



Attorney to speak on retrieving art stolen from Holocaust victims

By: [Adina Genn](#) February 23, 2017

A New York attorney will be speaking in Westhampton Friday to discuss art looting during World War II, and how sales of stolen works funded the Nazis.

The speaker, Raymond Dowd, a partner at Dunnington, Bartholow & Miller, will discuss “laws that were passed in the wake of the looting to return stolen art to its rightful owners, and the extent to which those laws have been successful,” according to a press release.

“Over 70 years after World War II, we are still fighting for the return of artworks stolen from Holocaust victims,” Dowd told LIBN. “Many U.S. soldiers died to right the wrongs of Nazism. I’m committed to continuing this fight in their memory and to finish the battle that the Allied victory was supposed to have guaranteed.”

Dowd represents Timothy Reif, an heir to the estate of Fritz Grünbaum – an Austrian-Jewish songwriter, director, actor, and master of ceremonies – whose extensive art collection was confiscated by the Nazis.

Grünbaum performed musicals and plays for his fellow prisoners in the Dachau concentration camp, where he was murdered in 1941.

His art collection comprised 450 pieces, 80 of which were by Egon Schiele, an Austrian painter of the early 20th century and a protégé of Gustav Klimt.

The event comes at a time when the nation has seen an increase in anti-Semitism and hate crimes, including the desecration of 170 Jewish graves in Missouri, and bomb threats at Jewish Community Centers across the country.

Recently, Dowd filed a motion to dismiss the pending appeals in the ongoing case to retrieve stolen art based on the HEAR (Holocaust Expropriated Art Recovery) Act, which Congress passed in December. The HEAR Act overrides state laws that guarantees that the national statute of limitations to retrieve stolen art is six years, beginning when the heirs first obtain the location of the artwork and make a legal claim to ownership, rather than when the artwork was initially lost or stolen.

“The HEAR Act is a wakeup call that will help Timothy Reif and Grünbaum’s heirs finally find the truth and reclaim part of their family legacy,” Dowd said.

According to Dowd, this will be the first time the HEAR Act is used in a court of law.

The discussion will be followed by a screening of “The Woman In Gold,” a 2015 film directed by Simon Curtis and written by Alexi Kaye Campbell.