



Pierre-Auguste Renoir

Scène d'Œdipe Roi (Scene from Oedipus Rex), 1895

Oil on canvas, 56.5 x 36 cm

on recto, lower right, signed: "Renoir"

on verso, canvas, at centre, inscribed in blue: "62"; upper centre, in black: "67"; upper right, in black: "vu"

on verso, frame, lower left, in black: [illegible]; upper left, in blue: "619"; lower right, label: "[Gustav Kna]uer, Berlin [...]030 Abteilung"; lower centre, in red chalk: "46" [in circle]

canvas relined and mounted on new stretcher

Provenance:

Renoir Heirs (per Dauberville)

By 1929: Jos Hessel, Paris (per Meier-Graefe)

(...)

Possibly with Theo Hermsen, Paris (per Hildebrand Gurlitt Papers)

May 1944: acquired from the above, Hildebrand Gurlitt (?)

By descent to Cornelius Gurlitt, Munich/Salzburg

From 6 May 2014: Estate of Cornelius Gurlitt

Bibliographical references:

Meier-Graefe, Julius. *Renoir*. Leipzig: Klinkhardt & Biermann, 1929. [pp. 386, 401, pl. 250]

André, Albert, Marc Elder, and Joseph Bernheim-Jeune, eds. *L'Atelier de Renoir*. Paris: Galerie Bernheim-Jeune, 1931. [pl. 41 ill. 116]

Dauberville, Guy-Patrice, and Michel Dauberville, eds. *Renoir: Catalogue raisonné des tableaux, pastels, dessins et aquarelles*. Paris: Bernheim Jeune, 2010. [vol. 3, no. 2144, ill.]

Primary sources:

Business records Hildebrand Gurlitt:

Sales ledger 1937–41: 10 May 1944 [no. 171]
Sales ledger 1937–?: 10 May 1944 [no. 1842]
30 May 1944 [no. 1842]

Correspondence Hildebrand Gurlitt – possible reference:
29 December 1947 [vol. 8, fol. 306ff.]

Cornelius Gurlitt Papers, Salzburg:
Correspondence, no. 7.1_F7105 [17 December 1955]

Witt Library, London:
Folder Pierre-Auguste Renoir [variant composition]

Seizure Inventory [Sicherstellungsverzeichnis], 2012, no. SV Part 2/141

Further sources consulted:

Bernard, Tristan. "Jos. Hessel." In: *La Renaissance de l'art français et des industries de luxe*, vol. 3, no. 1 (January 1930).

Exposition d'œuvres des dix dernières années (1909–1919) de Renoir. Exh. cat., Galerie Paul Rosenberg, Paris, 16 January–24 February 1934.

Fezzi, Elda. *L'opera completa di Renoir: 1869-1883*. Milan: Rizzoli Editore, 1972.

Monneret, Sophie. *Renoir*. Cologne: DuMont, 1990.

Cultural Plunder by the Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg: Database of Art Objects at the Jeu de Paume

Database "Central Collecting Point München"

Database "Kunstsammlung Hermann Göring"

Getty Provenance Index, German Sales Catalogs

Lootedart.com

Lost Art

Répertoire des Biens Spoliés

Rijksbureau voor Kunsthistorische Documentatie

Verzeichnis national wertvoller Kunstwerke ("Reichsliste von 1938")

Note:

Two works in the Schwabing Art Trove (Lost Art ID nos. 478432 and ID 478433) are part of a series of preparatory drawings and paintings commissioned by Renoir's friend, the director of the Théâtre des Variétés, Paul Gallimard (1850–1929). These theatre panels were intended for the decoration of Gallimard's houses in Paris and Normandy.

The works were later in the property of Jos (aka Josse or Joseph) Hessel (1859 Brussels–1942 Cannes). Hessel was an art dealer in Paris of Belgian-Jewish descent. He initially directed the Bernheim-Jeune Gallery (the Bernheim brothers were his cousins) and then went on to set up his own shop on the Rue de la Boétie. Hessel was also a close partner of Paul Rosenberg. In 1930, Hessel's personal collection (containing numerous works by Renoir, Cezanne, Vuillard, Bonnard and others) was prominently featured by Tristan Bernard in a special issue of the French journal *La Renaissance de l'art français*. Following the Nazi invasion, the gallery was expropriated; Hessel fled to Southern France where he died in 1942.

According to the extant business records, Gurlitt acquired both Oedipus scenes in May 1944 through the art dealer Theo Hermsen in Paris.

In a document dated 1955, which he prepared for the Kunstverein für die Rheinlande und Westfalen, Gurlitt specifically referred to the origin of both works in the Jos Hessel collection.

Further research is on-going.

Disclaimer:

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