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Concordia Announces Key Findings in the Search For Max Stern's Art Holdings Lost During The Nazi Regime

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MONTREAL/March 23, 2006—

On Friday, March 24, at 2 p.m., Dr. Clarence Epstein of Concordia University will announce the first important findings and immediate actions related to the Max Stern Art Restitution Project. The announcement will be made during the inaugural Max and Iris Stern International Symposium at the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal (185 St. Catherine St. West), where this year's program, dedicated to the Arts of Memory, will pay particular attention to ideological movements in Germany during the twentieth century.

Exactly one year ago Concordia, acting on behalf of the executors and the university beneficiaries (Concordia, McGill and Hebrew University of Jerusalem) of the Estate of the prominent Montreal art dealer and collector, publicly committed to seeking restitution of the art holdings that were either confiscated from him by the Nazis or sold by force in the 1930s.

Executors of the Stern Estate intend to use the fullest extent of their resources to pursue the restitution of his property", reaffirms Dr. Epstein, who is heading the Project. "Since Dr. Stern's death in 1987, the Executors have distributed hundreds of works of art and tens of millions of dollars to universities and museums worldwide".

In collaboration with the New York State Holocaust Claims Processing Office (HCPO), the Art Loss Register in London and the National Gallery of Canada Archives, Concordia can confirm that more than forty works of art in public and private hands have been identified as exact matches from a grouping of more than four hundred belonging to Max Stern.

Discovered in this initial search are important works by European masters such as Jan Brueghel, Lodovico Carracci, Franz Xaver Winterhalter, Emile-Vernet Lecomte and Max Liebermann. While discussions with Christie's, Sotheby's and many of the current possessors of these works is moving forward positively, the Estate is about to commence legal proceedings regarding one painting located in Rhode Island.

The most pertinent and recurring finding by the international research team is that most of these forty works have been offered on the market in the last two decades by the same fifteen auction houses – the majority of them located in Germany.

Over the next few weeks, it is the intention of the HCPO to approach all of these establishments and request their assistance in making contact with the last-known possessors of the works. In addition to these auction houses, a list of all Stern works in question will be circulated to select members of the art trade and museums across Germany.

Also, in order to further sensitize the public to these matters, in Fall 2006, Concordia University will launch a traveling exhibition and publication on the infamous 1937 forced sale of Stern paintings at Lempertz auction house in Cologne, and will participate in an international lecture series on issues surrounding Nazi looting, forced liquidation and stolen art organized with the

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Montreal Holocaust Memorial Centre.

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