

Provenance Research and Restitution – Transdisciplinary Approaches

Annual Conference of the Arbeitskreis Provenienzforschung e.V. (Association for Provenance Research) 2025, 8 to 10 September 2025, Bonn

Provisional Program, June 2025

The [Arbeitskreis Provenienzforschung e.V.](#) brings together almost 600 international researchers and experts dedicated to researching the provenance of cultural objects. Our members work in collecting institutions (such as museums, libraries and archives), in the art trade, the legal system, in academia or as freelancers.

The host for this year's annual conference is the University of Bonn. The University of Bonn is one of the largest and most renowned teaching and research institutions in Germany. In summer 2019 it was named one of eleven German Excellence Universities. In the last years, Bonn has also established itself as a transdisciplinary centre in the fields of provenance research and restitution. The '[Research Centre for Provenance Research, Art and Cultural Property Law](#)', founded in 2018, brings together the activities of three professorships in the fields of law and art history. The research project '[Restatement of Restitution Rules for Nazi-Confiscated Art](#)' (2019-2024) created a basis for the reform of restitution practice in Germany. Provenance research projects have been carried out both in the [University Collections](#) and in the [University and State Library in Bonn](#). The [Global Heritage Lab](#), founded in 2022, has set itself the goal of rethinking heritage from global and historical perspectives.

The conference in Bonn is generously supported by:

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Conference website: <https://www.khi.uni-bonn.de/fpk/de/akbonn2025>

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NB. A number of the accepted proposals were submitted by research teams. Each team has agreed on one speaker to represent the project. The names and affiliations of all researchers working on the projects presented below will be included in the full program booklet which will be published to accompany the conference.

Monday 8 September 2025

Provenance Research: Methods and Discourses

12pm – 1pm

Introductions / Welcome

1pm – 2pm

Defining Contexts of Injustice

- Nicola Groß M.A., Bauhaus-Universität Weimar: “A legacy of colonial ambivalences: What constitutes the context of injustice of Sámi cultural heritage in German museum collections?”
- Dr. Tobias P. Jansen, Universitäts- und Landesbibliothek Bonn: “Books from German prisoner-of-war camps: An unusual context of injustice in the project to identify Nazi-looted assets in the Bonn University and State Library”
- Lubava Illyenko M.A., Universität Augsburg: “Restitution begins at home: On the history of looted Ukrainian treasures”

2.30pm – 4.30pm

Methods of Provenance Research: Collaborative and Transdisciplinary Approaches

- Dr. Joachim Sieber, Kunsthau Zürich (speaking for a team): “Reunited again! Two versions of “evening landscape with a couple” and their value for interdisciplinary (provenance) research in museums”
- Dr. André Koch, Museum Koenig, Bonn (speaking for a team): “Provenance, science & profit: Natural history museums and the global network of the Umlauff natural history trading house”
- Marianne Lose, Lindenau-Museum Altenburg: “Enigmatic graffiti - an interdisciplinary search for traces”

Networks, Witnesses and Memory

- Dr. Ivonne Kaiser, Landesmuseum Natur und Mensch Oldenburg (speaking for a team): “Digital provenance research in dialogue: transdisciplinary methods and international perspectives in the DiViAS project”
- Sophia Bokop, Ethnologisches Museum und Museum für Asiatische Kunst, Berlin (speaking for a team): “Collaborative knowledge production and negotiation processes in provenance research and restitution”

5pm – 6pm

Round Table Discussion: Comparing Provenance Research in various Contexts: Practical Experiences

- Impulse Statements
 - o Dr. Klaas Stutje, NIOD Expertisecentrum Restitutie, Amsterdam (speaking for a team): “The virtues of comparing provenance research”

- Speaker TBC, Zentralarchiv Staatliche Museen zu Berlin: “Provenance research on Nazi-related dispossession and colonial contexts in comparison: similarities, differences and mutual learning “
 - Sarah Fründt, M.A., Deutsches Zentrum Kulturgutverluste (speaking for a team): “Continuities and ruptures. On victims of violence in public collections: Cross-context considerations on the state of provenance research on human remains”
 - Prof. Dr. Carla Jaimes-Betancourt, University of Bonn
- Roundtable Discussion

Tuesday 9 September 2025

Restitution and Beyond: Norms, Relational Ethics and Impact

9am – 11.30am

Towards Normativity in Restitution

- Eyal Dolev M.B.A., Dolev Consulting, Tel Aviv: “Are there "good" or "bad" restitution cases?”
- Dr. Lucas Da Costa Maciel, National Museum of the American Indian, Smithsonian Institution, Washington DC: “Kvtxan, or being will: Shamanism and provenance research in the Mapuche land”
- Prof. Dr. Amnon Lehavi, Reichman University, Herzliya: “Holocaust-era provenance research in Israel: law, policy and professional practice “
- Prof. Dr. Charlotte Woodhead, Warwick Law School, University of Warwick: “An evolving ethic of care in repatriation claims”

Statement and Q+A: New Developments – Arbitration in Germany

- Opening Statement:
 - Prof. Dr. Matthias Weller, Rheinische Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität Bonn: “The dissolution of the Limbach Commission and arbitration in Germany”

12pm – 1.30pm

Restitution and Relational Ethics: Experiences from the NS context

- Dr. Regina Prinz, Münchner Stadtmuseum (speaking for a team): “Munich Roots: Information events for the descendants of Jewish families from Munich”
- Dr. Emily Löffler, Deutsche Nationalbibliothek, Leipzig: “Cooperative restitutions in libraries: The case of Jellinek-Mercedes”
- Tamara Loitfellner M.A., Kommission für Provenienzforschung, Wien: “The restituted objects are inscribed with the shadow of the people who once held them: Restitution and heritage research”
- Alfred Fass B.A., Historian and family representative, Ra’anana, Israel. “The Unique Adelsberger/Isay archive at the Jewish Museum of Amsterdam: A Jewish art-loving family in the eye of the storm”

3pm – 4.15pm

Restitution and Relational Ethics in colonial contexts

- Dr. Leandro Matthews Cascon, BASA Museum (Bonner Amerika-Sammlung), University of Bonn (speaking for a team). “Not everything was stolen, not everything should have been taken: Waiwai indigenous discourse and the role of direct object analysis for understanding native agency in the forming of a collection at the Världskulturmuseet, Gothemburg” and Community representative, TBC

- Ricarda Rivoir M.A., GRASSI Museum, Leipzig (speaking for a team). "Linking knowledge for restitution" and Community representative, TBC
- Dr. Mareike Späth (speaking for a team), Niedersächsisches Landesmuseum Hannover: "Homemaking: Weapons and belongings from the Iringa to Hanover" and Deonis Mgumba, M.A., Iringa Boma – Regional Museum and Cultural Centre

4.45pm – 6pm

Potentials of Digitisation

- Jakob Claus M.A., Carl von Ossietzky Universität Oldenburg (speaking for a team): "Photographic provenances. photographs of the Hamburg South Sea Expedition - between archive and resocialisation"
- Dr. Martina Diaz, Eidgenössische Technische Hochschule Zürich (speaking for a team): "unarchive: a call for relational ethics beyond restitution"

Wednesday 10 September 2025

Communication and Politics

9am – 10am

Communicating Provenance Research

- Dr. Julia Devlin, Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen (speaking for a team): "Art, theft and restitution: Forgotten life stories"
- Dr Carlee Forbes, Baltimore Museum of Arts: "Transparent dialogues: sharing provenance of african collections with public audiences"
- Maike Schimanowski M.A., Humboldt Forum, Berlin (speaking for a team): " Postcolonial provenance research, (re) presentations of knowledge and exhibition practice: Historia za Tanzania - Geschichte(n) Tansanias - Histories of Tanzania at the Humboldt Forum "

10am – 11am

The Role of Central Support Organisations

- Opening Statement from the Arbeitskreis Provenienzforschung e.V. (Association for Provenance Research)
- Impulse Statements:
 - o Dr. Claudia Andratschke, Landesmuseum Hannover (speaking for a team): "Coordination centres for provenance research"
 - o Dr. Sören Groß, Stiftung Deutsches Optisches Museum (speaking for a team): "Violence - injustice – trauma: How can dealing with victims and perpetrators be professionalised?"
- Roundtable Discussion

11.30am – 2pm

Provenance Research and Politics: Challenges for the Future

- Impulse Statement:
 - o Fenya Almstadt, M.A., Initiative Provenienzforschung stärken! (speaking for a team): "Open letter: Protecting and strengthening provenance research against new right-wing cultural policy"
- Roundtable Discussion