WHY WAS A NAZI-LOOTED PAINTING FINALLY RETURNED TO ITS OWNERS' FAMILY?

WHAT'S HAPPENING?

A colourful painting by Wassily Kandinsky has been sold for about $42 million after a long fight over its ownership. Kandinsky painted Das bunte Leben, meaning The Colorful Life, in 1907. During the Second World War, Nazi forces invaded the Netherlands and the painting was taken from the collection of a Jewish family who had fled persecution. It was later sold without the family's permission and eventually hung for decades in a German museum. In 2023, German officials decided that the painting should be returned to the family's descendants because it had been seized as a result of Nazi persecution. After its return, the painting was put up for auction in London. The sale has brought attention to the many artworks still being traced, returned or debated because of Nazi theft.

WHY IS THIS INTERESTING?

This painting shows that the effects of the Holocaust did not end in 1945. Families are still trying to recover property taken by the Nazis. Returning stolen art is about money, but it is also about justice, memory and recognising what happened to people who were persecuted.

THINK LIKE A HISTORIAN

"Who should own art that was stolen during the Holocaust?"

Source: Smithsonian Magazine

https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smart-news/looted-by-nazi-and-recently-restituted-a-kaleidoscopic-kandinsky-painting-just-sold-for-nearly-42-million-180989763/