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*The Lost Museum*

Engaging with the past and reimagining the future of the Bode Museum  
70 years after World War II



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## **Abstract**

This thesis aims to discover the extent to which the exhibition *The Lost Museum: The Berlin Paintings and Sculpture Collection 70 years after WWII* at the Bode Museum be described as an agent of political catharsis and historical abreaction both in Germany and in German-Russian relations. Berlin and Germany's cultural memory is complex, with the preservation of this cultural memory being of importance to city planners, curators and the public by and large. This exhibition represents a way in which this difficult memory can be addressed and used as a means of looking forward. In a sense, the museum undertakes an "abreaction" of painful cultural memory. The use of replicas and the dedication to research in museums, in both Russia and Germany bring about solutions to painful loss and disputed property and "reactivates" the memory of artworks lost at the end of World War II through destruction and theft.

Keywords: cultural memory, restitution, Berlin, Russia

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## Introduction

In mid-2014, the curator of the sculpture collection at the Bode Museum, Julien Chapuis along with his newly appointed colleague Neville Rowley visited the *Gipsformerei* in Charlottenburg, Berlin to view some casts of lost artworks, previously only having seen them as photographs. The experience was striking for the men and Rowley, recognising the upcoming 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the end of the Second World War, saw an opportunity to exhibit these artworks and to bring them back into the public and art-historical conscious. This set in motion the organisation of *Das Verschwundene Museum* or *The Lost Museum*, curated in just ten short months by Chapuis and with assistance from Rowley.

The Bode Museum in Berlin suffered great losses in the final days of World War II, when artworks from the collection, moved to the Friedrichshain Flak Tower for safe-keeping, were greatly damaged or completely destroyed following two fires there. The surviving artworks were for the most part taken to Russia by the Soviet Trophy Brigades as 'restitution-in-kind'. While many were returned to the museum in the 1950s, a number of these works, which according to the contemporary rhetoric had been taken to Russia for restoration and for safe-keeping, remain in the collections of the Pushkin and State Hermitage museums. The actions of the Trophy Brigades, along with the devastation as a result of the fires have resulted in a huge number of losses for many Berlin and German museums. The exhibition at the Bode Museum examines the museum's losses and opens up a discussion which has previously been, and arguably remains, a sensitive issue. It would be incorrect to state that the exhibition is extremely controversial or provocative in any way, but it is, very arguably, a sensitive topic and one which has been acknowledged as so by both professionals and by popular newspapers.<sup>1</sup>

The content of the four chapters of this thesis will examine how successful this exhibition was in explicitly addressing the museum's past and in opening up dialogue regarding a number of issues that currently affect the museum. Firstly, the theory of nostalgia will be utilised to examine the intentions of the exhibition in looking to the past and reviving Wilhelm von Bode's curatorial style. With *The Lost Museum*, Chapuis takes from this past to look to the future and it also hints at the plans to reunite the sculpture and paintings collection in Berlin to the style that Wilhelm von Bode himself employed and favoured. Whether or not it is useful to return to 19th-century ideas or to the original intent for the collection will be explored. In the city of Berlin, there is also a strong focus on the past and history can be said to be embraced in an effort to negotiate a difficult identity or identities that have emerged following reunification. Again the theory of nostalgia will be employed here with the aim to evaluate developments such as the rebuilding of the Berlin Schloss and to understand what this means for Germany and what it

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<sup>1</sup> See Schulz, 2015 for an example of German reaction in newspapers.

contributes to Berlin's cultural memory. The third issue which will be addressed is the Bode Museum's position within the restitution politics of Germany and Russia and the exchange between museum professionals in each country. The research which has been shared by academics and museum professionals in both Germany and Russia as a result of the exhibition will be discussed. This interaction will be discussed in relation to theories of good museum stewardship. The final issue which will be addressed concerns the level of research that has been carried out by the Bode Museum and the rejuvenation of provenance and art historical research there that has previously been claimed to have been neglected in German museums. This is also an example of the Bode looking back to its past and confronting it in a way that, according to some critics, other museums have not.

In the first chapter, I will examine how this exhibition takes a frank retrospective of the museum's past and uses this as a means to looking forward to the museum's desired future. The exhibition, while directly addressing the losses it incurred following World War II, also pays close attention to how the museum was and was intended to be by its founder Wilhelm von Bode. Photographs showing how the collection was curated and arranged in the galleries accompany the damaged and restored works as well as the replicas from the *Gipsformerei*, themselves either loosely or exactly arranged the way that Bode would have done so himself. The exhibition echoes the desire of some for the Bode museum to revert to the way it was at the time of the Prussian empire and to Bode's curatorial style. That is, to bring back many of the paintings which are now located in the Gemaldegalerie and elsewhere and to again unite the collection in Bode's style. Chapuis in an article in the book, *Museum Island Berlin*, argues for this reunification.<sup>2</sup> While the preservation of one important figure's curatorial style is important, the question must be asked: what purpose will this serve? Many of the questions posed regarding the restoration of the artworks in the exhibition are equally relevant here. To what point in history do we restore the museum to? What is lost in the process? And finally, in going back to a particular point in time, is the remaining history in between being duly represented? In order to delve deeper into these questions, a theoretical framework which interacts with the idea of nostalgia and Cultural Memory will be employed, particularly Assman's theory of "Canon" and "Archive" and how this exhibition allows materials and history to re-enter "Active" memory.<sup>3</sup>

Chapter two will build on these questions and explore what has happened further in Berlin and on the *Museumsinsel*. How do the actions of the Bode Museum reflect the decisions made elsewhere? This is particularly relevant when we consider the current rebuilding of the Prussian Palace at Schlossplatz, intended to be renamed the Humboldt Forum and to address Germany's colonial history. Berlin is a city that is honest about its past. Memorials to the victims

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<sup>2</sup> Chapuis, Eissenhauer, 2013

<sup>3</sup> Assmann, A. in Erll, Nünning, 2008

of the Holocaust are placed directly in the centre of the city, a few minutes walk from the Reichstag, *stolpersteine* are dotted throughout the city to commemorate the homes of individual victims of the war. At Bebelplatz, a towering stack of enormous books remind passersby of the Nazi book-burning that happened there in 1933. At the Neuesmuseum, the preserved bullet holes which mark the facade serve to remind us of the heavy battle that was waged on Museumsinsel. By re-erecting a Prussian Imperial palace, one which will address Imperial German atrocities, what message does the city send to its citizens and to its visitors? How has *The Lost Museum* and the Bode Museum addressed these issues differently? And if so, has it been more successful? As with chapter one, the theoretical framework of Cultural Memory will also be employed here along with the ethics of remembrance in cities. Didem Ekici's discussion of the Humboldtforum offers a rounded view of the symbolic reunification represented by the rebuilding of the structure while Gavriel Rosenfeld's enthusiastic arguing for why all remnants of the past must be preserved will be questioned.

In the following chapter, the relationship between the Bode Museum and Russian museums will be investigated as an example of good stewardship on the part of the professionals working in these museums, especially considering the history of Restitution Politics between Germany and Russia. Part of *The Lost Museum* was made possible due to the successful dialogue which has been established between Russian and German museums, in Russia these are notably The State Hermitage Museum in St. Petersburg and the Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts in Moscow. Works which were previously thought to have been completely lost in the fires and which have been replicated from moulds in the *Gipsformerei* have been identified as still being in the State Hermitage's collections. For example the marble relief *The Flagellation of Christ*, attributed to Donatello and which was replicated for *The Lost Museum* was believed to have been lost. Thanks to the curator of the Sculptures Collection in the Pushkin Museum, Vasily Rastorguev, its existence was confirmed in the collection of the Pushkin Museum. Images of the sculpture were shown during a conference entitled *Donatello and The Lost Museum* at the Bode Museum on September 17th, 2015. This generosity of information and willingness of both sides to contribute to art historical knowledge, particularly in light of the actions of the Russian government in delaying the return of cultural property to Germany, is truly noteworthy and a testament to the museum staff involved.<sup>4</sup> With regard to this openness of communication, this chapter will investigate whether the exhibition, along with those organisations such as the German-Russian Museum Dialogue may be identified as agents of political catharsis and of being exemplary of the museum's role to act as stewards of the collection. The exhibition and the surrounding dialogue appears to have bolstered the exchange between professionals on both sides and to have marked the solidification of a new era for

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<sup>4</sup> See Akinsha, Kozlov, 2007, Akinsha 2010 and Eichwede, 2010

cultural relations between Germany and Russia. It has also contributed greatly to the field of Art History in enriching the knowledge available to students and researchers.

The final chapter will segue from the previous chapters focus on how inter-museum research can assist in political catharsis and the fulfilment to the museum's duty to Stewardship to focus more fully on issues of research in German museums. Museum research, though ethically a primary function of any museum, is generally accepted as being universally underfunded. German museums have especially come under fire in the past for their supposed lack of sufficient provenance research in their collections and have been accused of attempting to take advantage of the statute of limitations in this regard.<sup>5</sup> *The Lost Museum* is an exhibition which is firmly grounded in research. The urgency with which the exhibition was arranged and the level of research which the curators have conducted and very openly made accessible and available is at odds with this view. Research was conducted into the provenance of works in both Russian and German collections as well as into the historical timeline of the Friedrichshain Flak Tower fires. Those involved have also arranged for the publication of elements of the research in a catalogue following the huge amount of interest in the exhibition, as well as having organised an enlightening conference which was open to the public. These actions exemplify the dedication to research that this museum possesses. In this chapter, I will aim to discover what this exhibition has discovered through the research that was conducted as a part of the exhibition and to again identify whether this exhibition plays a part in marking a new era for the Bode Museum and German museums in this regard, in conducting research in a better and more committed way.

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<sup>5</sup> See Brandlin, 2014



## Chapter One - Looking back, moving forward

The exhibition *The Lost Museum* takes a frank retrospective of the history of the Bode Museum and addresses the losses that were experienced by the museum in a direct way while using these losses as a tool to look forward to the museum's future. While addressing this past and bringing back to light those artworks which were lost or damaged, Julien Chapuis has also brought the intended use of the Bode Museum's building and the curatorial style of its founder, Wilhelm von Bode to the visitor's consciousness. While Chapuis is, with this exhibition and with supporting literature, effectually proposing a return to these original intentions for the Museum's building and style of curating, it may be argued that this retrospective is not a case of nostalgia to be avoided but rather is a positive contribution to the cultural memory of Berlin and to the Museum's memory and history. In terms of Cultural Memory, and particularly regarding Aleida Assmann's theory of Canon and Archive, *The Lost Museum* has made active the memory of the museum. Assmann identifies four main subcategories under the two categories of "Remembering" and "Forgetting" which relate to Cultural Memory. "Forgetting" may be active by the destruction of material memory or by censoring or making taboo other points of memory, it may be passive by way of neglect, loss or disregard. "Remembering" is active through actively selecting and collecting or canonising material memories or otherwise, while it is passive when it is accumulated or archived.<sup>6</sup> In museums, the actions of canonisation and archiving are constantly at play and this contributes to Cultural Memory both inside and outside of the museum. In exhibiting and speaking about Bode's curatorial style, Chapuis is making active the memory of the museum before World War II and helps to move beyond this point in history.<sup>7</sup> In addressing the losses incurred as a result of World War II, the lost art works and those which have been passively remembered in the museum's storage and the *Gipsformerei* also re-enter active Cultural Memory. Addressing these losses and acknowledging those aspects of the Museum's memory and history which have for so long been passive is a telling act of accepting what has been lost, and deciding to move on. It is also evident that in returning to the exhibition of both sculpture and paintings at the Bode Museum, the intermittent history, that of World War II, is in no danger of being forgotten.

In addressing losses and offering a more cohesive historical narrative, the Museum may experience an "abreaction", that is an alleviation and unburdening of the painful trauma it has experienced by way of directly addressing and working through its difficult past. In doing so, Chapuis addresses the various points of this difficult issue of history and uses it as a means to

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<sup>6</sup> Assman in Erll, Nünning, 2008, 99

<sup>7</sup> See Hennes, 2012 where the author also talks about the construction of memory in museums. Hennes describes exhibits at the Ncome Museum and the Voortrekker Museum in South Africa, where the presentation and Construction and canonisation of Zulu history is strongly opposed and problematic.

looking forward to the museum's future. The problems and ethics of restoration and the decisions which are made by the *Gipsformerei* (the State Museums of Berlin's replica workshop) and the curators of the museum are also useful to examine when we consider how difficult memories and the burden of history is carried by artworks damaged at a painful point in a nation's memory. The conclusions which are reached for the artworks are a parallel of the choices which are to be made for the future of the museum. With regard to each of these issues these methods of retrospective will be examined and finally I will examine how Chapuis has deigned to look forward.

### **Reimagining Wilhelm von Bode's vision**

The Bode Museum's role as home to a sculpture collection was not this museum's primary mission until the early years of the National Socialist regime in Germany. The Bode Museum, originally named the Kaiser-Friedrich-Museum, was designed and built between 1897 and 1904. The museum was the embodiment of Bode's experimental museum display which he developed during his experience of helping to build and install private collections. According to Gaehtgens, "the collectors' rooms were arranged according to three basic principles: that the work of art should be integrated into the sphere of real life, that paintings, sculptures and applied arts should be combined, and that the rooms should come as close as possible in function, design and content to the setting that had provided the objects' original context".<sup>8</sup> And so, the collectors attempted to display their collection in a way which was "in contrast to what was perceived as the aesthetically fragmented present of Wilhelmine culture".<sup>9</sup> Once the Kaiser-Friedrich-Museum had been built, Bode found it difficult to apply all of his principles to the display there. Isolating a masterpiece for the visitor's contemplation was difficult but a "crammed" display of images was also something that Bode aimed to avoid.<sup>10</sup> The resulting display focussed on symmetry with important pieces being placed at the centre, flanked on either side by works of less significance. The display in this regard did not result in a primarily chronological or even didactic effect, but it did have a pleasing aesthetic aspect and brought a liveliness to the museum which Bode was always aiming to achieve. In each of the galleries which focussed on a particular period or school, works from each medium were incorporated to provide context for the easily discernible masterpieces. As Gaehtgens, again, states, the rooms were not related to the Anglo-American "Period rooms" whereby entire rooms were taken from houses or palaces and re-installed in a public museum. The Bode concept was about providing context for the artworks in a bid to understand them in a more fruitful way while the Period rooms really aimed to reproduce an exact historical setting.

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<sup>8</sup> Gaehtgens, 1994,16

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

Following the end of the First World War, Bode's curatorial style was criticised and was considered to be representative of "imperial propaganda". This saw the beginning of the division of the collection amongst those existing museums on Museum Island. In 1930, the Northern European collections were moved to the North Wing of the Pergamon Museum and in 1933, following the dismissal of Max J. Friedlander from the Gemaldegalerie, Karl Koetschau was installed as the director there and this put in motion the separation of the paintings and sculpture collection of the Kaiser-Friedrich-Museum. In the years succeeding the end of World War II, the collections remained divided and were scattered following their evacuation at the end of the war. They now were located in both West and East Berlin. Despite the reunification of Germany, this situation has endured.<sup>11</sup>

While much of *The Lost Museum* focuses on the losses of artworks incurred by the Museum, the title and certain exhibits in the galleries also refer to the loss of this museum which has just been described. That is, the museum which was designed by Wilhlem von Bode, which was lost as a result of decisions which were made in the 1930s and which had a sure vision of housing a paintings and sculpture collection. Throughout the exhibition, Chapuis takes the opportunity to resurrect not just "lost" artworks but also another aspect of the Museum's history, that is its background as a sculpture *and* paintings collection and the curatorial style of its founder, Wilhelm von Bode. Antonio Tamagnini's *Portrait of Acellino Salvago* from 1500 for example, is exhibited in its non-restored state (fig.1). The subject's face is badly damaged. The left side and the entire lower part of his face has been worn away, his lips have been destroyed and a gaping hole is all that remains of his mouth. Salvago has now taken on the appearance of a victim and the observer cannot help but reflect on the many casualties of World War II and in this way deals with the type of loss which will be discussed a little later in this chapter. Beside the sculpture, a large reproduction of a photograph hangs on the wall which depicts a display arranged by Bode which features the Tamagnini bust. The photograph helps the viewer to see what the sculpture used to look like but it also shows how it would have been displayed in the museum before this style of museum display lost favour. In this way, two histories are being exhibited. The history of the artwork itself and also that of the curatorial style in the museum. The sculpture is shown amongst paintings and sculptures from the same era and of a similar theme. Here, Chapuis is echoing the thoughts which he puts forward in his chapter regarding the future of the Bode Museum in *Museum Island Berlin*, co-written by the General Director of the Berlin State Museums, Michael Eissenhauer. That is, to revisit Bode's style of curating and to re-incorporate the paintings collection of the Gemaldegalerie into the Bode Museum. Chapuis and Eissenhauer argue that a return to this style of curating and the melding of the two media will lead to a more cohesive experience for the visitor, while the juxtaposition of painting and

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<sup>11</sup> Chapuis, Eissenhauer, in Eissenhauer, 2012, 286

sculpture can “confirm the degree to which painters and sculptors inspired each other across the centuries.”<sup>12</sup> The merging of the collections will also see the “merging of the Skulpturensammlung with the Gemaldegalerie [which] will resurrect a vital Berlin tradition, one that was interrupted in the early years of National Socialism”.<sup>13</sup> Thus, Chapuis and Eissenhauer are suggesting a step back, and in a way, to take up where pre-Nazi Germany left off.

The proposal of borrowing from Bode’s style in the future is to return to the original intention of the museum and can make the best use of Bode’s careful design of the building. In Neville Rowley’s article “The ‘Basilica’ in the Bode-Museum: a Central (and Contradictory) Space” which discusses the original intent of the Basilica and its current and past uses, these points are elucidated further. The Basilica at the Bode Museum was designed to replicate a Florentine church and was intended to house both Florentine and Sienese sculptural works. This was a fitting home for those works which were indeed intended for a church. It served as a didactic tool for the visitor who had never been to Italy “to understand not only the monumentality mixed with austerity of Florentine architecture, but also the variety of iconographies and techniques represented by different altarpieces, whether they were modeled or painted”.<sup>14</sup> Again, Rowley’s discussion of the Basilica’s original purpose, and his discussion about returning to this purpose shows that this is not about returning to the glory of Imperialism or about erasing the decisions that were made during Nazi Germany. For the museum professionals working there, it is about utilising the building as it was intended and therefore, in the best possible way. It should also be mentioned again that the Bode Museum’s practice does not much fit in with the current trend in museums to return to Period rooms and so that tendency to engage with nostalgia is not present here.<sup>15</sup> In the exhibition’s catalogue however, it is interesting to note that the future as envisioned by Chapuis and Eissenhauer in their chapter in *Museum Island* is not explicitly referred to or described. The catalogue is very much concentrated on presenting what was lost in an art historical sense and what is offered by restoration and replicas. Given the evident interest in returning to Bode’s vision of the museum that the curator has expressed in the past, it is interesting to see that this agenda is not presented in the exhibition or in its catalogue.

### **Restoration: serving history and dealing with the scars of the past**

The representation of lost artworks and the decisions regarding the extent to which restoration is to be carried out on those works which are damaged can lead us to an understanding of how the past is dealt with on a larger level in the museum. Many of the

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Rowley, 2015, 3

<sup>15</sup> See Bryant 2009 for a discussion on the current revival of period rooms in museums, particularly in New York.

questions regarding how to exhibit and how to restore these pieces are equally applicable to the museum when memory, history and the future of the museum is discussed. The exhibition, aesthetically, is a beautiful one. A certain sombreness is afforded by the muted colours of the exhibits while the walls, painted a cool blue provide the exhibition with a calm and peaceful backdrop. The sculptures, the condition of which will be discussed later, are themselves affecting, but the reproductions of the paintings have a particular poignancy. The paintings, reproduced in life size, are in black and white, bringing to modern minds the retrospective quality of old family snapshots from a by-gone era (fig. 2). The viewer can only imagine the lost vibrancy of the original paintings and again we are confronted with what has been lost. Indeed, we are given this wonderful opportunity to see the composition and the scale as the artist had intended but nevertheless, something as important as tone and colour is forever lost and the viewer becomes painfully aware of this. When asked if this was at all intentional, Chapuis confirmed that the black and white reproductions were entirely a result of working with what he had. These are paintings which were, unlike many of the sculptures, doubtlessly lost in the fire and the only available photographs were from before the end of World War II and as a result are in monochrome. Chapuis explained that the poignancy brought about by the black and white reproductions was a by-product of his original intention.<sup>16</sup> This by-product is just one example of how, as Chapuis explained, the vision of the exhibition was in many ways different to the outcome. Much of the exhibition's intention was to bring to light and remember artworks which had been lost and were therefore missing from art historical study, or moving from "passive" to "active" remembering. The co-exhibition of the Berlin sculptures and paintings collections was also very much an intention of this exhibition. However, these "by-products" are undoubtedly welcome as they contribute to the theme of loss in a layered, nuanced and deeply affecting way.

The sculptures, as mentioned previously, also have an acute affecting quality in their representation. The sculptures are shown in varying phases of restoration or are represented by their replicas, which are produced at the *Gipsformerei*. Presenting replicas of the lost artworks which are produced in the *Gipsformerei* taps into the Museum's tangible memory. Importantly, while the art collections of the museums were evacuated at the beginning of the war for safe-keeping, the holdings of the *Gipsformerei* remained at Charlottenburg and unlike the evacuated artworks, all of the models and moulds survived Berlin's bombardments. And so, as Chapuis writes, "If the Zentralarchiv (central archives) is the historical, document-based memory of the Berlin Museums, then the Gipsformerei can be considered their three-dimensional memory".<sup>17</sup> Francois Duquesnoy's *Amor Carving His Bow* is exhibited twice at the exhibition, the two figures

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<sup>16</sup> In conversation with the author, 16th September, 2015.

<sup>17</sup> Chapuis in Chapuis, Kemperdick, 2015, 89

standing alongside one another. One is the original sculpture, the bow of which has been restored but the bullet hole which was inflicted by a soldier at the end of war remains visible in Amor's temple (fig .3). The second is a plaster cast produced by the *Gipsformerei*, its surface perfectly untainted and intact. The effect of seeing the two sculptures side-by-side is striking and besides having a didactic purpose, that is in showing the work of the *Gipsformerei* and the possibilities of restoration, it is also indicative of the difficult decisions which curators and restorers make when handling and working with these artworks. While the bow has been restored, the bullet hole, inflicted in the final days of a brutal war, has been preserved and in turn, that moment in history has been preserved along with it. In other cases, such as that of *John the Baptist* a small statue attributed to Donatello was replicated by the *Gipsformerei* in a realistic bronze effect, the sad revelation being that this is one work which at the conception of the exhibition was believed to have been entirely lost.<sup>18</sup> In this way the work has been taken out of the abyss of lost art and can be newly appreciated by art historians and museum visitors alike. In the case of the *Amor*, we can also see that often, the restoration of a work and the preservation of certain marks of history is a way of acknowledging certain and important moments of history but also gives the work back to the contemporary world and to present day art historical discussions. It is an "active" way of remembering these objects and their histories.

The debate concerning the ethics of restoration and the concerns which arise when these issues are engaged with are again mirrored by the concerns which are addressed within the Bode Museum. If the concern that I have raised here is considered more fully, that of restoring Bode's curatorial style and reversing a number of the decisions made during the National Socialist period of the museum and as a result of World War II, it can be argued that it is inappropriate to restore a museum to one point in history and that the rest of the history in between is not duly represented. However, as Chapuis questioned during the conference on the 18th September 2015 at the Bode Museum, in reference to artworks bearing the scars of historical events, why should artworks be burdened with the negative events that have unfolded around it? In the case of the *Amor Carving a Bow*, why should Amor have to bear the bullet hole on his temple, inflicted on him so carelessly and with such malice. Indeed it is representative of an important part of history but does it assist the viewer in appreciating the artwork and what does it contribute otherwise? This issue is likewise dealt with in the exhibition publication wherein the contradiction presented to conservators between the need to "do justice to the artist, his intention and thus to the original image" along with trying to

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<sup>18</sup> On September 17th at the conference *Donatello and The Lost Museum*, Vasily Rostorguev of The Pushkin State Museum in Moscow presented photographs of Donatello's *John the Baptist*, confirming that the sculpture was still in existence in the Pushkin's collection although it was greatly damaged in the fire at the Friedrichshain Flak Tower.

maintain the standard of the Venice Charter of 1964.<sup>19</sup> This standard of historic preservation calls for the respect of any change in the state of a work of art and rejects the elimination of any historical traces, however inflicted. This, for the reason already mentioned above, is clearly problematic and always puts “historical traces” on a higher ranking than the artist’s intention or the quality of the work. In this sense, it is clear that restoration must be addressed case by case and cannot be sufficiently addressed with a blanket policy. In the Bode Museum’s situation, the arguments put forth for the return to the Bode style of curating are strong. With these arguments it is also clear that this is not intended as a return to a point in history for the sake of it or for reasons of nostalgia.

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<sup>19</sup> Chapuis in Chapuis, Kemperdick, 2015, 93

## Chapter Two - *The Lost Museum and Berlin: negotiating the past*

In Berlin, home to the Bode Museum, contributions to public cultural memory are highly prevalent and the aftermath of the war has been well preserved and is indeed inescapable within the city's landscape. Public cultural memory refers to a landscape's memorials, to buildings and to "official" lines of memory and historiography as dictated by museums and governments, particularly in exhibition practices and the preservation of memory in buildings. That it is to say, the decisions that the government makes, in this case the German government, in how cultural memory is portrayed in city-planning and the construction of monuments and memorials. The Bode Museum location within a central and historically significant area of Berlin is important and how *The Lost Museum* and the Museum in general fits within this museum in general is important to consider. A crisis relating to memory in Europe and the fear of heritage being forgotten is discussed by many scholars. Sharon Macdonald's discussion of the 'European Memory Complex' in her book, *Memorylands*, is particularly interesting and is very much applicable to Berlin. Macdonald discusses the constant agonising over 'cultural amnesia', the fear in the public of losing our foothold in the past, the continual disappearance of eye-witnesses to key events and the fear that intergenerational transfer of memory is, in today's world, not fully achieved. As a result "Europe's land- and cityscapes have filled up with the products of collective memory work – heritage sites, memorials, museums, plaques and art installations designed to remind us of histories that might otherwise be lost".<sup>20</sup>

The focus on the past as described by Macdonald and the need to be reminded of the atrocities committed in the name of Germany is extremely present. The heritage sites, memorials and museums etc. as listed by Macdonald, are dotted throughout the city and are difficult to avoid. They have certainly been designed to remind us of the many histories of the city, lest they be forgotten. In traversing the city, remnants of the past are inescapable. Didem Ekici asserts that "the staging of Berlin's historic identity has mostly emerged on the surface of the built environment". The memory of this past and Berlin's historic identity is present in those places where damage has not been erased, such as the bulletholes which pockmark the facade of some of the city's buildings. This is particularly notable at the Neues Museum, where renovators made the decision to preserve at least part of the extensive damage to the museum. The past and attempts to deal with the trauma of World War II are equally notable in the numerous memorials throughout the city, many of which are placed in prime locations such as Paul Eisenmann's *Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe* (2005), located a five-minute walk from the Brandenburg Gate. Throughout the Museum Island and Berlin, Germany's difficult past is visible and is by no means at risk of being forgotten.

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<sup>20</sup> Macdonald, 2013, 2



## Reconstructing the past

The ongoing reconstruction of the Humboldt Forum at the Schlossplatz in Berlin has been the source of much discussion in Berlin regarding the complicated relationship with the past. The project will see the reconstruction of three facades of the Berlin Schloss, the winter residence of the kings of Prussia and of German emperors. The East facade is of contemporary design, an allusion to the aim of easing tension between past and present which will be addressed through exhibitions inside the building. The Schloss was badly damaged towards the end of World War II and instead of undertaking the costly repairs, the German Democratic Republic decided to demolish the building entirely. The appropriateness of the revival of such a strong symbol of the past has been the defining factor for both sides of the debate. For many, the decision to rebuild what was a palace from the era of the Prussian Empire is an unwelcome reminder of Germany's Imperial past and will also be of huge cost to build with no obvious long-term economical benefits. Many feel that it is a reminder of Imperial attitudes and an "us and them" ideology, one which does not fit the identity that many contemporary Germans strive to create.

On the other side of the debate, those in favour of the reconstruction felt that the Palace could complete and offer an integrity to the Museumsinsel area. The managing director of the Association for the rebuilding of the palace, Wilhelm von Boddien has stated that "The palace is the heart of Baroque Berlin, the rest of the buildings don't make sense without it".<sup>21</sup> The surrounding buildings are of varying Baroque styles. The avenue leading up to Schloss Platz, Unter den Linden, "includes many important Prussian buildings and memorials such as the Berlin State Library, the Berlin State Opera, Humboldt University, Cathedral of St. Hedwig, the Kronprinzenpalais (former palace of the crown princes), the Neue Wache war memorial, the Zeughaus Berlin (the old armory that now houses the German Historical Museum), Karl Friedrich Schinkel's Altes Museum, and the Berliner Dom".<sup>22</sup> As Didem Ekici explains, "supporters of the [rebuilding of the] Schloss focus on the pre-1914 buildings on Unter den Linden, arguing that only the imperial building, by its volume and external appearance, can unite their eclectic styles harmoniously".<sup>23</sup> Likewise, as has been discussed in Chapter One of this thesis, the main purpose of returning to much of the original intent of the Bode Museum, for Chapuis and for Rowley is a concern for the integrity of architecture and for the original purpose of the museum as it had been designed.

Gavriel Rosenfeld in *Munich and Memory: Architecture, Monuments, and the Legacy of the Third Reich* discusses Munich's treatment of public memory and argues that this sort of preservation of memory is needed and criticises those who fully restored or rebuilt buildings

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<sup>21</sup> Quoted in Huggler, 2014

<sup>22</sup> Ekici, 2007, 29

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

which were damaged or destroyed during World War II. He calls for the reconstruction of buildings with “liberal quotation of, or allusive formal reference to, ruins”.<sup>24</sup> This would, in Rosenfeld’s opinion, bring about the forming of a cultural memory which would address the past, retain it in the public’s consciousness and ensure that it is not repeated. In criticising the apparent “erasure” of the evidence of war, Rosenfeld suggests that the Mitscherlich’s theory of the German “inability to mourn” is at play. That is, that following the end of World War II and the death of Hitler, who was seen by many to be the “father” of Germany, German people could not openly mourn him due to the state of Germany at the end of the war and the nature of the defeat by the Allied side. The erasure of war and a return to a pre-1933 Germany is thus described by Rosenfeld as a manifestation of the German inability to mourn. A critic of Rosenfeld’s book, Jeffrey Diefendorf, suggests that the preservation of every remnant of the War is not entirely practical and that Rosenfeld’s call for Munich to be a site of memory and to constantly aim at remembering the Third Reich is not altogether realistic.<sup>25</sup> This hints at the complexity of the treatment of memory in Germany, the difficulty of which has been discussed to a large extent following reunification of Germany. Jeffrey Olick and Daniel Levy discuss the effect of the “taboo” of Germany’s past in terms of collective memory and how this can ultimately become a “cultural restraint” which in their discussion, can affect the rationality of political decisions.<sup>26</sup> It can similarly be argued that this taboo can in turn bring about issues for museums and buildings and constrain decision-making to a degree. Suggestions like those of Gavriel Rosenfeld call for the primary role of German cities to be memorials to a singular, albeit important, point in German history no matter how limiting that may be to contemporary and future generations. Cultural memory then, is something that can be diversely represented and can bring about complicated and continuously shifting issues. These issues are particularly problematic in Germany where the memory of the last one hundred years is especially charged.

The Mitscherlich theory appears regularly in discussions about Berlin, Germany and cultural memory. If Germany has been unable to mourn, according to Rosenfeld, the Humboldt Forum is proof that this is still the case. However, *The Lost Museum* disproves it. The exhibition directly addresses the past and speaks of loss without rebuilding the museum to be *exactly* as it was, but rather to revisit a previous style and moment in the museum’s past as a means to better serving the collections and offering a unified narrative and experience to the visitor. All while also making better use of the architecture. It is perhaps worth noting that neither Chapuis nor Rowley is German. Born in Austria and having studied in The Netherlands and the United States, as a curator in a German museum, Chapuis has the benefit of an outsider’s perspective. This outsider status can perhaps allow Chapuis to explore avenues of curating which are not

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<sup>24</sup> Rosenfeld, 2000, 312

<sup>25</sup> Diefendorf, 2001,

<sup>26</sup> Olick and Levy, 1997, 922

necessarily accessible, obvious or acceptable to a German curator. This perspective is also afforded to Rowley who is of French nationality.

In the cases of both the Bode Museum and the Humboldt Forum, neither endeavour, whether it be the reunification of the the paintings and sculptures collections or the rebuilding of an Imperial Palace, aims to completely erase the events of the intervening time between the rise of National Socialism and the present day. At the Humboldt Forum, the structure will be shared by three organisations: the Prussian Cultural Heritage Foundation, the Humboldt University Berlin and the Federal State of Berlin. The Prussian Cultural Foundation will exhibit its “non-European” collections on the second and third floors of the museum with their “intellectual archives” stored on the first floor.<sup>27</sup> The Humboldt University’s Humboldt-Lab will also be located on the first floor along with the exhibition “World.City.Berlin”, organised by Federal State of Berlin. The history of the site will also be addressed in the building, “from its early days as the residence of the Hohenzollern through to the Palace of the Republic”, while “the events that give this place its historical charge will be brought to life for visitors by a presentation organised by the Berlin Palace–Humboldtforum Foundation”.<sup>28</sup>

The reconstruction of the Berlin Schloss is accessible through the project’s website where its mission is described as follows:

“As the Humboldt Forum, the historic site of the Berlin Palace will symbolise constant change, stimulating and inspiring society. The Forum will be a hub of movement, of encounter and of interaction with the cultures of the world. The Berlin Palace–Humboldt Forum will reflect and creatively neutralise the tension between past and future on this site, which is evident even through the contrast of the historic Baroque façades with the modernity within. The Humboldt Forum will be a cultural and, in the true sense, a political venue, but it will also be a place that contributes to living life sustainably.”<sup>29</sup>

The project then, aims to reconstruct an Imperial structure to symbolise change and to talk about cultural interaction among other things. Indeed, the intent of the project seems to be something of a paradox. If a building was needed to house a forum for discussion of the tension between the past and the present and to house the ethnographic collection of Berlin and to give voice to those victims of German Imperialism for example, the 75,000 Tanzanians murdered by German soldiers between 1905 and 1907, why choose a symbol of Imperialism and therefore the notions of superiority that are connoted by Imperialism to do so?<sup>30</sup>

### **Reconstructing a united Germany**

This apparent misstep may be read on another level of course. In choosing to construct only three sides of the building and in having a completely modern interior, the reconstruction

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<sup>27</sup> From <http://www.sbs-humboldtforum.de/en/Humboldt-Forum/>

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> From <http://www.sbs-humboldtforum.de/en/Foundation/Mission-Statement/>

<sup>30</sup> The figure of 75,000 is taken from Scaturro, 2015

is not a complete replica. Three sides of a facade will remain but the East will be representative of a new stage in German history. The function of the building will also be utterly different to that of its early-20th century predecessor and will also send a markedly different message to that sent by the GDR government when they demolished the old Schloss and constructed the Palast der Republik in its place. That is, the Humboldt Forum is not meant as a sign of victory over the preceding past but as a combination of all of these histories. The incomplete structure, in having only three of the original facades itself hints at the broken nature of German history. Yes, the Schloss is rebuilt and has returned but it is not whole and not exactly as it previously was, it's missing side is representative and a reminder of the building's previous destruction. For many Germans, as stated by Didem Ekici, the rebuilding of the Schloss will also signal a true reunification of West and East whereas the Palast der Republik was a symbol of an unstable past and of division for many. In revisiting an aesthetic and a building which was active until right after World War II, it symbolises a return to a united Germany.<sup>31</sup> In this way, the thought processes which apply to the Humboldt Forum are equally applicable and present, arguably, in *The Lost Museum* and the intended return to the Bode Museum's previous purpose of housing both the paintings and sculpture collections of Berlin, as it was before the division between East and West. At the Bode Museum, the division of the collections is a reminder of those decisions made in the museum following the rise of National Socialism and a reunification of the collections will signal a return to a unified Germany. The desire to return to a united Germany is considered by many critics of the rebuilding of the Schloss as an example of German nostalgia. The theory of nostalgia is very present when Berlin and post-war Germany is discussed in relation to memory studies. Nostalgia, etymologically, refers to the longing (Greek *algia*) for home (Greek *nostos*).<sup>32</sup> When speaking about contemporary memory theory it relates more directly to time and a longing to return to a certain era or to a moment in time, due to a belief that the past was better than the present. Nostalgia is frequently discussed as a negative experience though it connotes a positive view of the past. Indeed, in the seventeenth-century, it was even identified as a curable disease.<sup>33</sup> The rebuilding of the Humboldt Forum has been criticised as an example of nostalgia, and of a desire to return to a united Germany with a less difficult and complicated identity and past. However, the inclusion of each element of the site's past and its use as a museum to difficult moment in German history cannot lead to an accusation that the retrospect here is rosier than it should be.

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<sup>31</sup> Ekici, 2007, 27

<sup>32</sup> Legg, 2004, 100

<sup>33</sup> Legg, 2004, 100

## Other voices

The decision to make the Humboldt Forum a space where multiple world views and voices will be given a platform is also echoed in *The Lost Museum*. For Chapuis, an important point of the exhibition was to invite other voices into the museum and to ensure that the narrative and perspectives which are presented in the museum are coming from a multitude of sources. In the final room of the exhibition, entitled “New Beginnings”, *Red Mannheim 1*, a painting by contemporary artist Mark Alexander (1966-) is exhibited in close proximity to the Mannheim High Altar by Johann Paul Egell (1691-1752). The painting, produced by Alexander in 2010, was exhibited in the Baroque rooms of the Bode Museum for the first time in October of 2014. This was also the first time that the painting was exhibited in direct dialogue with its subject, along with two sister paintings of the same subject. For *The Lost Museum*, *Red Mannheim 1* alone remained in the gallery, alongside the original altar. The altar, created between 1738 and 1742 for a Catholic church in Mannheim, was acquired by the Royal Prussian Collections in Berlin in 1880 due to “changing tastes”.<sup>34</sup> During the fires at the Friedrichshain Flak Tower, the altar was badly damaged with many of the features being completely destroyed. Now, the only remaining figures of the crucifixion scene are those of Adam and Eve, depicted as young children with part of the tree and cross also visible. The painting depicts the altar shades of deep red and black. Alexander used a screen-printing technique but instead of ink, he has chosen to use oil, a thicker material which has resulted in the running of the red paint from the top of the painting to the bottom. While the death of Christ and links to the violence of war can be evident in the appearance of the blood-like paint, Alexander primarily links the altar to his own personal relationship with religion. He likens the “empty altar” to his own empty experience of faith.<sup>35</sup> In inviting a contemporary artist to reinterpret an 18th-century altar, Chapuis has invited another voice to be present in the museum, besides those of art historians. It allows the works to move beyond the narrative of what happened after the war and allows the work to be active again and in a new way. In this case, the purpose of the Humboldt Forum does share similarities with The Bode Museum and *The Lost Museum*. While *The Lost Museum* is striving to allow new interpretations of the artworks which are already heavy with history, the Humboldt Forum aims to give voice to those who had been oppressed by what the palace had originally symbolised and thus, aims to repurpose that symbol.

Elsewhere on the Museum Island, the Neues Museum, as previously mentioned, has preserved the history of its trauma while allowing for a positive view of the present and of the future. The museum had been heavily damaged during World War II and had received minimal repairs during the years of the German Democratic Republic. It was restored in accordance with

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<sup>34</sup> Kessler in Chapuis, Kemperdick, 2015, 132

<sup>35</sup> Alexander in Chapuis, Kemperdick, 2015, 134

International Charter for the Conservation and Restoration of Monuments and Sites of 1964 and was officially re-opened in 2009. Elements of the charter are notable in the restoration, particularly the preservation of “historic evidence”, that is, the heavy destruction and damage to the areas of the buildings which were still standing. It is also noteworthy in the reconstructing of those parts which were missing, in that the replacement parts are distinguishable from the original building while integrating harmoniously with the original architecture. The restoration of the Neues Museum was praised for its ability to blend and aestheticise the destruction which it had suffered with a more modern architectural programme which suits the function of a contemporary museum well.<sup>36</sup> The restoration project of the Neues Museum can be described, like *The Lost Museum*, as using the past as a means to looking forward. The Museum lay in ruin following the end of World War II, the interior is heavily marked not just by the battle waged on Museum Island but also by the gradual ruination it suffered over fifty years. These marks have been largely preserved and the new parts of the museum replace those parts of the museum which were unsalvageable and are gleaming in comparison. The Neues Museum differs from the Humboldt Forum in its treatment of memory. While the Neues Museum project has preserved the damage of the past and rebuilt in a way that makes it a contemporary structure, the Humboldt Forum project has reconstructed something that was entirely lost.

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<sup>36</sup> See Barndt, 2011

## Chapter Three - Germany, Russia and fateful exchange

Issues surrounding the loss experienced by Berlin museums in the aftermath of the Second World War are manifold. Legal issues, the unethical response of those stakeholders party to the loss and the slow move towards fruitful dialogue have resulted in a difficult and unresolved situation. As the Bode Museum, along with other German museums such as the Bremen Kunsthalle, were victims of major losses caused by the Soviet army, their experiences of trying to recover their property, or indeed to know for certain what is missing and may be located elsewhere and what was irretrievably lost in incidences like the fires at the Friedrichshain Flak Tower, have depended very much on the already existing laws regarding cultural property and their dialogue with other museums. These issues in many cases relied on the ethical treatment of the situation by the governments in power and their adherence to international law. *The Lost Museum* has positioned itself in an unbiased way within the complicated history of German-Russian dialogue regarding cultural property. This unbiased approach has contributed to a new type of resolution that does not consider restitution or the return of the displaced property but is perhaps the most likely and most plausible solution going forward. This solution, as will be discussed in this chapter represents the progressive thinking which formed the basis of the exhibition and the cathartic quality of its conception and surrounding activities.

### **The political and legal context**

The law surrounding cultural property and its protection in times of conflict is relatively new and the establishment of international laws surrounding cultural property, in order to define certain limits regarding its protection in conflict, came about as a result of the serious losses incurred during World War II. When the first guidelines for the conduct of warfare were set out in the First and Second Hague Conventions in 1899 and 1907 respectively, the protection of cultural property is mentioned. Though vague, it was stipulated that in conflict, “buildings dedicated to religion, art, science...historic monuments...provided they are not being used for military purposes” should be protected whenever possible and that looting and wilful damage of cultural property was prohibited.<sup>37</sup> The Roerich Pact of 1935, an inter-American treaty was signed in 1935 and was a precursor for the 1954 Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict (The Hague Convention), the first international treaty concerning cultural property, initiated in response to the substantial damage caused to cultural property in World War II. Both stipulated that cultural property and heritage sites must be safeguarded during periods of conflict and The Hague Convention made direct reference to the theft of and damage to cultural property, stating that all observing states must not partake in

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<sup>37</sup> Milligan, 2008, 93

thefts and must put a stop to it when possible.<sup>38</sup> <sup>39</sup> The Hague Convention also provided guidelines regarding the export of cultural property for protection from damage during wartime and its return following the end of conflict. Following deficiencies in The Hague Convention and a string of damage to cultural property in the 1980s and 1990s, particularly related to the serious conflict in the South East of Europe, a second Protocol was adopted in 1999 to encourage the implementation of the Convention.<sup>40</sup> While internationally, these treaties have had a major influence on the way that conflict affects cultural heritage, they serve as a type of guideline in many cases while it remains for the states parties to define the limits in national law. In Germany, a series of restitution laws were passed in the 1950s to tackle the issue of cultural property damaged or looted by Nazis and to arrange the return of objects or compensation to the victims where possible. In Russia, though they were signatories of the 1907 Hague Convention, individuals and cultural institutions have not returned many of the objects which were transferred to Russia for “safeguarding”. The State Duma of the Russian parliament grounded its anti-restitution position by enacting a moratorium on 21 April 1995 prohibiting the return of cultural treasures brought to Russia after the Second World War. In 1998, Parliament also passed the Federal Law on Cultural Valuables Displaced to the U.S.S.R. as a Result of World War II and Located on the Territory of the Russian Federation”.<sup>41</sup> This law stated that “All displaced cultural valuables imported to the U.S.S.R in realization of its right to compensatory restitution and located on the territory of the Russian Federation, with the exception of those specified in Articles 7 and 8 of the present Federal Law, are the property of the Russian Federation and are federally owned”.<sup>42</sup> The establishment of this law in Russia, which disregards international law and treaties, is telling of just how difficult it was, and may be, for those trying to converse and reach agreement with the Russian government and museums regarding cultural property.

*The Lost Museum* has encouraged the discourse in Germany surrounding looted, missing or lost artworks and museum artefacts and has contributed to the ongoing effort to come to an agreement regarding these objects, especially in dialogue with Russian museums. Besides the frank perspective that it has taken of its own history regarding what they have lost, the same can be said about the discourse that the exhibition has helped to foster between themselves and other institutions. This is regarding the shared histories of the Bode Museum and Russian museums, namely the Hermitage Museum of Saint Petersburg and the Pushkin State Museum of

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<sup>38</sup> “Treaty on the Protection of Artistic and Scientific Institutions and Historic Monuments” (Roerich pact), 1935

<sup>39</sup> The Hague Convention, 1954

<sup>40</sup> Milligan, 2008,

<sup>41</sup> Bandle, Chechi, Renold, 2013, 3

<sup>42</sup> Article 6, Federal Law on Cultural Valuables Displaced to the U.S.S.R. as a Result of World War II and Located on the Territory of the Russian Federation, 1998



Fine Arts in Moscow. In order to talk about the *The Lost Museum* and its ability to nurture dialogue between museums in Germany and Russia, its position within the current state of affairs between the two states needs to first be established. While Russian-German relations can generally be described as being favourable both politically and economically, the aftermath of the looting carried out by the Soviet Trophy Brigades and the resulting objection to restitution on the Russian side has resulted in something of a stalemate in negotiations between both sides regarding the objects in question. In examining how both German and Russian museum professionals have behaved in the past and identifying where their actions were lacking in terms of acting as good stewards for the collections, it is clear that those scholars who have conversed as a result of *The Lost Museum* are committed to moving on from the previous positions adopted by their predecessors, that is of concealing the truth regarding the location of looted objects. In behaving in an open and generous manner, they have moved beyond the politically charged deliberations of government level negotiations, to sharing information and research and to working for the benefit of their collections. In taking action to enhance the information about their collection and in making this information available to researchers and scholars, no matter what their nationality, those working in the museums have worked more responsibly and with deeper ethical consideration than their predecessors.<sup>43</sup>

The actions of museum professionals have not always been as open and professional as is now true of their successors. Irina Antonova, former director of the Pushkin State Museum in Moscow was notoriously opposed to the return of cultural objects which were taken during the war.<sup>44</sup> Indeed, the existence of many works which were in the archives of both the Hermitage and the Pushkin museums was denied by her and she was vehemently and very openly in favour of keeping the objects held in Russia as “restitution-in-kind” for the bloodshed and heritage lost at the hands of the Nazi troops.<sup>45</sup> Konstantin Akinsha and Grigorii Kozlov, first in a 1991 article for ARTNews and subsequently in their book *Beautiful Loot: The Soviet Plunder of Europe's Art Treasures* of 1995, were the first to present claims to the West regarding hidden depositories of art which were taken by the Soviet Trophy Brigades from Germany in the years following the war. Previously believed to have been destroyed by Allied bombardments in the final days of the war, the claim that many of these works, among them paintings by El Greco, Titian, Rembrandt, Velazquez, Manet, Van Gogh and Degas, caused quite a stir and made international headlines. Soviet officials “flatly denied claims” that the depositories existed or that they knew anything about them.<sup>46</sup> In October 1991, the Soviet government eventually admitted the existence of the

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<sup>43</sup> For the arguments put forth in this chapter, the ethics by which the museum professionals are required to act in accordance with, are those of museum ethics, for example the ICOM Code of Ethics, 2013

<sup>44</sup> Barkan, 2000, 78

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> Akinsha, Kozlov 2007 <http://www.artnews.com/2007/11/01/top-ten-artnews-stories-tracking-the-trophy-brigade/>

secret store rooms in the state museums, only following the demands from Soviet scholars to do so. It was stated that the works were brought to Russia for restoration, a statement that is accepted by some but which Akinsha identifies as being “smartly constructed propaganda”.<sup>47</sup>

### **Discovering what has been lost**

Though some of the works have been exhibited, much of what is in these depositories is still unknown and so German museums are still at pains to know exactly what it is that they have lost to Soviet looting, what they have lost to Berlin’s destruction and in the case of the Bode Museum: what was also lost to the opportunistic looting which no doubt occurred following the Friedrichshain fires.<sup>48</sup> This situation has not been aided by the refusal of Russian authorities to allow foreign researchers into their museums. In the case of the Baldin collection the debate concerning the restitution of cultural property was played out with heavy influence from its political surroundings. In an enlightening article, Wolfgang Eichwede recounts his own experience of working with the case of the Bremen Kunsthalle’s missing collections. This collection, which includes a group of 364 works including drawings by Dürer, Rembrandt, Titian and Van Gogh, were taken from the Bremen Kunsthalle in the aftermath of the war. Unlike the many artworks and museum artefacts which were confiscated and taken to the Soviet Union by the so-called “Trophy Brigades”, this collection had been taken opportunistically by the Soviet Officer Viktor Baldin. In 1947, after attracting the interest of the Ministry of State Security, Baldin gave the artworks to the Museum of Architecture in Moscow. In 1963, Baldin became the director of the Museum of Architecture and soon, presumably having acknowledged the error in his actions, began campaigning to have the collection returned to its previous owners. Baldin wrote numerous letters to various leaders in Russia, from Brezhnev to Gorbachev, suggesting the return of the objects. However all of his efforts were unsuccessful.<sup>49</sup> The restitution of the collection has been discussed on numerous occasions and it was announced several times, following talks between German and Russian officials in the years 1990, 1992 and 1993, that artworks in general and indeed the Baldin collection would be returned to Germany, but the political climate on each occasion struck a blow to the proceedings.<sup>50</sup> Eichwede was asked by the Bremen Kunsthalle to lead research with the aim of reaching a resolution regarding the collection which had been taken to the Soviet Union in 1945. In a change of approach on the part of the Germans up until this point, Eichwede also aimed to research Soviet losses and focussed on what Germans had plundered from Russian, Ukrainian and Belarussian collections. Despite

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<sup>47</sup> Akinsha quoted from his presentation at the conference *Donatello und Das Verschwundene Museum*, 18 September 2015

<sup>48</sup> Dehnel in Chapuis, Kemperdick, 2015, 14

<sup>49</sup> Akinsha, 2010, 259

<sup>50</sup> Eichwede 2010, 392-393, See Akinsha 2010 for a detailed account of the negotiations surrounding the restitution of the Baldin collection.

the scope of the research (the project was active from 1991-2000), the researchers failed to meet the desired resolution. In Eichwede's own words, "the history of German-Russian negotiations over looted art (Beutekunst) is a history of failure".<sup>51</sup>

On more than one occasion, rumours that part of the collection would be returned were fueled by talks between German and Russian representatives. For example, in 1991, Boris Yeltsin, the president of the USSR, planned to visit the Federal German Republic. It was said that as a gesture of goodwill, he would arrive with the Baldin collection in tow.<sup>52</sup> However, the night before his departure, the drawings were confiscated by KGB agents at the request of Nikolai Gubenko, the Soviet Union's minister for culture who wanted to 'save' the collection from restitution.<sup>53</sup> Again, in 1992, following the exhibition of the drawings in the State Hermitage, Yeltsin promised to return the artworks to Germany in return for Russian works which had been moved to Russia. As before, the Russian commitment to returning the collection broke down due to disagreement amongst members of the commission responsible over the artworks' possible return. Eventually, in 1995, anti-restitution nationalists in the Kremlin enjoyed a victory with the enactment of the new legislation which stated that artworks displaced to the USSR from Germany were Russian property and its previous owners had "no right to claim from Russia compensation for damages" despite the fact that this was passed with clear disregard for international law regarding cultural property.<sup>54</sup> Since then, the restitution of cultural property has been carried out as a sort of bargaining tool and as gestures of political goodwill. Notably, the return of one of the mosaics which had been plundered from the Amber Room in Moscow and subsequently found in the collection of the Bremen Kunsthalle was returned to Russia following its discovery in 1997. At the same time, 101 drawings which had been part of the Baldin collection and which were being held in the German Embassy in Moscow were finally allowed to return to Bremen. The exchange did not come off without a hitch however, with the German government accusing the city of Bremen of "meddling" with foreign policy and barring Russian art historians from viewing the drawings before their return.<sup>55</sup> In April 2000, the mosaic was returned in a ceremony with much fanfare and with the newly appointed President Putin present. At present, the collection largely remains in Russia, with no suggestion of it being returned in the future despite it being widely accepted that these works were stolen from German collections during the war.

The legal aspect of the restitution has also been unhelpful in facilitating restitution. In the "Treaty on Good Neighbourliness, Partnership, and Cooperation" which Germany signed with the former Soviet Union in 1990 and the "Agreement on Cultural Cooperation" signed with the

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<sup>51</sup> Eichwede, 2010, 388

<sup>52</sup> Akinsha 2010, 260

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, 261

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 265

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 269

new Russian Federation in 1992 it was agreed on both sides that artworks which were lost or displaced unlawfully would be returned to the original owners or their successors. The German side cited the 1907 Hague Convention which declared that cultural assets have immunity in war and had forbidden their looting or destruction. The law gave the German side a sense of confidence in pursuing ownership of the objects but a lack of clear definition and the ability for many interpretations of the law has resulted in something of a stalemate. The Convention states that cultural property may not be looted, damaged or destroyed. The supposition then is that should a work be relocated as a result of war, it should be returned once peace has largely returned, but it is not a clear point and it is equally unclear whether the inference is that property damaged should be repaired by those who perpetrated it. Unfortunately, the resolution that was sought by these treaties, agreements and the problems that The Hague convention sought to avoid remains a contentious issue, a point which makes the work of museums in spite of these issues all the more impressive. The politicisation of the restitution, as evidenced by the many developments which have played out as a result of the Baldin collection is revealing of the desultory approach that governments may adopt when dealing with restitution issues and the unsatisfactory way that they have behaved within this context. The wrangling required to come to a conclusion regarding these works, despite the evidence of their ownership and the precedent set out by international law, is ultimately regrettable. Another important point to consider is the fact that many families who had been victim to the Nazi regime, and whose property had been confiscated prior to, during and after the war and which subsequently wound up in Russian institutions following Soviet looting, are also still at a loss thanks to this political fumbling. Evidence of this was published in a joint Russian-American project, "Heritage Revealed" by the Commission for Art Recovery in New York in 2006.<sup>56</sup> This project aimed to fund research and publish a series of catalogues detailing cultural property such as art, books and manuscripts, which was displaced to the USSR after the war and which had originally been taken from Jewish collectors. The commission was aided by the Russian Federation after they signed the "Guiding Principles of the Washington Conference on the Holocaust Period Property in Resolving the Issues Related to Objects of Art" agreement in 1998, opening their archives to researchers and agreeing to publish information regarding the stolen property.<sup>57</sup>

While there have been major failures on a governmental level, and indeed in museums in the past, it is clear that *The Lost Museum*, in its manner of addressing a politically charged and difficult issue has contributed in an extremely positive way to the situation at large. Eichwede's article presents the opportunity for so-called "trophy art" to be seen as ambassadors in political

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<sup>56</sup> Eichwede, 2010, 394

<sup>57</sup> <http://www.commartrecovery.org/projects/heritage-revealed>

and international relations and calls for art to “no longer divide nations but [to] be understood as a common, historical heritage” and suggests ways for both sides of the situation to work together and move beyond the legal and political obstacles which have hindered a satisfactory resolution.<sup>58</sup> For example, Eichwede has suggested that instead of “a continued tug of war over looted art”, works or art or entire collections could be displayed in their former hometowns.<sup>59</sup> He suggests that “there is no reason for Russian museums such as The Hermitage not to erect a branch in Berlin (as it now has in Amsterdam) in order to exhibit collections there including those that formerly belonged to German institutions. Long-term loans would also be conceivable and could become part of a more extensive exchange in both directions”.<sup>60</sup> It is clear that activities such as those that have occurred as a result of *The Lost Museum* are a step in the right direction and are in line with Eichwede’s suggestions to bring together the two sides of this debate and enabling discussion through art and research.

In the exhibition, the final room of the exhibition was dedicated to inviting the voices of others into the museum. Aside from the inclusion of contemporary artists in what is a historical, thematic exhibition, there is also a focus on the relationship between German and Russian museums, particularly on the efforts of the German-Russian Museums’ Dialogue (Deutsch-Russischer Museumsdialog or abbreviated as DRMD). Display cases included exhibition catalogues and lists of works still missing from both countries published in both Russian and German, an initiative established to encourage exchange and to inspire dialogue between both countries. Elsewhere, original documents showing lists of works which were taken (or saved, depending on the author) by the trophy brigades, old museum catalogues, as well as a letter from the 1950s announcing the return of many German museum artefacts to Berlin museums are displayed alongside one another. The exhibition presented this history in an inviting and unbiased way.

### **“Trophy art as ambassador” – a solution**

The conference *Donatello und Das Verschwundene Museum* which was held during the final weeks of the exhibition saw several speakers coming from Russian museums, or from a Russian background, who contributed greatly to the exhibition and ensured that the Russian side was taken into account. In these dealings, sensitivity to the topic was present as discussion was encouraged by Chapuis and Rowley and the tone was friendly and unbiased in general. The final presentation by Vasily Rastorguev of the first day revealed information which was particularly exciting for those in attendance. In the exhibition, two plaster casts after sculptures attributed to Donatello were on display and were listed as being missing. The fate of the works was

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<sup>58</sup> Eichwede, 2010, 400

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 401

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, 401

unknown but it had been presumed that the works were either completely destroyed in the Friedrichshain fire or that they were hidden in Russia in the aftermath of the war. The first, the *Flagellation of Christ* is a cast of the original bas-relief. For the exhibition, the cast was flanked by photographs and a thorough explanation of the means by which the *Gipsformerei* replicated the piece, right down to the vein of marble which runs through the centre of the marble slab. The second was a relatively small statue of John the Baptist, gaunt in the face and clothed in rags. The plaster cast was produced beautifully with the bronze-like finish almost indistinguishable from the genuine material. Here, the object is used to illustrate the potential use of replicas. It was seeing these casts in the *Gipsformerei* that brought to Chapuis' mind the worth of replicas and how they can offer so much more to researchers and audiences than unsatisfactory photographs in books. At the conference Rastorguev stated that the sculptures, in actual fact, were still in storage at the Pushkin Museum. Rastorguev presented photographs of the objects in their current state at the Pushkin Museum. The *Flagellation of Christ* is in many fragments and bore the marks of fire but is easily distinguishable. *John the Baptist* is also in two pieces and also appears to be badly damaged by fire but indeed, it is clearly identifiable (Appendix A). While the presentation of these works was a revelation due to the fact of their very existence, the condition could also reveal more clues about what actually happened in the flak tower, the facts of which have eluded researchers since their occurrence. In both cases and especially in the case of *John the Baptist*, the breaking apart at the legs of the figure and the nature of the damage suggests that as well as a fire, their must have been also an explosion.

The focus on the work of Donatello was evident in *The Lost Museum* in the many works attributed to the artist being present and also in being at the forefront of one full day of the two-day conference. While the replicas gave opportunity for experts in the work of Donatello to explore and discuss the attribution of these works to the artist, the revelation of its continuing existence in the Pushkin Museum offers legitimate means for continuing these discussions. In this way, the work of researchers is enriched, the collection of both museums is more accessible and art history in general has gained something which was previously been thought to have been forever lost. This is yet another example of how healthy exchange between Germany and Russia can enrich both collections and how the exhibition and its activities have extended beyond its political context in an effort to enhance the museum. The art has acted as "ambassador" and has brought about gracious exchange between art historians and museums.

While Akinsha describes the claim that Russia was holding the works for restoration as propaganda, Chapuis has been more diplomatic in his view of this situation. At the conference *Donatello and The Lost Museum*, an audience member questioned Rastorguev following his presentation about whether or not the works would be returned to Germany. At this point, Chapuis intervened and responded to the audience member by pointing out that this is a

political issue and is in fact a rather unfair question, even suggesting, with a hint of irony that “that is a question for Mr. Putin”. Chapuis took the opportunity to bring attention to the fact that records from the time show that restored works were returned to Germany whereas the damaged works were kept in Russia and notes that this is an important point.<sup>61</sup> It is a piece of evidence suggesting that the Russian claim to have kept the works only for restoration purposes is true to a degree, although the facts of this matter are likely to remain elusive for a long time. The fact of their having returned the vast majority of works in the 1950s, once the German museums were suitably prepared to receive them is also suggestive of this being a truth. In any case, this interaction at the conference helped to raise awareness of the fact that these issues are not just the concern of the museums involved. It is a wider problem and one which is very much in the hands of political leaders, most especially in Russia.

Taking the ICOM Code of Ethics and the adherence of a museum to this Code as the model by which a museum can be considered to behave ethically and as a good steward is a somewhat simplistic, but heuristic approach to continuing to explore the content and implications of *The Lost Museum*. By surveying the Code, it helps to prove the instances of a museum professional’s actions as being exemplary of good stewardship. The second and third principles of the ICOM Code of Ethics are of particular note to the issues surrounding this exhibition. The second reads “Museums have the duty to acquire, preserve and promote their collections as a contribution to safeguarding the natural, cultural and scientific heritage. Their collections are a significant public inheritance, have a special position in law and are protected by international legislation. Inherent in this public trust is the notion of stewardship that includes rightful ownership, permanence, documentation, accessibility and responsible disposal”. The previous behaviour of Russian museums, in denying the existence of artefacts is in clear disregard of this fact whereas Rastorguev revelation very clearly complies. Another example relates to point 3.2 of the Code of Ethics, in relation to “availability of collections” the Code states that “Museums have a particular responsibility for making collections and all relevant information available as freely as possible, having regard to restraints arising for reasons of confidentiality and security”.<sup>62</sup> The renewed accessibility and openness between scholars in both Germany and Russia in recent years, in contrast to the historic secrecy of museum workers is also evidence of this adherence to established museum ethics.

Although the actions of governments and a number of museum professionals have been lacking in the past, today’s dialogue between Russian and German museums is considerably more successful. The call by Eichwede to forget about restitution, though that may be a painful solution for some, appears to have been adopted by the museum professionals on both sides of

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<sup>61</sup> Chapuis quoted at the conference *Donatello und Das Verschwundene Museum*, 18 September 2015

<sup>62</sup> ICOM Code of Ethics, 2013, 6

the conversation. Though it may well be a good compromise for the states involved, the question remains of whether the victims of Nazi expropriation will ever find the justice that they seek. Besides the obvious good stewardship at the Bode Museum in forging good relationships in what was previously a stagnant context, the idea of bringing lost artworks back into literature by presenting their plaster casts or replicas in a museum and therefore back into art history is also evidence of working towards a more complete and enriched history and has helped to tackle the issue of research in museums, or indeed the lack thereof. *The Lost Museum* and the activities around the exhibition has proved itself to be an inclusive endeavour, striving to resolve a long-standing, painful issue for German museums with an approach that has benefitted from 70 years of hindsight.



## Chapter Four – Rediscovering *The Lost Museum*

The many benefits of the genre of exhibition that *The Lost Museum* embodies have been examined in the previous three chapters of this thesis. Its ability to address the past in an unbiased way, to use this perspective to envision and move towards the future and to strengthen previously fraught relationships have each been examined. The exhibition is also relevant to the discourse dealing with research in museums, and is significant in several ways in this regard. It is firstly significant to the discussion about provenance research, which due to the now notorious looting of cultural property by the Nazis during World War II, remains a central issue for German museums and a difficult legacy to bear. Indeed, museums and the international art market are still constantly dealing with the fallout of this enormous theft. Those at the helm of the restitution fight are often critical of research in German museums with many finding it unsatisfactory while there have been accusations that German museums and collectors deliberately stall the processes in a bid to incur the statute of limitations regarding the restitution of cultural property.<sup>63</sup> Many of the artefacts missing from German museums and which are still being held in Russia, of which a number may have originally been illegally acquired by the Nazis - as was noted in the previous chapter - is just another facet of the long and complex history of Nazi looting and the battle for restitution. It highlights again the importance of provenance research. The theme of this exhibition also presented Chapuis and Rowley with the opportunity to reassess the potential of plaster casts to fill the void that is presented by lost art, something which now, in times of major international discussions regarding the destruction of cultural property and postcolonial restitution claims, is of great significance. Replicas brought back to life the artworks which were lost and presented a solution for future art historical discussions about the missing parts of the collection. *The Lost Museum* and the dialogue that it has fostered with Russian museums, its commitment to research as its basis and its engagement with replicas as a research tool has addressed each of these major issues and is an important example for museums and cultural institutions in this regard in contributing to the historical catharsis which is present in other aspects of the exhibition.

In this sense, those museum professionals and scholars who have been involved with *The Lost Museum* and who have contributed in some way to the efficient and unbiased research for this exhibition are an example of excellent stewardship. Stewardship is the responsible and ethical management and planning of resources with the duties of a steward being to ethically protect and enrich a resource.<sup>64</sup> According to the ICOM Code of Ethics, museums are responsible for the collections which they maintain for the public trust and “inherent in this public trust is

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<sup>63</sup> Knöfel, 2015

<sup>64</sup> ICOM Code of Ethics, 3

the notion of stewardship that includes rightful ownership, permanence, documentation, accessibility and responsible disposal".<sup>65</sup> In addition to these responsibilities research and co-operation with other institutions are pillars of museum stewardship.<sup>66</sup> For the Bode Museum, the need to enrich their collection and to conduct significant research is of paramount importance to the commemoration and abreaction of their history and their loss as well as being one of their primary responsibilities as a museum. Indeed, for all Berlin and German museums, and even on a wider basis, throughout Europe and the rest of the world, this intelligent exhibition and its results serve as a best practice example. It also represents an antidote to the anxiety surrounding the perceived lack of research in museums and the shifting duties of the curator. The way that the museum has benefitted from this exhibition, in contributing to cultural memory and art history on a wider scale, is evidence of why the curator's role as researcher in addition to caretaker is important.<sup>67</sup>

### **German museums criticised for lack of research**

German museums are at the epicentre of the discourse surrounding provenance research in cultural institutions and it can be assumed that nowhere else are the actions of museums surrounding provenance research observed and criticised so heavily. For this reason, the research activities of many museums are made as transparent as possible. According to the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin's website, provenance research remains an important and everyday activity for the dedicated provenance research department as well as for each curator at every one of their museums.<sup>68</sup> At present, the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin is running four different provenance research projects across their museums with each of these projects researching the provenance of works acquired before 1945.<sup>69</sup> While these major and high-profile museums in Berlin appear to evidently be committed to this research, provenance research in German museums or the lack thereof remains a contentious issue and nonetheless attracts much criticism from many sources. Anne Webber, co-chair of the Commission for Looted Art in Europe is one such critic. In response to the discovery of the Gurlitt collection of art (made up largely of objects deemed "degenerate" and deaccessioned or confiscated from German museums and collectors before 1945), Webber criticised the fact that the discovery of the

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<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

<sup>67</sup> See Alloway in Greenberg et al., 1996 who describes the rise of temporary and monographic exhibitions in museums and the requirements of curators to pander to art critics, art dealers and artists. Alloway identifies a crisis in the curator's profession as the duties of the profession have moved away from offering real critique to acting in the interest of these outside stakeholders. The trend has endured since this time and literature regarding "blockbuster" exhibitions includes Barker, 1999, Skinner, 2006 and McClellan in McClellan 2008

<sup>68</sup> See <http://www.smb.museum/en/research/provenance-research-restitution.html>

<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

Gurlitt collection seems to have mobilised some German museums into researching and making claims for works found within it while they had previously been slow to carry out research on their own collections to identify looted art.<sup>70</sup> Webber stated that “as it is, only one-third of German museums have undertaken provenance research to identify Nazi looted art in their collections, despite an 18-year commitment to do so”.<sup>71</sup> Webber continued, “there still seems to be a huge reluctance in Germany to appreciate the moral and ethical significance of holding on to looted works of art”.<sup>72</sup>

*The Lost Museum*’s efforts to strengthen dialogue with Russian museums, and subsequently to learn what objects remain there following the looting of the Trophy Brigades, can, at first glance, appear to be in a similar vein. It may seem that the efforts of the museum to exchange information and to find out what remains of their collection in another country is simply motivated by self-interest. However, as was highlighted in the last chapter of this thesis, objects which are still being held in Russia may very well have been originally confiscated by the Nazis from their original owners in the Jewish or other persecuted communities. Though the Bode Museum is aware of what it is missing from its collections thanks to catalogue records, the efforts to build lasting and fruitful relationships with museums is surely a positive step forward. Even if it does not directly offer a direct means of restitution for those victims of expropriation and their families, it works towards deepening the knowledge and understanding of this issue and may indeed lead to more discoveries in the future. It also serves as an example of best practice for other German museums. This is of the utmost importance, as it is a facet of many German museums which evidently needs to be readdressed and reformed, especially if Webber’s claims that two thirds of museums have not carried out provenance research are indeed accurate.

### **Plaster casts and research - what do they offer?**

At the conference “Donatello and The Lost Museum”, Chapuis mentioned that following this exhibition, he would now consider the use of plaster casts of the kind exhibited in the museum in the permanent collection for illustrative purposes. He explained that while he would have been very hesitant to include them alongside the permanent collection, in the months following the opening of *The Lost Museum* in March of 2015, his opinion was beginning to change. He highlighted that in studying photographs of the replicas exhibited, art historians can study the composition of a sculpture or a painting but that with a three-dimensional object, the shadows, depth and presence of the sculpture offers something more.<sup>73</sup> This point is evident to

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<sup>70</sup> Brändlin, 2014

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>73</sup> Chapuis quoted at the “Donatello and The Lost Museum” conference, 18th September 2015

anyone who has experienced the sensation of seeing an artwork for the first time “in person”, having long admired it as a photograph in a book or stuck on a wall, however it begs the question: why not include replicas more often in these instances? Chapuis’ comment was met with concern from some members of the audience although Chapuis responded by elaborating that if used, the replicas would be for illustrative purposes.

This last point, along with the contribution that plaster casts had in this exhibition as a whole, offers an interesting perspective on the role that replicas can have in research and education in museums. As the conference previously had a focus on the sculptures of Donatello, experts on the artist joined the conference to discuss the replicas of artist’s sculptures which were on display. The speakers at this point were able to discuss the works more freely thanks to their inclusion in the exhibition. The *John the Baptist* sculpture, which subsequently appeared in Vasily Rastorguev’s lecture as being in the Pushkin museum’s store, has long been the subject of debate surrounding its attribution to Donatello. Its loss and disappearance into the Pushkin obliterated it from scholarly research. Likewise, the *Flagellation of Christ* relief, along with *John the Baptist*, was considered to have been a masterpiece of Doantello’s and *The Lost Museum* was the first time that it had been presented in three-dimensional form since World War II.<sup>74</sup> This has happened in the same manner with many other works which otherwise may have had an important contribution to make to art historical investigation from the end of World War II up until this point. In many cases those artworks which were too damaged or are missing are regularly omitted from the discussion, but the use of replicas in large museums such as the Bode can reintroduce these objects back into scholarly research, as is the case with the *John the Baptist* sculpture. While it is highly doubtful that major museums will begin to exhibit replicas alongside authentic originals permanently, the fact of Chapuis having somewhat changed his mind about their worth is telling and suggests that other curators in major museums may be open to the idea too, in the right circumstances.

The ICOM Code of Ethics states that “Museums should respect the integrity of the original when replicas, reproductions, or copies of items in the collection are made. All such copies should be permanently marked as facsimiles”.<sup>75</sup> It is clear that this is necessary and that marking a replica as being clearly that is essential. Many scholarly debates surround the authenticity of art and artefacts and are concerned with the “realness” of the original. James Janowski discusses some of the ethical considerations regarding the restoration of artworks and the use of replicas, exploring what he terms the “appropriateness” of restoring artworks, echoing what was previously stated by Chapuis: that each work is restored on a case-by-case

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<sup>74</sup> Chapuis in Chapuis, Kemperdick, 2015, 115

<sup>75</sup> ICOM Code of Ethics, Section 4.7, 8

basis.<sup>76</sup> Janowski presents the questions which surround the restoration of a purposely damaged artwork and in utilising the writings of Mark Sagoff and Michael Wreen, he investigates what restoration and replicas mean in terms of “authenticity”, for example, when Michelangelo’s *Pieta* was attacked with a hammer and subsequently restored, is it the same artwork?<sup>77</sup> While Sagoff would claim that it isn’t and that the sculpture now has more than one creator - both Michelangelo and the modern restorers - Wreen argues that the artwork is object-based and by this, a replica of art is the same as the original itself. Wreen holds that “the identity of the artwork is constituted by its ‘phenomenological payload’” and so an object that looks exactly like the original artwork is the same artwork.<sup>78</sup> Wreen’s opinion is perhaps alarming to the majority of people working in any sort of position relating to art, archaeology or museums. For those people, the “aura” of the original artwork or artefact is important and it is also arguably the “authenticity” of a museum’s collection which distinguishes it in the world of things.<sup>79</sup> The replica has a “second rate” status in museums, never quite matching the presence of the original. The debate around authenticity in the museum today has gained great momentum in previous years and encompasses a wide variety of issues while the literature spanning the topic is expansive.<sup>80</sup>

The 2010 conference of the annual ICOM International Committee for Museums and Collections of Archaeology and History was entitled “Original, Copy, Fake: On the significance of the object in History and Archaeology Museums” and addressed the use of replicas, copies and “fakes” in museums. The conference explored the anxieties and questions that replicas can inspire. Rosmarie Beier-de Haan of the German Historical Museum, in an introduction to the conference’s publication writes “when an exhibition presents a reproduction instead of the original, colleagues from other museums wonder: was the museum not considered trustworthy enough to be given the original? Does it not meet the essential global conditions for getting items on loan? Do people here confuse the exhibition with the gift shop? And visitors might wonder: do they count on having immature visitors who won’t notice the difference between the original and the copy?”<sup>81</sup> The Victoria and Albert museum’s “cast courts” is perhaps the best known example of a large museum which permanently displays plaster versions of some of the

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<sup>76</sup> See Janowski in King and Levin, 2006 143 - 154

<sup>77</sup> Janowski, 144

<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

<sup>79</sup> See Holtorf and Schadla-Hall, 1999 where the authors discuss the importance that archaeologists place on the authenticity of artefacts while the public is notably less concerned and how replicas can subsequently take on new authenticity.

<sup>80</sup> Many authors on the subject assert that authenticity is a construct and as a result its “aura” is therefore also a construct. The aura is based in the belief that the artefact is real but is not dependent on the artefact in itself being *authentic*. See Brida et al., 2014, Gable and Handler, 1996, Hall in Karp et al., 2006 and Handler, 1986.

<sup>81</sup> Beier-de Haan, in publication for the ICOM International Committee for Museums and Collections of Archaeology and History conference 2010, 1

world's most well known artworks, a Victorian trend which had its basis in providing art students and those who could not travel to see the originals with exact models of the original works. With this age of 3D printing, which itself offers an even cheaper alternative to the traditional plaster cast replica and serious consideration from a curator of Chapuis' calibre, could replicas offer more to the modern museum? Especially when we consider what replicas have facilitated in this instance? In terms of research, an interesting example of what 3D renderings and a certain bending of the rules around the Venice Charter can produce is wonderfully exemplified by Francesco Laurana's *Portrait of a Princess of Naples* (ca.1452 – 1502) (Fig.1). The head of this bust was caused to separate from the shoulders and torso during the fire. While the lower portion has remained in Moscow since 1945, the head has remained in Berlin. The head had been exhibited by itself for many years but on the occasion of *The Lost Museum*, a plaster cast of the entire bust was exhibited alongside the fragmented head. The juxtaposition "made apparent that the head had not been mounted at the correct angle. The chin is too high, and in the original state the head was tilted more to the side".<sup>82</sup> A cast of the shoulders could be made, to which the fragmented head could be attached. This would reinstate the unity of the sculpture's aesthetic and would be a truer representation of the artist's intention.<sup>83</sup> It is also indicative of how plaster casts and replicas are useful for research, in many cases more so than a badly damaged original may be. The Bode Museum, as *The Lost Museum* has illustrated, has a large number of fragmentary artworks and replicas, partial or otherwise, may offer a solution for displaying them in a more unified and truer way.

The use of replicas and plaster casts of artworks which are themselves already present in other museums internationally (for example the cast of Michelangelo's *David* in the Victoria and Albert museum in London) is evidently useful for art students and as a tribute to an older style of collecting, particularly of the Victorian era. However it also has the potential to be used in exhibitions that are like *The Lost Museum*, where the focus is on what has been lost and which is no longer existent. The inclusion of the casts, as a means to sparking very real dialogue about the artworks represented, can be a method of confronting loss in a productive way. It is unlikely that the *Flagellation of Christ* or *John the Baptist* will be returned to the Bode Museum, even in their extremely damaged state and while a museum full of replicas is certainly no solution, their use should not be disregarded. The use of replicas and of 3D printing is now being newly considered for similar cases of "lost" works. Just one example of this is the use of plaster casts at the Acropolis museum in Athens in place of those marbles which remain in the British Museum. Recently, Iraqi-German artist, Nora Al-Badri and German artist, Jan Nikolai Nelles claimed to have secretly 3D scanned the bust of Nefertiti in the Neues Museum and released the 3D data

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<sup>82</sup> Chapuis in Chapuis, Kemperdick, 2015, 21

<sup>83</sup> Ibid.

set. Following this, the pair printed the bust which will now reside in the American University of Cairo in Egypt, from where it was taken following its discovery in 1912.<sup>84</sup> Though it now appears that the act of 3D scanning the bust itself did not actually occur, the use of a replica in this case and the possible “theft” of the data required to produce it (whether by the prohibited scanning or the alleged hacking), has contributed to the discussion regarding replicas and is a powerful comment on repatriation and Egypt’s claim to the bust.<sup>85</sup> It again highlights the potential of replicas to be used in cases where repatriation is an issue and how they can contribute to dialogue. In terms of cultural memory and returning to Aleida Assman’s “Canon and Archive” which was consulted in the first chapter of this thesis, replicas clearly bring about the activation of memory, especially of those artworks which had been “achived” or obscured from art historical discussions.<sup>86</sup>

Ultimately, the focus on research in this temporary exhibition and its surrounding activities such as the conference, lends credibility to this museum and is an example for other museums who face similar issues such as the need for committed provenance research. Research has enabled the museum to face loss, to investigate its meaning for the museum and to look forward to how it can be incorporated in the museum today. It has been a catalyst for further fruitful discussions between German and Russian museums and has strengthened what they know about the museum’s history and the fate of its collection. In investigating this history Chapuis has envisioned new ways of incorporating lost artworks and has lent support and legitimacy to the use of replicas in major museums for illustrative and educational purposes. Unlike the trend for high-profile temporary, “blockbuster” exhibitions, *The Lost Museum* prioritises the fundamentals of museum research and sees the curator taking on the role as set out in museum standards and codes of ethics. The curators and other professionals involved in the exhibition have acted as true stewards of their museum and its collection.

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<sup>84</sup> Voon, 19-02-2016

<sup>85</sup> It is still unclear how the pair acquired the data set. Due to the precision of the scan, it is generally accepted that it would have been impossible for it to have been scanned with a consumer grade 3D scanner. Some commentators suspect hacking of the Neues Museum’s servers or that they may have 3D scanned a replica of the bust which is available for purchase in the Museum’s shop. See Voon, 09-03-2016

<sup>86</sup> Assmann, A. in Erll, Nünning, 2008

## Conclusion

Museums are political spaces and can be viewed as a reflection of society or as a microcosm in which society and its values are played out. In Berlin, museums and the city at large presents the past dutifully and are at pains to preserve the remnants of its difficult history. *The Lost Museum* represents an example of a German museum actively searching for solutions which are relevant to its cultural memory. Instead of presenting something as a blockbuster or a history exhibition might, this is evidence of *active* scholarship and a curator taking action to address a myriad of issues relevant to his museum. It is not simply presenting facts but engaged the audience. The exhibition especially questions how we remember through objects and how we can project meaning relating to our own history onto these artworks. The exhibition was active. It asked the viewer to engage and not to passively absorb what was presented. The Bode Museum and Chapuis have offered more to their audience in questioning huge issues which it and other museums face in an intelligent and straightforward way.

*The Lost Museum* set out with a research objective but ultimately touched upon a number of issues relating to the exhibition of these damaged and lost artworks. While Chapuis and Rowley's original intention was to explore the *Gipsformerei* and to somehow commemorate, examine and move forward from these losses, they ultimately opened up a number of discussions which branched into several different directions. International dialogue, the use of replicas, the ethics of restoration and the legacy of World War II, were, among other topics, relevant to this exhibition and in this way it pays testament to the necessity and benefits of research in museums.

Examining how a museum in a significant city such as Berlin deals with trauma is invaluable and is of use to other places in the world where humanity has faltered and cultural heritage and art has suffered along with people. Dealing with loss and revisiting or inventing new methods of reclaiming something of a collection and heritage which has in many ways irreversibly vanished, presents museums with a method of looking forward. One of the most important conclusions to consider from this thesis is that the dislike for replicas in museums, the concern over "authenticity" and the restrictions set out by the Venice Charter of 1964 can in fact be damaging to art history and can hinder the progress towards alleviating the symptoms of trauma as it relates to cultural memory. Another important conclusion is that for art history and art historical research, location is not important. What has been made clear by the dialogue between Germany and Russia in the past regarding the restitution of cultural property is that claims to ownership made by states and the incessant arguing over who owns what is unproductive. For researchers and for audiences, accessibility and the fact of actually knowing if something still exists, that it is part of an existing body of work and that it can be viewed if necessary, is far more important than whether it is in a German or a Russian museum. This is



not to say that this is a blanket solution for all artwork and cultural objects which have been displaced. Justice in many cases must, of course, be reached for reconciliation to occur. The loss of privately owned cultural property, those objects which were taken from Jewish families before and during World War II for example, are different and restitution is of course the only solution in those cases.

This thesis set out to investigate how *The Lost Museum* could be seen as aiding political catharsis. While it doesn't necessarily do so, it has enabled scholars in both countries to override the surrounding political stasis. Indeed, perhaps with time, the dialogue between museums will encourage gradual progress on a political level. While those museum professionals are convinced of the ethics regarding these artworks, it may take further discussion, on the part of the Russian government in particular, to leave the past behind and to look forward to the future. History has shown that museum dialogue can act as precursor to political advance and that they do have influence on, and simultaneously reflect, the surrounding social and political climate. In terms of abreaction, that is, addressing and discussing a traumatic past in order to advance, the exhibition has been extremely successful. The exhibition took an unflinching view of the past and presented it to the audience for contemplation. It showed what has been unequivocally lost and how we might move forward.

*The Lost Museum's* message about objects, how they bear the weight of history and how this contributes to how a whole society views its cultural memory is important, it is relevant and it deserves further consideration and a wider platform. In today's world, where attacks on heritage are increasingly committed in a bid to desecrate the humanity that it represents, the limits of restoration and the benefits of preserving material manifestations of history are important to consider, while the power of objects and culture to play a part in the healing of the aftermath must be duly recognised.

## Appendices

### POSTSCRIPT

After successful collaborations with the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin on various archaeological subjects, such as the Merovingians or the Bronze Age, the Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts has embarked on a new joint research venture with Berlin. The aim of the project is to bring back to light important sculptures by Donatello and other Renaissance masters which until World War II were in the Kaiser-Friedrich-Museum. Curators and conservators from Moscow and Berlin are working together to study, restore, publish, and exhibit these works so

that they once again become accessible to the general public. On 17 September 2015, as part of a scholarly symposium at the Bode-Museum, Vasily Rastorguev, curator of sculpture at the Pushkin Museum, presented recent photographs of five works by Donatello and his circle, including the bronze *Saint John the Baptist* and the marble relief with the *Flagellation*. Two of these images are reproduced here, as a promise of more discoveries to be made.

Marina Loshak



Fig. 14: Donatello (ca. 1386–1466), *John the Baptist*, ca. 1425–30 (possibly reworked ca. 1453). Bronze, originally H. 84 cm, photographed in the Pushkin Museum, Moscow, in June 2015 (cf. fig. 127)

Fig. 142: Donatello (ca. 1386–1466) and workshop, *Flagellation of Christ*, ca. 1425–1430, marble, 465 x 395 cm, photographed in the Pushkin Museum, Moscow, in June 2015 (cf. fig. 108)

Appendix A, facsimile of pages 140 – 141 of Chapuis J., Kemperdick, S. eds., *The Lost Museum: The Berlin Painting and Sculpture Collections 70 years after World War II*, Berlin, 2015 showing the photographs of the sculpture *John the Baptist* and the *Flagellation of Christ* relief, taken by Vasily Rastorguev at the Pushkin State Museum in Moscow and presented at the “Donatello and The Lost Museum” conference on 17 September 2015.

## Illustrations



Fig. 1 View of Antonio Tamagnini, *Portrait of Acellino Salvago*, 1500 located to the left of the photograph depicting how the bust was originally exhibited by Wilhelm von Bode. The original head of Francesco Laurana's *Portrait of a Princess of Naples*, ca.1452 – 1502 is seen on the right, displayed next to a plaster replica of the entire bust. Photograph: Audrey Hogan



Fig. 2 View of the exhibition showing reproduced paintings in life size and in monochrome. Photograph: Audrey Hogan



Fig.3 Francois Duquesnoy, *Amor Carving his Bow*, before 1629. Amor has a bullet hole in his temple and his other arm along with his bow remains missing. There are further bullet holes in his back. Photograph: Audrey Hogan



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