

METRO

Heirs of Holocaust victim sue art dealer over works

By [Julia Marsh](#)

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One of the works in question, "Woman Hiding her Face," by Austrian expressionist Egon Schiele.

Two descendants of a Jewish Holocaust victim whose \$5 million collection of paintings was stolen by the Nazis are suing a London-based art dealer for their return — saying they have original court documents proving their rights to the pieces, according to court papers filed Tuesday in Manhattan.

Timothy Reif of Washington, DC, and David Fraenkel of Pennsylvania are co-heirs to the estate of Fritz Grunbaum, a Viennese cabaret performer who was imprisoned at the Dachau concentration camp, where he was murdered in 1941.

The heirs, distant relatives of the performer, say they have an original power of attorney that Grunbaum was forced to sign handing over assets to the Nazis, including two paintings by Austrian expressionist Egon Schiele.

The forced authorization and a 1938 document of Grunbaum's "Jewish Property Declaration" from a Vienna probate court are exhibits in Manhattan civil lawsuit.

The asset list includes Schiele's "Woman Hiding her Face" and "Woman in a Black Pinafore," which were both displayed by art dealer Richard Nagy at the Park Avenue Armory. The exhibition ended on Nov. 16 and the works were not sold, Nagy told The Post.

The heirs' lawyer, Raymond Dowd, is confident.

"This is an ironclad case," Dowd said. "The evidence of Nazi looting is overwhelming."

Dowd's colleague rushed to Manhattan Supreme Court Tuesday for an emergency order preventing Nagy from "transferring, selling, or otherwise disposing of" the two paintings before a judge hears the case.

Justice Charles Ramos signed the restraining order and the parties are due in court on Dec. 1.

Reached by e-mail, Nagy claimed he's done nothing wrong.

"The works which are being claimed were sold by a member of the Grunbaum family in 1956," he said. "There have been two separate independent adjudication boards in Vienna stating there is no evidence of looting."

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