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Wiesbaden, 13 December 1950

With respect to the enclosed list of my pictures stored at the collecting point in Wiesbaden, I have the following comments to make:

1. The works marked with a circle come from my parents’ house in Dresden, Kaitzerstr. 26. They were already in the possession of my father Cornelius Gurlitt, the well-known art historian (a privy counselor [*Geheimer Rat*], a professor with a doctorate and two honorary doctorates, president of the Federation of German Architects [*Bund Deutscher Architekten*], president of the German Academy of Urban Planners [*Deutsche Städtebauerakademie*], etc.), before 1933. His copies of the books he had written were publicly burned in 1933 in front of the technical university in Dresden, where he served multiple terms as rector.

2. The works marked with a cross belong to my collection of new and Expressionist art. It is generally known that, having been dismissed from my position as director of the Art Union [*Kunstverein*] in Hamburg as a promoter of so-called “degenerate art” already in 1933, I continued even after 1933 to stand up for modern art, contrary to the ideology of the “Third Reich.” I bought most of the artworks from the artists personally, in order to support them in their severe need. None of the pictures originated in Jewish ownership or abroad.

3. The works marked with a hook come from the estate of my deceased sister, the painter Cornelia Gurlitt, who lived in Paris as a respected artist. All the works were acquired before 1933; my sister died before 1933.

4. I received pictures no. 2004/5 (Picasso, 1940) and no. 2004/4 (Chagall) in 1943 as a gift from the Swiss[[1]](#footnote-1) painter Karl Ballmer, who was living in Basel at the time and who to the best of my knowledge is a good friend of Picasso’s. I did Mr. Ballmer, who lived in Hamburg before 1933, who had married a German Jew, and whose art was classified as “degenerate,” a service in that I was able to save his entire life’s work from confiscation and send it to Switzerland.

5. Picture no. 1951/1 by Beckmann is a personal gift from my friend Max Beckmann to me.

6. The items marked with a double line are gifts from His Royal Highness Ernst Heinrich, duke of Saxony, to me. Our family has always had close ties to the Saxon royal house.

(Dr. Hildebrand Gurlitt)

1. Translator’s note: “Swiss” is added by hand in the margin. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)