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## Articles You May Have Missed

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**“Criminality in the Russian Art Market has Reached Alarming Levels,”** *The Art Newspaper*, 04/20/06.

Vladimir Petrov, the 19th-century Russian art specialist at the publicly-owned Tretyakov Gallery in Moscow, has broken his silence on the subject of faking in the Russian art market. Dr. Petrov first discussed this subject at a private lecture held at the Tretyakov Gallery in November last year.

On that occasion, he told his colleagues that inexpensive works by little-known European painters were being reworked in Russia and then fraudulently marketed as Russian paintings at much higher prices. He admitted then that he himself has unwittingly authenticated 20 fakes. The admission of error by one of the country’s most respected art experts has shocked the Russian art world.

He says that the flow of fakes in and out of the country has become an uncontrollable torrent since the government relaxed regulations on art imports in 2004. Disputes are often settled by violent reprisals in Russia. Dr. Petrov is constantly shadowed by a bodyguard, and says he has received death threats; other Moscow scholars have also made similar claims.

Validation by Dr. Petrov and his colleagues can be the difference between a painting selling for \$1,500 or \$400,000. For a few thousand dollars, it is easy to hire thugs to “persuade” a scholar to say a work is authentic, says Dr. Petrov. It was only in late 2004 when he installed a high speed internet connection that allowed him to view the websites of European auction houses, that he began to understand the scale of the problem.

Once the paintings are in the country, they are doctored by talented conservators, who find it hard to earn much by legitimate means.

**“England Expects as Conservators Start Work to Repair Nelson,”** *The Guardian*, 04/27/06.

Admiral Lord Nelson lost an arm and the sight of one eye in battle, his life in the hours of his greatest victory - and 83 years later nearly lost his remaining arm when he was struck by lightning.

The 18-ton statue is more than five metres tall (17ft), and stands on top of a 56-metre granite column in Trafalgar Square. The conservators were particu-

larly anxious to check, before removing three corroding metal bands strapped above Nelson’s elbow, whether that was all that prevented the stone from plummeting on to a tourist’s head in the square below. This is only the third time in the monument’s history that there has been comprehensive conservation work, including cleaning all the stonework, and the garland of acanthus leaves below his feet that was cast in bronze from captured French cannons.

More than 150 years of weather and two world wars have left their marks, but structurally the monument has proved to be in remarkable shape. Nelson does bear the scars of generations of crude repairs, many of which have left chips and gouges, the mark of 19th-century chisels and 20th-century angle grinders. But the arm appears to have been bruised, not broken, by the 1888 lightning strike, and will be more sensitively repaired.

**“A Plea to Save Afghan Antiquities,”** *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 05/03/06.

Three decades of war have devastated Afghanistan’s cultural heritage. Warlords bombed and pilfered the national museum in the early 1990s. Looters plowed archaeological sites into moonscapes. And the Taliban committed the most monstrous act by demolishing two colossal ancient Buddhas carved into the cliffs in the Bamiyan valley.

The U.S.-led coalition in Afghanistan, has devoted scant resources to protecting and restoring endangered heritage sites. American and Afghan scholars lamented at a recent conference at the University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology. Though looting of unprotected sites continues, the Afghans said that not all the news out of Afghanistan was bad. The National Museum in Kabul has been rebuilt, partly with U.S. Money. The site of the destroyed Bamiyan Buddhas has been stabilized, and the rubble preserved.

The Afghans are considering suggestions to rebuild the monuments. Many smaller Buddhas presumed destroyed by the Taliban were actually concealed by Afghan conservators. In fact, some of the richest treasures feared lost in the war were discovered intact, secured in safes beneath the presidential palace. The recovered antiquities include more than 21,000 exquisite gold items from the ancient Bactrian culture.

The Bactrian hoard has never been exhibited - it was discovered the year before the 1979 Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and is too valuable to put on display in Kabul in the current political climate, the Afghans said. But as a bargaining chip for getting foreign assistance, the treasures may be one of Afghanistan’s most valuable assets.

**“Tate Unveils Epic Holbein Show,”** *The Guardian*, 05/06/06.

The biggest exhibition in half a century about the father of British art, Hans Holbein, will not include one of his most famous works because it is too fragile to travel the two miles from the National Gallery to Tate Britain. *The Ambassadors*, dated 1533, is “the most elaborately conceived of all Holbein’s portraits,” according to Susan Foister, the curator of the exhibition at Tate Britain and the leading authority on Holbein’s work in England.

The painting, which underwent a controversial restoration a decade ago, is painted on wooden panels, which have been thinned over the years during conservation. “It is a wafer-thin conjunction of 10 panels that tend to wobble about,” said Dr. Foister, who is based at the National Gallery. “It would have been lovely to have had it, but it’s not too far for people to travel to see it.”

**“Celestial Find at Ancient Andes Site,”** *Los Angeles Times*, 05/14/06.

The discovery in Peru of a 4,200-year-old temple and observatory pushes back estimates of the rise of an advanced culture in the Americas. Archeologists working high in the Peruvian Andes have discovered the oldest known celestial observatory in the Americas — a 4,200-year-old structure marking the summer and winter solstices that is as old as the stone pillars of Stonehenge. The observatory was built on the top of a 33-foot-tall pyramid with precise alignments and sightlines that provide an astronomical calendar for agriculture. The site is remarkably well preserved because it rains in the area only about once a year.

**“First Egypt Tomb Since King Tut Revealed,”** *Discovery News*, 05/31/06.

Hopes of finding a royal mummy in the Valley of the Kings got a boost this week as a small, gilded sarcophagus

emerged from the mysterious chamber known as KV63. Discovered in February by a team of archaeologists from the University of Memphis, led by Otto Schaden, KV63 still holds many mysteries.

Pottery and a wine label identical to one found in King Tut's tomb indicate that the place dates from the 18th-dynasty (ca. 1539-1292 B.C.). No mummies were found, however, as the coffins were opened. Dirt, fragments of broken pottery, linen, and natron lay inside instead of human remains. KV63 may have been used as an embalmer's storage room, but further examination revealed it wasn't just an ordinary storage room.

Several sealed jars, which already contained broken pottery, had been smashed and the bits stuffed inside the coffins. A child-sized coffin did not contain a mummy, but was stuffed with pillows. Hidden under the pillows, the archaeologists found an infant-sized gilded coffin of a quality that could suggest royalty.

Schaden told *The New York Times* that if the last coffin holds a mummy, it is probably someone the embalmers wished to hide. It could be Ankhesenamun (a.k.a. Ankhesenpaaten), King Tut's wife. One of the few pieces of writing found in KV63, on a seal, bears a faint inscription with the word "pa-aten," which is a part of her name.

**"Theft of Bronze Statues Worth £45,000 Linked to 'Artworks for Scrap' Gang,"** *The Independent*, 05/31/06.

Two bronze statues worth £45,000 in total have become the latest artworks to be stolen by thieves believed to be taking sculptures for their scrap value. Police will examine whether the criminals behind the most recent thefts in Wiltshire and Gloucestershire are responsible for taking a £3m Henry Moore bronze sculpture last December.

**"Popular Ed Ruscha Mural Abruptly Painted Over,"** *Los Angeles Times* 06/03/06.

Without apparent warning, an iconic mural by artist Kent Twitchell depicting fellow artist Ed Ruscha was painted over Friday, a move Twitchell described as a shock and a violation of laws protecting works of art. The artist said he was alerted by conservationist Nathan Zakheim, who had been in the

early stages of restoring the work and had gone by to see it Friday morning. "I went to get more pictures and take samples," Zakheim said, "and guess what: It was completely painted out." Kent Twitchell worked on *Ed Ruscha Monument* for nine years. He says he plans to file a suit.

**"Rome's Falling Arches,"** *Los Angeles Times* 06/05/06.

The Colosseum and other treasures of the archeologically rich city need more funding and less abuse, or they may soon be history. The landmarks that define this legendary city are in serious disrepair, the victims of monumental neglect, shrinking budgets, and the wear and tear of Mother Nature and heavy-heeled visitors.

Rome's troubles exceed those found in many other archeologically rich locations because its historic center is not a roped-off museum but a vibrant, congested urban nucleus. The Italian government is halfway through a vast, year-long engineering assessment of hundreds of archeological sites in the Eternal City, studying their condition and determining where the most urgent repair work should be done.

The biggest problem is money. Even though Italy earns billions of dollars from its archeological attractions, the budget for the Culture Ministry has been slashed steadily over the last five years as part of overall cost-cutting measures the government said were necessary.

**"Old Masters,"** *The Guardian*, 06/06/06.

Archaeologists have discovered what they believe to be a 27,000-year-old drawing of a face, which would make it the oldest in history. The eye is a bold horizontal slash that connects to a downward diagonal apparently signifying a nose; below is a thinner line suggesting a mouth. These features are drawn in black on a face-shaped rocky mass in a cave near Angoulême in western France; discovered in February, the image has only now been made public after scientific testing by French archaeologists that has apparently convinced them of its authenticity and age.

**"Road Plans put Stonehenge Status at Risk,"** *The Guardian*, 06/14/06.

Stonehenge risks being stripped

of its status as a world heritage site because of "second-rate" government proposals to ease traffic congestion at the monument, the National Trust said yesterday. Sarah Staniforth, historic properties director with the trust, said the national committee of Unesco, which administers world heritage sites, had reviewed the situation and Stonehenge could be taken off the list because of poor traffic management.

The trust's warning comes as ministers prepare to decide what to do to ease congestion on the A303, which passes the ancient stones. The issue was not the preservation of the stones but protection and restoration of the surrounding site, believed to hold undiscovered archaeological treasures.

**"Hensel's Plinth is All that's Wanted,"** *Associated Press*, 06/16/06.

British sculptor David Hensel thought the opportunity to exhibit at the Royal Academy's prestigious summer exhibition in London would send his career soaring. Instead, he was bemused to find that his laughing human head has been left out of the exhibit. All that is on display is its plinth. Officials said Hensel submitted the pieces separately - and they had preferred the plinth. "The base was thought to have merit and accepted," the Royal Academy said in a statement. The head, which is carved from jesmonite, took Hensel two months to create. The plinth, cut from an old mortuary slab, took one day.

**"Lauder Pays \$135 Million, a Record, for a Klimt Portrait,"** *New York Times*, 06/19/06.

Cosmetics magnate Ronald S. Lauder paid the highest sum ever for a painting for Gustav Klimt's 1907 portrait *Adele Bloch-Bauer*. A dazzling gold-flecked 1907 portrait by Gustav Klimt has been purchased for the Neue Galerie in Manhattan by the cosmetics magnate Ronald S. Lauder for \$135 million, the highest sum ever paid for a painting.

**"UD and Spelman Undergrads Restore Mural,"** *University of Delaware Daily* 07/06/06.

Undergraduates from the University of Delaware and Spelman College are getting hands-on lessons in art conservation in a four-week internship program at Winterthur Museum and

Country Estate that blends mural restoration work with independent research projects, museum field trips, and lectures by conservation experts.

Six participants are repairing areas on a large, damaged mural owned by Hampton University and painted in 1947 by John Biggers, an African-American artist featured prominently in UD's Paul R. Jones Collection. The Biggers' mural presents them with unusual conservation issues, and its idiosyncratic nature requires them to dig a little deeper into its history. At one point the mural was removed from its stretcher, rolled it up and stored during which it was damaged. Biggers also tried to do restoration work himself that didn't quite match, so students have the interesting problem as well of dealing with the artist's own restorations.

**"A Room Full of Destiny,"** *Kansas City Star*, 07/09/06.

Cristina Mossetti has spent much of the last 10 years overseeing restoration of a 300-year-old palace in Turin, Italy. The so-called Italian Drawing Room, or "Gabinetto," at the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art was the main reason for Mossetti's visit to Kansas City from Turin, where she supervises the Villa della Regina and other historical sites in the Piedmont region of northern Italy.

In the midst of the Nelson's general makeover, the room has become the subject of a new round of scholarly detective work. The room is apparently the only one of its kind outside Europe, Mossetti said, and only one of three outside of Turin, where royal tastes in the mid-18th century seemed to spawn a trend. The room will be taken apart and put back together, and eventually it will be topped off with a newly made but faithfully replicated ceiling, which it has long lacked.

**"World Famous RAF Biggin Hill Station 'at Risk',"** *24Dash.com*, 07/10/06.

Part of the famous Royal Air Force fighter station at Biggin Hill has been included in the latest edition of the Greater London Buildings at Risk Register. Regarded as Britain's principal fighter station, Biggin Hill squadrons claimed more enemy aircraft than any other station - 1,400 over the course of the war, including 400 during The Battle of Britain in the summer of 1940. It also

became the target of the Luftwaffe's attacks with some of the buildings sustaining bomb damage which is still visible. The buildings are an elegant redbrick neo-Georgian style which is typical of military airfields of the inter-war period. All buildings have remained vacant since the RAF left the site in 1993.

**"Time Has Come for Title Insurance on Art,"** *Los Angeles Times*, 07/14/06.

The latest attempt to tame the wild and woolly world of art is a new brand of title protection insurance. Although various businesses and nonprofit organizations maintain databases of lost or stolen artworks and grapple with ways to guarantee authenticity, New York-based ARIS Title Insurance Corp. offers a policy designed to insure the ownership of works of art.

Six years in development and six weeks on the market, the new product is similar to real estate title insurance. Art title protection insurance transfers risk to a third party so that people can buy and sell art with the confidence that there is not a World War II claim, an import-export issue or a lien or judgment against the artwork. Who needs this insurance? Nearly everyone who creates or owns art, the company says, reciting a litany of domestic and legal situations that can affect ownership. Who's buying it? No one yet. But one application from a private collector arrived 24 days after the insurance was launched. It's under review.

**"Art Restorer Nabbed Stockpiling Valuables,"** *Kathimerini English Edition*, 07/20/06.

A 28-year-old Greek art restorer has been arrested in London after he allegedly stole from a 52-year-old woman a number of valuable items he was meant to be repairing, Attica police said yesterday. The man has not been named but officers said they had found 23 valuable paintings belonging to the woman in a warehouse in Galatsi which is owned by the suspect's 58-year-old father. Officers said they are continuing to search for other items that the art restorer may have stolen, as his alleged victim, a member of a shipping family, claims that some jewelry and antiques are also missing from her houses in Greece and abroad. The 52-year-old told police in London, where she reported the matter,

that the man had taken the items on the promise of restoring and returning them but did not actually give them back.

**"Two Hurt when Sculpture Moves,"** *Los Angeles Times*, 07/25/06.

Two women died and 13 people were injured when they fell from a huge inflatable sculpture after it broke its moorings and flew into the air in a park in northeastern England, police said Monday. Up to 30 people were inside the walk-in exhibit, which has been shown around the world, when a gust of wind blew it nearly 30 feet above the park in Chester-le-Street on Sunday. The victims, aged 68 and 38, had been walking through the artwork with children when it took off. Designed by artist Maurice Agis, the exhibit, called Dreamspace, is 16 feet high and made out of plastic sheeting. It has walls that change color as visitors wander through its maze of corridors.

**"Loaded Imagery: America Tropical to Be Restored,"** *LAVoice.org*, 08/02/06.

Good news for fans of *America Tropical*, the raw, sensual and massively controversial mural that L.A.'s city fathers whitewashed over not long after Mexican artist David Alfaro Siqueiros painted it above Olvera Street in 1932.

The Getty Trust is about to announce a multi-million-dollar restoration/conservation project for the mural, including a sheltered viewing platform, visitor bridge, and interpretive center. Siqueiros, the most revolutionary of *Los Tres Grandes* in materials usage, social intent, and content, worked for a period of time in Los Angeles. His 80-foot-long mural *America Tropical* spoke to the exploitation of the Mexican worker.

Commissioned by the city fathers for a Bavarian beer garden (owned by a Nazi), the mural was intended to depict a kitschy Mexican village scene for the benefit of tourists. Instead, Siqueiros made the central image of the mural a crucified figure.

**"Guard Dog Mauls Elvis's Teddy in Rampage,"** *The Guardian*, 08/03/06.

When Barney met Mabel, there was an instant - and fatal - chemical reaction. On Tuesday night the doberman pinscher guard dog, after six years' blameless service, went berserk: within minutes Mabel, a 1909 German-made

Steiff teddy bear once owned by Elvis Presley, more recently the pride and joy of an English aristocrat, lay mortally wounded. Barney went on to rampage through hundreds of rare teddies, all on loan to Wookey Hole Caves in Somerset, and so valuable that the insurers had insisted on a guard dog to protect the premises at night.

**“At Paris Exhibit, L.A. Art Is a Smash – Literally,”** *Los Angeles Times*, 08/03/06.

The world-renowned Pompidou Center of Paris, which set out in March to celebrate the work of Los Angeles artists, has accidentally destroyed two of their works - which fell from museum walls. A third piece was slightly damaged. The incidents, all of which occurred during the March-to-July run of “Los Angeles 1955-1985,” have experts wondering whether a major museum has ever done so much damage in the course of a single show.

“It’s not our guilt,” Catherine Grenier, who curated the show for the Pompidou, said from her Paris home. “For me, it’s not a coincidence. These two works were made of the same materials, and made in the same period. And both were incredibly fragile.” But LACMA curator Lynn Zelevansky, who heads the contemporary art department, noted that the piece the museum lent had gone on and off display often - and survived several earthquakes - during its three decades in LACMA’s care.

**“Preservationists Score a Coup in Rescuing L.A. Office Designed by John Lautner,”** *Los Angeles Times*, 08/05/06.

One of Los Angeles’ most public landmarks has come to the rescue of one of the city’s most private ones. A one-of-a-kind Modernist high-rise office designed by acclaimed architect John Lautner will be reassembled in the historic former May Co. building on Wilshire Boulevard’s Miracle Mile after being evicted from the 20th story of a Century City tower.

The Los Angeles County Museum of Art, which owns the 67-year-old Streamline Moderne building that was home to the former department store, will use the room — built with walls of sleek copper and glass, a floor of triangular black slate and a ceiling of flowing wood

— as an executive office. Museum administrators hope to reassemble the Lautner office in 2008 or 2009, when work on the building’s upper floor is planned. The architect’s original design plans will be used for its reassembly.

**“Artist Twitchell Sues over the Disappearance of his *Ruscha*,”** *Los Angeles Times*, 08/05/06.

Artist Kent Twitchell has filed lawsuits over the destruction of his large-scale mural *Ed Ruscha Monument* that was painted over in June. The defendants, the suit contends ‘willfully and intentionally desecrated, distorted, mutilated and otherwise modified’ the work. Twitchell has said he received no notice — as required by law — that the artwork, on a downtown building owned by the federal government, would be painted over.

**“Local New Deal-Era Map Almost Complete,”** *The Shreveport Times*, 08/14/06.

For the last two summers, visitors to the Louisiana State Exhibit Museum have seen experts and students restoring a New Deal-era topographical map depicting the state of Louisiana. The 141-foot sculptural painting is located on the floor inside the front entrance of the museum.

Made in five large sections of plaster, the map was assembled over the foundation and then painted with casein and resin paints. Over the years, the map was repainted to indicate changes in crops and industries in various state parishes. Shelley Reisman Paine, a veteran sculpture conservator who runs her conservation business out of Nashville, Tenn., is heading the project.

Paine and her team removed eight layers that had been added on top of the initial painting and sprayed a protective coating on what was left of the original work. Then they touched up the parts that had faded over time. Last summer Paine worked with colleague Richard Wolbers from the Winterthur Museum in Delaware to design a system to remove the overpaint layer by layer. This summer she and her students are working with painting conservator James Bernstein from San Francisco.

**“Rebuilding The Tuileries,”** *Bloomberg.com*, 08/23/06.

There is a plan in Paris to rebuild

the Tuileries Palace. No one has seen this handsome pile since it was torched by the Communards in 1871. For the past century and more the name ‘Tuileries’ has brought to mind not a building but a garden. Now, the French government is considering a project to put it back on the original site, opposite the Louvre, at an estimated cost of 300 million euros (\$383 million). If the plan -- which would be funded from private sources -- goes ahead, it will by no means be unique. To a surprising extent, the monuments of Europe are not original, but reproduction.

**“Madras Varsity Senate House Restoration Almost Over,”** *The Hindu*, 08/24/06.

The stately Senate House in the University of Madras exuded a quiet radiance on Tuesday as a small audience gathered under its newly painted ceilings. President APJ Abdul Kalam will inaugurate the renovated Senate House, 143 years old. And when that is done, the historic hall with its stained glass windows, intricate murals, painted panels, patterned balcony railings, and walls smoothed by plaster will open its doors to the public.

The past two years and a half have been challenging for conservation architect K. Kalpana and her team. Kalpana said that the team had tried its best to conserve the original structure or make exact replicas when the existing work could not be saved. “The walls required seven coats of paint, including one coat with a mixture of frothy egg white and whey water from curdled milk,” said Kalpana. An expert from Bangalore was called to restore the stained glass windows.

**“Ancient Arctic Rock Carvings Need Protection, Experts Say,”** *CBC.CA*, 08/28/06.

Archaeological experts in Nunavik seek protection for a site with ancient petroglyphs off Quebec’s northern coast after hearing that carvings have been damaged. The approximately 170 petroglyphs are mask-like images and animal shapes carved into a soapstone ridge on Qajartalik Island, one hour by boat from the village of Kangiqsujuaq. Experts believe the carvings were created by the extinct Dorset culture 1,500 years ago. Quebec cultural officials dis-

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covered gouges on the etchings earlier this year. Reports in some newspapers in southern Canada suggest local people may have done the damage because their religious beliefs, perhaps believing the petroglyphs are pagan images.

### **“Painter Said to Be Focus of FBI Probe,”** *Los Angeles Times*, 08/29/06.

The FBI is investigating allegations that self-styled “Painter of Light” Thomas Kinkade and some of his top executives fraudulently induced investors to open galleries and then ruined them financially. Investigators are focusing on issues raised in civil litigation by at least six former Thomas Kinkade Signature Gallery owners.

The ex-owners allege in arbitration claims that, among other things, the artist known for his dreamily luminous landscapes and street scenes used his Christian faith to persuade them to invest in the independently owned stores, which sell only Kinkade’s work. Former gallery owners said that after they had invested tens of thousands of dollars, the company’s practices and policies drove them out of business. They alleged they were stuck with unsalable limited-edition prints, forced to open additional stores in saturated markets, and undercut by discounters that sold identical artworks at prices they were forbidden to match.

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## Of Interest

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