

Articles You May Have Missed

Susanne Friend, column editor

“Proposed California Arts Budget Lowest Per-Capita In US,” *Los Angeles Times*, 01/12/05

The California Arts Council has a new director - Muriel Johnson, a veteran Republican politician and arts advocate from Sacramento. But she won't have much to work with. The \$3.2-million arts budget governor Arnold Schwarzenegger proposed Monday means that California again will likely rank last in the nation in per-capita state spending on the arts.

“Weak Dollar Sending Art Back Across The Atlantic,” *The Guardian* (UK), 01/29/05

The American dollar's slide against other currencies has apparently sparked a push by European art institutions to reacquire some of the countless works which had been bought up by American collectors over the decades. The weak dollar offers European buyers some remarkable bargains. At Sotheby's Old Masters sale in New York, a Botticelli sold for the equivalent of £246,000. Sources said Italians were particularly active buyers. Italy having produced so much good art, there are plenty of works for Italians to repatriate.

“The Art Of Costco (Literally),” *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 01/23/05

What's so strange about buying a Picasso at Costco? They have an excellent return policy. By visiting costco.com and searching under 'fine art,' buyers can access a list of artworks for sale by Marc Chagall, Amadeo Modigliani, Henri Matisse, Georges Braque, and others. On Wednesday, prices on the ever-changing list ranged from \$21.49 to about \$1,500, for a limited-edition lithograph. With a click of the mouse, you can add art to your cart.

“Still Searching For Kuwait's Art,” *The Telegraph*, (UK) 01/10/05

Where did the art stolen by Iraq from Kuwait during the Gulf War in 1990-91 go? Although most of the collection looted from Kuwait's National Museum has been recovered, almost all the jewelry, Islamic art, and other works taken from wealthy Kuwaitis by the Iraqis during the six-month occupation has vanished. Only a few pieces have surfaced on the art market, and none of it was found in Iraq.

“Small Endowment - Why David Has A Small...” *The Age* (Melbourne), 01/26/05

As every visitor to Florence will know, the modest dimensions of David's "pisello" are a running joke with Italians, and the stuff of irreverent postcards. But, in a paper to be published at the end of this month, two Florentine doctors offer a scientific explanation: the poor chap was shriveled by the threat of mortal danger. Michelangelo's intention was to depict David as he confronted Goliath.

“‘Wall Of Air’ To Protect David?,” *BBC*, 01/04/05

Officials in Florence are considering installing machinery that would envelope Michelangelo's David in a constant stream of air. The "wall of air" is one of several steps the museum is considering that could protect the statue from dirt particles without encasing it in glass. More than a million tourists are said to visit the statue every year in the Italian city of Florence.

“Uncovering Nero's Roman House,” *MSNBC.com*, 01/19/05

When Nero's Rome fell, his palace in the middle of the city was buried. This week, almost 2,000 years after Nero's rule, Rome city officials unveiled a new find from the palace that offers a tantalizing hint of the treasures buried beneath the hill. It is a large mosaic, more than 9 by 6 feet, showing naked men harvesting grapes and making wine, a typical illustration for a Roman palace of the time.

“A Find: Leonardo's Studio,” *The Independent*, (UK) 01/12/05

Researchers have discovered the hidden laboratory used by Leonardo da Vinci for studies of flight and other pioneering scientific work in previously sealed rooms at a monastery next to the Basilica of the Santissima Annunziata, in the heart of Florence.

“Russia To Consider Returning Dresden Collections,” *St. Petersburg Times* (Russia), 01/18/05

Russian president Vladimir Putin seems to have opened the door to negotiating the return of German artwork looted by Soviet troops at the conclusion of World War II. Putin said that an exhibition in Russia of art that has been re-

turned to Germany, including Raphael's *Sistine Madonna* from Dresden's State Art Collection, as has been proposed by Lidia Levleva, director of the Tretyakov Gallery, could be held. Such an exhibition would create an atmosphere that could allow further progress on the matter of trophy art.

“Frankfurt Garbage Collectors Destroy Artwork,” *The Guardian* (UK), 01/13/05

Frankfurt sanitation workers mistakenly removed and destroyed some yellow plastic sheets on the street that were part of an art installation. Thirty of the dustmen are now being sent to modern art classes to try to ensure that the same mistake never happens again. The head of Frankfurt's sanitation department, Peter Postleb, took responsibility for the destruction of the sculpture, saying that confusing the plastic sheets with rubbish was an easy mistake to make. He thought they were abandoned building materials.

“Physicist: Hockney Theory Is Wrong,” *The Scotsman*, 01/13/05

A California physicist says he has proof that David Hockney's controversial theory that Renaissance artists traced their work is wrong. David Stork used computer imaging of a 1645 painting, *Christ in the Carpenter's Studio*, by Georges de la Tour, to show that the only source of light in the work was a candle shown in Christ's hand. It means the image could not have been projected, he said.

“Louvre, Pompidou To Open Branches,” *The New York Times*, 01/10/05

Two big French museums are opening satellite branches. The Louvre is to open a \$100 million satellite in the northern French city of Lens, near Lille, in 2009 and will occupy a new annex at the High Museum of Art in Atlanta for three years from 2006. Still, the Louvre's director, Henri Loyrette, has said he considers Britain's Tate to be a closer role model than the Guggenheim. The Tate, founded a century ago on London's Millbank, now runs three other museums in Britain, but it has no permanent presence abroad. In contrast, while the Pompidou will inaugurate a new \$68 million branch in the northeastern French city of Metz in 2007, it is also looking beyond France.

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“Look Out Art, Mama's Got An Ax! (Her Day In Court),” *The Guardian*, (UK) 01/07/05

The mother of Europe's most prolific art thief was in court in France Thursday, charged with throwing away art her son had stolen. When Mireille Breitwieser, a former nurse, found out that her son Stephane, 33, had been arrested on suspicion of stealing paintings worth tens of millions of pounds from museums across Europe, she rushed into his bedroom and started chopping up all the canvases she found there, prosecutors said yesterday.

“Workers Destroy Section Of China's Great Wall,” *News.com.au* 02/12/05

Construction workers destroyed a large section of the Great Wall of China recently. Almost 100m of the wall in northern Ningxia autonomous region was leveled in two overnight raids by construction workers who used the material to pave a road. The destroyed area near Zhongwei city was constructed during the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) in a region known as the Great Wall Museum because of the profusion of rammed earth sections of the wall.

“Angkor Looting Increases,” *The New York Times*, 03/21/05

Looting at Angkor Wat has increased in the past six months. One of the astonishing aspects of the Angkor sites is their diminished nature at the hand of modern man. Amid the grandeur, empty pedestals, headless carvings, and missing lintels cast an aura of indelible loss. The sudden cascade of tourists - one million foreign visitors came to Cambodia last year, a vast majority to Angkor - brings many risks: overcrowding, dwindling of the scant local water supply, a cheapening atmosphere.

“The EU's Resale Madness,” *The Guardian*, (UK) 01/03/05

A proposed levy in the European Union would grant a resale tax on every resold piece of art. The measure will give artists, and their descendants for 70 years after their deaths, claims upon a levy imposed every time one of their works is resold. Very fair, some will say. Yet in practice, it will simply cause owners of contemporary art to send works for sale in markets where the levy is not applied, notably Switzerland and the US.

“Art Of The Moment (After The Moment Has Passed),” *The New York Times*, 01/02/05

Art made from obviously impermanent materials that is being painstakingly preserved; art made to stay shiny and new that is being treasured for its age; art challenging the notion of originality that is being scrutinized for that quality; once-standard, off-the-shelf materials that are now hard to find; collectors who cling to a piece of paper that proves their dated light fixture is worthy of a museum, not a recycling bin; and caretakers of a reputation who make decisions that they readily admit run counter to the artist's original intentions. Such is the strange afterlife of work that produces beauty from the banal, an object lesson in how the legacy of a strong-willed radical can be brought to heel by an even stronger force, the market.

“Hirst's Shark Deteriorating,” *The Art Newspaper*, 02/04/05

Damien Hirst's shark floating in a tank of formaldehyde was recently sold for \$12 million. But the shark has deteriorated noticeably to the naked eye since it was first unveiled at the Saatchi Gallery in 1992. The formaldehyde solution in which it is suspended is murky while the skin of the animal is showing signs of wear and tear.

“Shark Pickler Hirst Admits to Silly Ideas,” *Reuters*, 3/29/05

The artist best known for pickling a shark and slicing up a cow admits he has had some pretty silly ideas over the years. Damien Hirst, the ageing enfant terrible of the British art world, is optimistic that museums will still be showing at least some of his work in 200 years time.

“You do turn round after a few years and look at your stuff and you think it's embarrassing,” Hirst said in an interview at New York's Gagosian gallery, where his latest work is on show in an exhibition called *The Elusive Truth*. “Certainly everything you make is not a masterpiece. Some of my spin paintings I think are a bit silly. The cut in half pig that moves like a bacon slicer I suppose I thought was a bit silly in retrospect.”

He stands by his most famous work, a shark preserved in formaldehyde and titled *The Physical Impossibility of Death In The Mind Of Someone Living*. “I

think the shark's obviously an important piece,” he said, brushing off reports that it is disintegrating. “I think it just needs a bit of love and attention.”

“A Big Business In Stolen Religious Art,” *Los Angeles Times*, 01/02/05

Stolen religious art is big business in Mexico and all over Latin America. Churches, convents, and shrines all over Latin America are under siege. The Immigration and Customs Enforcement Agency in Washington and the FBI, which will soon unveil a “rapid response” task force to fight trafficking in smuggled art, say they are beefing up enforcement efforts. A key tactic is monitoring the Internet, where much of the loot is sold.

“Art For Your TV,” *ABCNews.com*, 01/04/05

Flat screen high-definition TVs are becoming popular. But there still isn't a lot of programming to take advantage of the screens. So one company is introducing the GalleryPlayer. It will allow subscribers to purchase and display high-resolution digital images of “museum-quality” art and photos on their high-definition digital TV displays.

“Plundering Iraq,” *The New York Times*, 02/14/05

Tens of thousands of objects have just gone completely missing from Iraq in the past two years. It's a cultural disaster of massive proportions. A senior counter-terrorism official said the trade in illicit antiquities was increasingly run by organized rings of professional thieves, who use poor Iraqis in rural areas as diggers. Objects are funneled out of the country in concealed shipments along smuggling routes that have been plied for centuries, in a system in which artifacts are sold for cash or sometimes for weapons that wind up in the hands of insurgents in Iraq. Some archaeological experts estimate that the illegal antiquities trade may pump tens of millions of dollars into the underground economy in Iraq.

“Hidden City's Remains Uncovered By Tsunami,” *BBC*, 02/13/05

Parts of a long-lost port city in India were uncovered by last year's tsunami. Archaeologists say they have discovered some stone remains from the coast close to India's famous beach

front Mahabalipuram temple in Tamil Nadu state following the 26 December tsunami. They believe that the “structures” could be the remains of an ancient and once-flourishing port city in the area housing the famous 1200-year-old rock-hewn temple.

“Will Henry Moore Arch Ever See The Light Of Day Again?” *The Guardian* (UK), 03/06/05

What happened to the grand marble arch created by sculptor Henry Moore that used to reside in London’s Kensington Garden’s area? A note in the guidebook *Buildings and Monuments in the Royal Parks* says that the Arch (as the sculpture is officially called) has been “temporarily removed and dismantled for repair.” But it has been broken up for nearly a decade. Nor is there much prospect that this grand piece, made in 1980 by Britain’s most famous sculptor for the people of London, will be repaired - or indeed seen by the public again.

“Billionaire To Restore Henry Moore,” *The Guardian* (UK), 03/22/05

A billionaire art collector has offered to pay for the restoration of a Henry Moore marble arch. The six-meter tall work, given by Moore in 1980 to the people of London, was removed from Kensington Gardens and dismantled in 1996 on safety grounds. The sculpture is unevenly weighted, and soon after it was installed it began to twist. In addition, travertine, the stone of which it is made, is susceptible to damaging cycles of freeze-thaw in cold weather. The Royal Parks, which manage Kensington Gardens, have estimated that to repair it - by inserting a steel “spine” - would cost around £300,000, which they say they cannot afford.

“Is Pollution Hurting Terra-Cotta Warriors?” *China View*, 03/03/05

American scientists are collaborating with Chinese counterparts to study the effects of pollution on the terra-cotta warriors in Xian. Based on continuous observation of the pollution and studies on the change and chemical reaction mechanism of corrosive gas, aerated solids, and dust, researchers will work out an evaluation report on the mechanism of pollutants’ corrosion on the rare cultural relics.

“British Government Knew Queen’s Benin Bronze Had Been ‘Expropriated’,” *The Art Newspaper*, 02/16/05

The British Foreign Office knew back in the 1970s that a Benin bronze head given to the Queen by Benin’s president had been “expropriated” from the Lagos Museum. The bronze which Gowon gave to the Queen on his [1973] state visit was a sixteenth century piece worth up to £30,000 on the market. It was in the Lagos Museum up to a few days before Gowon left for the UK when, realizing he had to come bearing a suitable gift, he sent to the Museum and said “I’ll have that one.”

“Scots Plea For Architectural Mercy Killing,” *The Times* (UK), 02/21/05

When the makers of a new Channel 4 series on Britain’s ugliest buildings invited viewers to nominate the eyesore they would most like to see demolished, they were hardly prepared for a request to flatten an entire town. But civic pride appears to be truly dead and buried in Cumbernauld, a 1950s creation that is home to 52,000 souls 15 miles northeast of Glasgow. Its residents were among the first to contact the program, begging for dynamite and bulldozer to deliver them oblivion. The town’s design won architectural awards in the brutalist-besotted 1970s, but the 2003 *Idler’s Book of Crap Towns* called Cumbernauld the second-worst place to live in the UK.

“Gehry’s LA Concert Hall To Get A Bit Duller,” *Newsday*, (AP) 03/02/05

Los Angeles’s glittering jewel of a concert hall, as designed by Frank Gehry, seems to be glittering a bit too much. Disney Hall will undergo a \$90,000 exterior renovation this spring to dull the sheen on a convex section of the building’s reflective outer walls, following extensive complaints from pedestrians and nearby residents about sun glare and excessive heat.

“Critics: Conservators Ruined Gaudi Chapel,” *The Art Newspaper*, 03/05/05

Architects and conservators say the Spanish government has caused irreparable damage to the Catalan architect’s Güell crypt. They describe the cleaning of the building as “brutal” and say that it was carried out with abrasive materials abandoned years ago by the

conservation industry. They also say that a staircase which provided access to the roof has been removed, and they say that the restorers have placed a large stone plinth commemorating their restoration inside the chapel. This distracts visitors and disrupts the circulation within the chapel intended by Gaudí. The restorers also cut down an old pine tree near the building, which Gaudí had deliberately left standing and which he had incorporated in his design for the chapel.

“Arrests In Munch Theft,” *The New York Times*, 03/08/05

Nine arrests have been made in Oslo in the weekend theft of three Edward Munch artworks. A car chase ended when a police vehicle smashed into a vehicle in which the suspects were fleeing. The artworks were apparently found in a building in Oslo’s Kampen neighborhood, less than a mile from the Munch Museum, from which armed robbers took one of the two painted versions of *The Scream* - the other is in the National Gallery of Norway - and another Munch masterpiece, *Madonna*, on Aug. 22.

“CT: Tut Not Murdered,” *Discovery*, 03/08/05

King Tutankhamun was not murdered, but may have suffered a bad broken leg shortly before his death at the age of about 19, a CT scan on the 3,300-year-old mummified body of the pharaoh has revealed.

“Michelangelo’s Self-Portrait?,” *Discovery*, 03/21/05

Historians in Florence believe they have found a sculpted marble relief of Michelangelo that might have been carved by the artist himself. The work speaks for itself: it is a very high-quality sculpture which depicts Michelangelo. The skilled chiseling on the back makes them think it might be a self portrait.

“Pompidou Picasso Recovered,” *BBC*, 04/08/05

A Picasso painting stolen last year from the Pompidou, has been recovered. Following a tip-off, police traced the painting - worth 2.5m euros - to a house in Paris where the painting was hidden behind a wardrobe. Cubist painting *Nature Morte a la Charlotte*, completed in 1924, was reported missing in May last year from a restoration workshop.

“Expert: “Fake” Cezanne Is Real,” *News.com.au*, 03/23/05

An expert says a painting recently declared a fake is in fact a real Cezanne. He based his assessment on the unsigned work, purported to have been painted by Paul Cezanne, being riddled with secret “signatures” left behind by the renowned French impressionist. The piece, *Son in a High Chair*, was among notable works said to have been taken from the home of eccentric NSW art restorer John Opit in February last year.

“The Drama Of Authentication,” *Boston Globe*, 03/30/05

A new play running in Boston focuses on what outsiders might consider an unlikely profession when it comes to the creation of dramatic sparks: art authentication. Of course, the play isn’t exactly an accurate depiction of the authentication business, any more than archeologists’ lives resemble that of Indiana Jones, but the production does call attention to a little-known, but vitally important, corner of the art world, and sheds some light on the rivalries and internal politics that can affect it.

“Mona Lisa Takes A Holiday (What Will The Tourists Say?),” *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* (WSJ), 03/25/05

The room at the Louvre that is home to the Mona Lisa is to be renovated, and for the first time in three decades, the painting will skip a day on show. Now she is having her room renovated, to handle an average of more than 1,500 visitors an hour. She’ll be off display for one day on April 4 while curators install her in the upgraded digs. The Louvre fears irate crowds if Japanese and American visitors turn up to find an apology hanging from Lisa’s empty spot on the wall. While Rembrandts, Titians, and El Greco can all spend weeks in restoration, under study, or on tour, the Mona Lisa has always remained on display.

“Storing Art Out In Public,” *CNN.com*, 03/28/05

The Brooklyn Museum’s Luce Center for American Art is among a growing number of visible storage centers in the world. Art experts say visible storage is a good option for museums to show the public the breadth of a specific collection, but they caution that it must be used to complement, not to replace,

traditional exhibits. At the Brooklyn Museum, about 800 objects are housed in the Luce Center, including all American paintings previously not on display. There are thousands more decorative objects, such as spoons, teapots, and toasters, still in storage.

“LA County Museum Director’s Resignation A Surprise,” *Los Angeles Times*, 04/04/05

Longtime director Andrea Rich’s announcement was unexpected. Her resignation comes just weeks after the museum announced that \$156 million had been raised for an ambitious expansion and renovation, enough for construction to begin by year’s end on the first round of architect Renzo Piano’s plans for the Wilshire Boulevard facilities. That announcement marked a major turning point for the museum, which had to abandon an earlier, more sweeping plan for the museum complex after failing to raise enough money.

“US Scientists Fight Legislation That Would Restrict Kennewick Man Study,” *Newsday*, 04/11/05

Scientists are opposing a bill in the US Congress that would allow federally recognized tribes to claim ancient remains even if they cannot prove a link to a current tribe. That could block study of the ancient Kennewick man. Scientists fear that the bill, if enacted, could end up overturning a federal appeals court ruling that allows them to study the 9,300-year-old skeleton, one of the oldest ever found in North America. The skeleton was discovered in 1996 along the Columbia River near Kennewick, Wash., and has been the focus of a bitter nine-year fight.

“Peru’s Emergency Plan For Machu Picchu,” *The Guardian*, 04/15/05

The Peruvian government has come up with an emergency rescue plan to save the ruins of Machu Picchu from erosion and tourists. The \$132.5m plan is to be studied by Unesco and the World Bank at a three-day meeting in Lima beginning on Saturday. Machu Picchu is the most visited archaeological site in Latin America. It has been a Unesco world heritage site since 1983, but the UN’s cultural organization made it clear last year that if something were not done soon it would be put on the list of sites at risk.

“Vatican’s Ancient Laocoon - A Forgery?” *The New York Times*, 04/18/05

A scholar has suggested that *Laocoön*, a fabled sculpture whose unearthing in 1506 has deeply influenced thinking about the ancient Greeks and the nature of the visual arts, may well be a Renaissance forgery - possibly by Michelangelo himself.

“Moscow Treasure Reopens After Fire,” *The New York Times*, 04/19/05

A major architectural treasure has reopened a year after a damaging fire. Built in just six months in 1817 under the orders of Czar Alexander I for the fifth anniversary of Russia’s victory over Napoleon, Manege was considered architecturally unique from the start. Its recognizable neo-classical yellow facades and majestic white pillars were designed by the Russian architect Ossip Bovet, while its 150-foot-wide interior and triangular wooden roof were created by the French engineer Augustin Bétancourt. This hall could hold a regiment of 2,000 in addition to visitors and audiences. It was said to be the largest uncolumned interior space in the world.

“Spice up the Drive,” *The Los Angeles Times*, 5/2/05

Next time you’re faced with a long drive, you might want to bring some gum or a minty air freshener. New research shows that the smell of peppermint or cinnamon can significantly improve alertness and performance. Bryan Raudenbush, a psychophysicist at Wheeling Jesuit University in West Virginia had previously shown that peppermint and cinnamon scents can enhance alertness. To see if they could also help tired drivers, he put 25 students through a two hour simulated driving course while they smelled cinnamon, peppermint, or nothing at all.

He found that both smells improved performance on the driving test, as well as the mental state of the driver. Cinnamon and peppermint increased alertness and decreased frustration, and peppermint also decreased anxiety and fatigue. Raudenbush says peppermint activates an area of the brain that regulates alertness and sleepiness. The research was presented at a recent meeting of the Association for Chemical Reception Sciences in Sarasota, Fla.