



## Press Release

### **The Advisory Commission recommends that the City of Cologne restitute the watercolor *Kauernder weiblicher Akt* by Egon Schiele to the heirs of Heinrich Rieger**

08 February 2021

The Advisory Commission on the return of cultural property seized as a result of Nazi persecution, especially Jewish property, chaired by Prof. Hans-Jürgen Papier, decided unanimously on 29 September 2020 in the case of the heirs of Heinrich Rieger versus Stadt Köln to recommend that the watercolor *Kauernder weiblicher Akt* [Crouching Nude Girl] by Egon Schiele be restituted to the heirs of Heinrich Rieger.

Over the course of decades, Heinrich Rieger had built a substantial collection of contemporary art in Vienna. He probably received the watercolor *Kauernder weiblicher Akt* from the artist himself, whom he treated as his dentist. After the so-called annexation on 13 March 1938 Rieger was severely persecuted for his Jewish heritage. He lost almost the entirety of his collection in emergency sales and acts of “aryanization”. Rieger was deported to Theresienstadt concentration camp in 1942, where he died on an unknown date. His wife was deported to Auschwitz on 16 May 1944 and probably killed in the gas chambers upon arrival. Only their son Robert managed to escape to the USA in 1938.

The exact fate of the *Kauernder weiblicher Akt* is unknown. However, Rieger’s collection remained largely intact until 13 March 1938. Rieger rarely relinquished works, particularly those by Schiele, and only in exceptional cases. In accordance with the principles of prima facie evidence, the Commission therefore considers it a proven fact that *Kauernder weiblicher Akt* was still part of Rieger’s collection on 13 March 1938 and subsequently confiscated due to Nazi persecution.

The complete recommendation is available at [beratende-kommission.de](http://beratende-kommission.de)

Beratende Kommission  
im Zusammenhang mit der Rückgabe  
NS-verfolgungsbedingt entzogenen Kulturguts,  
insbesondere aus jüdischem Besitz

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