
GERMAN RAIDS OF JUNE 2013


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InCoRM learned last week that the raids on Russian Avant-Garde collectors and galleries in Germany by the Federal Criminal Police (BKA) on 12 June 2013 were instigated on the basis of allegations supplied to the German authorities by the Paris-based art historian, Andréi Boris Nakov, according to an officer of the BKA. This would now explain why State Prosecutors and the BKA have been taking the advice on paintings from Mr Nakov who, to date, is known to have declared over 30 paintings to be “fake”, mostly on photographs only. According to a letter of January 2014 from the office of one of the State Prosecutors to the owner of a seized work, the “case is closed” due to “insufficient evidence” and the work will be returned. In apparent contradiction to this, a letter from the BKA, also of January 2014, takes as sufficient evidence “the opinion of Prof. Dr Nakov” (a misnomer since he has no professorship) who pronounced this same work as “obviously fake” and as a consequence states that the work will be posted on their database as “dubious”. This decision is in flagrant disregard for the fact that the work has scientific and art historical opinions from recognised experts and an excellent provenance. In addition and known to them, the German authorities are relying on the opinion of someone who has been condemned by European courts. Mr Nakov authenticated and organised an exhibition in three public museums of nearly 200 fake works which he attributed to Mikhail Larionov (Geneva, Cour de Justice, PS115/95, ACJP 121/01, 27 April 2001), and he was also accused by the French courts of making “fraudulent claims” to having the moral right over the art of Alexandra Exter (Cour d’Appel de Paris, Arrêt du 25 June 2013 No. 421, Numéro d’inscription au répertoire général 12/21691). But Mr Nakov does not just have the ear of German authorities, he also caught those of a few individuals, who wish to remain anonymous, when he is reported to have said about the fine and well known Russian Avant-Garde collection of Moscow banker, Piotr Aven, that “it is full of fakes”.

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