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The University of Oklahoma, OU Foundation and Museum Ask U.S. and French Courts to Enforce 2016 Court-Ordered Art-Sharing Settlement Agreement

NORMAN, OKLA. – The University of Oklahoma, OU Foundation and the Fred Jones Jr. Museum of Art are asking the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Oklahoma and the District Court of Paris to enforce the landmark international art-sharing settlement, which the U.S. and French courts ordered in 2016 and was praised worldwide as a model. Since 2016, OU, the Foundation and the Museum have fully complied with the court order.

The written and signed mutual agreement was ratified by U.S. and French courts and ensured Camille Pissarro’s *Shepherdess Bringing in Sheep* (1886) painting would be perpetually and publicly exhibited on a three-year rotating schedule. The French claimant Léone Meyer now inexplicably seeks to break the settlement agreement by asking a French court to stop the rotation schedule, preventing the painting’s return to Oklahoma in 2021.

“This misguided attempt to undo the U.S.-French museum-sharing agreement should be alarming to the cultural and international community,” said President Joseph Harroz, Jr. and OU Foundation President Guy Patton jointly. “We are confident that the U.S. and French courts will enforce the settlement agreement – which they have previously approved – as it ensures the painting’s history and beauty will continue to be shared with the people of both Oklahoma and France.”

The settlement agreement was heralded as a model by arts and cultural leaders worldwide because it is consistent with the Washington Principles and the Alliance of American Museums Guidelines, which the parties followed to mutually resolve the modern-day art ownership claim. As the AAM Guidelines counsel, in achieving the Pissarro settlement, the parties shared the historical provenance research, balanced the goals of addressing modern-day claims with the present-day owner’s good faith, and thus, reached a resolution acknowledged as fair and just.

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