The Insatiable Pursuit of Art

THE JACQUES GOUDSTIKKER COLLECTION AND NAZI ART LOOTING

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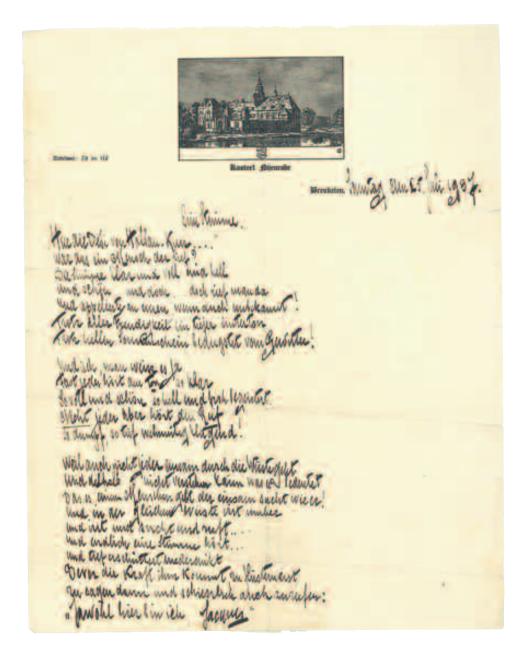


Fig. 1
"Eine Stimme," poem written to Dési von Halban
Kurz by Jacques Goudstikker, July 25, 1937.

Fig. 2 Dési and Eduard in the Netherlands. Photograph



I adore [Holland] more than anything and [it] has always been so good to me.

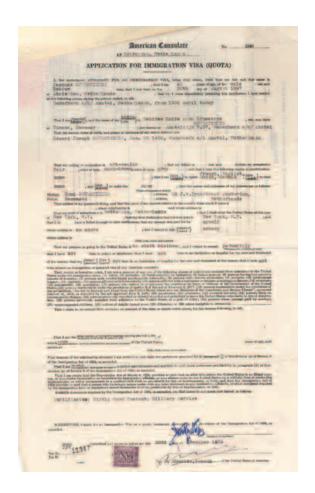
—Jacques Goudstikker

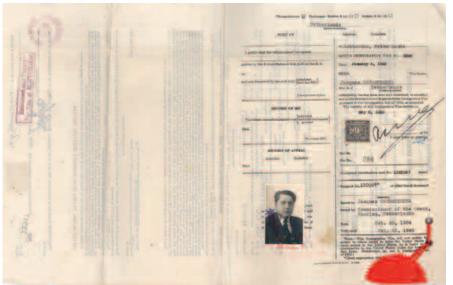
Jacques Goudstikker was, without question, an astute man. This is clearly borne out by the enormous success of the art and antiques business he inherited from his father, which he turned into one of the leading and most influential galleries in the Netherlands in his time (Sutton essay, fig. 33). But his wisdom can also, and most importantly, be seen in the foresight he displayed by taking steps to ensure his family's future should Holland fall to the Germans. In a love poem he wrote to his wife Dési on July 25, 1937 (fig. 1), he already expressed his concerns: "Despite all the joy, despite the sunshine, there is a note of anxiety, a fear of the imminent storm." Well aware of what the German occupation of Holland would mean for him and his business, Jacques arranged for a safe haven, procuring visas for the United States for himself, his wife, and his son on November 28, 1939 (fig. 2). In addition, he purchased tickets on the SS *Simon Bolivar*, shipped several works of

art to England, and transferred money to an American bank account.⁴ Nonetheless, the German occupation of Holland on May 10, 1940, took even this man, who imagined he had prepared for any contingency, by surprise. The visas in his hand (fig. 3) had expired on May 9,⁵ and the renewed documents were waiting for him at the consulate in Rotterdam; however, he was no longer able to collect them:⁶ "We were totally surrounded. It was impossible to get to Rotterdam, which was under heavy bombardment. All the avenues for leaving the country were closed off." In her memoirs, Dési describes the idyllic days before the occupation: "So much beauty, so much love around us and within us." But then she adds the chilling words: "We wanted to take our own lives in case the Germans occupied Holland. We wanted to live, but only as free citizens." Although many of their friends left the Netherlands, Jacques's heart belonged to the country; "I adore [Holland] more than anything and [it] has always been so good to me," he wrote.⁹

"Our last May days in Holland," 10 as Dési calls them, were a trying time for the family, who had always had a busy social life and lacked for nothing. In a letter he wrote to a friend on May 6, 1940, Jacques spoke of his forebodings for the future: "The question is whether the latest developments will be limited to Europe alone . . . or will encompass the whole world. . . . I have made arrangements, but I find the constant uncertainty very unsettling." They were soon confronted with the reality of the situation, when the air rang with the roar of planes and machine guns. "As for us," Dési wondered, "do we fully understand what is going to happen to us?" But Jacques, a man of action and vision, foresaw the coming events. He took leave of his mother and co-workers and quickly piled

Fig. 3 Jacques Goudstikker's immigration visa to the United States of America.





his family, along with a few colleagues from the art world, into their Lincoln Zephyr, and headed for the port of IJmuiden. Proceeding slowly, they made their way through the sea of refugees that filled the roads, until they were forced to abandon the luxury car in the high grass of the seaside dunes. With their son Eduard, only sixteen months old, in Dési's arms, they boarded the cargo ship SS *Bodegraven* (fig. 4) on May 13, 1940, a mere three days after the German army had entered Holland. They departed without the essential documents: valid visas and an official power of attorney naming an executor of the large estate left behind in Holland, which included personal property, their extravagant houses, and the business with the many important works of art adorning its walls and stored in its cellars. Only later

would it emerge that Jacques had with him a hidden treasure in the form of a small notebook, the pages of which carefully recorded the details of most of the approximately 1,400 artworks that remained behind in Holland (fig. 5). "In these times, justice has sunk forever into the void of oblivion. . . . Perhaps some cork will enable us to float, and as long as we can swim, we will get by," he wrote to a friend.

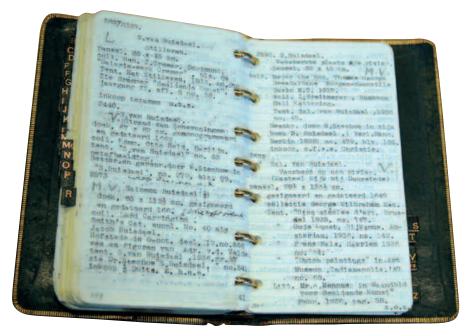


Fig. 4
The SS *Bodegraven*. Photograph

Fig. 5 Jacques Goudstikker's inventory notebook, the Blackbook. Photograph

Jacques's hasty departure left the business in turmoil. He had made all the necessary arrangements to entrust it to the loyal hands of his best friend, the attorney Dr. A. Sternheim, providing him with a document giving him full power of attorney to administer all his property. Unfortunately, however, on May 10, the day of the invasion, Sternheim suffered a heart attack, fell from his bicycle, and died. Jacques did not appoint a successor to Dr. Sternheim and, contrary to his usual practice, Jacques did not formalize any arrangements with anyone. This was not an oversight but rather a deliberate measure meant to ensure that he did not leave anyone with the authority to negotiate with the Germans in his name, a fact attested to after the war by August Eduard Dimitrios von Saher, Dési's second

husband, with whom Jacques had consulted for legal advice for the gallery before the war. In effect, the decision is an indication that Jacques, known for his competence, meticulousness, and controlling nature, did not entirely trust the loyalty of his senior employees. Nevertheless, following his departure, two of his employees, Jan Dik Sr., the conservator, and Arie Albertus ten Broek, who was to become the acting manager, took it upon themselves to manage the firm. According to von Saher, "Jacques left Holland and no one had power of attorney to act on his behalf." This precaution was taken "so as not to appoint anyone the enemy could get their claws into." 17

Jacques was on board the ship with the people closest to him, his beloved wife and son. Things seemed to be going relatively well as he and his family sailed away from occupied Holland. On the morning of May 15, having survived a nighttime raid by German bombers, the ship anchored in Dover, where "the sun shone . . . we were overwhelmed by happiness . . . we were free in England!"18 But their joy did not last long. None of the many Jewish refugees from all over Europe on the SS Bodegraven was allowed to set foot on British soil without the proper visa. "Such a disappointment," Jacques related, "but we must not lose courage." Helpless to change the situation, the small Goudstikker family crowded into the hold of the ship with the other refugees and prepared to spend the night there. Little Edo was crying inconsolably, and Dési was waiting for Jacques to return. He had gone up on deck to breathe a bit of fresh air. What happened on the night between May 15 and 16, the very day of Holland's capitulation to the Germans, was recorded in the ship's log (fig. 6):

On this sixteenth day of May, Nineteen Hundred and Forty, on board of the above mentioned steamship, presently being in the English Channel, appeared before me, Huibrecht Regoort, Master of the above mentioned craft, Piet Ruig, 1st Officer [and] Jan Daniel Filarski, Boatswain, who have declared that, Jacques Goudstikker, passenger, lately domiciled at Ouderkerk aan den Amstel, on the sixteenth day of May 1900 and Forty at one o'clock in the morning, passed away on the above mentioned vessel, at the age of 42 years, married to Désirée Louise Anna Ernestina Halban, son of Eduard Goudstikker and Emmy Sellisberger.

We have of this made this statement and we have signed this together with the appearers after reading aloud. (signed)

H. Regoort

P. Ruig

J. D. Filarski²⁰



Fig. 6
Extract from the day register of the SS *Bodegraven* ship's log, May 16, 1940, recording Jacques Goudstikker's death.

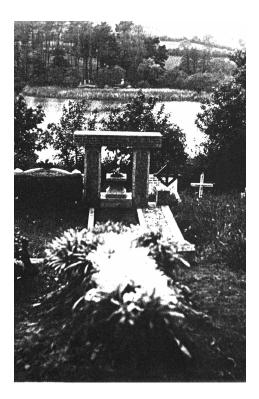
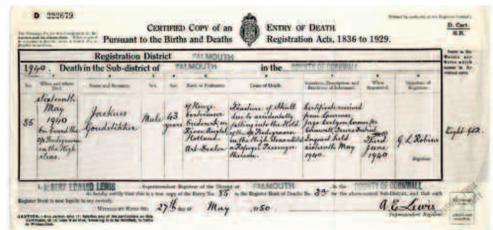




Fig. 7
Jacques Goudstikker's fresh grave, with flowers.
Photograph

Fig. 8 Proclamation of induction as a Knight in the Order of Oranje-Nassau.

Fig. 9 Certified copy of Entry of Death for Jacques Goudstikker in the Register Book of Deaths for the Sub-district of Falmouth.



As Désirée describes that night: "We found your husband. Where? How? Is he alright? . . . They took me to a cabin. He was lying there . . . with his sardonic smile on his face . . . Jacques was dead."21 The captain decided to make an unscheduled stop at the military port of Falmouth in southwest England. Désirée, whose Austrian passport branded her the citizen of a hostile nation, was not given permission to go ashore to be present at her husband's interment. She asked that the grave be covered with flowers (fig. 7), that he be buried with the cufflinks she had given him as a wedding present, and that they play his favorite song, Cole Porter's "Night and Day." On a hillside facing the sea, Jacques Goudstikker, the distinguished scion of a Dutch dynasty who had been knighted by the queen of Holland (fig. 8)²² and was esteemed as an eminent figure in the Dutch cultural world (Sutton essay, fig. 7), was laid to rest in a foreign land. The man forced to flee his homeland because he was a Jew, whose ancestors appear in the records of the Dutch Jewish community from the eighteenth century, and whose fate was sealed by the German occupation, like that of most of the Jews of Holland, of whom some 102,200 were murdered, was buried in the south of England, far from his loved ones and far from his roots (fig. 9).23 "I think of you / Day and night, night and day."24

If international Jewry inside and outside of Europe should succeed once again in plunging the nations into a world war, the result will not be the Bolshevization of the world and thus a Jewish victory, but rather the annihilation of the Jewish race in Europe. . . .

-Adolf Hitler, speech to the Reichstag, January 30, 1939

The fate of the Goudstikkers during the Holocaust, like that of all the Jews in Europe, was in the hands of the Nazi extermination machine that sought to wipe them off the face of the earth. To this end, they developed a coherent ideology and a civil and military hierarchy to put it into practice, including engineers to design and construct the most efficient apparatus for this national objective. Six million of Europe's Jews were murdered in the course of twelve years of mobocracy orchestrated by Adolf Hitler, whom the German citizens had elected as their Führer in 1933. Those same citizens filled the ranks of the executioners and cheered their leader's orations, dripping with hatred of the Jews.

The following history of the Goudstikker family draws on a variety of written sources and the oral testimony of survivors. Although the information is incomplete, it offers a picture of the fate of a single family that had been fully integrated into Dutch society for hundreds of years. Only a few members of this illustrious family survived the inferno of Nazism.

The first documented mention of the Goudstikker name in the Netherlands appears in a surviving record of the Amsterdam Jewish community from 1797, which notes the marriage of Lea Hartog Hirsch Goudstikker.²⁵ Six years later, the record of the marriage of her sister, Marianne Mindele Hartog Hirsch Goudstikker, provides us with the origin of the family name: their father, Hartog Hirsch Mozes Goudstikker, who accompanied the bride, is noted as having previously changed his name from Goldstikker,²⁶ the name to which he was born in Tielen (most likely in Germany), about 1750.²⁷ Marianne Mindele's husband, Samuel Samson Salomon, took the unusual step of adopting his wife's surname, and so the Goudstikker name was passed on through their children. The earliest known civil document containing mention of the name is a marriage registration from the town of 's Hertogenbosch in the Noordbrabant district dated 1840.²⁸ It lists Salomon Elias Sussan as the father of the groom, Elias Salomon Goudstikker, in what appears to be his second marriage.

Surviving family trees reveal an interesting fact: Samuel Samson Salomon was the older half brother of Elias Salomon, as both men had the same father, Salomon Elias Sussan. Thus Elias Salomon apparently followed in the footsteps of his older brother Samuel Samson and also took his wife's surname, thereby creating a second branch of the Goudstikker family. Elias Salomon Goudstikker was the great-grandfather of Jacques Goudstikker. Born in 1800, he died in 1878, some eleven years before Jacques was born.

Although the Dutch Goudstikkers celebrated the birth of many children in the generations to come, they remained a relatively small family, with only these two main branches. The first branch, the descendants of Elias Salomon Goudstikker, was split between Amsterdam and 's Hertogenbosch, whereas almost all the members of the second branch, descending from the older half brother Samuel Samson, resided in Bergen op Zoom. These three towns form what is

nearly an equilateral triangle, with Amsterdam in the north, 's Hertogenbosch in the southeast, and Bergen op Zoom in the southwest, each located at a distance of seventy to ninety kilometers from the others.

Goudstikker couples in the nineteenth century gave birth to five to ten children. However, from the limited sources available, it appears that a rather large proportion of the children in the next three generations either never married or did not perpetuate the family line. Furthermore, as is typical of the early twentieth century, the number of children per household shrank, and the Goudstikker line consisted of the two- or three-child family units emblematic of the modern era. Also typical of the time was the fact that many of the children born to later generations married outside the Jewish faith and assimilated into the general population.²⁹

Before World War II, the overall picture painted of the Goudstikkers by existing records is that of a well-to-do family. Where family members' occupations are listed in historical records, we find many merchants, manufacturers, and the like. They were not, for the most part, however, overly comfortable. Family members who lived during the prewar era remember considerable variation in the economic status of the expanding branches of the family.³⁰ Not only was there economic disparity between the members of the family, but there was significant social distance as well. In her memoirs, Dési relates a telling episode aboard the SS *Bodegraven*. There were other Goudstikkers on the ship, and when she asked Jacques if he wanted to talk to them, he replied: "I have managed to not speak to them for years, and I'm certainly not going to do so now." His death at the age of forty-two, less than two days later, left his widow destitute and alone.

The sky is full of birds, the purple lupins stand up so regally and peacefully, . . . the sun is shining on my face—and right before our eyes, mass murder. The whole thing is simply beyond comprehension.

—Etty Hillesum, Westerbork Transition Camp³²

Jacques's untimely death was a sad anticlimax to his life. This book and exhibition tell his story and are a tribute to his accomplishments and his status in Dutch society. At the same time, they throw light on the life of the Jews in the Netherlands and the tragedy that befell them with the German occupation. Indeed, the annals of the Goudstikker family encapsulate the story of the Jewish community of Holland as a whole, and the cruel fate it suffered: 73 percent of Dutch Jews lost their lives in the Holocaust.

At the outbreak of the war, twenty-seven people residing in the Netherlands and identifiably Jewish bore the name of Goudstikker, having been born into the family or married into it. Of these, sixteen are known to have died in the Holocaust. Jacques Goudstikker met his death while fleeing the Germans. His wife and infant son were the only members of the family to successfully make it to an Allied country, sailing from England to Canada where they stayed for some months with the Bronfman family before finally settling in the United States. The other Goudstikkers who survived the Holocaust consisted of Albert, who served in the merchant marine during the war, and a mere seven who survived in Continental Europe, all but one of whom, Jacques's mother, Emilie (fig. 10), were interned in

Fig. 10 Emilie Goudstikker née Sellisberger. Photograph



concentration camps. Many more family members bearing the names Duyzend, Boedekker, and others as a result of marriage perished as well.

Personal testimonies and existing documentation, sparse as they are, provide an indication of the fate of two Goudstikker families headed by the cousins Henri and Maurits Henri. Henri was born in 1891 in Bergen op Zoom to Salomon and Roosje Goudstikker. He was the fifth of ten children, one of whom died young and four of whom later married non-Jews. Henri married Helen Gompers, the daughter of a diamond merchant, who was born in New York in 1896. Perhaps because her family was in the United States only temporarily, Helen did not have American citizenship (or at least any proof thereof). The couple had four children, all boys: Salomon Henri, born in 1920; Hermann, born in 1924; Jacques, born in

1925; and Benjamin Henri, born in 1926. They moved to The Hague in 1930 and were living there at the time of the German occupation. Benjamin, Herman, and Jacques were picked up together in August 1942 and taken to the Westerbork transit camp. Their parents went into hiding but were ultimately betrayed by the owner of the house where they were staying, and they too were taken to Westerbork. The three brothers were all sent to Auschwitz: Benjamin in August 1942; Jacques on September 7, 1942; and Hermann on October 10, 1942.33 Each of them was sent to the gas chambers on the day of arrival. Their father,

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Henri, was transported to Auschwitz on November 30, 1942 (fig. 11),³⁴ arriving on December 3. He survived until January 11, 1943—precisely five weeks. Their mother, Helen, was sent to Auschwitz on January 21, 1943, and was never heard of again. The sole surviving member of this family was Salomon Henri, who fled to Switzerland in October 1941. He was married there and then managed to make his way across France to Spain, where he boarded a ship for England. He returned to Holland in 1953 and immigrated to Israel in 1963. Known today as Shlomo Gidron, he is still unable to share more than the barest of details about his harrowing escape from Europe.

Maurits Henri Goudstikker was born to Henri and Flora, née Hirschel, Goudstikker in Bergen op Zoom in 1893, the youngest of three children. He married Frederika Duyzend, and the couple had two children, Flory Ella, born in 1924, and Henri Jacob, born in 1927. The family remained in Bergen op Zoom, where Maurits Henri held a respected position as a bank branch manager. Foreseeing the German invasion and its consequences for Dutch Jewry, Maurits Henri arranged for American visas for the family, but events moved too quickly. The bombing of Rotterdam made it impossible for them to take possession of these valuable documents. The extended family managed to acquire false papers and lived under assumed identities until September 1942, when they were informed on and

Name GOUDSWIK	KER Henri	File 0.C.C.2/
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Next of Kin		
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		Date
CC/Pringex Auso	hwitz. Arb.Kdo	lib.
Transf. on	to	
Died on	in	
Cause of death		
Buried on	in	
Grave		D. C. No.
Remarks No excis given	act date of arriva	l or departure

taken to Westerbork. From there, Alida, Maurits Henri's older sister, was sent to Sobibor on May 28, 1943, where she was immediately murdered. The grandmother, Flora Hirschel, died in Buchenwald on August 1, 1943.35 Maurits Henri, Frederika, and their two children were piled onto the last transport from Westerbork to the Theresienstadt Ghetto on September 6, 1944.36 Just three weeks later, on October 1, Maurits Henri and his son, Henri Jacob, were transported to Auschwitz.³⁷ On their arrival, Maurits Henri was sent to the gas chambers. Henri Jacob was given prisoner number B-11178 and assigned to the Arbeitskommando Golleschau (fig. 12), a forced labor detail at the Auschwitz subcamp of that name.³⁸ On January 21, 1945, in advance of the approaching Soviet troops, he was herded onto a train with more than one hundred other prisoners. They rode for some eight days and nights without food or water in subzero temperatures. When the train arrived in Zwittau, near the Brunnlitz subcamp of Gross-Rosen, which was established

by Oskar Schindler, Schindler managed to have it rerouted to Brunnlitz.39 The survivors of this journey, including Henri Goudstikker, were ultimately saved by appearing on Oskar Schindler's famous list of supposedly vital workers (fig. 13).40 Henri Goudstikker died of tuberculosis shortly after liberation. On October 6, 1944, less than one week after her husband and son had been sent to Auschwitz, Frederika and her daughter Flory Ella followed them there on Transport Eo from Theresienstadt.41 Frederika was immediately sent to the gas chambers (fig. 14). Two weeks later, Flory was assigned to forced labor in eastern Germany and was eventually

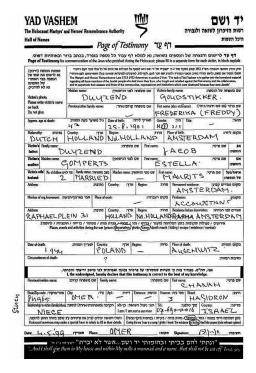




Fig. 12 Card indicating Henri Jacob Goudstikker's assignment to the *Arbeitskommando Golleschau* at Auschwitz, compiled by the International Tracing Service of the International Red Cross, Bad Arolsen, Germany.

Fig. 13 Page 13 of Schindler's List; Henryk [Henri] Goudstikker is listed as number 740.

Fig. 14
Page of testimony filled by a family member in memory of Frederika Goudstikker, née Duyzend, Yad Vashem Hall of Names.

liberated by the Soviet army. After the war, Flory returned to the Netherlands, where she married Philip Wagenaar, a Dutch Holocaust survivor, and soon thereafter they moved to the United States.

With the exception of Jacques Goudstikker's immediate family, no other member of this entire Goudstikker branch is mentioned in any available wartime records. Almost all the existing documentation from the period of World War II and the Holocaust refers to the branch descended from Samuel Samson Salomon Goudstikker, the elder half brother of Jacques Goudstikker's great-grandfather.

Unlike many of his relations, Jacques Goudstikker did not die a direct victim of the Holocaust. Nevertheless, the circumstances of his death are associated with the events of that time. He could never have imagined he would meet his end in the way he did, nor would he have wished their fate on his wife and only son. When the SS *Bodegraven* docked in Liverpool in May 1940, Dési and the baby were taken off and detained as aliens in an old-age home because of her Austrian passport. Despite her connections with influential individuals, including the American ambassador Joseph Kennedy, her visa was not renewed. The widow and her orphaned son made their way to Canada and, from there, finally found the haven they sought in the United States, arriving bereft of family and fortune.

Let me live modestly, but in peace. I had property. I don't need it any more.

—Jacques Goudstikker

On February 6, 2006, banner headlines around the world brought news of a dramatic decision taken by the government of the Netherlands: 202 artworks listed in the national registry of Dutch cultural assets that had been stolen by the Nazis from the collection of the Jewish art dealer Jacques Goudstikker would be returned to their rightful owner in the United States, Marei von Saher. Nearly sixty-six years had passed since May 16, 1940, the day Jacques Goudstikker fell to his death while fleeing the Nazis, until his daughter-in-law, Marei von Saher, could issue a public statement on February 11, 2006, declaring: "[We] fought long and hard to see justice done. . . . It wasn't about money, it was about right being honored. I only wish that my husband was still alive to celebrate this victory." 43

The family had waged a legal battle for eight years, demanding the return of more than two hundred works of art from the Goudstikker collection, which had been handed over to the Dutch authorities by the Allies in 1946 to be restored to their owners. Now that the fight was over, Marei stressed that the victory did not belong to the family alone, proclaiming: "The Dutch government's return of these pictures was an historic event for us and for all families whose possessions were stolen during the Holocaust era."

The gravity of the government's decision found expression in the words of the Dutch Deputy Minister of Culture at the time, Medy van der Laan, who described it as "a cultural bloodletting," an indication of the importance of the works of art that would now be taken down from the walls of Holland's leading museums. Thus began the complex and emotional process of collecting the artworks from the various museums. As one by one the paintings made their way to the assembly point at the Instituut Collectie Nederland (Institute of Cultural

Heritage) near The Hague, the Goudstikker collection gradually took shape and was ultimately revealed once again in all its glory. It is a collection rare not only in breadth but also in the quality of each work, a collection built with love and expertise by Jacques Goudstikker over the course of many years. What is indicated by the bold lettering of the J. Goudstikker Gallery's calling card, that the gallery that was founded in 1845 dealt in old master paintings from all periods, was unexpectedly brought back to life. The reassembling of the collection recrowned the long-dead Jacques as the classic art dealer he was, a man who framed the very definition of culture (fig. 15).

The family's struggle to regain possession of the paintings actually began in 1946, when Dési first returned to Holland after the war. She was appalled to discover that her estates and gallery had been completely emptied, leaving no trace of the art collection, the furniture, the family's treasures, or any of their personal possessions. It had all been looted. "Everything was gone," reported Marei von Saher. "But a person from the gallery came out with a big blanket under his arm and in it was a painting of two young girls by Berthe Morisot."47 Dési's efforts to recover the family property, including the artworks, were all in vain. Although a very small number of artworks were returned to her in 1952, she went to her death in 1996 with the sense that justice had not been done. "I was just angry," recalls her granddaughter Charlène. "I felt that my grandmother wasn't treated fairly after the war."48 In De Zaak-Goudstikker (The Goudstikker Case), published in 1998, Pieter den Hollander confirms that the numerous postwar commissions established to consider the claims of Holland's Jewish citizens for the return of plundered property were not sympathetic toward the applicants. 49 In response to such charges, the Dutch government resolved in 2004 to refer the matter to the Advisory Committee on the Assessment for Items of Cultural Value and the Second World War (Restitutions Committee), which had been set up in late 2001 and, at the time of the restitution, was chaired by Mr. B. J. Asscher, an attorney and former president of the District Court of Amsterdam. In December 2005 the committee recommended that 202 paintings "acquired" by Göring be restored to the heirs. The government's statement that the works of art would be returned to the family came less than two months later, with headlines in the press announcing that the saga had finally come to an end. "I was in Holland a few days ago and saw the paintings for the first time. Some hit my heart right away. It was overwhelming," related Marei von Saher.50

"When Goudstikker's body was recovered, a little black book was found in his breast pocket."⁵¹ The leather-bound notebook (fig. 5), measuring a mere 4 3/4 by 7 inches and filled with pages of dense typing, is the true protagonist of the drama of the Jacques Goudstikker collection, which was played out in so many acts. It contained an itemized inventory, organized in columns, that listed the title of the artwork, its dimensions, the date of its purchase, and the price paid, in code. Under the letter R appeared names with which every art lover is familiar: Raphael, Rembrandt, Rubens, and Jacob van Ruisdael; under D were Donatello and several mentions of Anthony van Dyck. These are only a few examples of the great names that filled the pages of the notebook. Listed alphabetically by the artist's surname were 1,113 of the artworks left behind in the gallery on the Herengracht in Amsterdam to await their owner's return.

Fig. 15 Jacques Goudstikker's business card.



Even after so many years have passed, the mere facts are chilling. Reichsmarschall Hermann Göring knocked on the door of the J. Goudstikker Antiques and Art Gallery at 458 Herengracht in Amsterdam just two weeks after the death of the proprietor. Walter Andreas Hofer, a Berlin art dealer appointed curator of Göring's country estate, Karinhall, had already traveled to Holland on May 20. A week later, Göring made the first of many visits to the Netherlands, where he had quite a few friends.

The same reputation that had brought museum directors and collectors to the gallery before the war now drew Göring the "art lover," and he was eager to see for himself the treasures of the Jew Goudstikker, hastening to the address before anyone else could beat him to it. He was intent on obtaining for his private collection at Karinhall the paintings that would be left after Hitler selected the ones he wanted for the museum in Linz. In a letter dated August 22, 1940, Hans Posse, the director of the Linz collection, confirmed the arrival of artworks in Berlin: "As per the instructions of the Führer, I have examined the seventy-five works displayed at the Führer's residence, some of which I was familiar with from Holland. . . . Most of them are the remainders of collections that come from art dealers in Holland (mostly from the collection of Goudstikker, Amsterdam)."52 Since Hitler's appetite for Dutch art was well known, there was little doubt that once Holland was occupied the artworks in that country would be looted on a massive scale. Indeed, in early June, less than one month after the occupation, Dr. Kejetan Muhlmann, a crony of Posse's, arrived in Berlin. Director of the Dienststelle Muhlmann, the authority responsible for the sale of the property of Dutch Jews who had fled abroad, he reported that large quantities of art could be acquired in occupied Holland.53

In the wake of his "visit," Göring indeed "acquired" the artworks in the Goudstikker Gallery collection in exchange for an astonishingly small sum,⁵⁴ a fraction of its true worth. In fact, the gallery was the source of the largest number of "acquisitions" made for his private museum. Approximately 1,400 items, mostly paintings,⁵⁵ were the subject of the "sale" arranged by Göring's agent, Walter Andreas Hofer. This was a typical example of a "forced sale," a tactic often employed by occupiers and perfected by the Nazis for the legal theft of artworks. An American investigation unit established after the Allied victory articulated in very clear language the methods used by the Germans to give the appearance of legality to their criminal acts of plunder: "Thus no art collection or single work was seized, requisitioned or robbed by them without their 'legalizing' these crimes by some sort of sales certificate or exchange paper duly signed by their victims through force." ⁵⁶

Jacques Goudstikker's "loyal" employees, Jan Dik Sr. and Arie Albertus ten Broek, "sold" the contents of the gallery to Göring and his confederate, the German-born banker Alois Miedl. Through trickery and connivance, Dik and ten Broek transferred everything to Miedl: not only the property but the name and reputation of the company as well;⁵⁷ the artworks went to Göring. Not only was the "sale" accomplished hastily in order to anticipate the sharp rise in the Dutch art market that followed the occupation,⁵⁸ but those who stood to benefit from the looting spread the false rumor that the gallery was experiencing financial difficulties⁵⁹ and was on the brink of bankruptcy, thereby causing a drop in the

value of its assets. The monetary transfers involved were conducted by Lipmann, Rosenthal Co., the "official" bank operating under the auspices of the Dienststelle Muhlmann, which sold numerous collections in addition to that of the Goudstikker Gallery. ⁶⁰ The transfers were a contrivance that were supposed to show that the "sales" were all legal.

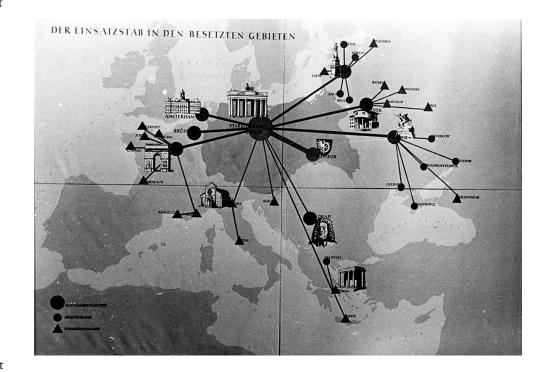
Fig. 16 Der Einsatzstab in den besetzen Gebieten. Photograph

The Führer is very pleased with the latest art acquisitions.

-Martin Bormann

On the whole, the preceding account of the theft of Jacques Goudstikker's artworks typifies the policy and methods employed by the Nazis to plunder the art of occupied Holland. Reichsmarschall Hermann Göring himself urged the establishment of the Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg (ERR), whose job it was to seize art collections on behalf of the Führer. "I welcome the initiative of Reichsleiter Rosenberg to organize teams in all the occupied territories in order to preserve all the research materials and cultural assets of the groups mentioned above [Jews and Freemasons] and transfer them to Germany," Göring wrote in a document dated

May 1, 1941.61 The ERR was the most proficient of all the arms of the Third Reich involved in the confiscation and looting of property and was directly responsible for the plunder of over twenty-one thousand works of art from more than two hundred art collections belonging to Jewish collectors (fig. 16).62 Nevertheless, Alfred Rosenberg's unit did not show the same determination in Holland as it did in Eastern Europe and France, primarily because of the spirited activities of other groups competing for the same artworks, particularly the Dienststelle Muhlmann, which operated under the full protection of Reichskomissar Arthur Seyss-Inquart.63 As early as July 4, 1940, just



two months after the occupation, Seyss-Inquart issued order VO33, authorizing Germans to seize whatever property they desired.⁶⁴ After Göring and Rosenberg had preceded him in France, Hans Posse, working directly for Hitler, was more than happy to cooperate with Muhlmann, who reigned supreme in Holland. With the support of Hitler's private secretary, Reichsleiter Martin Bormann, Posse was given free rein. "The Führer is very pleased with the latest art acquisitions. He hopes that you will soon be able to procure further valuable works in Holland. The operating funds for that purpose will be transferred to you immediately." ⁶⁵

"In Brussels and Amsterdam we are also on the trail of valuable articles. I believe we will be able to bring quite a few items to Germany," Rosenberg

reported to party treasurer Schwarz in September 1940. However, since Rosenberg's unit was not the dominant player in the Dutch arena, the art treasures of the Netherlands found their way straight into the collections of the primary players behind the Nazi plunder of art: Göring and Hitler. The two men were driven by fundamentally different motives. Hitler regarded it as the role of the museum in Linz, Austria, to represent the greatness of the German Reich in the town of his birth. He saw it as part of what was for him a national objective: to demonstrate the wealth and culture of the Third Reich to the whole world and to add his name to the list of art patrons from the country's glorious history, the past rulers of the German states. It is not surprising that he chose Hans Posse for this task. Posse had been the director of the Gemäldegalerie in Dresden, which held a collection of European masterpieces that had been brought to Saxony by Elector Augustus the Strong, a noted patron of the arts. Posse expressed his gratitude for the appointment in a letter to Bormann dated June 29, 1939: "I confirm receipt of your letter in which I was informed of the weighty responsibility conferred on me by the Führer, to establish a museum of art in the city of Linz, and permit myself to express my deepest gratitude."67 Alfred Rosenberg testified to the nationalistic, ideological nature of the Nazi plunder of art at the Nuremberg trials. When asked to explain how the actions of his unit during the war were any different from looting, he replied that seizing works of art was the policy of the Reich. It would have been theft, he argued, had he taken the items privately. As he perceived it, his unit was charged with the custody of enemy property.68 The national character of Hitler's collection is also evidenced by a provision of his last will and testament, which states: "The paintings in the collections I have purchased over the years were never collected for private purposes, but only for the gallery in the city of my birth, Linz."69

If Hitler collected art for nationalistic reasons, Göring did so for his personal pleasure, his repeated insistence that he would ultimately donate the works to the German people notwithstanding.⁷⁰ Göring's objective, to establish an art museum in Karinhall, is linked to the story of his love for his Swedish wife, Karin Gräfin von Fock, for whom the estate was named. He dedicated his art collection to her as a tribute for her following him to Germany, at a time when he had nothing to offer her. Karin died of an illness in Sweden in 1931, but when the Nazis rose to power in 1933, Göring brought her body to Karinhall, which was to be her mausoleum.⁷¹ As previously described, he chose as his curator Walter Andreas Hofer, a Berlin art dealer who had extensive connections with colleagues in the Netherlands. Through these same contacts, Göring would later hear of the Goudstikker Gallery and the Dutch artworks that would soon find their way to his private museum. The hundreds of paintings from the gallery formed a major part of the Karinhall collection. During the twelve years of Nazi rule, Göring succeeded in amassing one of the largest private art collections of the twentieth century. According to Consolidated Interrogation Report no. 2 of the American army's Office of Strategic Services Art Looting Investigation Unit, in 1945 1,300 works of art were in his possession, half of which had been plundered from "enemies of the Reich."72

Two astounding photographs offer visual evidence of the lust for collecting shared by Hitler and Göring. In the first, taken on January 12, 1938, Hitler is seen



presenting Göring with a gift for his birthday, a painting by the minor nineteenth-century Austrian artist Hans Makart. It is a sentimental portrait of a female falconer, a work whose theme and style reflect the petit bourgeois taste of the two men (fig. 17). The ceremonial presentation takes place in a formal hall in the presence of officers and soldiers. In the second photograph, Heinrich Himmler is seen congratulating Hitler on his birthday on April 20, 1939, and presenting him with a painting by the nineteenth-century German artist beloved of the Kaisers, the Prussian Adolph von Menzel. Entitled Frederick the Great on a Ride, the painting not surprisingly lionizes the Prussian rulers; Himmler's giving it to Hitler was meant to demonstrate that Hitler's election as leader of the German people continued that dynasty (fig. 18). This, too, is an official occasion attended by high-ranking officers in resplendent uniform. An unsigned official letter to Göring sent from Charlottenburg on January 11, 1943, in honor of his fiftieth birthday, notes: "On this occasion I would like to present you, a patron of the arts, with a Dutch picture as a gift for your museum. It was painted by the artist Jacob Adriase Bellevois from the seventeenth century and is a seascape."73 The custom of bestowing paintings as gifts, as shown in such photographs and letters, is further evidence of the fact that Hitler and Göring were known to be avid art collectors. Moreover, these sources confirm that the gifts were given openly and officially in the Reich, rather than solely as a private gesture.

In describing the plunder of art by the Third Reich, it has been said that "Never in history has a collection so great been amassed with so little scruple."⁷⁴ As can be adduced from the evidence presented, this was an act defined by the Nazi leaders as a national objective. Nevertheless, the extensive looting was also driven by the desire of Hitler and his senior officers to satisfy their craving to possess the treasures found in occupied territories. Confidential reports of the Foreign Economic Administration from May 5, 1945, included in the final report of the Art Looting Investigation Unit of the American War Office dated May 1, 1946, provide



Fig. 17 Adolf Hitler presenting Hermann Göring with *The Falconer* (1880), a painting by the 19th-century Austrian academic painter Hans Makart. Photograph

Fig. 18 Heinrich Himmler presenting Hitler with the painting *Frederick the Great on a Ride* by Adolph von Menzel as a birthday gift, April 1939. Photograph

an indication of the scale of the plunder: "Most experts agree that it is difficult to estimate the value of the art treasures looted by the Nazis. . . . Francis H. Taylor, Director of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, reported that the Nazis had stolen European art treasures valued at \$2,000,000,000 to \$2,500,000,000, more than the total value of all the works of art in the United States" (fig. 19).





He shall scatter among them the prey, and spoil, and riches.
—Dan. 11:24

The massive looting described here continues to resound in the frequent headlines of the world press, which report on the efforts of Jewish Holocaust victims' heirs to regain possession of the property stolen from their families. It was the express intent of Nazi ideology that the Jews, bereft of all protection, have their lives and their possessions taken from them during the Holocaust.

The official emblem of the State of Israel, adopted on the eleventh of Shevat [February 10,] 1949, bears the image of the menorah, the seven-branched candelabrum from the Temple in Jerusalem: "I have looked, and behold a candlestick all of gold . . . with his seven lamps thereon . . . and two olive trees by it" (Zach. 4:2–3). The emblem was designed by the Shamir brothers, who based their depiction of the menorah on the relief on the Arch of Titus in Rome. After the destruction of the Second Temple in the year 70 C.E., Titus, commander of the Roman legions, brought the menorah back to Rome along with other spoils, displaying them in a triumphal parade that is immortalized in the relief (fig. 20). How ironic that were it not for this act of plunder, we would likely have no way of knowing what the ancient menorah looked like.

The history of the Goudstikker family and the art collection of Jacques Goudstikker thus constitutes another chapter in a long saga of looting that is recorded as early as biblical times, was commemorated in the Roman era, and reached its height with the Nazi persecution of the Jews during the Holocaust. The book of Daniel prophesies the unusual act of the king of the north, who will undertake the responsibility never manifested hitherto—to return the spoils of war—bestowing us with the following legacy: "He shall scatter among them the prey, and spoil, and riches."

Fig. 19 Items looted from Holland being loaded onto a barge for their return, July 6, 1946. Photograph

Fig. 20
The sack of Jerusalem as depicted on the Arch of Titus.

- 1. "Eine Stimme," poem written to Dési von Halban Kurz by Jacques Goudstikker, July 25, 1937.
- 2. Application for immigration visa no. 2346, American Consulate, Rotterdam, Netherlands, November 28, 1939.
- 3. P. Den Hollander, Roofkunst: De Zaak-Goudstikker (Amsterdam, 2007), p. 64.
- 4. Ibid., pp. 166-67.
- 5. Immigration visa no. 2249, issued at the American Consulate, Rotterdam, The Netherlands, January 9, 1940
- 6. Den Hollander 2007, p. 67.
- 7. Desirée von Saher, memoir in manuscript (MS), 1970s, "May 1940," p. 4.
- 8. Ibid., p. 1.
- 9. Jacques Goudstikker to unnamed friends, December 15, 1939.
- 10. Von Saher MS, p. 3.
- 11. Jacques Goudstikker to an unnamed friend, May 6, 1940.
- 12. Von Saher MS, p. 3.
- 13. Ibid., pp. 4-5
- 14. Jacques Goudstikker to an unnamed friend, May 6, 1940.
- 15. Von Saher MS, p. 4; and Den Hollander 2007, p. 68.
- 16. Von Saher MS, p. 4.
- 17. Den Hollander 2007, p. 68.
- 18. Ibid., p. 7.
- 19. Ibid.
- 20. Extract from the day register of the SS *Bodegraven* ship's log, May 16, 1940, recording Jacques Goudstikker's death.
- 21. Von Saher MS, p. 8.
- 22. Proclamation by Queen Wilhelmina of Jacques Goudstikker's induction as a knight in the Order of Oranje-Nassau, August 24, 1931. This was accompanied by a letter from the Dutch Ministry of Education, Arts and Sciences, August 29, 1931, addressed to Mr. J. Goudstikker, Director of the Organization of Art Dealers in Amsterdam: "It has pleased her Majesty the Queen to command you as Knight in the Order of Oranje-Nassau on August 24, 1931, No. 20. An excerpt of the decree will be sent to you by the Ministry of Education, Arts and Sciences."
- 23. Register Book of Deaths for the Sub-District of Falmouth, 1940, entry no. 85.
- 24. Cole Porter, "Night and Day."
- 25. Akevoth—Dutch Jewish Genealogical Data Base (http://www.dutchjewry.org).
- 26. The name Goldstikker was given to craftsmen who worked in gold filigree. In the Jewish community, this typically involved not only jewelry but also the making of ritual objects, such as adornments for Torah covers.
- 27. Akevoth—Dutch Jewish Genealogical Data Base (http://www.dutchjewry.org).
- 28. Brabants Historisch Informatie Centrum, Civil register—Marriage, 50.083/3943/77.
- 29. Telephone conversation with Shlomo Gidron (Salomon Goudstikker), November 13, 2007.
- 30. Personal communication with Chana Koppel, née Duyzend, Shlomo Gidron (Salomon Goudstikker), and Flory Wagenaar, née Goudstikker, November 13–15, 2007.
- 31. Von Saher MS, p. 6.
- 32. E. Hillesum, *Letters from Westerbork*, trans. Arnold J. Pomerans (New York, 1986), p. 146.
- 33. In Memoriam: Nederlandse Oorlogsslachtoffers.
- 34. International Tracing Service (ITS), Master Index.
- 35. Personal communication with Flory Wagenaar, née Goudstikker, November 15, 2007.
- 36. List of Deportees from Holland to Theresienstadt, September 9, 1944, Yad Vashem Archives, O.64/274.
- 37. List of Deportees from Theresienstadt to

- Auschwitz, October 1, 1944, Yad Vashem Archives, O.64/324.
- 38. International Tracing Service (ITS), Master Index.
- 39. Testimony of Mr. Reichgut, Yad Vashem Archives, O.3/9718.
- 40. List of Deportees to Brunnlitz (Schindler's List), Yad Vashem Archives, P.41/44, p. 13, prisoner no. 740.
- 41. List of Deportees from Theresienstadt to Auschwitz, October 6, 1944, Yad Vashem Archives, O.64/326.
- 42. L. H. Nicholas, "A Long Odyssey: The Goudstikker Collection," in *Important Old Master Paintings from the Collection of Jacques Goudstikker*, New York (Christie's), April 19, 2007, p. 10.
- 43. Stephen Castle, "Nazi Loot Back in Right Hands," *New Zealand Herald*, February 11, 2006. 44. "Christie's to Offer Old Master Paintings from Famed Goudstikker Collection," press release, Christie's, February 22, 2007.
- 45. Nicholas Glass, "Collection of Grievances," FT Magazine, November 26, 2006, pp. 42–45.
- 46. Ibid., p. 42.
- 47. Carol Vogel, "Recovered Artworks Heading to Auction," *New York Times*, February 22, 2007.
- 48. Glass, "Collection of Grievances," p. 44.
- 49. Pieter den Hollander, De Zaak-Goudstikker (Amsterdam, 1998).
- 50. Vogel, "Recovered Artworks Heading to Auction."
- 51. Glass, "Collection of Grievances," p. 42.
- 52. Letter from Hans Posse to Martin Bormann, August 22, 1940, in Günther Haase, *Die Kunstsammlung Adolf Hitler: Eine Dokumentation* (Berlin, 2002), p. 37.
- 53. David Roxan and Ken Wanstall, *The Jackdaw* of *Linz* (London, 1964), p. 69.
- 54. Recommendation Regarding the Application by Amsterdamse Negotiatie Compagnie NV in Liquidation for the Restitution of 267 Works of Art from the Dutch National Art Collection (Case number RC 1.15), Advisory Committee on the Assessment for Items of Cultural Value and the Second World War (Restitutions Committee), December 19, 2005.
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- 57. Aalders, Nazi Looting, p. 76.
- 58. Charles de Jaeger, *The Linz File: Hitler's Plunder of Europe's Art* (Exeter, 1981), p. 69.
- 59. Ibid
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- 63. Roxan and Wanstall, *The Jackdaw of Linz*, p. 68.
- 64. Aalders, Nazi Looting, p. 23.
- 65. Bormann to Posse, July 25, 1940, National Archives, in Haase, *Die Kunstsammlung Adolf Hitler*, p. 36.
- 66. Alfred Rosenberg to the Reich Treasurer of the NSDAP, F. X. Schwarz, September 18, 1940, Yad Vashem Archives, Nuremberg Military

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- 68. Aalders, Nazi Looting, p. 49.
- 69. Private will and testament of Adolf Hitler, dictated to Martin Bormann, April 29, 1945, Yad Vashem Archives, Nuremberg Military Tribunals, Tr.2/PS-3569.
- 70. Haase, Die Kunstsammlung des Reichsmarschalls Hermann Göring, p. 12.
- 71. Ibid., p. 10.
- 72. Rothfeld, "Nazi Looted Art," p. 135.
- 73. Unsigned letter to Göring, January 11, 1943, Yad Vashem Archives, Nuremberg Military Tribunals, TR.2/PS-1118.
- 74. Aalders, Nazi Looting, p. 2.