Worlds most famous fakes, Famous art forgers, famous fakes, famous fakers, Fake paintings, fake signatures, fake drawings, fake picasso, Worlds Greatest Forgers, Copyists & Fakers - Art Fraud, Art forgery- forgers, faking art - fake paintings, art crime.

The world’s most famous and greatest art forgers and fakers

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The Fine Art of Faking
The faces of the world's greatest art fakers and fraudsters

ART FRAUD AND FORGERY INFORMATION ARCHIVE FROM INTERNATIONAL ART AUTHENTICATION EXPERTS THE FREEMANART CONSULTANCY

Arty-Fact:
Art fraud and forgery dates back more than 2000 years.

Arty-Fact:
The Freemanart Consultancy who specialise solely in art authentication and art fraud investigations, see more FAKE Pablo Picasso drawings, prints watercolors and oil paintings than any other artists work. On average, about a dozen a week!

All about the Worlds Greatest Forgers, Copyists & Fakers
(Arranged here by time frame)

The Romans.
Assiduously copied Greek sculptures, many of which were sold believed to be originals by their purchasers.

The Chinese generally!
Faking in China dates from at least the Sung Dynasty (960-1280) when the wealthy began to collect art. Forged paintings were mostly made by students seeking to imitate the masters. It still seems a common practice!

14th century, Italian stone carvers:
The stone carvers lead the way in commercially forgery, faking works of art by imitating Greek and Roman master craftsmen and creating sculptures which could and were to be sold to the rich as authentic antiques! Much the same tale as that of their Roman counterparts.

Jacopo di Poggibonsi: (1418-1449) Italian
There are many contemporary critics at the University of Michigan who label Jacopo di Poggibonsi as a “master forger”. This criticism stems from his purported imitation of the works of Fra Filippo Lippi which Cosimo de’ Medici in about 1447 realised he had copied elements of, from an Adoration hanging in the Medici Palace. However, many artists of the time engaged in imitations of the earlier styles and after all, in translation from the French renaissance does mean, "rebirth." Clearly, many Renaissance artists not only imitated earlier forms of art, but also each other's recent works. It was standard practise. History according to U of M has it however that Lippi was outraged and is believed to have hired paid muscle to track down di Poggibonsis’ studio where more alleged copies were found.

A few days later, thirty-one year old Jacopo, is found murdered in his bed. All in all a good story but sadly untrue.

Art History Students are advised to check this out very carefully. All may not be as it seems!

Piero del Pollaiuolo: (1443-1496) Italian

CONTENTS:
Made pastiches (copies) of works by artists such as Sandro Botticelli as illustrated here on the right. His, Profile of a woman is a straight copy of Portrait of a Woman (La Bella Simonetta) and this reproduction is now housed in the Museo Poldi-Pezzoli in Milan.

Famous art forgers

Michelangelo di Ludovico di Lionardo di Buonarroti Simoni: (1475-1564) Italian

It's widely believed that the world's greatest sculptor Michelangelo as a student, forged an "antique" marble cupid for his patron, Lorenzo de' Medici. It is certainly recorded that he also produced many replicas of the drawings of Italian painter Domenico Ghirlandajo (1449-1494) which were so good that on seeing them Ghirlandajo thought they were from his own hand.

"He also copied drawings of the old masters so perfectly that his copies could not be distinguished from the originals, since he smoked and tinted the paper to give it an appearance of age. He was often able to keep the originals and return the copies in their stead." — Vasari on Michelangelo

Giovanni Cavino and Pirro Ligorio: (1500-83) Italians.

Cavino was born in Padua in 1500. He was a goldsmith who faked medals and coins. Scholar Alessandro Bassiano often assisted. Both Cavino and Ligorio were master 16th century coin counterfeiters which is one of the earliest forms of faking and fraud. Coins have been counterfeited since they were first introduced by King Gyges of Lydia in 670 BC and it was pretty easy to accomplish. Casts could simply be made from original coins and new ones minted.

Hendrik Goltzius: (1558 - 1617) Dutch

Hendrik Goltzius was a Dutch master printmaker, draftsman and painter and a great master craftsman who produced copies of the works of other legendary artists and proved his talent. According to Hollstein, he credits 388 reproductions of great works of art to the process of engraving to Golzius.

Pieter Brueghel the Younger: (1564-1627) Flemish

Pieter Brueghel followed in his father’s footsteps and became best known at first as a copyist of several of his father’s rare works, particularly high quality copies of his father’s scenes of peasant life. One particular landscape painting now in the Delporte Collection in Brussels, is a copy of one which his father painted in 1556. This was one of the most popular paintings by Pieter Bruegel the Elder and was to be reproduced by many artists, especially by his son who copied it several times.

Peter Paul Reubens: (1577-1640) Flemish

Was a pre-eminent artist of the 17th century and his position in history is sealed forever. However lesser known is the fact that he actually resorted to copying and reworking many compositions and works created by others. Known copied works include those originally executed by Giulio Romano, 1499 to 1546. Before the Renaissance copying paintings created by others was a requisite part of any artists apprenticeship. It did not constitute forgery.

Wolfgang Küffner: (1760-1817) German

Faked Albrecht Dürer. In 1799, a self portrait by Albrecht Dürer from the Nuremberg Town Hall was loaned to Wolfgang Küffner. The painter successfully made a copy of the original and returned the fake in place of the original. On the right is an image of the Kuffner fake of 1799 after Durers self portrait.

William Henry Ireland: (C 1775) British Author of the Shakespeare Papers:

William Henry Ireland was the creator of many forged documents, miscellaneous papers and legal instruments believed to be William Shakespeare memorabilia.

(As laterly published as original and later by his father William Henry.)

He was the last time to become a literary master forger and made nothing of himself at school... his first venture into forgery...
He was the least sleek to become a literary master forger and made nothing of himseft at school. His first venture into forgery came after William saw how obsessed his father was at owning original Shakespeare memorabilia. This was on a trip to Stratford to collect material for Samuel's forthcoming publication, Picturesque views on the Upper, or Warwickshire Avon.

The first Shakespeare forgery he made was modest. A lease agreement for a property in Blackfriars and one closely based on one of the few genuine manuscripts available at the time bearing Shakespeare's legitimate signature. After this, the forgeries followed thick and fast and he became more and more proficient in their execution. As his father's acceptance of them was so rewarding, they were soon followed by others.

William Henry became more confident and ambitious, fabricating manuscripts and letters from and to Shakespeare even including a love letter to Anne Hathaway with an enclosed lock of her hair!!!

William even became an art faker, using a coloured drawing he had bought from a local antique dealer, making it into a representation of Shakespeare performing the part of Bassanio from The merchant of Venice, complete with signature. His father was overjoyed at all the finds and combined them into a master literary work, Miscellaneous papers and legal instruments under the hand and seal of William Shakespeare, which was published over the Christmas holiday period of 1795-1796. With scholarly challenges as to the authenticity of these documents and drawings ensuing, finally and seeing that the game was up, William Henry confessed the forgeries to his father. But his father never believed him and died in 1800 fully convinced that the documents were real.

Reinhold Vasters: (1827-1909) German

Vasters was a German master goldsmith and restorer who worked in Aachen from 1853 to 1890. It is widely believed that he was responsible for many forgeries, attributed as priceless Renaissance jewellery. In 1879, more than 1,000 workshop drawings by Vasters were discovered in the archives of the Victoria & Albert Museum in London and expert examination showed that these were fake pieces that had been sold to collections as Renaissance jewellery. Amongst the fakes he is believed to have created are; The Rospigliosi Cup sometimes referred to as the Cellini Cup and attributed to Jacop Billivert. The St. Hubert Tazza and a gold and emerald dragon pendant, thought to have been made in Spain at the end of the 16th century sold to the Rothchilds.

Paul Désiré Trouillebert: (1829-1900) French

Was a fine Barbizon painter in his own right but he also was a copyist and imitator of Corot as you will see from the image on the right. When he was first exposed to Corot’s work, Trouillebert took a very keen interest in it and immersed himself in emulating his techniques. He was so similar to Corot that if his signatures were erased and Corot’s forged added, enormous value was added to the work. All in all, the Corot fakes issue was compounded by Camile Corot himself, as he signed many reproduced works by other artists when asked simply because he felt honoured to be copied!

Denis Vrain Lucas: (c 1830) French

Was the most blatant French contemporary autograph forger. He produced forgeries from Galileo, Descartes, Newton, Rabelais and Louis XIV.

It’s recorded that within an eight year career, he produced and sold no less than 27,000 autographed manuscripts including a letter from Judas Iscariot to Mary Magdalene. His downfall: composing a letter from Cleopatra to Julius Caesar but in modern French!
Giovanni Bastianini: (1830-1868) Italian

Giovanni Bastianini, produced numerous neo-Renaissance works, especially busts and bas-reliefs in the style of Donatello, Verrocchio, Mino de Fiesole and other Italian Old Masters. Most of which were sold as genuine pieces to such noted museums as the Victoria and Albert Museum in London and the Louvre. Faker or just a copyist? You decide.

Right: Giovanni Bastianini: Buste de femme "Aloya Strozi"

Moses Shapira: 1830-1864

Jerusalem antiquities dealer and purveyor of fake biblical artifacts such as fake scrolls and forged Hebrew scripts. One issue in particular concerned a sheepskin manuscript which was supposed to have come from the Moabite hills to the East of the Red sea. He tried to convince the world that it was an early variation of the Book of Deuteronomy that dated from around the 9th century B.C., the era of Moses. Accused of many forgeries in his life and pursued by scandal, he shot himself in the Hotel Bloemendaal in Rotterdam on March 9, 1884.

Tadeu Hasdeu

A Romanian scholar and archivist who was a pioneer in Romanian language and historical studies but was likely responsible for the so-called 'Dacian' or 'Sinaia' lead plates. These were gibberish texts, probably manufactured to substantiate Romanian cultural nationalism in the 1880s.

Legend has it that the lead plates are in fact copies made at the Nail Factory of Sinaia in about 1875 from the originals, which were made out of gold.

They first appeared when the 200 lead plates were discovered in the archive warehouse of the Bucharest Museum of Antiquities in the late 19th century. Up to now, they have been widely ignored and considered as fakes because they looked so new, not showing any traces of corrosion.

Renewed interest in the plates has been shown however by experts more than a century later.

For more information see: Sorin Olteanu's Thraco-Daco-Moesian Languages Project (TDML)

Eugene Boban: (C1840) French

Eugene Boban was a French collector of pre-Columbian artefacts. Appointed archaeologist to the court of Maximilian and a successful antiques dealer who latterly ran a lucrative business in Mexico City, it is believed between 1862 and 1880. He was sent to Mexico by Napoleon III in 1860 to head a scientific commission to collect works of art which were to be exhibited in 1867 at the Tocadero Museum. Napoleon’s idea, perhaps copy Napoleon 1st success in an attempt to emulate his earlier explorations in Egypt?

Experts widely believe that Boban may well have had a part in the forgery itself, let alone the deception of the British Museum in relation to their “Aztec” rock crystal skull which was proven to be a fake after it was sold to them by Tiffany’s in 1897 and another at Paris’ Musée de l’Homme also suspect.

An investigation carried out by archivist, Jane Walsh at the Smithsonian in 1992, alleged that documents she unearthed reveal that it was Boban who had acquired the skull that were eventually sold to Tiffany’s in 1897. She also uncovered evidence that it was Boban who some years earlier tried to sell the same skull to the Smithsonian themselves and that it was Boban himself who sold a similar crystal skull to a collector who later donated it to the Musée de l’Homme in Paris.

It is believed that Boban likely acquired the skulls from sources in Germany where large quantities of Brazilian quartz crystal were shipped in the early nineteenth century.

As to the mystery surrounding the crystal skulls, it is said that “he who reveals the secret will die”

"Baron" Charles Weisberg (D 1945) American

Forged original letters along with surveys of mount Washington with signatures of the presidents and various celebrities. Served two terms in prison.

No known image exists.
Alfred André: (D 1919) French

A Parisian goldsmith and restorer who worked for a time for the Rothschild family. In 1994 Rudolph Distelberger, an Austrian museum curator, became suspicious of jewellery that had been given to the National Gallery of Washington by the American millionaire Peter Widener and his subsequent research lead him to the Andre workshops. There, Distelberger found drawers full of plaster casts and wax models of his fakes. At Sotheby's Rothschild sale in 2003, were three of Andre's fakes all with their history clearly marked. "Not only was Andre expertly restoring original Renaissance pieces," says the catalogue. "He was also creating examples in the Renaissance manner to satisfy the high demand among the collectors of the period."

Émile Schuffenecker: (1851-1934) French

Implicated with Wacker in the van Gogh fakes affair. One independent theory proposed by Ben Landais a Frenchman based in the Netherlands and his colleague Antonio de Robertis, which has caused considerable controversy in the art world. It concerns the Yasuda "Sunflowers" painted by Vincent van Gogh, in Arles in 1889 and suggests that it is a fake.

In a booklet published by Mr Landais, he claims that the picture is not by Van Gogh at all but is in fact a fake and the creation of Emile Schuffenecker, its owner, who exhibited it at Benheim in June of 1901. It has never been established whether he actually produced any forgeries at all?

The Gokhman Brothers & Israel Rouchomovsky (1860-1934) Russian. The unknowing faker.

Rouchomovsky was a brilliant Jewish goldsmith who was born in Mozyr, a small town near Minsk in Russia. His claim to infamy is that he unwittingly created an exquisite gold artifact which was sold as an ancient Scythian - Greek tiara known better as the "Tiara of Siatapheas" to the Louvre Museum in Paris but apparently without his knowledge. Experts there dated it to the third century B.C.!

In fact, the beautiful work, a tiara, bearing a Greek dedication in the form of a convincing inscription which confirmed it in their eyes as an ancient artifact, was actually a great deal younger.

It came to light that it had been created in Odessa in Russia only two years earlier in 1880 after a commission to the young Rouchomovsky by shady dealers known as the Gokhman brothers. After paying for it, the Gokhmans cleverly let it slip that they were on their way to sell their priceless Greek find to the British Museum.

Once there the Gokhmans cleverly let it slip that they were on their way to sell their priceless Greek find to the British Museum. After that, it didn't take long for the officials to get all hot and bothered, promptly purchasing the crown for a huge amount of money, some 200,000 gold francs!

It was only much later when German archeologist Rudolf Furtwanglerfirst labelled it as a forgery, that eyebrows were raised and others chipped in. It only took the Louvre seven years to announce to the public that the tiara was indeed a fake and they promptly removed it from public view!

Not wanting to be beaten, the Louvre once again bought artifacts which they didn't know emanated from the Gokhman shop in Ochakov. Here at the shop, it transpired that L Gokhman would sketch out artifact orders which would magically become treasures in silver and gold and pass the plans to jewellers and craftsmen to manufacture. They operated an extensive and very successful network of agents with one, Anyuta, a woman from Peroutino, a village on the site of the ancient city of Oliva, who would make regular visits to museums, offering up highly plausible stories of how the treasures were discovered buried and exhumed from a grave or turning up in excavations and so on!

So once again, this time in 1939, the Louvre bought another Scythian artifact in the form of a Golden horn in the likeness of a boar's head!

Said E R Stern, Director of the Archeological Museum in Odessa; "The shop would forge everything!"


Print forger and expert woodcut artist who it's allledged, used the designs of other artists to create new engraved blocks which would turn up as finds.

Ken Martens who is an attorney and print collector from Canada believes that the prints of Earl M. Washington have no historical significance but are rather more likely the production of a young man in Michigan who is trying to deceive buyers that the prints were produced in the early part of the 20C by his great grandfather!

Icilio Federico Joni: (1886-1946) Italian

Known as the prince of Sienese fakers. He specialized in Renaissance and Old Master paintings. Joni was so good that Old Master experts have called him one of the art world's most spectacularly inventive forgers.

Much of his success as a forger was due to the fact that he imitated either the works of lesser painters such as Sano di Pietro or the undistinguished works of more famous artists, which could deceive even the best connoisseur. It is widely believed that he was responsible for a Madonna and Child with Angels supposedly by Sano di Pietro in the Cleveland Museum of Art collection (Exposed in 1948). A Triptych in the Courtauld Institute Gallery and a Madonna & Child, Saint Maria Maddalena and Saint Sebastiano in the style of Neroccio di Bartolomeo Landi in the Lehman Collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York.
Joseph van der Veken: (1872 - 1964) Belgian

Joseph van der Veken was the official art restorer to the Royal Museums in Belgium and considered to be one of the forefathers of restoration of old masters in Belgium. He is now better associated with a fake painting scam! The production of 'Mary Magdalen' that had been long attributed to the Flemish artist Hans Memling (1430-1494) Van der Veken was also accused of faking many other Flemish Primitives during his lifetime and it was later to be proven that indeed the Memling was a fabrication, a fake created in the 1920s.

According to Christina Ceulemans who was a department head of the Royal Institute for the Study and Conservation of Belgium's Artistic Heritage, like Van Meegeren, van der Veken also sold a painting, the Mary Magdalen panel, to Herman Goering during the second world war, after which it disappeared.

Like a bad penny, it turned up again in 2004, when a Scandinavian man took the picture in to be appraised. Ceulemans said that Van der Veken, had worked creating commissioned copies of art and that in this case he had scraped an authentic 15th century panel down and painted his own old master, complete with craquelure.


James Edward Little: (1876-1953) British

An antiques dealer and restorer who worked and lived in Torquay on Devon’s south coast where he specialised in selling ethnographic material and Polynesian artefacts and although he’d never set foot in the South Pacific in his life. His specialization was forging and selling Maori artefacts.

His modus operandi was to place advertisements in the Exchange and Mart newspaper and soon had a string of serious collectors as clients. Starting up in the process, one of Britains first antiques mail order businesses.

In his career, Little fooled museum directors, scholars and art collectors across the world. All bought into the idea that his forged or stolen Polynesian artefacts and their associated documentation were real.

Little's best work was often direct copies of authentic Maori artefacts, instruments, curiosities and trinkets. His master plan was to steal artefacts from museums, copy the pieces accurately, replace them with fakes and sell the originals on. As a master thief however, he was next to useless and he bungled many criminal attempts.

In 1915 he stole a decorated Maori wooden box from a Wiltshire museum, substituting the original for one of his fakes. But it was noticed.

Little was tracked down by police having signed the visitors' book at the museum with a false name in - Another Little bungle as he was the only visitor at the museum for three days!

He was arrested and sent to prison for six months, serving more time up and into the 1930’s for attempted theft from various museums and auction houses. Even so, he was never actually convicted of forgery.

Alceo Dossena: (1878-1937) Italian

Dossena didn’t set out to copy sculptures but just happened to be so adept at using the techniques of the Greek and Renaissance sculptors that many of his works were bought by unknowing collectors and museum curators who were convinced that they were authentic!

This was principally down to his dealer Alfredo Fasoli who marketed them as priceless antiquities.

Dossena successfully defended himself at his trial and was acquitted of the charges set against him claiming that he’d been unaware that his dealer was selling his work under false pretences.

Jean de Sperati: (1884-1967) French Known as: The King of Counterfeits and as the Rubens of Philately.

Sperati was the master forger born in Italy but spending most of his life in France. He was noted as the faker of pre-1920 Australian stamps which even the authenticators believed to be authentic. This included the red 1913 - £2 stamp and the Hong Kong olive 1965 - 96 cent stamp.

Like many before him and indeed after him, he considered himself to be an artist and not a counterfeiter.

In 1942, Sperati came into conflict with the law when French customs officials seized a shipment of German stamps and found some to be forgeries. Sperati claimed that they were not forgeries but simply copies.

It didn't wash and he got a year for his trouble and was fined 310,000 francs for his criminal intentions.

Sperati is best known in Australia for his excellent 1913 £2 Kangaroo stamp forgeries of which dozens are now in collector hands. Today, the stamp forgeries of Jean de Sperati are considered to be some of the best of the world and are selling at Sotheby’s and Christies, legitimately as fakes, for thousands of pounds.

Joseph Cosey aka Martin Coneely: (1887-1950) American

Cosey stole a Benjamin Franklin document from the Library of Congress in the 1930's which began his career as an autograph forger and copyist of presidential handwriting.

Han van Meegeren: (1889-1947) Dutch

Han van Meegeren was charged with having sold a Dutch national treasure in the form of a Vermeer painting which later turned out to be a fake. In German military leader Hermann Goering, Van Meegeren defended himself in 1944 by demonstrating that he...
out to be a fake, to German military leader Hermann Goering. Van Meegeren defended himself in court by demonstrating that he had painted the Vermeer masterpiece himself. He also brilliantly forged paintings of some of the world's most famous artists including; Frans Hals, Pieter de Hooch and Gerard Peter Borch. His story is well documented.

**Otto Wacker: (1898-1976) German**
Notorious German art dealer and Berlin cabaret performer and the faker of at least 33 unknown Vincent van Gogh canvases that were supposedly painted 35 years before they were found. In 1932 Wacker was charged with fraud and after an appeal, was sentenced to 19 months in prison.

**The Spanish Forger: Active late 19th early 20 C.**
So called unidentified forger responsible for producing a vast number of forgeries of medieval miniatures.

**Chang Dai-chien / Zhang Daqian: (1899-1983) Chinese**
Regarded by many art experts as one of the most gifted master forgers of the twentieth century and was renowned for being a professional forger but also as a dealer used to sell genuine paintings. When he noticed that his buyers couldn't tell the difference he turned to fakes! Chang produced outstanding works reminiscent of the Ming master Shitao, as well as controversial imitations often regarded as forgeries during the early part of his career.

**A. Beers. (19C) Belgian**
A. Beers, was a faker of fakes. A 19th-century Belgian artist who according to art historian Hans Tietze; "because Beers didn't have time to fill all his commissions, he had inferior artists make copies of his paintings. When they were well done he signed them himself. Tietze wrote. When they were not, he had the copyists sign them with his name for him, thus, if they aroused suspicion, he could disown them. By this method, Beers himself helped to forge genuine and even fake A.Beers paintings!

**Yves Chaudron: (C 1900) French**
Was reputed to be one of the most gifted counterfeiter in the art world. A respected conservator but really a master forger, from his studio in the Bohemian artist district, Montmarte. Chaudron would copy great paintings which had been lost or stolen, which his collaborator the Edouardo Marquis of Valfiero would then sell on to collectors. He was most notoriously responsible for copying Da Vinci’s La Gioconda in the famous 1911 Mona Lisa painting theft from the Louvre.

**Edouardo Marquis of Valfiero: (C 1900) Argentinian**
Was a small-time South American conman from Argentina who made his living by scamming art collectors. Valfiero sold fake Spanish masters, such as Bartolome’ Murillo, in Buenos Aires and was the brains behind the Mona Lisa Art theft.

**Real Lessard: (C 1900) Canadian**
Painter and dealer and part of the forgery partnership with Elmyr de Hory. He worked for an agent called Fernand Legros who was selling de Hory's forged art production along with fake certificates of authenticity.

**Elmyr de Hory: (1906-1976) Hungarian**
Hungarian art forger who lived on the island of Ibiza. He made hundreds of art forgeries and duped collectors with his Picassos, Modiglianis and Matisses but also painted works signed Van Dongen. The Dutch artist himself, towards the end of his life and in need of money, is said to have endorsed more than once the validity
Elmyr de Hory: (1919-1984) British

Elmyr de Hory, known as "Armin Hull" (1919-1984) was a British rogue who is best known for his extensive career as a forger. Born into a poor family, he failed to achieve any real fame in the art world and felt himself shunned. Like many artists, he saw the art world and in particular the gallery system as utterly rotten. He thought that the art world did not truly recognise his true talent but more often than not, he painted fakes just for fun! He principally concentrated on the production of fake animal art. Old Gloucestershire spot pigs, prize bulls and sheep, but very impoverished artists.

As he himself wrote; "I have always been the master of faking, and I am one of the few who has made a fortune by doing so". He is reported to have forged over 2,000 paintings by something like 100 artists, the most notorious of which was the Haywain — which he painted backwards! Not satisfied with just that, he would always plant obvious flaws within the compositions and often used materials which dated the original time frame of the fake he'd painted by hundreds of years. As a younger man in the 30s, he had made a special study of German typography and printing techniques and had been a professional printer before the war. As an expert, he was made responsible for espionage forgeries and propaganda, as well as forgeries of postage stamps. This includes the forgery of German ration cards, orders and letters. The scale of the operation was massive.

As the Daily Express’s chief foreign correspondent Setton Delmer wrote later: "...it became necessary for us to forge signatures and handwriting. Once we needed to forge a letter written by one of Goebbels’s astrologers. Hull produced the perfect forgery within three days."

Derek Hughes: (1925 - 2003) British

Derek Hughes exists. No known image of Derek Hughes exists. If you have one, Contact us.

British Station and Jail!

A prime example of his dry humour, he exhibited many of his works at Constables Studio which was housed in the Old Fowey Police Station and Jail!

Surviving the war, Howe went on to write many books on typography, astrology and the occult.


Armin Hull, the non-de-plume of Eric Howe and it was Howe who became the man who was put in charge of Britain's forgery and counterfeiting operation during World War Two with SOE (the Special Operations Executive). A young man in the 30s, he had made a special study of German typography and printing techniques and had been a professional printer before the war. As an expert, he was made responsible therefore for espionage forgeries and propaganda, as well as forgeries of postage stamps. This includes the forgery of German ration cards, orders and letters. The scale of the operation was massive.

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Waterlows in Dunstable was where forged documents for secret agents were printed in the UK and the printing itself took place at local newspaper presses in Luton.

Bernhard Kruger: Howes German counterpart was: SS Major Bernhard Kruger and Kruger’s forgers were based in Sachsenhausen Concentration Camp located near Oranienburg bei Berlin.

Surviving the war, Howe went on to write many books on typography, astrology and the occult.

Tom Keating: (1917-1984) British

Thomas Patrick Keating, a true cockney born in Lewisham. He made a particular specialty out of producing forged watercolours by Samuel Palmer and fine oil paintings by Dutch, Flemish, English and French old masters. The famous yet loveable British rogue was a remarkable forger who certainly showed up all the experts in a forgery career which landed him in jail charged for conspiracy to defraud!

Born into a poor family, he failed to achieve any real fame in the art world and felt himself shunned and just like many artists before and indeed after him, he turned to faking to prove his talent. This was likely to get his own back on society as Keating saw the art world and in particular the gallery system as utterly rotten.

As he himself wrote; "Avant-garde fashion, with critics and dealers often conniving to line their own pockets at the expense both of naive collectors and impoverished artists".

Tom Keating effectively avenged himself by producing forgeries of all sorts in a prolific and remarkable career. Oil paintings, watercolours and drawings flowed out of his studio, all of which were certified as genuine works by artists such as Gainsborough, Renoir, Van Dongen, Degas, Fragonard, Boucher, Modigliani and of course Samuel Palmer. One clear and important point that was missed was that Keating planted "time bombs" in all his pictures. Often writing snide or blatantly rude comments in lead white on the canvas before he started the painting, knowing full well that if the works were examined properly in the first place and x-rayed, they'd show up!

Not satisfied with just that, he would always plant obvious flaws within the compositions and often used materials which dated the original time frame of the fake he'd painted by hundreds of years. Admitting to painting over 200 Cornelius Krieghoff pastiches which are still floating around Canada somewhere today, he was prolific to say the least and of his John Constables and other fine reproductions and there is only an estimate of what is out there! He is reported to have forged over 2,000 paintings by something like 100 artists, of which one was a remarkable piece was the Haywain — which he painted backwards!

Ironically, after confessing in 1976, he was to star in his own major television program on Channel 4 in the UK on how to paint like the masters!

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Surviving the war, Howe went on to write many books on typography, astrology and the occult.

Tom Keating: (1917-1984) British

Thomas Patrick Keating, a true cockney born in Lewisham. He made a particular specialty out of producing forged watercolours by Samuel Palmer and fine oil paintings by Dutch, Flemish, English and French old masters. The famous yet loveable British rogue was a remarkable forger who certainly showed up all the experts in a forgery career which landed him in jail charged for conspiracy to defraud!

Born into a poor family, he failed to achieve any real fame in the art world and felt himself shunned and just like many artists before and indeed after him, he turned to faking to prove his talent. This was likely to get his own back on society as Keating saw the art world and in particular the gallery system as utterly rotten.

As he himself wrote; "Avant-garde fashion, with critics and dealers often conniving to line their own pockets at the expense both of naive collectors and impoverished artists".

Tom Keating effectively avenged himself by producing forgeries of all sorts in a prolific and remarkable career. Oil paintings, watercolours and drawings flowed out of his studio, all of which were certified as genuine works by artists such as Gainsborough, Renoir, Van Dongen, Degas, Fragonard, Boucher, Modigliani and of course Samuel Palmer. One clear and important point that was missed was that Keating planted "time bombs" in all his pictures. Often writing snide or blatantly rude comments in lead white on the canvas before he started the painting, knowing full well that if the works were examined properly in the first place and x-rayed, they'd show up!

Not satisfied with just that, he would always plant obvious flaws within the compositions and often used materials which dated the original time frame of the fake he'd painted by hundreds of years. Admitting to painting over 200 Cornelius Krieghoff pastiches which are still floating around Canada somewhere today, he was prolific to say the least and of his John Constables and other fine reproductions and there is only an estimate of what is out there! He is reported to have forged over 2,000 paintings by something like 100 artists, of which one was a remarkable piece was the Haywain — which he painted backwards!

Ironically, after confessing in 1976, he was to star in his own major television program on Channel 4 in the UK on how to paint like the masters!

Derek Hughes: (1925 - 2003) British

A gentleman British master of faking English Naive and Provincial School primitives usually executed on timber panels and old canvas pot boilers which he cleaned off with thinners. His supplies of wood, canvasses and particularly old paint, were bought in regularly from local auctioneers in Cornwall. Looe, Lostwithiel and Par were his own favourite haunts before he contracted Parkinsons and couldn’t get around much but he had a regular team of friends supplying him with product on which to paint. He principally concentrated on the production of fake animal art. Old Gloucestershire spot pigs, prize bulls and sheep, but very successfully reproduced many works purportedly by Eugene Boudin.

He lived, taught painting and worked vociferously from a studio on the Espanade in Fowey where many of the fake paintings were exhibited in his bay window for holidaymakers to see. Derek colluded with the local baker who happily ‘baked’ his works in the large bread ovens to give them age in return for the odd masterpiece many of which lined the walls of his three story town house. As he told me many times and like Tom Keating, Derek turned to his tongue in cheek faking simply to get his own back a bit on an art world that did not truly recognise his true talent but more often than not, he painted fakes just for fun! A prime example of his dry humour, he exhibited many of his works at Constables Studio which was housed in the Old Fowey Police Station and Jail!
Enrico & Piero Penelli: (19 C) Italian

Enrico, was a restorer from the Louvre. One day in 1893, he casually informed experts at the British Museum, that an Egyptian sarcophagus held in their collection had been made by him and his brother and that they had formerly buried it in Certeveri! They very successfully flooded the Italian market with clay masterpieces.

Miguel Canals: 1925- 1995 Spanish

Legitimate Copyist

Commercial paintings produced by the Barcelona based studio of Miguel Canals have been successfully offered for sale by top Auctioneers Bonhams for many years, giving the works an air of social respectability. The Spanish studio claims no anonymity as all the paintings produced here carry clear and definitive studio stamps on the back. The studio to this day, specialise in producing outstanding reproductions and variations of works in the manner of many artists, styles and sizes and cover every subject imaginable; from a Parisian Street Scene to a romantic Victorian portrait to a still-life with birds, fruit and flowers.

Miguel Canals was responsible for founding one of the first and most highly successful studios to mass produce high-quality fakes that are neither designed to confound nor defraud the buyer. They're sold for their decorative merits only. Today, the manufacture of these works is continued by his family at the studio in Barcelona, which is staffed by 14 master copyists. Each has a specialist period, style or painter as their expertise. It's true to say that many of their copies carry a facsimile signature of the original painter they are reproducing but only if the work is out of copyright (70 years) and it was signed by the artist in the first place. This makes it legal.

Lothar Malskat: (1913-1968) and Dietrich Fey, German

This pair were German master forgers who swamped the German art market with up to 2,000 expert imitations of 71 ancient and modern masters. Everything from Rembrandts to Utrillo's, they masterfully copied such artists as Degas, Corot, Gauguin, Renoir, Rousseau, Chagall and Munch, with Malskat doing all of the faking work. Sometimes he would copy famous old paintings, sometimes imitate the style of old masters. Incredibly, Malskat could forge one a day and was so good at faking the French impressionists that they took less than an hour to make. Fey then forged the signatures on the paintings.

Unfortunately, the pair went too far when they were involved with the 'restoring' of Gothic murals and Frescoes which magically appeared whenever they worked.

Fey's firm were commissioned to restore the frescoes of a cathedral, the Marienkirche in Lübeck which had been severely damaged in World War II. The medieval frescoes on its walls had nearly disappeared! Fey's company happily did the work usefully, behind closed doors! The restorations finishing in 1951. The restorers were immediately praised for their good work and for discovering upreviously unknown Frescoes. The new treasures were unveiled with great ceremony during the 700 anniversary celebrations of the founding of the Marienkirche; Embarassingly as it would transpire, with dignitaries in attendance at the unveiling which included various government ministers such as Federal Chancellor Konrad Adenauer, the West German government celebrated the finds by printing 2 million postage stamps depicting the newly found frescoes!

In 1952, Malskat, Fey's assistant, announced that he had painted the frescoes himself and instead of restoring the original frescoes, had whitewashed the walls and painted them with new works. Both were arrested. Fey got 20 months and Malskat 18. The frescoes were rapidly removed from the church walls.

When asked why had he confessed? Malskat said that he was angry that his partner Fey grabbed all the glory over the restoration of St. Mary's old frescoes!

Elizabeth Durack: (1915 - 2000) Australian

A Western Australian artist, who signed paintings as the work of Eddie Burrup, who it turned out, was a non existent aboriginal artist.

* The Deletion of the Amiel family story from our web page:

At the insistence of Ms. Sarina Amiel, the educational information we previously collated from publicly available sources on the Amiel family's alleged activities connected with the selling and distribution of illicit fine art prints, this section has been removed from its historical dateline position on this information page as she feels it is inappropriate for the family to be associated or listed alongside forgers and or information relating to fakes and forgery.

As Ms. Amiel took great pains to point out to us in an e mail in which she complained of the stories inclusion, none of those involved were ever charged nor convicted of forgery or art fraud nor of faking works of art, but only of 'mail fraud' and it is therefore inappropriate for them to be accurately included here under any of our headings.

Sadly, as Ms. Amiel is offended by the families prior inclusion in this copious list of the worlds most successful and even 'admired individuals' who were, or have ever been accused or involved with illegal activities associated with art, we naturally do not wish to cause them or her any offence and subsequently have immediately complied with her wishes and removed the section entirely.

Happy Christmas anyway Ms Amiel!
Fernand Legros: (1931–1983) Egyptian

Fernand Legros was an Egyptian born American art dealer who sold the forgeries of Elmyr de Hory conspiring together with Real Lesard. It is believed that Legros kept most of the profits from his dealings across America in selling fakes, without telling De Hory.

Eric Hebborn: (1934-1996) British

It’s written that: “Hebborn was a rogue who had no limits to his skulduggery.” Eric Hebborn was a British forger who defrauded the art world in the 1960s with purportedly over a thousand Old Master drawings. Hebborn copied the style of artists such as; Corot, Castiglione, Van Dyck, Poussin, Savelli Sperandio, Francesco del Cossa, Mantegna, Ghisi, Rubens, Tiepolo, Piranesi and Jan Breughel, with huge success, duping great art auction houses, including Christie’s and made a good living out of duplicating works of art for owners who didn’t want the real thing hanging on the wall. Apparently even the Foreign office were clients of his. Hebborn died under mysterious circumstances in 1996.

David Stein: (1935 - 1999) French

David Stein is a French born forger who never physically copied a painting but painted in the style of; Chagall, Picasso, Matisse, Braque, Paul Klee, Miro, Jean Cocteau and Rouault and got away with it, that is until he was jailed in the 60’s. See the book “Three Picassos Before Breakfast” having served a prison term in the USA, he was deported to his native france, where he served another sentence.

Konrad Kujau: (1938-2000) German

The German author of the Hitler Diaries. Again very well recorded. Many of the manufactured relics he sold included military helmets, uniforms, flags, medals, forged letters and documents allegedly by former SS officials. Yet, of all the items he sold, his most popular were paintings purportedly created by Hitler.

Petra Kujau (Claimed to be great niece) 2010

Bizarrely in a strange twist, following a two-year long trial which centred on 300 paintings obtained by Dresden art dealer Petra Kujau from the far east, it seems she put his signature on them and sold them on as fake paintings by Konrad Kujau himself, claiming they were the works the elderly Stuttgart forger had made in his latter years. Forgeries of forgeries. She admitted to 40 counts of fraud having bought paintings in Asia and selling them on as “Kujau forgeries” for a total of €300,000 (£247,000). Her 56-year-old male accomplice received a 20-month suspended sentence and 120 hours’ community service. The court gave her a two-year suspended sentence.

Jean-Pierre Schecroun: (C 1940) French

Jean-Pierre Schecroun was a French art forger arrested for his Picasso forgeries in 1962. At the time he had admitted to making eight forgeries in two years. Before he was arrested and charged with forgery in 1962, Schecroun had produced about 80 works purported to be by Picasso and others. The pictures were said to have brought in about £25,000 in two years.

Pamela and Ivan Liberto: (C 1942) Australians

Were jailed for nine months in 2007 after forging works by aboriginal artist Rover Thomas, four of which sold for over $307,000 through auction houses including Sotheby’s and Christie’s.
**Geert Jan Jansen: (B 1943) French**

Has been called by the French police, the most sophisticated and prolific master forger that ever lived. He had over 12 million in Swiss bank accounts and 3 false identities. Not clever enough though as Dutch painter Karel Appel recognized one of Jansen's forgeries as his own work. When police investigated the farm where Jansen had his studio, they found 1600 forged paintings, including works purportedly by Cocteau, Dufy, Ferdinand Errman, Charles Eyck, Leo Gestel, Bart van der Leck, Matisse, Miro and the most popular target of all, Picasso. Jansen was sentenced to one-year imprisonment and five additional years suspended sentence.

Many thanks to Mr Peter Leutscher, who has added some information about Geert Jansen.

Mr Leutscher tell ArtFake that "He was, however, NOT apprehended in a farm, but in a French Chateau in La Chaux, all his adventures are written in a book about him called "Magenta" written with his consent. Publisher Prometheus, September 2008.

His last known residence is: Castle Beverweerd, near the village of Werkhoven, province of Utrecht, in the Netherlands, where he has a studio and exposes art he now signs with his own name, in the style of any artist wanted.

We thank Mr Leutscher for his contribution.

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**John Myatt (B 1945) and John Drewe: (B 1948) British**

British artist John Myatt painted fake works of Jean Dubuffet, Nicolas de Stael, Marc Chagall, Graham Sutherland, Ben Nicholson and Alberto Giacometti, with John Drewe cleverly forging false documentation and provenances and planting the information in archive. It was to be one of the biggest modern day art forgery scams and it rocked the art world to its boots.

60 of the fakes were recovered by police but another 140 still remain at large.

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**William Blundell: (B 1947) Australian**

An Australian who painted works for Sydney art dealer Germaine Marie François Toussaint Curvers in the manner of many Australian artists such as; Charles Blackman, Arthur Boyd, William Dobell, Russell Drysdale, Sidney Nolan, Lloyd Rees, Arthur Streeton, but also very successfully, Monet, Picasso and Brett Whiteley.

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**John Douglas O'Loughlin: (1948-) Australian**

In 2001, an Adelaide art dealer who sold fake Dreamtime art, purportedly to be by Aboriginal artist Clifford Possum Tjapaltjarri, was found guilty of deception. In 1999, police were called in to make enquiries after experts queried the authenticity of dot paintings hanging in his Sydney gallery. O'Loughlin, told the court that he was allowed to make Tjapaltjarri paintings because he was given a "skin name" during a ceremonial kangaroo hunt and was therefore Tjapaltjarri's cousin and entitled to!

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**Shinichi Fujimura: (B.1950) Japanese**

Shinichi Fujimura is a scandalised Japanese amateur archaeologist who was accused and caught on film planting fake specimens and relics in archaeological digs to gain more prestige. Newspapers famously published pictures of Fujimura digging holes and burying the artifacts that his team later found.

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**Tony Tetro: (B.1950) American**
Tony Tetro is an American, born in 1950. A massively prolific art forger whose works vary from Chagall to Rembrandt and Dali to Rothko. Deceiving the art world very successfully throughout the 70's and 80's. Convicted of art forgery in a show trial in Los Angeles. He was released from jail in 1994.

Thomas McAnea: (1950) Scots “Hologram Tam”

A Glaswegian master bank note forger. Reputedly responsible for forging some £700,000 worth of bank notes at Print Link Ltd. and subsequently sentenced in 2007 for six and a half years in prison. McAnea had previously walked free from a 10-year sentence for counterfeiting after earlier an conviction in 1998 was overturned following his appeal.

Lawrence Cusack: (1951) American

Was convicted in 1999 for forging papers supposedly by J F Kennedy and Marilyn Monroe, letters which he claimed were proof certain of a steamy relationship between them. Called the most audacious and most profitable hoax since the Hitler diaries, the case was known as the Cusack Papers. His defence was that he had found more than 700 pages of documents written by JFK, his brother Robert Kennedy and Monroe, amongst the files of his father, Lawrence Cusack Sr, who died in 1985.

Robert Thwaites: (B.1952) British UPDATE

Produced forgeries of British Victorian oil paintings. He even conned an Antiques Roadshow expert Rupert Maas into buying one of his 19th century fakes purportedly by John Anster Fitzgerald and was jailed for two years in the process.

*APOLOGY: Our sincere apologies to Mr Rupert Maas of the Maas Gallery for mistakenly placing his image instead of that of Robert Thwaites in this descriptor prior to this update. 18.4.09.  This was an unintentional error on our part and in no way was any malice or disrespect intended. We apologise to Mr Maas for any embarrassment, annoyance or inconvenience this may have caused him and thank him for bringing this matter to our attention.

Ely Sakhai: (B 1952) Iranian

Ely Sakhai is a Manhattan gallery owner, charged with forging works by numerous post-Impressionist and Impressionist painters. According to the FBI, Sakhai had bought the real Gauguin years earlier, painted a duplicate and sold the fake copy to a Japanese collector. Sakhai then brazenly put the original up for auction in an attempt to double his profits. It was a pure fluke that the unwitting owner of the Tokyo forgery decided to resell his copy at the same time. But for that coincidence, the forgery might never have been identified.

Sakhai allegedly duplicated 25 works by the painters; Claude Monet, Marc Chagall, Pierre-Auguste Renoir, Paul Gauguin and Paul Klee amongst others... Prosecutors claimed he had been pursuing his forgeries racket for about 14 years and an estimate of his profits sits at $3.5 million. In March 2004, Sakhai was charged with a total of 8 counts of art fraud and deception but was released on bail. In July of 2005 he was sentenced to 41 months in prison, fined $12.5 million and ordered to forfeit eleven art works, for the crime of federal mail fraud.

Mark William Hofmann (B 1954) American ‘The Utah Bomber.’

Mark Hofmann has built for himself the reputation of being a notorious dealer in forged historical documents but is widely regarded as one of the most successful document, coin and banknote forgers in US history. His downfall involved a criminal deception & the Mormon church in a Hofmann scam by convincing them that he had discovered vital documents relating to the church’s founding history. Counting on their ultimate desire to suppress anything negative in its possible content, he set about the felony Sounding dramatically as if they were penned for Jason Bourne by Robert Ludlum, these forged documents included amongst others: the Salamander Letter, the Anthon Transcript, the Far West Letter the Stowell Letter and Blessing of Joseph Smith III. On October 15, 1985, two motion activated booby-trapped shrapnel bombs, both hidden in parcels addresses to church officials, exploded in Salt Lake City, Utah, killing two people.

Steven F. Christensen, a Mormon bishop and Kathleen Sheets whose husband was also a bishop in the Mormon Church. Both, it is believed, were involved with negotiations between the church and Hofmann for the secret purchase of the ‘recently discovered’ documents.

Eventually, Hofmann, after a confession to police authorities, was charged with theft and deception relating to hundreds of thousands of dollars from Mormon Church leaders through the sale of forged historical documents and with two counts of first-degree murder. He is currently serving a sentence of 5 years to life in Utah state prison.
Ethem Ulge: (B.1964) Turkish

Hillsborough Police say the 44 year old native of Turkey, netted about $200,000 in bogus art sales in the USA in 2007. Under the eBay username "pakmailseller24," he offered fake paintings on eBay and was arrested in 2008. He is thought to have netted about $200,000.

Pedro Castorena Ibarra: (C 1965) Mexican

According to U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement officials. Pedro Castorena who was on the US, 10 most-wanted fugitives list, is accused of heading the family-run enterprise that has dominated the document-forging industry in the United States since the late 1980s. Supplying bogus identity papers to millions of illegal immigrants over the last two decades. It is alleged that the Fake Documents Cartel operated in 33 states.

Brigido Lara: (20 C) South American

A Mexican forger of pre-Columbian antiquities who created many items in the style of the Mayans, Aztecs. Lara sold his work as genuine Mexican antiquities with buyers not asking too many questions since they believed they were buying contraband. Lara went to jail in 1974 for a year.

Christian Goller: (B 1974) German

Faker of a work supposedly painted by Matthias Grünewald. The work was subsequently reattributed. Cleveland Museum of Art paid US$1 million.

Christophe D. Petyt: (20 C) French Legitimate Copyist

Runs a Paris-based art company formed in 1992, L'Art du Faux, that employs more than 80 highly talented artists. All are specialists in copying particular styles, periods and specific artists, Degas, Renoir, Cezanne and so on and all ingeniously create individually commissioned copies of master works. The company's decorative fakes are clearly labelled and as an additional security measure, a piece of gold leaf is worked into each picture. L'Art du Faux boasts galleries in the United Arab Emirates and Palm Beach Florida.

Kenneth Andrew Walton: (20 C) American

An American software developer and author of his memoir FAKE: Forgery, Lies and eBay, which relives his time spent selling forged art on the online auction site eBay. In May 2000, he auctioned a painting attributed to Richard Diebenkorn on Ebay which sold for for $135,858.00 which was a fake. His Crime. Internet fraud. He and Fetterman were charged with Shill bidding. Bidding on the item themselves.

Kenneth Fetterman: (20 C) American

Scam artist who occasionally partnered with Kenneth Walton to sell very expensive counterfeit art on rigged 'on line' auctions.

Guy Hain: (20C) French

On January 17th 1997, Guy Hain, nicknamed "the Duke of Burgundy, a well-known French bronze dealer appeared before a court in Lure, central France, under charges accusing him of having produced thousands of faked sculptures which eventually were sold as originals of Rodin, Renoir, Maillot, Camille Claudel, Carpeaux, Barye, Fremiet, Mène and other sculptors. The French art forger who produced a large number of fake bronze sculptures, the most famous pretending to be by Rodin, was sentenced to four years in jail on June 28, 1997 but served only 18 months. He was to be rearrested 2002. This time evidence collected by Dijon police department consisted of 1,100 copies of works of 98 different French sculptors. The prosecutor asked for five years in prison and FF2/2 million fine! The faking scam is said to be worth more than $60 million. It's is estimated that he produced something like 6,000 copies beyond those that the police had previously confiscated. Only one-third of the copies have ever been traced!
Frank X. Kelly: (20 C)

The Posin Brothers. (20C) Russian
Legitimate Copyist
Mikhail, Evgeni and Semjon Posin are three Russian brothers working in Germany who make a living by copying famous works of art: Van Gogh, Renoir. Bernardo Strozzi, Pissarro and so on. All are brilliantly reproduced.

Leo Stevenson: (20 C) British
Legitimate Copyist
Artist, historian and broadcaster. This copyists view is that the easiest paintings in the world to forge are modern British masters. However, he protects his own works from being mistaken for the genuine article by placing invisible inscriptions beneath his paintings which can be picked up by X-ray. He was quoted as saying: "a forger's main task is always the creation of relevant documents. This is often far harder to do convincingly than the creation of the artwork." They call the art of copying the masters 'Pastiching'.

The Greenhalgh family. (20C)
The lastest massive art faking scandal to hit the media and rock the art world.
Mastermind, Shaun Greenhalgh never made art school and must have carried a huge chip on his shoulder over rejection by an art world which was much the same as with Tom Keating and the way he felt about the world.
Greenhalgh instead, turned very successfully to faking a huge variety of Art Treasures, from Egyptian figures and Assyrian reliefs to paintings by Gaugin, Peploe and Lowry.
His parents, George and Olive, convincingly approached clients, while his older brother, George jnr, managed the money. Over a million pounds was made they say.

Bulgaria: (21st Century)
Has recently become a source for counterfeit ancient Greek and Roman coins!

Nigeria: (21st Century)
In particular the Oluwole area of Lagos
Here its said that anything can be and is forged!
Police recently seized; 50,000 assorted foreign cheques, 10,000 blank British Airways tickets and 10,000 United States Postal Money Orders!

Dr. Vilas Vishwan Likhite
Vilas Vishwan Likhite a 67-year old former Harvard Medical School professor was convicted and sentenced to a year in prison for attempting to sell fake Mary Cassatt drawings in 2004. Likhite had also sold an "Edgar Degas," a "Pierre Bonnard," and a "Daniel Ridgeway Knight" according to a local entrepreneur, Anthony Biancaniello, who had subsequently brought criminal charges against him.
In July of 2005 a Manhattan art dealer Chantal Park of Art History inc. alleged she spent $145,000.00 for a fake drawing called "Personnage Endormi et Femme Accroupie" (Sleeping Person and Kneeling Woman) allegedly created by Picasso and deemed fake by his daughter Maya Picasso. She paid to Charles Locke of Duluth, Georgia and to Biagio Cugini of Maynard, Massachusetts $145,000 for the fake piece. The judge entered a $175,000 judgment against Cugini and his co-defendant in their absence.

Cugini was a co-defendant in California in the mid 1980s in an additional alleged art fraud case involving $600,000.00 and the fake sale of art. In the case in 1985, Cugini and an associate were charged with art forgery and fraud involving artists which included fakes purportedly by Hans Hofmann, Jackson Pollock and Willem de Kooning. The case, however, was dropped.

August 26, 2010

The now sixty-eight-year-old Luigi Cugini was arrested again by the FBI in Florida recently accused of trying to sell counterfeit works of art by Picasso, Matisse and John Singer Sargent. He was also alleged to have forged Sotheby’s provenance documents confirming their authenticity. Marketing the paintings by deceit as part of the private collection of his grandfather Joseph Coletti dec’d, it seems he lied about being the grandson of the late Joseph Coletti, a Boston-area sculptor. Undercover FBI agents investigated Cugini for six months posing as a jewellry broker in order to trick Cugini. Cugini intended to sell three paintings claimed to be the authentic works of Sargent, for $565,000. He told the undercover agent that the works were called “A Gust of Wind,” “Under the Willows” and “Head of a Young Woman.”

In addition to the ongoing undercover operation that led to Cugini’s arrest, the FBI had previously been investigating Cugini for selling a counterfeit Picasso watercolour in March and for offering to sell $28 million dollars worth of fake paintings purportedly by Matisse to a dealer who later became a confidential informant for the government.

Cugini is currently charged with mail fraud! This complaint is only an accusation and a defendant Cugini is presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.

Tatiana Khan and art restorer Picasso faker Maria Apelo Cruz

69 year old Tatiana Khan, a West Hollywood antiques dealer admitted to having a Picasso drawing replicated in 2006 order to sell it for $2 million. In a complaint against her, it is reported that Tatiana Khan, owner of the Chateau Allegre Gallery on La Cienega Boulevard, claimed that an artwork called "La Femme Au Chapeau Bleu" (The Woman in the Blue Hat) was an original Picasso and further told a prospective buyer Victor Sands of the Sands Family Trust, that it was previously owned by the Malcolm Forbes family estate and was a bargain at only $2 million, according to court documents. It was alleged that dealer Khan told artist Maria Cruz that she needed a copy of the original work based upon an accurate photograph of the original Picasso and that the reason the copy was needed was that the real Picasso artwork had been stolen from one of her clients and that she needed a copy to play a trick that would help catch the thief. Artist Cruz, had worked with Khan in the past and did not think ill of the request and was subsequently paid $1000.00 for the copied work. Khan told artist Cruz to offer the painting to Malcom Forbes family estate and to Biagio Cugini of Maynard, Massachusetts $145,000 for the fake piece.

Jack and Leslie Kavanaugh

According to reports and information based on the official complaint; Jack Kavanaugh and his wife lived an opulent lifestyle which spoke much of their success in life and their collection of fine art, backed up their apparent knowledge of the art market. It's alleged that they also convinced Sands to buy paintings claimed to be by Marc Chagall, Willem de Kooning and Pierre Auguste Renoir which "represented outstanding investment opportunities that were sure to earn Sands a substantial return on his initial investment." Though these works have not been proven to be illegitimate, it was alleged that they were 'overpaid for' and would never reach the investment profit levels implied.

It is interesting that Sands is now suing the Kavanaugh’s. In his complaint he adds that the de Kooning and Renoir were never delivered to him and he was never refunded the $175,000 deposits that he paid. Sands subsequently sued the Kavanaughhs and 21 unknown defendants for breach of fiduciary duty, fraud, misrepresentation, conversion and breach of contract. The outcome is not published to our knowledge as yet.

This complaint is only an accusation and a defendant is presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.

Kristine Eubanks and husband Gerald Sullivan

Television Art Fraud: Fine Art Treasures Gallery

Kristine Eubanks and her husband Gerald Sullivan pleaded guilty in 2007 to conspiracy and tax evasion having conducted an art auction shows twice a week on DirecTV and The Dish Network from 2002 to 2006. The Fine Art Treasures Gallery allegedly sold fake and forged lithographs, prints and paintings purportedly found at estate liquidations around the world to more than 10,000 victims. Both received prison sentences of seven and four years respectively James Mobley.

James Mobley, 63, of Woodland Hills a TV show auctioneer was also implicated in the same Fine Art Treasures Gallery fraud which aired on DirecTV and the Dish Network. For his part he was sentenced to five years in prison.

In the interim, Feds seized $3.8 million from bank accounts connected to the couple.

William and Beryl Ann Toye

William and Beryl Ann Toye, a Baton Rouge couple, have been accused by the FBI of forging paintings by renowned black folk artist Clementine Hunter.
The FBI investigated allegations that William Toye, 78 and his wife Beryl Ann, 68, inferring that they had been selling forged paintings to unsuspecting art collectors and dealers since the 1970s. Works which have got into the hands of Museums and galleries it is claimed. William Toye was previously arrested in the 1970s on a charge of forging Hunter's work but was never prosecuted. The couple also is suspected of using an intermediary, Robert Edwin Lucky Jr., to sell forged paintings. They were eventually charged with three counts each of mail fraud and one of conspiracy to commit mail fraud from early in 2000 until Sept. 30.

If convicted of conspiracy, the defendants face a maximum penalty of five years in prison, a $250,000 fine or both. Mail fraud carries a maximum penalty of 20 years, a $250,000 fine or both.

**Wolfgang Beltracchi & Otto Schulte-Kellinghaus.**

Charges have been filed in Cologne Germany against four individuals for running what police authorities believe is the largest-scale art forgery ring in German history.

Wolfgang Beltracchi, born Wolfgang Fischer, is the accused leader of a recent European forgery ring that included his wife, sister-in-law and another alleged forger Otto Schulte-Kellinghaus, allegedly responsible for a massive fake art scam duping some of the world's most prestigious auctioneers.

Police are investigating whether that forger is Wolfgang Beltracchi, 59, an artist from Freiburg, aided by his wife, Helene, 52, and her sister, Susanne, 57 - women described as "great charmers". All three are now in police custody. Two additional men are also being investigated.

Fake works of art believed to be by Heinrich Campendonk, Max Pechstein, Johannes Molzahn, Fernand Léger, Raoul Dufy and Max Ernst have been sold as legitimate pieces with the enormous figure of £30,000,000.00 being mentioned and imperious auctioneers Christies and Lempertz caught up in the scam which has rocked the art world. The police allege that the ring sold at least 44 apparently forged paintings since the mid-1990s. With all of the purported fakes rediscovered or lost works, with each carefully chosen for their lack of photographic image, the scam has been enormous.

Incredibly however, if found guilty, Beltracchi may get away with most of the crimes as the statute of limitations is limited to 10 years!

NEW>>

**Lothar Wilfried Senke (German) given 9 Years imprisonment for Giacometti sculpture forgery.**

Called the largest scam to ever shake the German art market.

Lothar Senke - calling himself Count Graf von Wallstein was accused of the worst counterfeiting scandal of works of Giacometti to date in a case involving more than 1000 bronzes and plasters. He was convicted on June the 30th 2011 in Stuttgart Germany for 38 of the 50 crimes including the infringement of the copyright of Alberto Giacometti.

Senke had produced as provenance for prospective buyers, some who had bought fake Giacometti sculptures out of the boot of his car, providing a convincing book of photographs and dialogue relating to the forgeries which purportedly has been secreted away by Giacometti's brother who was a personal friend.

Accomplices named were Herbert Schulte -- an art dealer in Mainz -- as well as Schulte's wife and another accomplice.

Schulte also admits to sending bank transfers to the Netherlands amounting to €700,000.

Hopefully, no offence was, will be or may be taken by any of the members of the public who may be, have been or might be in the future, caught up or defrauded by the purchase of an illicit work of art or upset by our web page which is designed to be wholly informative, educational and above all entertaining.

Just in case we may have offended the Romans generally or as a nation, the Chinese, the Bulgarians or the Nigerians for their inclusion also on this fake page, we humbly apologise to them.

For those others of you who are upset by the inclusion of the fake, fake, story of Srn. none existant Poqbionsi,
For those others of you who are upset by the inclusion of the fake, fake, story of Snr. none existant Poggibonsi, how sad you are!

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