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EU-FUNDED PILOT PROJECT FOR CENTRAL ARCHIVAL DATA BASE ON NAZI-ERA PLUNDERED CULTURAL OBJECTS COMPLETED

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The Jewish Digital Cultural Recovery Project Foundation announces the completion of a groundbreaking pilot project launching a central database of documentation of cultural objects plundered by the National Socialists, their allies, and their collaborators. Funds for the pilot project were provided by the European Union, together with the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany and the Commission for Art Recovery.

The pilot project website presents an object-based visualization of the 1943 Nazi-orchestrated theft in southern France of the Adolphe Schloss Collection of Dutch and Flemish Old Master paintings. The 333 stolen artworks were divided between the Vichy and Nazi governments. Local thieves in Munich stole much of the remaining collection in May 1945. Nearly half of the artworks remain missing.

"For the first time, this website provides a complete overview of the provenance and later theft of the Schloss Collection paintings," said Marc Masurovsky, academic director of the JDCRP pilot project. "The methodology allows users to deepen their knowledge of relationships among entities and gain a richer understanding of the overall dimensions and mechanisms of the theft." The website provides an event-based timeline and search aids on the artists, artworks, perpetrators, locations, and entities that are tied to the ownership, seizure. and dispersal of the works.

"The pilot project illustrates in detail the perseverance and tenacity with which the National Socialist government tracked and confiscated cultural objects from Jewish owners," said Wesley Fisher, executive board member and co-founder of the JDCRP Foundation. "It also reveals the systematic way such stolen art was stored and distributed. Regrettably, large parts of this crime remain undetected and unsolved."

Pilot project researchers, coordinated by Pilot Project Manager Avishag Ben-Yosef, uncovered important historical information, such as fierce competition between the Vichy and National Socialist governments to steal cultural objects belonging to Jewish owners. "The innovative combination of a website and Wikibase graph provide both a research environment and a broad overview of the fate of a Nazi-plundered collection," said Ben-Yosef.

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The Adolphe Schloss Pilot Project displays the major documents related to the collection from archives in France, the Netherlands, Germany, and the United States. The 19-month pilot project was guided by three transnational advisory groups that included archivists, art historians, provenance researchers and IT specialists, many of whom are representatives of JDCRP partner organizations.

Comments and suggestions are welcome on demos of the pilot project website and the Wikibase graph:
https://pilot-demo.jdcrp.org
https://wbdev.jdcrp-research.eu/wiki/Main_Page

"The immensity of the Nazi-era cultural theft, which played an integral role in the Holocaust, remains little known and marginal to Holocaust education and Holocaust studies. We hope this pilot project marks the beginning of change in this regard," said Deidre Berger, JDCRP executive board chair.

The JDCRP Foundation, founded in 2019, is focused on documentation, research, and education related to art plundered during the National Socialist era. It plans to integrate relevant Nazi-era archives to improve cross-search capabilities for use by art experts and a wide range of general users. Its work is intended to foster European remembrance of plundered art, expand the legacy of Jewish cultural heritage in Europe, and provide context for fighting contemporary antisemitism.

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ועידת התביעות
Claims Conference
Conference on Jewish Material Claims
Against Germany

The JDCRP pilot project is co-funded
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