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Gurlitt's 'Henry Moore' to Star in Hit Art Detective Series, Fake or Fortune?

Drawings in Bern that could be an early work by the British sculpture will feature in the new series of the BBC's hit show.

Javier Pes, March 29, 2018



The presenters of *Fake or Fortune?* with a genuine Lucian Freud. Courtesy of the BBC.

The Gurlitt hoard has generated litigation, a tsunami of press coverage, shows in Germany and Switzerland and now a TV special. The BBC's popular art detective program *Fake or Fortune?* is including in its next series a sheet of drawings of

reclining female nudes that experts are examining to determine if it is an unknown early work by the British sculptor Henry Moore just as his career was taking off.

The show, which is co-presented by the art dealer Philip Mould with Fiona Bruce, the BBC news anchor, has investigated numerous works, including a “Chagall” (fake), a “Monet” (?), which was rejected by the Wildenstein Institute, and a portrait by Lucian Freud (fortune), although the artist denied it was by him.



Sketch for a Stone Sculpture attributed to Henry Moore, bequest of Cornelius Gurlitt 2014, courtesy of Kunstmuseum Bern

Nina Zimmer, the director of the Kunstmuseum Bern, where Cornelius Gurlitt chose to bequeath his art dealer father’s long-hidden stock, confirmed that filming had started. The BBC responded with Gurlitt-like mystery and declined to comment. Mould was unavailable due to filming.

The discovery of the sheet of drawings in Bern, which artnet News first reported in January, has led to in-depth research into its authenticity and provenance. “It is not a masterpiece drawing,” Zimmer told us, which increases the chances that it is

genuine and not a forgery or copy. Experts from the Henry Moore Foundation have traveled to Bern but no verdict has so far been delivered.

The work on paper's provenance is also problematic, like many pieces in the Gurlitt hoard. Untypically it appears to be a work by a British artist: Hildebrand Gurlitt tended to focus on French and German art, although he did deal in Moore's work after World War II.

One theory is that the work on paper was acquired in London around the time of Moore's first major solo show by the director of the Hamburg's museum of fine and applied art, Max Sauerlandt. The German curator acquired a sculpture by Moore for the museum around 1932, the artist's first significant institutional purchase. Sauerlandt died of cancer in 1934 as the Nazi's were purging Hamburg and the nation's museums of so-called degenerate art.



Camille Pissarro's *La Seine vue du Pont-Neuf, au fond le Louvre* (1902) is confirmed as Nazi-era loot in the Gurlitt collection. Courtesy of the Kunstmuseum Bern.

If genuine, the Henry Moore Foundation hopes to include the work in an exhibition focused on the artist's drawings, which is planned for 2019. However, the Kunstmuseum Bern has not included the work in "Gurlitt: Status Report Part Two," which opens on April 14 (until July 15). The exhibition explores Hildebrand Gurlitt's role as an art dealer in Nazi Germany and the range of art he bought, sold and hoarded, which includes paintings, sculptures, as well as prints and drawings from the 16th to the mid-20th century.

