



**GERMAN/AMERICAN PROVENANCE RESEARCH EXCHANGE PROGRAM (PREP)
for Museum Professionals, 2017-2019**

In 2016, the German/American Provenance Research Exchange Program (PREP) for Museum Professionals, 2017-2019 received funding from the German Federal Government’s European Recovery Program (Deutsches Programm für Transatlantische Begegnung) and its Commissioner for Culture and the Media, and from six PREP partner institutions and the Smithsonian Women’s Committee, to advance the field of World War II-era provenance research in museums, archives, libraries, and research institutions in Germany and the U.S. PREP draws personnel, collections, resources, shared experiences, and expertise together for the first time in genuinely collaborative endeavors.

With PREP, the **Smithsonian Institution Provenance Research Initiative (SPRI)** and the **Stiftung Preußischer Kulturbesitz (SPK)** have co-organized a 3-year provenance research exchange in collaboration with 5 partner institutions—**The Metropolitan Museum of Art (Met)**, New York, **Getty Research Institute (GRI)**, Los Angeles, **Zentralinstitut für Kunstgeschichte (ZI)**, Central Institute for Art Historical Research, Munich; and **Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden (SKD)**, Dresden State Art Collections; with the **Deutsches Zentrum für Kulturverluste (DZK)**, German Center for Lost Art, Magdeburg in an advisory capacity. They will convene 2 Exchanges/year to engage in long-term, systematic dialogue exploring differences in the legal, cultural, museological, and research systems of each country. PREP is building a “provenance research *autobahn*” of provenance experts, who share improved methodologies and newly-digitized provenance research resources and results with academic and professional colleagues, and PREP provides a platform to develop collaborative research projects. PREP will educate the public in both countries about the methods and challenges of provenance research, so that they can better understand its results.

Although both countries devote many resources to WWII-era provenance research, the professionals who conduct this exacting, complicated work often find themselves hampered by several conditions:

- Lack of understanding of the different legal, museological, and cultural systems, which make it difficult to evaluate what is learned in the counterpart country
- Lack of time and specific knowledge necessary to work with these resources
- Lack of a secure platform into which provenance results can be uploaded and shared, causing duplication of research and inefficient use of scarce museum resources
- Lack of understanding of how to communicate their work to the public

PREP Objectives

Because PREP Partners enlist the participation of other cultural and educational institutions in their host cities—museums, archives, research institutes, universities, and libraries, led by experts with deep knowledge of their holdings—PREP will create a multiplier effect, expanding the circle of institutions and individuals drawn into the project. PREP will:

1. Engender a more nuanced comprehension of the differences and similarities between German and American approaches to provenance research and their responses and solutions to claims. PREP will build collaborative dialogue between museums, archives, and legal entities, and help to achieve understanding of the unique circumstances that inform every provenance research undertaking.
2. Initiate a platform for new scholarly, collaborative projects between U.S. and German curators and researchers that will contribute to the international debate around provenance, restitution, and related policy issues.

3. Foster mentorship programs, so that provenance specialists can share knowledge and expertise with less experienced colleagues, particularly early career researchers, who require on-the-job training. The results will solidify a foundation for the future of provenance research.
4. Ensure substantive exchange with German and American colleagues that will inform both the historical and the wider contemporary debates surrounding the preservation of cultural heritage, emphasizing the need for provenance research in areas from antiquities to the prevention of looting and theft.
5. Establish new, concrete steps over a 3-year period to assure public access to the results of these exchanges, so that they increase public understanding of the complexities of this provenance work, and lessen distrust of governmental parties and museums.

Principal Outcomes

- A network of German and American provenance research experts, facilitated by a communications portal that serves as the infrastructure for the secure sharing of resources and information, and the development of collaborative research projects
- An online *World War II-era Provenance Research Resources in Germany and the U.S.*
- Expert art-historical and museum/archive input to shape the technologies that advance the recording, sharing, and dissemination of provenance research resources and results both within the profession, and to the public

PREP Exchanges:

2017 New York, The Met (February 4-10)

2018 Los Angeles, GRI (February 25-March 2)

2019 Dresden, SKD (March 17-22)

Berlin, SPK (September 24-29)

Munich, ZI (October 8-12)

Washington, DC, SPRI (October 20-25)

PREP organizes 6 Exchanges over the 3 years of its program. With the PREP Steering Committee, each Partner develops a week-long Exchange in its home city—a program of discussions and workshops, tours of local institutions with holdings of interest to WWII-era provenance research, and a public educational program. Because much research has already been accomplished on painting and sculpture, PREP’s areas of focus will be graphic arts, decorative arts, and Asian art.

Participants: PREP’s 3 cohorts—in 2017, 2018, and 2019—bring 21 Participants/year to 2 Exchanges, one in each country. Partners appoint one Participant each, and the Steering Committee selects 14 Participants/year, based on professional criteria, to achieve a synergistic mix of museum and archive professionals—provenance researchers, curators, collections managers, archivists, lawyers, and information technology experts who work with expertise in WWII-era provenance in museums. The cohort works to expand the PREP international provenance research network, trains and mentors research professionals in museums, and contributes expertise to the development of technologies that facilitate sharing of resources and research results. Participants may extend time for longer exploration or personal research, but this time is not supported by the PREP grant.

Within the Program timeframe, Participants must produce publicly-available outcomes of some kind, and report on what they learn through the PREP Exchanges to colleagues at their institutions, as well as the online *World War II-era Provenance Research Resources in Germany and the U.S.*

Honorary Co-chairs: Hermann Parzinger, President of Prussian Cultural Heritage Foundation—Berlin State Museums, and Richard Kurin, Distinguished Scholar and Ambassador-at-Large, Smithsonian Institution

 provenance.si.edu for information about PREP and PREP application