

Press Release  
17 September 2011

## **The first hearing on the case of the false art collection "Werner Jägers" was held at the beginning of September.**

Thursday, September 1, the first hearing of the sensational trial about the largest case of fraud and false artworks of the moment was held in Cologne. The first session allowed the General Attorney of Cologne, Ms. Kathrin Franz, to recite all the charges contained in the record including the evidence of forgery discovered at the initiative of AV Modern & Contemporary. The prosecutor also revealed on this occasion that forty other plaintive hearings were being conducted by the court to carry out prosecutions, the end of the procedure will certainly not take place before March 2012.

The four defendants, Wolfgang Beltracchi and his wife Helene (both considered to be the brains of the scam), Jeanette Spurzem and Otto Schulte-Kellinghaus, were all present at this first appointment. The defendants are accused of having deliberately put false artworks on the market, forging official documents and organized fraud, the later alone should earn them several years in prison. Helene Beltracchi's older sister, Jeannette Spurzem, will however scoop of a lighter sentence than her co-conspirators having been implicated in only three of the transactions related to the case and received a profit of approximately 100,000 euros while the total amount of the fraud is estimated to be over 34 million euros.

The prosecution file contains a total of fifteen paintings by modern art masters including Max Pechstein, Heinrich Campendonk, André Derain and Fernand Léger. No less than forty-seven paintings have been implicated so far in this forgery, investigations are still ongoing.

The next hearing was set to take place on Wednesday, September 21.