

"The Mystery of Hitler's Lost Art Collection," *The Guardian*, 08/24/2005

Art experts have long been fascinated with the story of Adolf Hitler's dream of creating a huge museum in the Austrian city of Linz. A new book looks at where the Nazi leader's collection came from -- and where it went.

It remains at the center of one of World War II's most enduring mysteries: Hitler's intended National Socialist museum of art in the Austrian city of Linz was a dream that was never fully realized by the Führer although many thousands of art works were obtained for the project. Speculation has always surrounded the origins of the dictator's collection but since the war ended, this has only intensified as experts attempt to discover where many of the works disappeared to.

"New Orleans Art Museum Survives Intact," *The Times-Picayune (New Orleans)*, 08/31/05

The New Orleans Museum of Art has survived the hurricane. But when Federal Emergency Management Agency representatives arrived in the area Wednesday, NOMA employees holed up inside the museum were left in a quandary: FEMA wanted those evacuees to move to a safer location, but there was no way to secure the artwork inside. Six security and maintenance employees remained on duty during the hurricane and were joined by 30 evacuees, including the families of some employees.

"Shock Tactics to Save Italian Art," BBC, 08/31/05

Many of Italy's most famous cultural sites are in peril, and the government is embarking on a campaign to increase awareness of the problem. Organisers of a campaign hope an image of Michelangelo's David with a leg missing will scare Italians into forking out to save artworks at risk. TV adverts and posters will feature the staged destruction of its most famous works with the slogan: "Without your help, Italy could lose something."

A third of Italy's cultural sites are deemed to be in a state of emergency. Other famous art works used in the fundraising campaign include an image of Leonardo da Vinci's *Last Supper* with disciples scratched out and strips torn off the canvas of Botticelli's *Venus*. They

will form part of the biggest art fundraising campaign Italy has ever seen.

Despite the paintings and sculptures headlining the campaign being in no real danger, well known treasures such as Venice or Rome's Colosseum are considered at risk. Pollution, vandalism, and natural decay have all contributed to the condition of many cultural sites.

"That's no Xmas Bauble, it's a Gauguin Bust," *Globe and Mail Tuesday*, 08/30/05

Copenhagen -- A bust by French artist Paul Gauguin of one of his sons has been discovered in Denmark where a family had unwittingly been using it as a Christmas decoration, a museum said yesterday. The work of art will be added to a large Gauguin exhibition set to open at the Ordrupsgaard museum near Copenhagen this week.

"I inherited this bust from my grandparents and I never thought it was authentic, even though Gauguin's name was inscribed on it," the former owner of the bust, Bent Avnsoe, told AFP. Suspicions that it might be an original Gauguin were first raised about five years ago, when Avnsoe took the bust to an insurance agent for appraisal following a break-in at his home.

The insurance agent gawped at it and sent the child bust in for authentication at a Danish auction house and then to a conservationist and Gauguin specialist at the Ordrupsgaard museum, Anne-Birgitte Fønsmark, who bought it for 200,000 kroner [\$32,940 U.S.]

"David's Left Foot," *The Guardian* (UK), 09/03/05

The origin of the marble used by Michelangelo to create his masterpiece has been revealed. Until now, art historians knew only that the large block came from the Carrara quarries in Tuscany, which still produce many types and qualities of marble.

Analysts have used three small samples, retrieved from the second toe on David's left foot when the figure was damaged by vandals in 1991, to track the marble's origin. Not only were they able to determine the exact spot of excavation - the Fantiscritti quarries in Miseglia, the central of three small valleys in Carrara - they also found that Michelangelo's marble is of mediocre quality, filled with microscopic holes, and likely to degrade faster than many other marbles.

Michelangelo worked on his masterpiece between 1501 and 1504, but the five-metre block of marble was actually quarried 40 years before that for the sculptor Agostino di Duccio, who had planned to make a giant figure of a prophet for one of the buttresses of Florence cathedral, but abandoned the project. In 1501, when Michelangelo stepped in, he promised to carve a statue from the block without cutting it down or adding other marble.

"Which Works Of Art Would You Want To Survive A War?" *The Guardian* (UK), 09/07/05

The UK is signing on to a half-century old provision from the Hague convention's rules of war which allows for the protection of cultural treasures from marauding armies. British politicians had always dismissed the guidelines, which call for labeling specific works of great cultural or artistic significance with a blue shield, but reconsidered after the 2003 looting of Baghdad's museum in the wake of the American invasion. Now the government is launching a consultation process to determine the works of art that should be selected for the special treatment.

"The List: Cultural Sites In Katrina's Path," *Minneapolis Star Tribune* (AP), 09/17/05

Keeping track of the current state of New Orleans's cultural institutions has been a chaotic enterprise at best, but a picture is beginning to emerge of just how widespread the damage is. The New Orleans Museum of Art lost one of its more valuable works to the storm, and a new, unfinished museum in Biloxi was crushed by a casino barge that was pushed a full quarter-mile inland. Some institutions escaped damage altogether, but not many.

"Will New Orleans Still Look Like New Orleans?" *The New York Times*, 09/21/05

There will be many painful decisions ahead for those who must find a way to rebuild New Orleans, and none may be more taxing than deciding what aspects of the city's famed architecture can be preserved, and which must get the wrecking ball.

New Orleans is a city where the grand and the debauched are often

separated by feet rather than miles, and much of its treasured visual narrative remains intact. Still, local preservationists believe that unless the bulldozers roaming New Orleans are used with care, the city that officials are trying to save will be lost.

"Working To Save Gulf Coast," *The State (SC)*, 10/05/05

Art conservators are working overtime to save artworks damaged in the Gulf Coast hurricanes. The American Institute for Conservation of Historic & Artistic Works, based in Washington, is sending conservators to help the Federal Emergency Management Agency and cultural associations determine how to best repair waterlogged historic documents, sodden furniture, and artwork. It also will help private citizens with damaged collections and heirlooms. Even before the floodwaters buried New Orleans, efforts were under way to preserve art treasures.

"Getty Curator Resigns in Loan Flap," *Los Angeles Times*, 10/03/05

The [Getty] has determined through its own investigation that Marion True failed to report certain aspects of her Greek house purchase transaction in violation of Getty policy. "In the course of the Getty's discussions with Ms. True on this matter, she chose voluntarily to retire," their statement said.

In response to the on-going Italian investigation, an internal review by Getty attorneys found that True and other museum officials continued doing business with a handful of dealers, including Symes and Michailidis, despite signs that they were trafficking in possibly looted antiquities. *The Times* reported last month that in one case, documents show, True purchased an object after the dealer informed her it was being sought by Italian police.

"Greeks Want Getty To Return Art," *Los Angeles Times*, 10/24/05

The Greek government is demanding that the Getty return four artifacts it says were illegally exported. The Greeks have presented archeological evidence that they say proves the Greek origin of three objects the Getty purchased in 1993: a gold funerary wreath, an inscribed tombstone, and a marble torso of a young woman. The three ar-

tifacts, which date from about 400 BC, are ranked among the masterpieces of the Getty's antiquities collection. The fourth object that Greek officials are seeking to recover is an archaic votive relief bought in 1955 by J. Paul Getty himself.

"Italy Makes Claim On Met Museum Prize Vase," *Los Angeles Times*, 10/28/05

Italian authorities say they have irrefutable proof that the most prized ancient Greek vase in New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art was looted. The Euphronios krater, described as one of the finest antiquities ever obtained by the Met, has been a source of controversy since the museum acquired it 33 years ago. Italian authorities have long maintained that the vase was looted from a tomb north of Rome, but the Met has refused to return it, saying the Italians lack proof.

"Italians Get Serious About Recovering Their Antiquities From American Museums," *Bloomberg.com*, 10/31/05

Italian police are heating up their cases against museums that may have stolen art. The Getty case is just a slice of an illicit global trade in antiquities that stretches from the Egyptian desert to Chinese tombs to Peruvian monuments, and pulls in some of the most-respected names in art and academia. At least 52 items the Getty has acquired or handled were looted or came from smugglers, according to charges against Hecht, Medici, and True that were contained in Italian court documents obtained by Bloomberg News. Eight such pieces are in the Metropolitan, 22 in Boston's Museum of Fine Arts, and one each are in the Princeton U. Art Museum and the Cleveland Museum of Art, the documents say.

"Did Italian Police Offer Deal To Art Smuggler To Give Up Museums?" *Bloomberg.com*, 11/08/05

A Rome prosecutor is said to have offered reduced jail time to an antiquities smuggler if he would testify against big museums like the Metropolitan and MFA. "If you accuse the Metropolitan and Getty and the Berlin Museum, Boston, Cleveland, Copenhagen, and Munich -- one piece each -- I can make this go away," prosecutor Paolo Ferri said two weeks ago, according to the smuggler, Giacomo Medici.

"The Mozart Of Art Theft," *Agenzia Giornalistica Italia*, 11/02/05

His name is, in fact, Mozart. He is 82, lives in Linz, and trades in stolen archaeological items from Italy. The carabinieri have found 3000 items to have passed through his hands and around 600 have already been returned to Italy.

"Redoing The Getty Villa," *Los Angeles Times*, 11/06/05

The \$275-million Getty Villa project stands as Machado and Silveti's most significant design, centering on the 64-acre property just above Pacific Coast Highway where oil billionaire J. Paul Getty built a loose replica of a Roman country house. The mock villa by the architecture firm Langdon & Wilson was dismissed by some critics as a gaudy concoction when it opened to the public in 1974. The architects said "This folly of Getty, how do you take that building? We could have taken it with irony; we could have taken it with aggression. A lot of architect friends of ours recommended both. We took it very seriously, and I think we made it a better building."

"Famed Chinese Scroll To Get First Viewing," *Chicago Tribune (AP)*, 10/06/05

One of the most famous -- and longest -- paintings of Chinese antiquity will go on display this month in its entirety for the first time ever. Engineers at the Beijing University of Technology have built a 52-foot-long case weighing 5 tons and costing \$247,000 to display *Qingming Shanghe Tu*, or *Qingming Festival on the River*, the official China Daily newspaper reported.

The 12th-century work has long been praised for its realism and historical detail in portraying social and commercial life in an ancient Chinese city. Yet, its size, and fears of damage to the delicate colors and silk on which it was painted have prevented it from ever being shown publicly.

"Scream: A Museum That's Kept Its Sense Of Humor," *The Guardian (UK)* 10/24/05

The Munch Museum in Oslo, which lost *The Scream* painting last year in a dramatic theft, is selling a board game in its gift shop based on the incident. Players of the *Mystery of the Scream*, a game aimed at the family market, must

hunt down the robber before he reaches a criminal paradise.

“Ripped From The Tabs: Dali Sculpture In Exorcist Basement!” *The Globe & Mail* (Canada) 10/14/05

A sculpture of Christ that Salvador Dali gave to his exorcist has been found among the belongings of the deceased Italian priest.

“Art Vandal Attacks Florence Again,” *The Guardian* (UK), 10/17/05

Italy’s most notorious art vandal has struck again. Piero Cannata, who earned worldwide notoriety by taking a hammer to Michelangelo’s David, confessed to local newspapers in Tuscany that he had struck again in the very centre of Florence. It was discovered that somebody had sprayed a thick black “x” on a plaque, set into the paving of Piazza della Signoria, commemorating the burning to death of the 15th-century preacher and reformer Girolamo Savonarola.

“Dresden Cathedral Reopens After 60 Years,” *Washington Post* (AP), 10/31/05

Sixty years after Allied bombs destroyed it, the Dresden cathedral has reopened after a \$215 million restoration. For 47 years, Dresden residents had known the Frauenkirche, or Church of Our Lady, as a 43-foot-high mound of rubble flanked by two jagged walls. That was all that remained after British and US planes strafed the city with firebombs on the night of Feb. 13-14, 1945.

“LA County Museum Unloads Some Art” *Los Angeles Times*, 11/01/05

The Los Angeles County Museum of Art is selling off \$10 million worth of art. Exactly why the museum has decided to sell them now is not known, although income from the auction will be restricted to future acquisitions. (Rumors have circulated that a war chest is being assembled for a major purchase, but they remain unsubstantiated.)

LACMA’s plan to construct a new building — the Broad Contemporary Art Museum — is no doubt one force driving the idea, as construction of the Anderson Building for Modern and Contemporary Art was at the time of the museum’s last big de-accession, in 1982. Bizarrely, one LACMA official said the

museum was merely pruning redundancies, as if unique works of art were not — well, unique.

“Homes Of The Henge Builders” *The Guardian* (UK), 11/03/05

Unearthed for the first time, archaeologists have excavated homes of prehistoric Neolithic henge builders, in a set of dwellings, some older than Stonehenge, excavated from a Northumberland quarry. The Neolithic Britons left some of the most spectacular prehistoric monuments in the world, but there have been only scraps of evidence showing where and how they lived. House sites are so rare that some archaeologists believe most people lived a semi-nomadic existence.

“Restoring Forbidden City,” *The Art Newspaper*, 11/10/05

The Chinese government is spending 1.5 billion Yuan (\$185 million) to restore the Forbidden City over the next 15 years. Work has already started, and scaffolding now covers dozens of buildings in the complex. Projects along the central axis are scheduled for completion by 2008, in time for the Olympic Games in Beijing. The restoration often takes the form of replacement of worn materials.

“Antiquities Trove Discovered In Egyptian Museum Basement,” *Sydney Morning Herald*, 11/11/05

For the past century, artefacts have been stored away in crates there and forgotten, often allowed to disintegrate in the dank, dusty cavern. Forgotten until now. The recent theft and recovery of three statues from the basement have prompted antiquity officials in Egypt to increase an effort already under way to complete the first comprehensive inventory of artefacts in the basement.

“Most of Stolen Iraqi Art Still Not Recovered,” *Boston Globe*, 11/13/05

Of the some 14,000 artifacts stolen in Iraq, only about 5,500 have been recovered. US military sources say forces in Iraq have no systematic way of investigating the missing objects, and in the ongoing insurgency neither US or Iraqi forces can justify using scarce manpower to guard sites in the countryside, where widespread looting has continued

since the March 2003 US invasion. Law enforcement organizations worldwide are chasing the lost items, but their representatives said there is no systematic coordination, and they are relying on a shifting set of ad hoc partnerships to bring the thieves to account.

“Ambitious Conservation Project Aims To Restore Enormous Painting,” *The New York Times*, 11/16/05

A 365-foot-long painting depicting the battle at Gettysburg is being restored in a mammoth conservation effort. One part art and one part commercial venture when it opened in Boston in 1884, the canvas, now in Gettysburg, has become as ragged as an old Army tent - worn, torn, sagging, and covered in grime. Art conservators here are embarking on a \$9 million federally financed project to restore vigor to a painting that has lost its visceral power. On Sunday the cyclorama and the sound-and-light show that brings it to life will close to visitors at the Gettysburg National Military Park for two years of renewal.

“Can David Cause ‘Mental Imbalance’?” *Discovery*, 11/21/05

So says one of Florence’s top researchers, who has studied more than 100 people who have been rushed to hospital after collapsing. The artistic intoxication is caused by a combination of several things, including the stress of the trip, an ‘overdose’ of beautiful art, and the degree of sensitivity of the person. We should not forget that a work of art is a very powerful stimulus and can stimulate memories in our unconscious, sometimes triggering a crisis.

“A New \$550 Million Museum At The Pyramids,” *The Art Newspaper*, 12/19/05

Plans have been announced for a massive new \$550 million Great Egyptian Museum, to be established near the Pyramids near Cairo. It will be among the world’s largest museums, and is by far the biggest to be built from scratch. The venture is expected to attract up to five million visitors a year, slightly more than the British Museum in London, which is the world leader. There will be some 100,000 Egyptian artefacts on show (compared with the British Museum’s 80,000 displayed objects, covering all major cultures).

"LA County Museum To Destroy Garage Art," *Los Angeles Times*, 11/28/05

The Los Angeles County Museum of Art is about to destroy art. On Dec. 1, the museum will tear down its parking garage. The plan is to erect in its place a \$60-million building for the display of contemporary art. The problem isn't that LACMA is demolishing a garage so that it can add gallery space, the problem is that LACMA isn't saving the art it commissioned for the garage.

"Building Threatens Watts Towers?" *Los Angeles Times*, 12/03/05

A new municipal building is being erected in the parking lot next to LA's Watts Towers. Neighbors are concerned about congestion, and preservationists who cherish Simon Rodia's fantasia of folk-art sculpture worry that the new building, which would augment the smaller, existing arts center nearby, will obstruct views of the towers. They question why officials decided to place a new \$4.7-million youth arts center near the towers, rather than on city-owned property around the corner that originally was designated for the project.

"Nero Palace Closes For Emergency Repair," *CBC*, 12/12/05

The palace of Nero is closing abruptly for emergency repairs and will be closed for at least two years. Leaking water is threatening the palace's frescoed walls. The estimated cost of repairs is five million euros (\$6.8 million). Ministry archaeologists said a full-blown restoration of the palace and the surrounding area would cost 130 million euros (\$179 million) over 10 years.

"Earliest-Known Mayan Painting Discovered," *The New York Times*, 12/14/05

A major find of an ancient Mayan painting changes what we know about the history of Mayan culture. The find, a 30-by-3-foot mural in vivid colors depicting the ancient culture's mythology of creation and kingship, is the centerpiece of a larger mural, parts of which were first discovered and exposed in Guatemala four years ago. New radiocarbon tests revealed the painting to be 200 years older than originally estimated, dating to about 100 B.C.

"Computer Declares Mona Lisa's Smile," *BBC*, 12/15/05

Mona Lisa is, in fact, smiling, says a computer analysis. The painting was analysed by a University of Amsterdam computer using 'emotion recognition' software. It concluded that the subject was 83% happy, 9% disgusted, 6% fearful, and 2% angry.

"Trove Of Nazi Images Now Online," *The Art Newspaper*, 12/15/05

A Nazi archive of 60,000 digital colour images of wall and ceiling paintings in German buildings has been put online. The pictures were taken for the Nazi Ministry of Propaganda and the Department of Buildings and Monuments between 1943 and 1945, and show the interiors of 480 buildings—churches, monasteries, castles and palaces, dating from the 10th to the end of the 19th centuries—in what was the 'Greater German Reich.'

"Digitally Detected - A Computer That Can Spot Fakes?" *Wired*, 12/08/05

Dan Rockmore, a professor of computer science at Dartmouth College, wants to bring digital technology to the art of authentication. Using hi-res digital cameras and software that he wrote himself, Rockmore aims to examine the brushstrokes from Flora and 24 other works to reveal Rembrandt's unique mathematical fingerprint.

"A Library's Overdue Return," *Los Angeles Times*, 12/16/2005

Forty years after being removed from Santa Monica's old library, a series of 1930s murals is on view again in the new one. Stanton Macdonald-Wright's panels, titled *Technical and Imaginative Pursuits of Early Man*, was the first federally sponsored mural project in Southern California.

When the library moved in the mid-1960s and the old building was slated for demolition, the 39 panels appeared destined for the dustbin, until a few Santa Monicans pleaded successfully for their rescue. The murals were hastily pried off walls and shipped to a Smithsonian Institution warehouse in Washington, D.C. There, they languished unseen for four decades.

Now, the murals are back home. Conservators are painstakingly cleaning,

repairing, and installing the panels in the city's new \$57.7-million main public library, scheduled to open in January.

"Major Italian Stolen Antiquities Bust," *The Guardian* (UK), 12/28/05

Italian police have busted a 74-year-old who plundered thousands of ancient artifacts. Officers who raided the man's home found 9,000 antiquities stolen over a period of years as well as a sophisticated restoration lab, metal detectors, and other devices used by amateur archaeologists. Thousands of Etruscan and Roman terracotta vases, polychrome mosaic tiles, pieces of travertine, and multi-coloured marble that once adorned Roman villas were recovered.

"Portrait Of An Illegal Antiquities Trade," *Los Angeles Times*, 12/28/05

Much of the classical ancient art sold in recent decades is believed to have passed through the hands of three men - Giacomo Medici, Robert E. Hecht Jr., and Robin Symes. They acquired items that had been illegally removed from Italian tombs and used fake ownership histories, rigged auctions, and relied on frontmen to sell the objects with a veneer of legitimacy. Italians say they traced more than a hundred looted artifacts handled by the dealers to the Getty, the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, and a dozen other museums and private collections in the U.S., Europe and Asia.

"Italians To Help Rebuild Iran Museum," *Iranmania*, 12/13/05

A group of Italian experts has undertaken to refurbish Iran National Museum as part of Italy's program to develop cultural and economic cooperation.
