleitung, 22.08.2018.

- the accuracy of the used sources' presentation of the facts and any analyses, conclusions, and assessments they may contain,
 - the exhaustiveness of our probing into and evaluation of the available source material,
 - the analysis and conclusions drawn from the sources in the course of our research,
 - the findings on the subject of the report and how they were derived,
 - the authenticity of the artwork, as well as the accuracy of its attribution to a particular artist.
- b) The report is based on the sources available at the time it was written. Further research might be required. It is important to note the possibility that new source material may be found, which may lead to a re-evaluation of the findings presented here.
- c) The present report does not purport to make pronouncements on any legal claims and legal positions. No liability will be accepted for any conclusions drawn by the addressee(s) or by third parties based on this report.