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NEWS THE TOP 200 COLLECTORS

## Lawsuit by Billionaire Collector Ronald S. Lauder Against Museum of World War II Dismissed

BY **Alex Greenberger** POSTED 10/01/19 12:18 PM

A federal lawsuit brought against the International Museum of World War II in Natick, Massachusetts, by Ronald S. Lauder, a storied collector who owns some of the most important German Expressionist artworks in the world, was dismissed last week with prejudice, meaning that it cannot be litigated again.

In the suit filed in July, Lauder, who issued the complaint through Ellenville, LLC, a company he owns, said that the museum was “stonewalling” him by refusing to ship a collection of World War II memorabilia—including 3,500 books, 500,000 photographs, 100 uniforms, 1,650 posters, and a Russian anti-tank cannon, in addition to other objects—that he purchased from the museum’s founders for \$25 million in 2018.



Ronald S. Lauder.  
FAIRCHILD ARCHIVE/PENSKE MEDIA/SHUTTERSTOCK

Reached by *ARTnews*, Judd Grossman, a lawyer for the International Museum of World War II, declined to comment on whether there had been a settlement. John S. Kiernan, a lawyer for Lauder, and a press representative for Lauder did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

According to the original complaint, Lauder had previously agreed for the museum to keep the objects he purchased on view through the end of 2019. But when Lauder claimed the right to take the works into his own possession earlier, the museum refused, according to the suit. Through the suit, Lauder was seeking to acquire the collection he had purchased and was not asking for monetary damages.

Lauder, who founded the Neue Galerie in New York, is well-known in the art world for buying big-ticket modernist and postwar artworks. In 2006 he bought Gustav Klimt's *Portrait of Adele Bloch-Bauer I* (1907) for \$135 million; at the time, it was the most anyone had ever paid for an artwork at auction. With his wife Jo Carole Lauder, he has appeared on the [\*ARTnews\* Top 200 Collectors](#) list each year since 1998.

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