

THE GREATEST ART FORGERS (PART 2)

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Disputed attribution to Leonardo Da Vinci (1452-1519), 'La Bella Principessa' 1495-96, Trois crayons (black, red and white chalk), heightened with pen and ink on vellum, laid on oak panel, 33 cm x 23.9 cm. The forger Shaun Greenhalgh claims to be the artist behind this work. Photo: Wiki Commons

- I would like to start by thanking all those who have subscribed to my YouTube channel as I have just exceeded 1,000 subscribers. Please subscribe if you have not done so already and you will be emailed whenever I upload a new talk. The second admin point is a reminder that full notes in PDF format with a lot more information and links to other talks and websites is available on my website at shafe.uk. Just type shafe.uk into Google and it should be the first entry.

- In this second part I cover six more recent forgers. The image you see is *La Bella Principessa* (pronounced 'PRIN-che-pacer') which many claim is by Leonardo da Vinci but, one of the artists I cover today claims he drew it using a supermarket checkout girl as the model. That just demonstrates the degree of uncertainty in the art world about even such a well-known artist as Leonardo.

NOTES

- Roman sculpture https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roman_sculpture
- Michelangelo <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Michelangelo>
- Han van Meegeren (1889-1947)
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Han_van_Meegeren
- Elmyr de Hory (1906-1976)
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elmyr_de_Hory
- Tom Keating (1917-1984)
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tom_Keating
- Eric Hebborn (1934-1996)
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eric_Hebborn
- John Myatt (b. 1945) https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Myatt
- Max Brandrett (b. 1949)
https://en.everybodywiki.com/Maxamillian_Brandrett

- Ken Perenyi (b. 1949) <https://www.kenperenyiart.com/>
- Anthony Tetro (b. 1950), https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tony_Tetro
- Wolfgang Beltracchi (b. 1951)
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wolfgang_Beltracchi
- Mark Augustus Landis (b. 1955)
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mark_Landis

- Shaun Greenhalgh (b. 1961)
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shawn_Greenhalgh
- Robert Driessen (b. 1962)
<https://www.spiegel.de/international/world/art-forger-robert-driessen-reveals-how-he-made-giacometti-fakes-a-893132.html>
one of the wealthiest forgers in the world
- <https://www.canvasgallery.com/blog/most-notorious-art-forges/> (Top Five)
- A non-fungible token is a non-interchangeable unit of data stored on a blockchain, a form of digital ledger, that can be sold and traded. Types of NFT data units may be associated with digital files such as photos, videos, and audio. Something is fungible if each one is practically identical, pound coins or fungible because we regard them as all the same. Fungible things are divisible- if I give you two 50p pieces it is the same as a £1 coin. Slight differences between fungible items do not matter. A unique serial number on a bank note does not change its value. A dirty note is worth the same as a mint note. Non-fungible items are unique, verifiable, scarce and indivisible. Imagine you lose a friend's dog and buy another one that looks the same - is that OK? Dogs are non-fungible. Non-fungible things have a unique identity that affects its identity and its value. Even the best forgeries have a value that is a fraction of the original because a famous creator adds a unique fascinating history, an aura. Non-fungible tokens bring real-world value into the digital space. NFTs have provable ownership (only you have the password) and you can sell it, transparency as all transactions are stored and visible so someone else knows you are the unique owner, interoperability, because tokens are now defined by a

common standard so can be used by different organisations (while you remain the owner) (See https://enjin.io/blog/nft-beginners-guide?utm_source=google_ads&utm_medium=cpc&utm_campaign=UK_generic_nft&gclid=Cj0KCQiA64GRBhCZARIsAHOLrIhxKAdrGGnk-HV2a-Qz5B1-EoV2iYd5J1dIp1Qel73BjLT0i8tvaMaAlgnEALw_wcB)

- Art works could be protected by including the artists DNA, Do paintings already include the artists DNA from skin cells?
- In 1996 the former director of the Metropolitan Museum of Art Thomas Hoving stated that 40% of all art in museums is fake. Camille Corot painted 3,000 paintings, 5,000 of which are in the United States. The Museum of Elne (Pyrénées-Orientales) indeed holds the rope, with 60%. As for the Mimara Museum in Zagreb, almost all of the 3,754 works are allegedly counterfeit.
<https://www.vwart.com/post/counterfeiters-art-or-scam-the-met-has-40-fakes-part1>
- <https://www.vwart.com/post/50-of-art-in-circulation-is-fake-2>
- 50 % of art in circulation is fake <https://www.vwart.com/post/50-of-art-in-circulation-is-fake-3>
- Bona fide copies made for personal use or by a museum.
- 3D printed copies made in the future could be perfect?
- Walter Benjamin, aura, copies so good the original no longer has value
- Warhol silk-screen prints
- Tate carpet artist, instruction from making copies
- Dali approved copies/works
- Recast Degas Little Dancer after his death.

- Recent case in London art market, selling shares of a painting amounting to over 100%

https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/fraudster-inigo-philbrick-blames-drugged-up-london-art-scene-for-his-crimes-3kbrzwwgkh?utm_source=Sailthru&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Best%20of%20Times%206%20April%202022&utm_term=audience BEST OF TIMES

WELL-KNOWN FORGERS

Britain's No. 1 Art Forger Max Brandrett: *The Life of a Cheeky Faker*, a new book on Amazon £10

1. John Myatt 200 forgeries Matisse Braque Picasso Giacometti Monet Renoir
2. Tom Keating
3. Han Van Meegeren - Vermeer \$60 million equivalent
4. Elmyr de Hory 1,000 forged paintings Modigliani Degas Picasso Matisse
5. Wolfgang Beltracchi
6. Tony Tetro
7. Greenhalgh family forged \$11 million worth over 17 years
8. Walter Keane took credit for his wife's work
9. Michelangelo
10. Reinhold Vasters
11. Robert Driessen
12. Yves Chaudron
13. Ely Sakhai
14. Guy Ribes
15. Fernand Legros

16. David Stein

17. Mark Landis (did not commit a crime)

18. David Bowie invented Nat Tate as a famous artist

19. \$5 million worth sold on eBay by two Americans, a Spaniard and an Italian 2008

20. German forgery ring conned Steve Martin out of \$49 million for a fake Campendock

21. Salvador Dalí, who signed at the end of his life a large number of blank sheets is likely to make fun of the market for art.

- This is what Guy Ribes, a talented and prolific art forger, said about his working method: "I put myself in the artist's shoes. When I painted a Picasso, I was Picasso. When I painted a Chagall, I thought like Chagall. To make the illusion perfect, Guy Ribes never copied anything: he created paintings that did not exist. "Many artists work in series. They produce 20, 30, or 50 almost identical designs. I slipped one in the middle. Obviously, this requires a perfect knowledge of the painter and his technique. I had to determine the year, the month, and even the day of manufacture of the painting I was inventing, locate the place where it was supposed to have been made, know what state of mind the artist was in, what materials, and pigments he was using. The research sometimes took me several months.

<https://www.vwart.com/post/counterfeiters-art-or-scam-the-met-has-40-fakes-part1>

- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Art_forgery mentions
 - Ken Perenyi
 - John Myatt

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- If a talk uses information from specific books, websites or articles these are referenced either at the beginning of each talk or in the 'References' section of the relevant page. The talks that are based on an exhibition use the booklets and book associated with the exhibition.
- Where possible images and information are taken from Wikipedia under an Attribution-Share Alike Creative Commons License.
- If I have forgotten to reference any work then please let me know and I will add a reference or delete the information.

THE GREATEST ART FORGERS

- Ken Perenyi (b. 1949)
- Anthony Tetro (b. 1950)
- Wolfgang Beltracchi (b. 1951)
- Mark Augustus Landis (b. 1955)
- Shaun Greenhalgh (b. 1961)
- Robert Driessen (b. 1962)

- I am covering:

- Ken Perenyi (b. 1949, pronounced '**pear-ainy**')
<https://www.kenperenyiart.com/>
- Anthony or Tony Tetro (b. 1950),
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tony_Tetro
- Wolfgang Beltracchi (b. 1951)
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wolfgang_Beltracchi
- Mark Augustus Landis (b. 1955)
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mark_Landis
- Shaun Greenhalgh (b. 1961, pronounced 'green-haltch')
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shawn_Greenhalgh
- Robert Driessen (b. 1962)
<https://www.spiegel.de/international/world/art-forgers-robert-driessen-reveals-how-he-made-giacometti->

[fakes-a-893132.html](https://www.bbc.com/news/entertainment-arts-11634725) one of the wealthiest forgers in the world, (pronounced 'dree-sen')

- Apologies if I have left out your favourite forger—there are so many. For example,
 - **Walter Keane** (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Walter_Keane, pronounced 'keen') who took the credit for his wife's work—the popular paintings of large-eyed children;
 - **David Henty** (<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p03tpjr3>) who sold many fake paintings on eBay until he was banned for life—when he simply registered under a different name;
 - **Jonathan Rayfern** (<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-11646321>) who was jailed for forging the work of Tracy Emin;
 - **William 'Billy' Mumford** (<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-london-17941464>) the British artist who was jailed for two years for creating 1,000 art forgeries that he and his co-conspirators sold on eBay;
 - **Kristine Eubanks** (and husband Gerald Sullivan, see <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/entertainment-arts-11634725>), possibly the first woman forger to be caught, she is said to have sold fake and forged art works on television to more than 10,000 victims making \$20 million. The list goes on and on but the ones I have chosen are those that crop up most often.
- So let's get started...

NOTES

- **Art works could be protected by including the artists DNA. Paintings must already include traces of the artist's skin cells and therefore their DNA.**

- In 1996 the former director of the Metropolitan Museum of Art stated that **40% of all art in museums is fake**. A well known joke goes, "**Camille Corot painted 3,000 paintings, 5,000 of which are in the United States**". The Museum of Elne (Pyrénées-Orientales) is alleged to have 60% fakes. As for the Mimara Museum in Zagreb, almost all of the 3,754 works are allegedly counterfeit. Taken from <https://www.vwart.com/post/counterfeiters-art-or-scam-the-met-has-40-fakes-part1> and <https://www.vwart.com/post/50-of-art-in-circulation-is-fake-2> and <https://www.vwart.com/post/50-of-art-in-circulation-is-fake-3>
- The philosopher Walter Benjamin (1892-1940) discussed the issue of reproduction and its impact on art. He reasoned that the original has what he called an 'aura', it is different because we know it was touched by the artist. If our ability to distinguish fakes from the original is eroded then we lose trust, the aura fades and all works became commodities.
- Warhol used silk-screen printed which potentially enables other copies to be indistinguishable but he manipulated the images and added his own touches.
- Rudolf Stingel (b. 1956) took it further and published instructions explaining how to create a fake Stingel. He also produced *Untitled* (1993) an orange carpet that hangs in Tate Modern undermining the idea of an original work.
- Salvador Dalí approved copies of his work, signed thousands before he died and worked with another artist who produced 'original' Dalís.
- Sculptures are even easier to copy. After his death Edgar Degas's *Little Dancer* was recreated in bronze by his family and these bronze copies are in major galleries around the world including Tate Modern.

- Digital art is becoming very popular but potentially can be copied indefinitely without loss of quality. Non-fungible tokens (<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/technology-56371912>) are copies of the art that cannot be copied without permission of the owner and ownership can be split between multiple owners.

WELL-KNOWN FORGERS

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- John Myatt (b. 1945) https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Myatt
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https://en.everybodywiki.com/Maxamillian_Brandrett
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- Robert Driessen (b. 1962)
<https://www.spiegel.de/international/world/art-forger-robert-driessen-reveals-how-he-made-giacometti-fakes-a-893132.html>
one of the wealthiest forgers in the world

LISTS OF FORGERS

- <https://www.canvasgallery.com/blog/most-notorious-art-forgeries/> (Top Five)
- http://www.freemanart.ca/greatest_art_forgers_fakers.htm a long list of forgers

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Ken Perenyi (b. 1949, after Claude Monet, *View of Vétheuil*, 63.5 x 101.6 cm

Claude Monet (1840–1926), *Vétheuil in Summer*, 1880, 60 x 99.7 cm, The Metropolitan Museum of Art

Ken Perenyi (b. 1949), after Claude Monet, *View of Vétheuil*, 63.5 x 101.6 cm

Claude Monet (French, Paris 1840–1926 Giverny), *Vétheuil in Summer* (pronounced vay-tur-ee'), 1880, 60 x 99.7 cm, The Metropolitan Museum of Art

- Which is the fake Monet? (CLICK) It is the one on the left by Ken Perenyi, he has painted in a more conventional manner than Claude Monet. As the Met puts it in their description of the genuine work on the right, "**... the flicker of individual brushstrokes reflects Monet's concern with recording sensations of color and light as accurately as possible. Ironically, this practice resulted in paintings of an increasingly abstract nature. Indeed, the imagery nearly dissolves in the myriad touches of paint.**" With the result that the painting by Ken Perenyi is

almost, dare I say it, more Monet than Monet.

- (CLICK) Ken Perenyi (b. 1949, pronounced 'pear-ainy') is an **American artist** who, when young, read about how **Van Meegeren** had fooled the art world and the idea appealed to him so when he failed to make a living as an artist he used the same techniques. He lacked a formal art education but **taught himself** by going round art dealers and asking about pigments, brushes, canvases and techniques.
- He is an example of a **talented artist** using his skill to produce fakes and at one stage of his life forgeries principally **to make money although he also enjoyed the excitement of fooling the experts**. He exploited the greed of dealers and buyers to make himself a lot of money and live a **lavish lifestyle** and he was proud of his achievement.

REFERENCES

<https://www.kenperenyiart.com/>

<https://www.vice.com/en/article/wjwn9b/this-guy-forged-famous-artists-for-decades-now-hes-gone-legit> video interview of Perenyi

<https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/437111>



Ken Perenyi (b. 1949), After Martin Johnson Heade, *Orchard [sic] and Hummingbirds*, 15" x 20"



Martin Johnson Heade (1819–1904), *Cattleya Orchid and Three Brazilian Hummingbirds*, 1871, 34.8 × 45.6 cm, National Gallery of Art, Washington

Ken Perenyi (b. 1949), After Martin Johnson Heade, *Orchard [sic] and Hummingbirds*, 15" x 20"
Martin Johnson Heade (1819–1904), *Cattleya Orchid and Three Brazilian Hummingbirds*, 1871, 34.8 × 45.6 cm, National Gallery of Art, Washington

- Perenyi started by faking Dutch Old Masters but after being advised by a major art collector he switched to painting in the style of 19th century American artists. He found money started to flow in and his market expanded from New York to London and Europe but he was starting to flood the market with fakes. His income which started at around **\$300 a painting**, the price of a good copy, **ended up at \$717,000**, for one painting he sold as an original by the famous American artist **Martin Heade** (1819-1904, pronounced 'heed') a well-known nineteenth-century American painter of landscapes, flowers and tropical birds.

One of these is by Heade the other Perenyi, guess which (CLICK). The Perenyi is on the left. He became a millionaire. **'Painting...consumed my life'** he said **'I lived to paint'**.

- **He spent 30 years accumulating a small fortune** and living the good life by selling fakes to collectors. Eventually, in 1998 **the FBI turned up at his kitchen door** and investigated him for **five years**. The investigation never went anywhere as all the fakes the FBI had were sold by dealers and auction houses not by Perenyi. He was **never charged** but decided to **leave the criminal world of forgery behind** and he now paints **'legitimate fakes'** that he now sells as reproductions. They are in high demand and more highly priced than most copies because he is now a well-known name.
- Statue of limitations means that he is now not able to be prosecuted enabling him to published a memoir in 2012 called ***Caveat Emptor: The Secret Life of an American Art Forger***. In the book he details decades of his activities **creating thousands** of authentic-looking replicas of masters such as **James Buttersworth, Martin Johnson Heade, and Charles Bird King**, and selling the forgeries to famous auction houses such as Christie's and Sotheby's and wealthy private collectors.

NOTES

- I am not a lawyer but I believe the statue of limitation for fraud in America is four years and six years in England & Wales but there are various circumstances which can extend the period.

REFERENCES

Ken Perenyi (b. 1949) <https://www.kenperenyiart.com/>

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cattleya_Orchid_and_Three_Hummingbirds

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Martin_Johnson_Heade

[https://culturalheritagelaw.wildapricot.org/resources/Documents/Fakes and Forgeries- The Art \(and Science\) of Deception and Issues with Recovery.pdf](https://culturalheritagelaw.wildapricot.org/resources/Documents/Fakes%20and%20Forgeries-The%20Art%20and%20Science%20of%20Deception%20and%20Issues%20with%20Recovery.pdf)

<https://vimeo.com/73508160> — a good 25 minute introduction to his life by Ken Perenyi, recorded nine years ago



James Buttersworth (1817-1894), *Great Republic*, 1850s, Old State House, Massachusetts



Ken Perenyi (b. 1949), *Yacht Race in New York Harbor*, after James E. Buttersworth

James Buttersworth (1817-1894), *Great Republic*, 1850s, Old State House, Massachusetts, USA. When it was built in 1853, the Great Republic was the largest clipper ship in the world.

Ken Perenyi (b. 1949), *Yacht Race in New York Harbor*, after James E. Buttersworth

- At one point he moved to the Royal Crescent in Bath, England and painted in his own style but he did not find it as exciting as painting fakes so he mastered British 19th century artists and sold his work in London. But he returned to faking American artists **like this imitation Buttersworth here**. (CLICK) The Buttersworth is on the left.
- He now sells **legal reproductions**—the one on the right is from his website—and he is doing better now as **he sells**

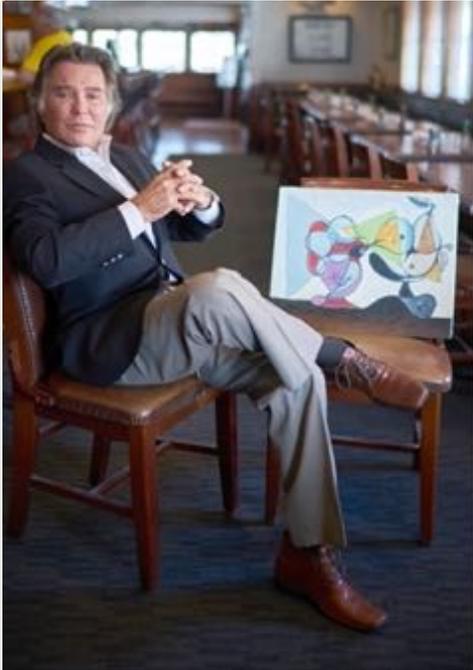
more work than he used to. He paints the original artists signature on the pictures he paints and refuses to sign his own name. As he puts it, it would compromise the integrity of the fake. He feels that imitation is the greatest form of flattery and that his work pays a tribute to great artists of the past.

- He thinks **a forger could still make a living today** despite the closer scrutiny. He advises future forgers to look for prime targets such as **recently recognised artists** whose work is **rapidly increasing in value** in the auction rooms as little will be known about the range of their work and research to authentic any work is therefore difficult.

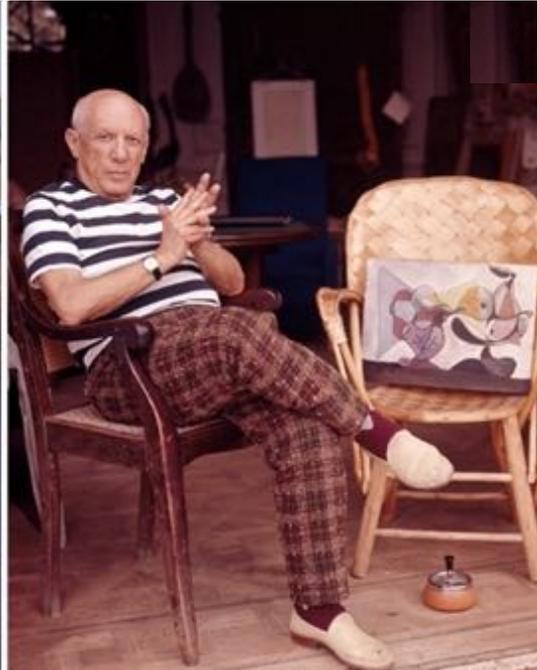
REFERENCES

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James_E._Buttersworth

<https://www.kenperenyiart.com/paintings> — for examples of his work



Anthony 'Tony' Tetro (b. 1950)



Pablo Picasso (1881-1973)

- Pablo Picasso (1881-1973) at home c. 1960, copyright Getty Images, with *Nature morte* (1960)
- This is Anthony 'Tony' Tetro (b. 1950), an American art forger known for his **perfectionism**. Like Perenyi he **never formally trained as an artist** but learnt from books and experimentation. Over three decades, Tetro forged works by many artists including **Rembrandt, Joan Miró, Marc Chagall, Salvador Dalí and Norman Rockwell** and, as you see here, **Pablo Picasso**.

REFERENCES

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tony_Tetro

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hiro_Yamagata_\(artist\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hiro_Yamagata_(artist))



Tony Tetro copy

William-Adolphe Bouguereau (1825-1905), *Art and Literature*, c. 1867, 108 × 200 cm, Arnot Art Museum, Elmira, NY, US

- Tony Tetro was born in 1950 in a **small town called Fulton in New York State**, part of what is called the Rust Belt. His father was a **house painter** and he had no formal art training but he learnt from books and by visiting museums.
- He liked to **copy famous paintings** as an exercise in learning to paint and he started to **sell them at art fairs as copies**. This became a business as people started to buy them because he painted **flawless copies**.
- He moved to Los Angeles and continued to sell his copies. He said he **never marketed them as originals** and his

business card said, 'art reproductions'. Dealers told him they sold to people who couldn't afford the originals. However, someone must have been selling them as originals as he started to make more and more money. Look at this example of a copy of a William-Adolphe Bouguereau (1825-1905), which is the copy? I thought it was the one on the right as the eyes of the standing woman seem wrong. (CLICK) However, it is the one on the right.

- As he never travelled into work each day and loved fast cars, fast women and hard drinking his **neighbours assumed he was a drug dealer** and his house was frequently searched by the police. It was not until he was arrested and no evidence was presented in court that he explained how he made money selling reproductions.
- He was eventually caught when an artist (Hiro Yamagata, b. 1948, a Japanese artists who is now based in Los Angeles) found a forgery of his own work in a gallery in Beverly Hills. The police searched his home, this time not for drugs but for forgeries and they found 250. The district attorney, Gary Helton, called him "**one of the two major [art] forgers in the United States.**"

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<https://tonytetro.com/la-times-profile/>

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/con-artist-by-tony-tetro-review-how-to-paint-a-fake-caravaggio-n8cjhjvz>

<https://artmarketmag.com/tony-tetro-an-interview-with-genius-art-forgers/>



Giovanni Battista Tiepolo (1696-1770),
Woman with a Parrot, 1760-61,
71 × 53.4 cm, Ashmolean Museum,
Oxford



Tetro copy

Giovanni Battista Tiepolo (1696-1770), *Woman with a Parrot*, 1760-61, 71 × 53.4 cm, Ashmolean Museum, Oxford

Tetro copy

- Another pair of paintings that caused me problems distinguishing the copy from the original. Slight differences are probably the result of the image quality. Tetro was very good and he rated other forgers—"**De Hory was good. Van Meegeren was overblown, but Eric Hebborn was very good**".
- So which is which? (CLICK) The original is by Giovanni Tiepolo and is on the left.
- Tetro was arrested and tried. The cost of the lawyer bankrupted him and he insisted in court that he only copied works and never intended to sell them as originals.

He blamed the dealers as misrepresenting his work and he was critical of the whole art market. Regarding experts, he said, **"often, instead of facts, their opinion is based on relationships, peer pressure and greed"**; regarding the gallery salesmen, **"like most dealers he could have been selling timeshares or diet pills"**; the auction houses **"much more worried about controversy than finding fakes"** and he added, **"Real or fake, the art business rolled on. It simply didn't matter to anybody."**

- The **jury was deadlocked** resulting in a mis-trial. The district attorney decided to **retry the case** but with no money Tetro had to plea ***nolo contendere*** ('no contest', i.e. 'I have no defence'), a plea in certain US jurisdictions neither admits nor disputes a charge. It is often regarded as a guilty plea but the verdict cannot be used in any later civil case. He was sentenced to community service where he painting a mural and five years probation.
- He featured in a BBC documentary and in a magazine article that explained how to forge a masterpiece. He continued to produce copies for private clients which required a court order to sign off his work.
- He is a very down-to-earth artist He says the forger is **not** some **"esoteric, mystical process, communing with the artist's mind until you can effortlessly do whatever they would have done"**. He regards it as **"a regular job"**, clocking in every morning in a secret room he has carved out of his apartment.
- Last week I pointed out that many artists have the skill to paint copies close to the original and I was asked why more artists do not become forgers. It is a bit like asking why more of use don't start phoning people to sell fraudulent stocks. Tetro's answer is **"Being a great forger, is not being a great painter but rather**

a convincing storyteller." You must constantly be "**on the lookout for a weak point, an opening, a mistake, any bit of uncertainty that allows your work a chance to exist . . . Like the best con artists, you must create a context and a backstory that justify an otherwise unbelievable circumstance.**"

- To explain the lengths you need to go to, Tetro needed to convince a dealer a work was by **Matisse** so he bought a **catalogue raisonné** which costs about £2,000 secondhand, he cut out a page and replaced it with a carefully printed copy of his fake painting. He then added labels and covers and put it on the shelf in the dealer's local library. He then stole the dealer's own copy of the book so the unsuspecting dealer would visit the library to check the painting.
- Today, he says, radiocarbon dating and spectroscopic analysis would uncover most of his forgeries but they continue to turn up. The **most recent scandal** was when In November 2019, it was reported that **four of the seventeen paintings** that were loaned to the **then Prince Charles's** for Dumfries House were not works by Picasso, Dalí, Monet, and Chagall, but in fact were fakes that had been painted by Tetro. The paintings were later removed from display.

NOTES

- Regarding the Tiepolo, "This painting probably belongs to a series of **half-length capriccio portraits** of women for Elizabeth Petrovna, **Empress of Russia** on which Tiepolo was working in late 1760. This distinctive **Venetian genre of poetic or fantasy portraits** derives from Giorgione, and Tiepolo (celebrated as a latter-day Veronese) often looked to sixteenth-century Venetian art. Such images of beautiful women are **often categorised as courtesans**. Exotic birds are common in Tiepolo's work and here

the macaw provides a colourful and witty motif. The cameo portrait shows one of the Caesars, possibly Augustus. Lorenzo Tiepolo made a pastel copy of this painting (National Gallery of Art, Washington), together with a pendant showing a woman in a fur wrap ('Allegory of Winter', Kress Collection, El Paso Museum) which may record a lost oil painting." [1]

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Wolfgang Beltracchi with his wife Helene in their studio standing next to one of his forged paintings in the style of Max Ernst

Max Ernst, *La horde (The Horde)*, 1927, 65 × 81 cm, Collection Würth, Künzelsau, Germany

The artist and forger Wolfgang Beltracchi with his wife Helene in their studio standing next to one of his forged paintings in the style of Max Ernst. Photo: Brill/ullstein bild via Getty Images

Max Ernst, *La horde (The Horde)*, 1927, 65 × 81 cm, Collection Würth, Künzelsau, Germany

BIO:BELTRACCHI

- This is Wolfgang Beltracchi (b. 1951) with his wife Helene (pronounced 'hell-EN') in their studio standing next to one of his forged paintings in the style of Max Ernst. The Ernst is one of a series of works titles *The Horde* (1927) so Beltracchi was painting another work in the same theme.
- He was born **Wolfgang Fischer** in **1951** in Germany, the son of an art restorer. He was surrounded by painting and claims to have **copied a Pablo Picasso (1881-1973)**

painting when he was 14. He was later **expelled from school** and went to art school in Aachen. He used drugs and **started 'a little' art forgery**, travelled through Europe and **lived in Amsterdam** and elsewhere. He **opened an art gallery** with a business partner but they fell out. In **1992 he met Helene Beltracchi** and married her the following year and took her name.

- **He did not copy existing paintings but painted subjects in the style of famous artists as we see here.** He **made up titles** and **invented false provenance** claiming that his **wife's grandfather was friends with a well known Jewish art dealer** (Albert Flechtheim, 1878-1937) **in the 1920s.** **When the war came the dealer fled leaving her grandfather with a large cache of paintings.** She did have a wealthy grandfather but he was a member of the Nazi party so the story was unlikely to be true.
- (CLICK) When questioned they **showed old photographs of Helene's grandmother with the paintings on the walls of her house.** The old photographs were forged and the model was Helene herself dressed in period costume. This is another example of the attention to detail and level of fraud required to back up the provenance of a faked painting.

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Wolfgang Beltracchi (b. 1951), *Red Picture with Horses*, painted in the style of German-Dutch Modernist Heinrich Campendonk



Heinrich Campendonk (1889-1957), *Pferde am See* (Horses at the Lake), c. 1915, gouache on card, 43 x 53 cm



Landschaft mit Pferden (Landscape With Horses) suspected to be by Wolfgang Beltracchi

Wolfgang Beltracchi (b. 1951), *Red Picture with Horses*, painted in the style of German-Dutch Modernist Heinrich Campendonk, allegedly c. 1914

Landschaft mit Pferden (Landscape With Horses), 45 × 45cm, suspected to be by Wolfgang Beltracchi

Heinrich Campendonk (1889-1957), *Pferde am See* (Horses at the Lake), c. 1915, gouache on card, 43 x 53 cm, sold at Christie's 2005 for £366,400. It was sold by the family that bought the painting around 1918.

- "Beltracchi was **caught because of a fake Heinrich Campendonk** (1889-1957) painting titled *Red Picture with Horses*. It was sold at auction in Cologne for €2.9 million and was later tested scientifically and found to be fake. It turned out there were **traces of titanium white** (only

available as a pigment in 1921) on the canvas, a pigment that Campendonk couldn't have used because it didn't exist at the time. **"I took a zinc white from a tube, a Dutch product, but unfortunately it didn't say that it contained a small amount of titanium white,"** Beltracchi told Spiegel. "In other words, the whole thing was discovered because of an **incorrectly labeled tube.**"

- "German police believe that American actor, comedian and collector **Steve Martin played a minor role as a victim** in what may be **Germany's biggest-ever art forgery scandal.** According to investigators at Berlin's state criminal police office (LKA), the art lover purchased what he believed to be a 1915 work by the German-Dutch modernist painter Heinrich Campendonk.
- (CLICK) He bought the colorful "Landschaft mit Pferden," or "Landscape With Horses," from the Paris gallery Cazeau-Béraudière for what would have been considered the **bargain price of an estimated €700,000** (around \$850,000 at the time) in July 2004 ... Investigators believe the fake Campendonk originated from either the invented "Knops" or "Jägers" art collections devised by a group of German swindlers caught in 2010. Main suspect Wolfgang Beltracchi, along with accomplice Otto Schulte-Kellinghaus and two sisters are all under suspicion of selling dozens of forged paintings since 2001 and possibly even earlier."

NOTES

- "Heinrich Mathias Ernst Campendonk (born 3 November 1889 in Krefeld, North Rhine-Westphalia, Germany – died 9 May 1957 in Amsterdam, Netherlands) was a painter and graphic designer born in Germany and became a Naturalized Dutch citizen. Campendonk was the son of a textile merchant, stopped his

textile apprenticeship in 1905. From 1905 - 1909, he received artistic education from Johan Thorn Prikker, a very progressive school for arts and crafts at the time. He became friends with Helmuth Macke, August Macke, Wilhelm Wieger, Franz Marc and Paul Klee during this time." [1]

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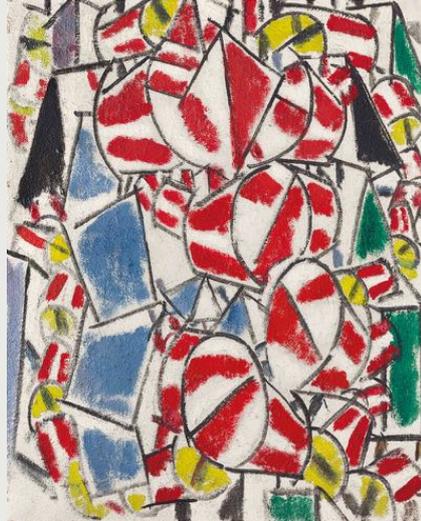
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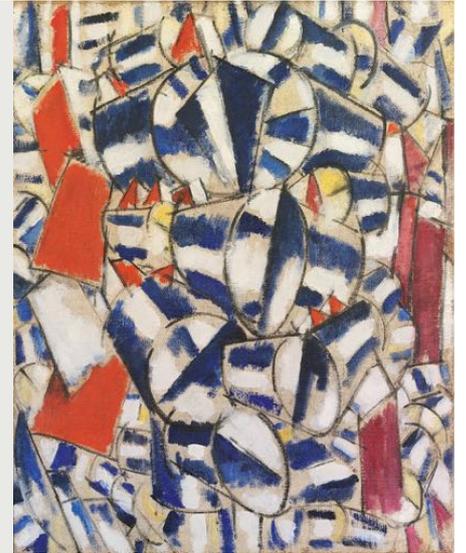
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Wolfgang Beltracchi (b. 1951) painted in the style of Fernand Léger (1881-1955)



Fernand Léger (1881-1955), *Contraste de formes*, 1913, oil on burlap, 92.4 x 73.2 cm, signed and dated 'F. LÉGER (1913)' (on the reverse), sold by Christie's in 2017 for \$70 million



Fernand Léger, *Contraste de formes*, 1913, 81 x 65 cm, Fondation Beyeler, Basel

Wolfgang Beltracchi (b. 1951) painted in the style of Fernand Léger (1881-1955)

Fernand Léger (1881-1955), *Contraste de formes*, 1913, oil on burlap, 92.4 x 73.2 cm, signed and dated 'F. LÉGER (1913)' (on the reverse), sold by Christie's in 2017 for \$70 million

Fernand Léger, *Contraste de formes*, 1913, 81 x 65 cm, Fondation Beyeler, Basel

- The Cubist painting on the left, supposedly by Fernand Léger (1881-1955), was also created by **Beltracchi**.
- "Painted by Fernand Léger in 1913, *Contraste de formes* belongs to a **series of paintings that changed for ever the way we look at art**. Across the course of just a few months, in a sequence of some **14 canvases, Léger**

advanced beyond Cubism into a visual language that abandoned the representational concerns of **his contemporaries, Picasso and Braque**. Instead, his only subject was **pure, abstract shapes and colours**, hinged on a network of forceful lines." [1]

- With a sequence of similar paintings it is easier for a forger to create another in the series. In the film of his life called *Beltracchi: The Art of Forgery* he says it is easier to sell a work for half a million dollars than ten thousand as every assumes it is not a fake.

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Wolfgang Beltracchi (b. 1951), *La Forêt 2 (The Forest)*, a fake 1927 Max Ernst oil painting created around 2004



Max Ernst (1891-1976), *La Forêt (The Forest)*, 1927-8, 96.3 × 129.5 cm, Guggenheim, New York

Wolfgang Beltracchi (b. 1951), *La Forêt 2 (The Forest)*, a fake 1927 Max Ernst oil painting created around 2004

Max Ernst (1891-1976), *La Forêt (The Forest)*, 1927-8, 96.3 × 129.5 cm, Guggenheim, New York

- **Max Ernst painted a series of dense forests in the 1920s and 30s** using a technique that combined random patterns. For example he would drop a piece of canvas on a wooden floor and then scrape oil paint over the surface, a technique known as **grattage** (compared with frottage, which involves rubbing a pencil over paper placed on the textured surface). After repeating this he would then interpret the design often adding a solar disk and a bird among the trees.
- One of these is by Beltracchi and is one of his most

"successful" fakes, the painting was **"authenticated," sold for several million dollars**, and even had a stint in the Max Ernst Museum in 2006. (CLICK) It is the one on the left.

- He was interviewed by Der Spiegel:
 - SPIEGEL: **Your Campendonk forgeries**, for example, led to an **explosion in prices** for his paintings on the art market.
 - Beltracchi: **Prices tripled**. The same thing happened with (Max) Pechstein and Max Ernst. **His widow Dorothea Tanning**, an artist in her own right, said that one of my forgeries was the **most beautiful Max Ernst painting she had ever seen**. The trick is to paint a picture that doesn't exist, and yet that fits perfectly into an artist's body of work.
- **Beltracchi earned an estimated €30 million making him one of the richest forgers.**

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Mark Landis at home

Mark Landis at home

- Mark Landis was an unusual forger. He toured American fooling over 50 museums in twenty states but he **never asked for any money**, he **donated his forgeries as genuine works** as he wanted to be seen as a philanthropist.
- When he was young he travelled round the world with his parents as his father was in the Navy. His father died when he was 15 and the following year he was diagnosed with a variety of mental illnesses. He studied art and opened an art gallery but it failed. He returned to live with his mother and to please her he donated a fake to a **museum in California** as an original. This was so successful and made him so happy he continued to donate fake works he had produced for the **next twenty years**. He made money by

selling his own work through an organisation that sold work painted by artists with mental illnesses.

BIO:LANDIS

- Mark Landis (b. 1955) was an American artist who was born in Virginia and grew up following his Navy lieutenant father around the Far East and Europe. He found he had a remarkable ability to copy works of art and when he was 16 his father died which affected him deeply and the following year he was diagnosed with various mental illnesses. He attended art courses and worked on repairing damaged paintings. He bought an art gallery but it lost money and he returned to live with his mother and stepfather. To please his mother he donated a copy of a work by the American artist Maynard Dixon (1875-1946) to a California museum **as an original**. His first attempt at faking the work of another artist was so successful that he continued donating works for the next twenty years, generally to small museums that did not have the means to analyse works and who tended not to authenticate gifts particularly by lesser known artists. At the same time he produced his own work and sold it through an organisation that sells works by artists with mental illness.

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Paul Signac (1863-1935), *Tugboat and Barge in Samois*, 1900, watercolour, gouache and pencil on paper, 12×19.7 cm, The State Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg

Mark Augustus Landis (b. 1955) forgery of Paul Signac

Paul Signac (1863-1935), *Tugboat and Barge in Samois*, 1900, watercolour, gouache and pencil on paper, 12×19.7 cm, The State Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg

Mark Augustus Landis (b. 1955) forgery of Paul Signac

- In 2007 he donated several works to a larger museum (Oklahoma City Museum of Art) and the curator investigated the works and found similar pieces had been donated to other museums. He investigated further and found Landis had donated to 60 museums in 20 states using a variety of aliases including that of a Jesuit priest. In 2010 *The Art Newspaper* published **an article exposing him** followed by an article in the *Financial Times*. It then turned out that he had **broken no laws**, as one expert put it "**Basically, you have a guy going around the country on his own nickel giving free stuff to museums**".

However, it is estimated that the damage brought about by his gifts was about \$5 million.



Art and Craft, a documentary about Mark Landis, available on Amazon Prime.

- Landis also donated art to churches and here is one example he is in the middle of painting using a magnifying glass. He would then dress as a Jesuit priest with a story of how he obtained the work.
- **To try to stop him** the University of Cincinnati held an exhibition called 'Faux Real' which displayed 60 works by Landis and his Jesuit priest's costume. **Landis attended the opening as guest of honour.**
- **A documentary was made** about his life and his work and the process he went through to donate his work. In the film he phones an auction house about this picture which he was just finishing , a crucifixion allegedly circa 1540.

- He had many stories to explain how he came to own the works he was donating, for example, he made up a sister as the owner of the work so he could fend off awkward questions.



Charles Courtney Curran, *Three Women*, 1894



Mark Landis's copy

Charles Courtney Curran (1861-1942), *Three Women*, 1894,
14 × 24.1 cm

American painter Charles Courtney Curran

- This is another work he admits faking, it is a copy of *Three Women* by the American artist Charles Courtney Curran (1861-1942). The painting is on a panel which he stained with coffee to look old, he added "**you get better with practice**".

NOTES

- Curran was born in Kentucky but when the Civil War broke out his family moved to Ohio. He showed an early aptitude for art and went to art school in Cincinnati before moving to New York. At this time many of his paintings feature young, attractive working-class women engaged in a

variety of tasks. He married and they moved to Paris for two and a half years where he enrolled at the prestigious Academie Julian. He painted scenes of well dressed modern women en plein air. His work remains popular and it is estimated he produced over 1,500 pictures.

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Jean-Antoine Watteau, *A Woman Lying On A Chaise Longue*, 1719



Mark Landis's copy

Jean-Antoine Watteau, *A Woman Lying On A Chaise Longue*, 1719

- Landis did not just copy nineteenth-century American artists. Here is a drawing in the style of French painter **Jean-Antoine Watteau** (1684-1721) who painted during the early eighteenth century. Watteau revitalised the waning Baroque style by shifting to this less severe, more naturalistic, less formally classical style called **Rococo**.

NOTES

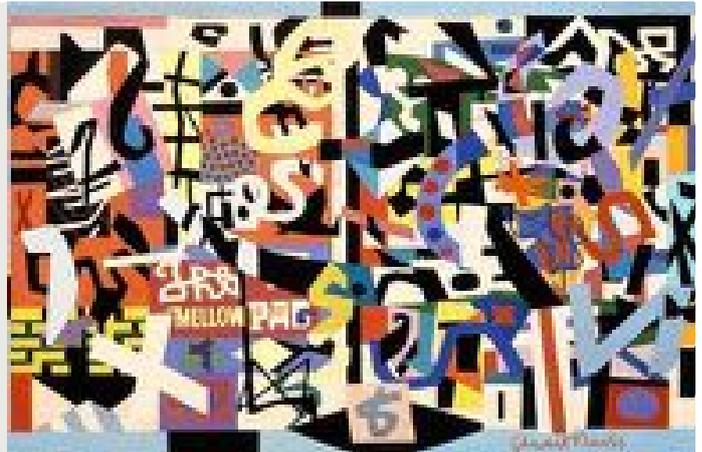
- Watteau is credited with inventing the genre of *fêtes galantes*, scenes of bucolic and idyllic charm, suffused with a theatrical air.

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Stuart Davis (1892-1964), *Houses Along a Canal*, 1914-18



Stuart Davis (1892-1964), *The Mellow Pad*, 1945-1951, 66.7 × 107 cm.
Brooklyn Museum of Art, New York

Stuart Davis (1892-1964), *Houses Along a Canal*, 1914-18

Mark Landis's copy

Stuart Davis (1892-1964), *The Mellow Pad*, 1945-1951, 66.7 × 107 cm. Brooklyn Museum of Art, New York

- Stuart Davis was an early American modernist and this is an example of his early work alongside a Landis copy. In the early 20th century Davis was a member of the Ashcan School and (CLICK) in the 1940s and 50s he is known for his bold, colourful proto-pop art paintings. (CLICK)
- Recently another exhibition was held in New York that **included Landis's work** in order to raise **the question of appropriation, authenticity and the way value is created**. During a panel discussion the idea of creating **Non-Fungible Tokens** or NFTs was discussed. More about

NFTs later.

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Shaun Greenhalgh (b. 1961)

Statue of a Couple, Akhenaton and Nefertiti, 1352-1335 BC, Louvre

The Amarna Princess, a forgery by Shaun Greenhalgh



Statue of a Couple, Akhenaton and Nefertiti, 1352-1335 BC, Louvre

The Amarna Princess, a forgery by Shaun Greenhalgh

- This is **Shaun Greenhalgh** (b. 1961, pronounced 'green-haltch'). He worked from his garden shed and was a master of many styles and media. He could produce an Egyptian relic one day and a L. S. Lowry painting the next.
- This is a forgery of an Egyptian relic, an Amarna princess that the British Museum claimed was a 3,000 year-old masterpiece valued at £440,000 but it was carved by Greenhalgh in his shed using a B&Q saw "and a bit of elbow grease" as he put it.
- (CLICK) This is a genuine statuette from the same period in the Louvre, one of just two in the world. Compare the fake

with the figure of Nefertiti on the left.

- The forgery was so successful it has a Wikipedia page all of its own and 33 references to articles about it in the press. So how did he fool the British Museum. Sculptures are easier to fake as they are more difficult to authenticate. The Greenhalghs, a father and son team, bought an 1892 sale catalogue of the contents of Silverton Park, Devon, home of the 4th Earl of Egremont. Although the 4th Earl was not a collector his ancestors were and the catalogue describes "**a draped figure of a female, five marble statuettes and eight Egyptian figures**". This is a vague description and Shaun Greenhalgh who was a professional antique dealer and meticulous researcher would have known the figure he produced could have been in the sale and not have been recognised.

NOTES

- The Amarna style was adopted in the Amarna Period during and just after the reign of Akhenaten (r. 1351–1334 BC) in the late Eighteenth Dynasty, during the New Kingdom. The art of this period was remarkable as it broke a thousand years of tradition by showing people in realistic statues and in intimate family settings in murals. The sudden change is probably related to the pharaoh's switch to a monotheistic religion that worshipped Aten, the disc of the Sun as giver of life.

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Paul Gauguin (1848-1903), *Thérèse*, c. 1902-3, carved miro wood, gold gilding and copper nails



Shaun Greenhalgh (b. 1961) forgery of *The Faun*, supposedly created by Paul Gauguin (1848-1903) in the 1880s

Shaun Greenhalgh (b. 1961) forgery of *The Faun*, supposedly created by Paul Gauguin (1848-1903) in the 1880s.

Paul Gauguin (1848-1903), *Thérèse*, c. 1902-3, carved miro wood, gold gilding and copper nails, signed with initials 'PGO' (below the left hand); titled 'THERESE' (below the right hand), height: 66 cm.

- Greenhalgh was versatile. This is a ceramic sculpture called *The Faun*, **supposedly created by Paul Gauguin in the 1880s**. In reality, it was made by Shaun Greenhalgh, a British art forger, sometime between 1989 and 2006. It's perhaps **his most successful ruse**: it was "authenticated" by experts, sold for millions, and **displayed at the Art Institute of Chicago for ten years**.
- What gave it away?: The Greenhalgh family - including

Shaun's parents and brother - worked together on the forgeries, and *The Faun* was outed as a fake after the family was caught selling the *Amarna Princess*.

- (CLICK) I am comparing it here with a genuine Gauguin sculpture. It is a carved figure of a stylised Polynesian woman which disappeared around 1980 and has since been in a private London collection, rediscovered in 2015 in a London gallery. It is said to depict a servant of the Marquesan Catholic bishop, Joseph Martin, who Gauguin believed had sexual relations with his employees. It sold at Christie's in 2015 for \$30,965,000 against an estimate of \$18-25m

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L. S. Lowry, *Going to the Match*, 1953, Lowry Art Centre, Salford



Shaun Greenhalgh (b. 1961), *Going to the Match*, 2017, signed LS Lowry 1927 on the right with the addition of Greenhalgh's symbol and 2017 on the left

L. S. Lowry, *Going to the Match*, 1953, Lowry Art Centre, Salford purchased for £7.8 m when the Players Foundation was forced to sell

Shaun Greenhalgh (b. 1961), *Going to the Match*, 2017, signed LS Lowry with the addition of Greenhalgh's symbol and dated 2017

- This is Greenhalgh's version of Lowry's *Going to the Match*. It is not a copy but another version that Lowry might have painted.
- In 2006, Greenhalgh was arrested and sentenced to four years eight months in prison.
- Today, he uses his talents legitimately. In 2017, four L.S. Lowry copies painted by Shaun Greenhalgh sold for between £2,700 and £4,800. This one, *Going to the Match*

sold for £4,600. The manager of the auction house said, "**We had people bidding from all over the world. There were people on the phone, the internet and the auction room was full. It was buzzing - Shaun Greenhalgh's artwork always attracts a lot of interest.**"

- Mr Greenhalgh's memoir, *A Forger's Tale: Confessions of the Bolton Forger*, was released this year and ended up being a bestseller. He has also appeared on BBC's *Fake or Fortune* TV Show.

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Disputed attribution to Leonardo Da Vinci (1452-1519), 'La Bella Principessa' 1495-96, Trois crayons (black, red and white chalk), heightened with pen and ink on vellum, laid on oak panel, 33 cm x 23.9 cm



Disputed attribution to Leonardo Da Vinci (1452-1519), 'La Bella Principessa' 1495-96, Trois crayons (black, red and white chalk), heightened with pen and ink on vellum, laid on oak panel, 33 cm x 23.9 cm.

- Many experts claim that this is a genuine work by Leonardo but Greenhalgh claims he created it.
- Independently, *The Guardian* newspaper art critic Jonathan Jones and the artist Leo Stevenson both think it is a forgery [1][2]. They believe the current owners have only carried out scientific tests that support their claim that it is a genuine Leonardo. The vellum has been carbon dated to between 1440 – 1650, within a 95 % confidence interval but fifteenth-century vellum is relatively easy to find and this is the only work Leonardo created on vellum. This is suspicious particularly as it is harder to detect a fake on

vellum. The provenance is mysterious and for a drawing that looks superficially like a Leonardo this seems "very suspicious".

- In November 2015, **Greenhalgh** (pronounced 'green-haltch') **claimed that he created the work in 1978**, at the age of 20; he said the woman's face is that of a supermarket check-out girl named Sally who worked in Bolton, outside Manchester. In his memoir *A Forger's Tale*, written in prison, Greenhalgh claims to have forged the drawing by obtaining an old piece of vellum from a reused 1587 land deed.
- Shaun Greenhalgh first practised the drawing on cartridge paper, then he mounted the vellum on an oak board from an old Victorian school desk lid, taken from the storeroom of Bolton Industrial Tech, where his father, George, worked as a cleaner. He had used just three colours, black, white and red, gum arabic earth pigments that he then went over in oak gall ink. Leonardo was left-handed so Greenhalgh turned the painting and hatched strokes from the profile outwards. When it was finished, Greenhalgh claims he took the picture to an art dealer in Harrogate, where he offered it for sale – not as a forgery, but as a homage. The dealer criticised its quality and paid just £80, an amount that barely covered the materials, let alone the labour.

NOTES

- La Bella Principessa (English: "The Beautiful Princess"), also known as Portrait of Bianca Sforza, Young Girl in Profile in Renaissance Dress and Portrait of a Young Fiancée, is a portrait in coloured chalks and ink, on vellum, of a young lady in fashionable costume and hairstyle of a Milanese of the 1490s. Sold for just under \$22,000 at auction on January 30, 1998 at Christie's Auction in New York City, the portrait was catalogued as early 19th-century German work. In 2007, Peter Silverman, purchased the portrait from a gallery on East 73rd Street, owned

by Kate Ganz. Peter Silverman believed that the portrait was possibly from an older period, potentially dating back to the Renaissance period, and some experts have since attributed it to Leonardo da Vinci. In 2010 one of those experts, Martin Kemp, made it the subject of his book co-authored with Pascal Cotte, *La Bella Principessa: The Story of the New Masterpiece by Leonardo da Vinci.*" (Wikipedia)

- The evidence for Leonardo is the style, high quality, corrections ('pentimenti'), left-hand hatching, the sitter's hair-style and the use of three chinks first pioneered by Leonardo, a palm print in the chalk associated with Leonardo. There is also some evidence that it was torn from a book now in the National Library of Poland which was given to Galeazzo Sanseverino. The knot-work ornament of the caul is similar to patterns explored by Leonardo in other works.
- However, left-hand hatching can be copied, as can the hairstyle and the three chinks. The palm print has been disputed and has now been dropped. The torn page from the book could have been part of an elaborate plan of deception although Martin Kemp's "needle in a haystack" search means the alleged forger did not bait the trap very effectively.
- By a process of elimination Kemp concluded it was a portrait of Bianca Sforza who married Galeazzo Sanseverino, a patron of Leonardo, in 1486 when she was 14. She died within months of her marriage possibly from an ectopic pregnancy.
- The attribution has been challenged by many scholars because of the lack of provenance prior to the 20th century, unusual given the fame of Leonardo and the Sforza family. The use of vellum which Leonardo had only used once before and the lack of cracking of the surface ('craquelure'). The use of left-handed hatching was common by forgers of Leonardo. The palm/finger

print evidence has been questioned. One scholar describes it as a “screaming 20th century fake”.

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[2]

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FORGERY?

£80 million or £0

Leonardo da Vinci?, *Bianca Sforza*?,
1495-6?, trois crayons (black, red
and white chalk), heightened with
pen and ink on vellum, laid on oak
panel, 33 × 23.9 cm, restored,
private collection



Disputed attribution to Leonardo da Vinci, Bianca Sforza (disputed), 1495-6 (disputed), trois crayons (black, red and white chalk), heightened with pen and ink on vellum, laid on oak panel, 33 × 23.9 cm, restored, private collection

- It sold for just under \$22,000 at auction on January 30, 1998 at Christie's Auction in New York City, the portrait was catalogued as **early 19th-century German work**. In 2007, Peter Silverman, purchased the portrait from a gallery on East 73rd Street, owned by Kate Ganz. Peter Silverman believed that the portrait was possibly from an older period, potentially dating back to the Renaissance period, and some experts have since **attributed it to Leonardo da Vinci**.
- In 2010 one of those experts, **Martin Kemp**, a world-leading expert on Leonardo made it the subject of his

book co-authored with Pascal Cotte, ***La Bella Principessa: The Story of the New Masterpiece by Leonardo da Vinci.***
(Wikipedia)

NOTES

- “*La Bella Principessa* (English: "The Beautiful Princess") is also known as *Portrait of Bianca Sforza*, *Young Girl in Profile in Renaissance Dress* and *Portrait of a Young Fiancée*. It is a portrait in coloured chalks and ink, on vellum, of a young lady in fashionable costume and hairstyle of a Milanese of the 1490s.



A Young Woman, 36.2 x 25.4 cm

La Bella Principessa, 33 x 24.8 cm

A Young Woman, 45.7 x 31.7 cm
(here shown mirrored)

A Young Woman, 36.2 x 25.4 cm

La Bella Principessa, 33 x 24.8 cm

A Young Woman, 45.7 x 31.7 cm (here shown mirrored).

- Let us compare it with some other works.
- The portrait on the left, *A Young Woman*, was bought in 1936 by the Detroit Institute of Arts as by Leonardo da Vinci or Andrea del Verrocchio. The attribution was made on the strength of the similarity of the curls to a Leonardo painting (*Ginevra de' Benci*). The picture is now described as "an Imitator of Verrocchio". David Alan Brown (*Virtue and Beauty*, 2001) described it as "**a probable forgery by its anachronistic materials and unorthodox construction**". "Probable" because: "after a recent technical examination, **the picture turns out to have**

been painted on photographic paper applied to a wood panel that was repaired before it was readied for painting. And at least one of the pigments employed – zinc white – is modern...”. The photographic paper and the zinc white make this a 20th century forgery.

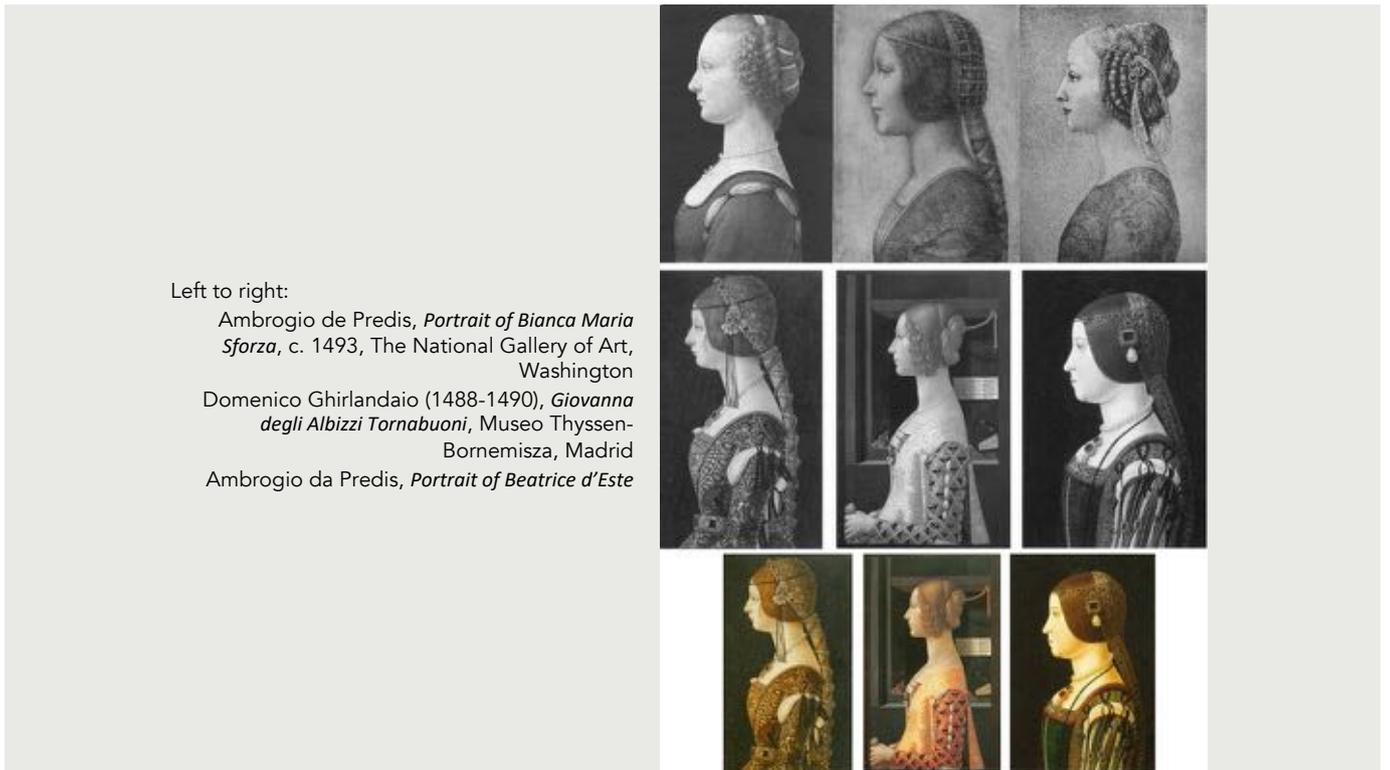
- The world-famous drawing that was dubbed “La Bella Principessa” by Professor Martin Kemp is insured for \$150 million and lives in a “secure vault in Zurich”.
- The portrait on the right, *A Young Woman*, was attributed to **Piero Pollaiuolo** by Bernard Berenson the American art historian, in 1945. The picture has since **sunk without trace** perhaps explained by a general comment—“such portraits were highly sought after by later nineteenth- and early twentieth-century collectors, encouraging a market for copies, fakes and over-ambitious attributions”.
- **Problems** with “La Bella Principessa”
 - It is made in **mixed media** (three chinks, ink, ‘liquid colour’) which **Leonardo never used elsewhere**. It is on vellum which Leonardo never used elsewhere (he was a strict vegetarian).
 - **The ‘look’ of the woman is not typical of the period and looks too modern**. Examining and comparing the look of a work is the essence of traditional connoisseurship. This breaks down to the initial impact followed by a detailed microscopic examination of the fluency and strength of the lines.
 - **It has no provenance**, and no one previously suggested it was by Leonardo. It was described as ‘German School, early 19th century’.
 - It has been **rejected by many scholars** in New York,

London and Vienna.

- One conclusion is that it is not a portrait of Bianca Sforza by Leonardo da Vinci but a twentieth century forgery or pastiche Leonardo or possible 'German School, early 19th century'.

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Left to right:

Ambrogio de Predis, *Portrait of Bianca Maria Sforza*, c. 1493, The National Gallery of Art, Washington

Domenico Ghirlandaio (1488-1490), *Giovanna degli Albizzi Tornabuoni*, Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza, Madrid

Ambrogio da Predis, *Portrait of Beatrice d'Este*

Bottom two rows,
 Ambrogio de Predis (Milanese, c. 1455-after 1508, pronounced 'ambro-jee-o day pray-dis'), Bianca Maria Sforza, c. 1493, oil on poplar wood, 51 × 32.5 cm, National Gallery of Art, Washington, upper center on headdress is the Sforza motto: MERITO ET TEMPORE (With merit and time)
 Domenico Ghirlandaio (1488-1490), *Giovanna degli Albizzi Tornabuoni*, Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza, Madrid
 Ambrogio da Predis, *Portrait of Beatrice d'Este* (tentatively attributed by Kemp)

- In the **bottom two rows are what we believe to be bona fide works**. They are highly individuated, richer works with distinctive features. **The top three works** appear to have been created to convey a **prettiness that is essentially modern**.



Attributed to Leonardo da Vinci (1452–1519),
Portrait of a Young Fiancée, or La Bella
Principessa (detail), 1495 (?), vellum, oak panel,
ink, gouache paint, 33 × 24 cm, private
collection



Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519), A Portrait of a
Woman in Profile (reversed and detail), c.1485-
90, metalpoint on cream prepared paper, 32.0 x
20.0 cm (sheet of paper), Royal Collection

Attributed to Leonardo da Vinci (1452–1519), La Bella Principessa or Portrait of a Young Fiancée (detail), 1495 (?), vellum, oak panel, ink, gouache paint, 33 × 24 cm, private collection

Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519), A Portrait of a Woman in Profile (reversed and detail), c.1485-90, metalpoint on cream prepared paper, 32.0 x 20.0 cm (sheet of paper), Royal Collection

- Finally, just when you were thinking it is definitely not by Leonardo (CLICK) look at this. This is a genuine Leonardo drawing in the **Royal Collection**. Notice both have left-handed shading. (CLICK) I will now reverse the image so that you can compare more easily. Of course, a forger would be aware of this drawing in the Royal Collection and so it could be the basis of the forger's drawing, if, of

course, it is by a forger.

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The Giacometti Affair, a still from a short film starring Robert Driessen (b. 1962)

Fake Alberto Giacometti (1901-1966), Kees van Dongen (1877-1968) and Lucian Freud (1922-2011)

- This is Robert Driessen (pronounced '**dree-sen**') whose speciality was forging fake Giacomettis and this still is from a short film on YouTube called *The Giacometti Affair*. In the film one of the experts says, "**For a forger, people like Giacometti are a goldmine because Giacometti was working on all these statues but he never kept records**".
- While doing my research, I read an **online interview** with Driessen by Jason Bailey that makes an interesting and relevant point. The interviewer had a similar upbringing to Robert Driessen. He grew up dreaming of being an artist

went to art school and art college but was **deeply disappointed** to find that the art world does not support artists and does not value skill. Of all the artists he knew at college only one now makes a living out of art and he is a **political cartoonist**. He can easily see how **Driessen became bitter and turned to forgery to prove his talent and get one back on the art world**. However, it is not a crime without victims as many non-artists think. Bailey explains that forgery undermines the whole art market which makes it **harder for up-and-coming artists** as it **erodes trust** in the whole market for everyone. **It is not a 'few rascals getting one over on the rich' it is an activity that threatens our whole cultural heritage.**

- Driessen was **born in Arnhem** in the Netherlands in 1962. It is estimated he made at least **€3 million but that was over 30 years, so on that basis he made about €100,000 a year**. However, it is difficult to trust any figures from forgers. He sold his fakes to dealers, who, knowing they were fake, would take the pieces to auction where they would be sold for a much higher price.
- Driessen loves producing art and the great artist he admires such as Giacometti, Jackson Pollock, Salvador Dalí, Lucien Freud and Banksy. He says, "**By copying them I can feel a bit like they felt**. Jackson Pollock is one of my favourites because he was so intense and modern."

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Alberto Giacometti 1901–1966,
Homme qui pointe (Man Pointing),
1947, bronze, 178 × 95 × 52 cm,
Tate, purchased 1949



Sculpture in the style of Alberto
Giacometti, created and signed by Robert
J.C. Driessen

Alberto Giacometti 1901–1966, *Homme qui pointe (Man Pointing)*, 1947, bronze, 178 × 95 × 52 cm, Tate, purchased 1949

Sculpture in the style of Alberto Giacometti, created and signed by Robert J.C. Driessen (from [1])

- Works by Giacometti reach extraordinary prices after his death making his work a prime target for forgers. For example, *The Pointing Man* sold for \$126m at Christies in 2015, still a record for any sculpture, in fact the top three highest priced sculptures are all by Giacometti (followed by Jeff Coons, Constantin Brâncuși and Amedeo Modigliani).
- As prices soared fake Giacomettis started to appear. **For forgers he is a goldmine as Giacometti was completely disorganised and never kept records.** Driessen has been quoted of saying that he feels like he has Giacometti in his

fingers. So which is the genuine work (CLICK), the Giacometti is on the left.

- Driessen came to the attention of Ernst Schöller, a detective from Stuttgart who specialises in art crimes. Two of Driessen's accomplices were arrested in Germany and an arrest warrant was issued for Driessen but he was living in Thailand where it was not valid. He wanted to come home for Christmas but as soon as he landed he was arrested and extradited to Germany and sentenced to five years but released after two years for good behaviour.
- He claims to have forged around 1,300 Giacometti sculptures over 30 years while Giacometti produced around 500 unique pieces. He now lives in Thailand where he has a small studio, and is still making and selling original reproductions of other artists work, but mainly specialising in Giacometti bronze statues and pictures and he has a website selling them for between €1,750 and €3,250 and now every work is stamped with his initials.

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one of the wealthiest forgers in the world

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Leonardo da Vinci (1452–1519)
Salvator Mundi, c. 1500, oil on walnut
wood, 65.6 × 45.4 cm, Louvre Abu
Dhabi, reproduction of the painting
after restoration by Dianne Dwyer
Modestini, a research professor at
New York University



Leonardo da Vinci (1452–1519) *Salvator Mundi*, c. 1500, oil on walnut wood, 65.6 × 45.4 cm, Louvre Abu Dhabi, reproduction of the painting after restoration by Dianne Dwyer Modestini, a research professor at New York University.

- As an aside, this is the world's most expensive painting that was sold to a Saudi prince for \$450 million. Driessen said in the interview, **"It's absolutely not da Vinci"**. As a former art forger, he says he can spot fakes a mile away. **"Have you seen the before restoration and after restoration? It's a totally different painting now. It's unbelievable how people can fall for that."**
- **That is Driessen's opinion.** Experts are divided. One of the world's leading experts on da Vinci, Martin Kemp, announced it was genuine.

- There are **at least thirty copies and variations of the painting executed by Leonardo's pupils and followers** and this is an important part of the pedigree of the painting and suggests that there must have been an original by Leonardo from which they were copied. Some experts say it is partly by Leonardo and others, such as British art historian Charles Hope, dismiss the attribution to Leonardo entirely.

REFERENCES

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Pablo Picasso (1881-1973), *Woman Before a Mirror*, 14 March 1932, 162.3 x 130.2 cm, Museum of Modern Art, New York



Robert Driessen in the style of Picasso

Pablo Picasso (1881-1973), *Woman Before a Mirror*, 14 March 1932, 162.3 x 130.2 cm, Museum of Modern Art, New York

Robert Driessen (b. 1962) in the style of Picasso. A large abstract figure study, sold for £180 at Aldridges of Bath auction house

- This was painted by Picasso in 1932, a very active period which gave rise to the exhibition at Tate called 'Picasso 1932'. Picasso said he "**preferred this painting to any of the others**" he painted that year.
- Driessen has achieved a very competent copy and **he can copy any artist**. When he was 16 he dropped out of school and produced Dutch landscapes that were popular in Germany. A dealer asked if he could copy **Dutch Romantic**

painters and he bought old paintings at flea markets, removed the paint and produced the copies. He moved on to copying the Expressionists like **Wassily Kandinsky and Emil Nolde**.

- In 1987 when he was 25 he began **casting sculptures in bronze**, a long and complex process that can easily go wrong. He learnt the skill from a caster living near his home town of Arnhem. Sculpture is easier to forge than painting partly because it is **difficult to date** and partly because there are **many recastings around** made by the family after the sculptors death and by the foundry to check the process and correct faults.
- **Driessen bought latex moulds of work by Degas, Rodin, Matisse** and others and recast sculptures that the foundry that worked for the artist told him were authentic. Driessen made his first Giacometti sculpture in 1998 when he was 36. He sold his first and was visited by two people who gave him 250,000 Deutsche mark and three weeks later Driessen gave him a dozen small fake Giacomettis. The so called **Great Giacometti Swindle had begun**. Millions changed hands but it is estimated that Driessen received **about one fifth of the price paid by the buyer**.
- In 2005 he and his wife and their son **decided to live in Thailand** for the sun. He continued to receive money, produce fakes and travel to Germany but when he was **detained for two hours for questioning** he decided to return to Thailand and **never return**. In 2009 his two accomplices were arrested in Germany and sentenced to nine and seven years four months. Over 1,000 of his sculptures were melted down on television. Driessen watched unmoved and he doesn't feel guilty, "**Anyone who believes he can buy a real Giacometti for €20,000 deserves to be duped. The art world is rotten.**"

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A collection of artworks by Robert Driessen in the manner of Banksy, largely ink on paper, includes copies of Banksy's *Balloon Girl* and *Girl Vomiting Hearts*

A collection of original artworks by renowned forger Robert Driessen, all in the manner of Banksy, largely ink on paper, signed to the lower edge by Driessen. Includes copies of Banksy's *Balloon Girl* and *Girl Vomiting Hearts*, 20th Century Design & Interiors Auction, June 2020

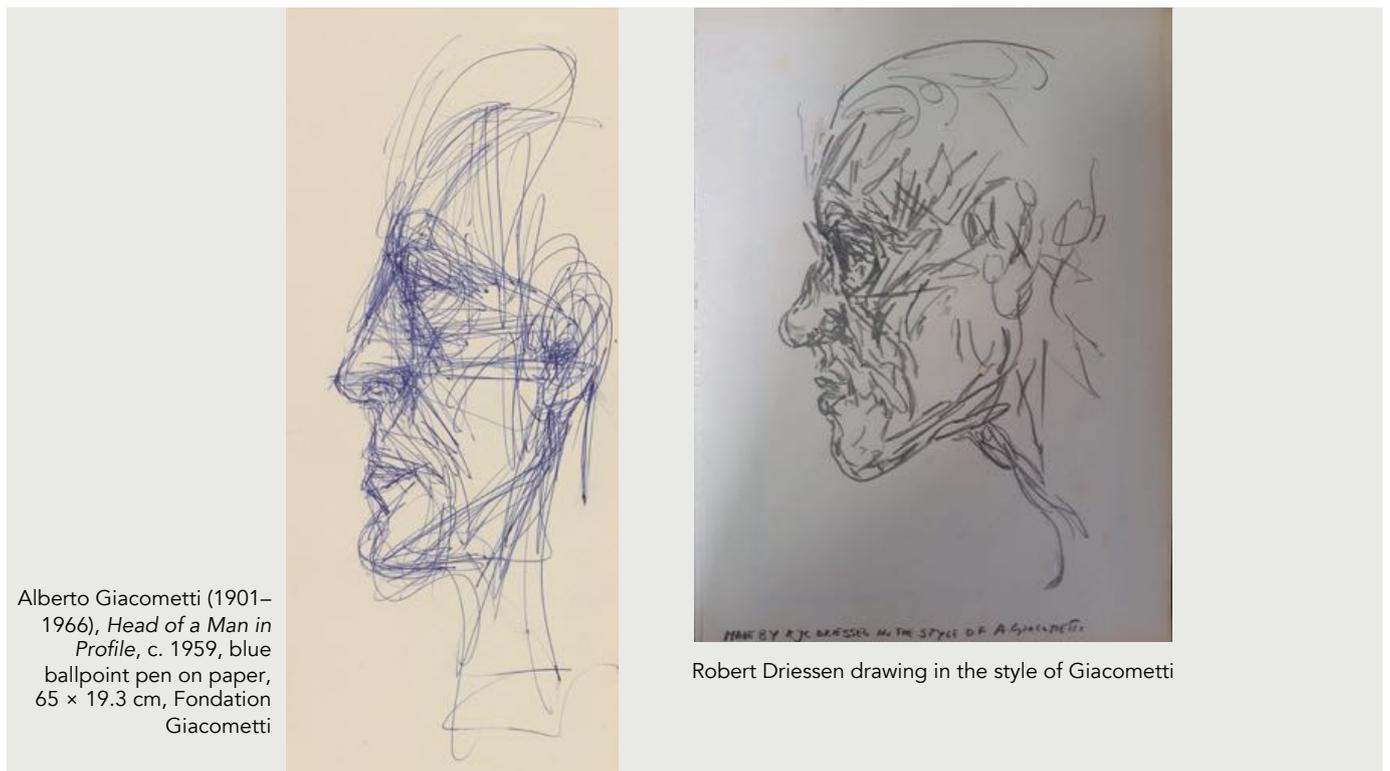
- A signed print of *Girl with Balloon* by Banksy sells for about £400,000. The only organisation authorised to authentic Banksy's work is the, so called, Pest Control Office. It charges £100 to £150 but no charge is made if it is a fake.
- Banksy wrote, "'copyright is for losers' in my (copyrighted) book and still encourage anybody to take and amend my art for their own personal amusement, but not for profit ...".
- He spent a few years in prison and returned to Thailand

where **he opened a small restaurant** and moved away from the world of art. He has recently taken up the brush and sculptors tools once again, producing original reproductions, all of which are signed by him.[1]

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Alberto Giacometti (1901–1966), *Head of a Man in Profile*, c. 1959, blue ballpoint pen on paper, 65 × 19.3 cm, Fondation Giacometti

Robert Driessen drawing in the style of Giacometti

- A couple of final examples of his fakes.
- This is an example of a drawing in the style of Giacometti although if you compare it with a genuine drawing it appears much weaker. From what appear to be scribbles a personality emerges from the Giacometti drawing.

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Lucien Freud (1922-2011), *Queen Elizabeth II* (1926-2022), c. 1999-2001, Royal Collection



Robert Driessen

Lucien Freud (1922-2011), *Queen Elizabeth II* (1926-2022), c. 1999-2001, Royal Collection

Robert Driessen (b. 1962) copy of Lucien Freud

- This is his copy of the controversial portrait of Queen Elizabeth II by Lucien Freud. A small, expressive portrait that strongly divided opinion. Richard Cork, art critic for *The Times*, called it '**painful, brave, honest, stoical and, above all, clear sighted**' and The Guardian said, '**Probably the best royal portrait of any royal anywhere for at least 150 years**'. In contrast, The Sun's Royal Photographer, Arthur Edwards, declared: '**Freud should be locked in the Tower for this**'.
- Returning to the Driessen copy I believe it shows the painterly depth that Freud brought to his subjects. He too a

notoriously long time to paint portraits, mostly therefore of his friends. He choose a very small canvas for this one as he knew he could not obtain his usual 150 sittings. Despite Freud hurrying to complete the small portrait the Driessen shows that Freud brought a depth of character that Driessen has turned into a parody of Freud's work. In fact, in an interview Driessen modestly stated, that he was **“Not making art. I was copying art. I’m not an artist.”**

- **Driessen believes that 35-40% all the art sold by auction houses is forged** as they need to sell art and as long as it looks good they don't really care. This is backed up by the former director of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Thomas Hoving, who stated that **40% of all art in museums is fake**. I find this surprising, perhaps he meant small galleries. In Tate Britain, for example, most of the paintings have a known provenance and in Tate Modern many of the works are by living artists who would call out any work not by them.

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Paul Gauguin (1848–1903), *A Vase of Flowers*, 1896, 64 × 74 cm, National Gallery



Copy of Paul Gauguin, *Vase of Flowers*

Paul Gauguin (1848–1903), *A Vase of Flowers*, 1896, 64 × 74 cm, National Gallery

- I have been talking about "**the world's greatest forgers**" but is this just hype? As soon as a forger is found guilty they claim to be the world's greatest forger.
- Consider this work. On the left is a genuine Gauguin in the National Gallery (purchased by Degas in 1897, by the National Gallery in 1918).
- On the right is a copy of Paul Gauguin's *A Vase of Flowers* painted by a team of Chinese artists paid a "paltry sum" by **Iranian forger Ely Sakhai**. It's been called "**a case of indentured servitude meets high art.**" The fake was **good enough to fool the art world** and what gave it

away? The auction houses **Sotheby's and Christie's found themselves both selling the same painting at the same time.** You might think that the fact that the National Gallery in London bought it in 1918 might have made them suspicious.

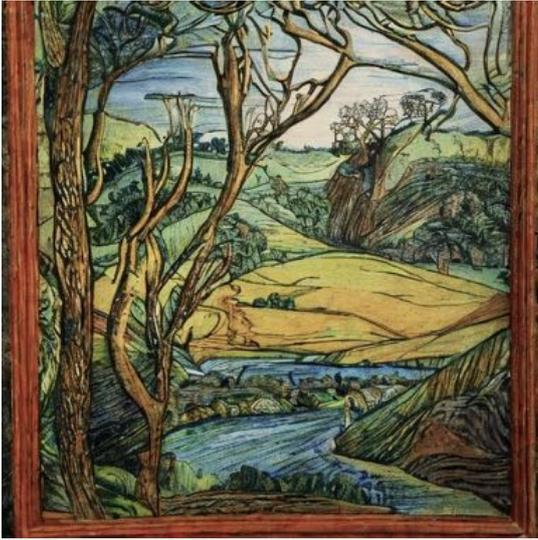
- In conclusion, a low paid art student can paint a copy indistinguishable from the original as long as no scientific tests are carried out. So, are the **world's greatest forgers no better than many competent artists** who could paint a forgery if they were so minded? I believe there are thousands of competent artists in the world who could produce excellent copies if they were so minded but most do not turn to crime.

NOTES

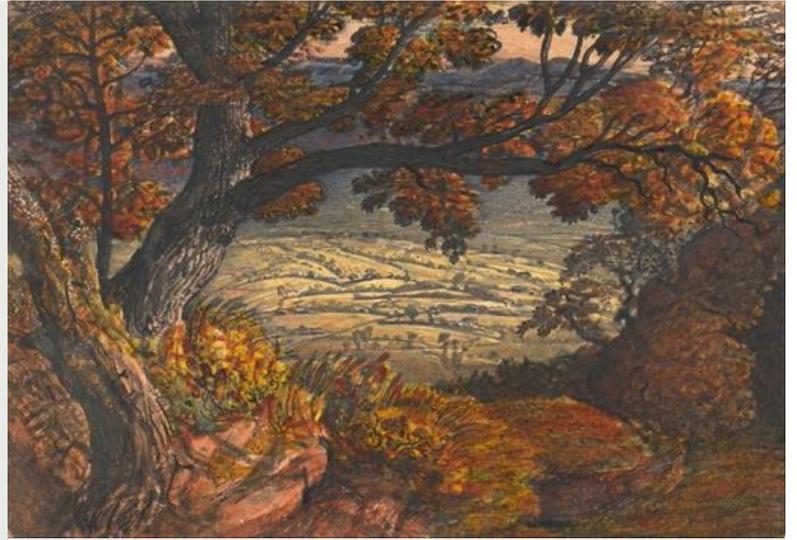
- Sakhal allegedly sold "25 forged works by artists that included Gauguin, Pierre-Auguste Renoir, Marc Chagall, Claude Monet, and Paul Klee."

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Stable Diffusion: a landscape in the style of Samuel Palmer



Samuel Palmer, The Weald of Kent (c 1833-4), watercolour and body-colour, 18.7 x 27.1 cm, Yale Center, New Haven, Wikimedia Commons

Stable Diffusion: a landscape in the style of Samuel Palmer.

Samuel Palmer, The Weald of Kent (c 1833-4), watercolour and body-colour, 18.7 x 27.1 cm, Yale Center for British Art, New Haven, CT. Wikimedia Commons

- **That comes to the end of today's stories about human forgers but the art world may be about to be revolutionised in other much more fundamental ways.** There are many advances in technology that will revolutionise the market.
- Fully textured 3D art reproduction is becoming affordable. We will soon be able to print a three-dimensional copy of a famous work that is indistinguishable from the original as long as scientific tests are not conducted.
- Digital art is becoming more valuable but at the same time AI, Artificial Intelligence, systems such as Stable Diffusion

are able to create art in any style from a written description.

- Here is an example, yesterday I asked Stable Diffusion for a landscape in the style of Samuel Palmer. You can probably tell which is Palmer (CLICK) but in two years time? I think not. AI systems will be able to create original art in the style of any artist or completely original art.

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Stable Diffusion, a portrait in the style of Rembrandt



Rembrandt Harmenszoon van Rijn (1606-1669), *Portrait of Jan Six* (detail), 1654, 112 × 102 cm, Six Collection

Stable Diffusion, a portrait in the style of Rembrandt

Rembrandt Harmenszoon van Rijn (1606-1669), *Portrait of Jan Six* (detail), 1654, 112 × 102 cm, Six Collection

- Here is one more example, I asked Stable Diffusion for a portrait in the style of Rembrandt. (CLICK) You may recognise the Rembrandt one on the right, I am showing just the head. The one on the left is completely original produced by Stable Diffusion in the style of Rembrandt.
- **But digital art can be so easily copied that it cannot easily retain any value.** The answer is **non-fungible tokens or NFTs.**

The Daydreamer,
minted 25 January
2023, current bid
£1,300



The Daydreamer, minted 25 January 2023, current bid
£1,300

- This is digital art, an **increasingly popular medium**. But if it is digital you are thinking it can easily be perfectly copied. This is where **non-fungible tokens step in**.
- You may have heard of NFTs in **news reports of people investing fortunes in art that they only part own**. Leaving aside all the hype and misleading news items you might not have read that they do have the big benefit for investors **that they cannot be forged**.
- What does non-fungible token mean? Fungible means something is interchangeable with other similar items, like cans of beans or money, like a dollar bills, are fungible. Non-fungible means the thing is unique and cannot be replicated, it is not freely interchangeable, like a

Rembrandt.

- A non-fungible token is a unique item in a **special computer database called a blockchain which guarantees the provenance and ownership of the token representing the art work**. With computers producing any art we want to order this is one way to protect ownership and so ensure value.

NOTES

- Benefits, no intermediary (i.e gallery, auction house), verified ownership and authenticity
- A non-fungible token is a non-interchangeable unit of data stored on a blockchain, a form of digital ledger, that can be sold and traded. Types of NFT data units may be associated with digital files such as photos, videos, and audio. Something is fungible if each one is practically identical, pound coins are fungible because we regard them as all the same. Fungible things are divisible- if I give you two 50p pieces it is the same as a £1 coin. Slight differences between fungible items do not matter. A unique serial number on a bank note does not change its value. A dirty note is worth the same as a mint note. Non-fungible items are unique, verifiable, scarce and indivisible. Imagine you lose a friend's dog and buy another one that looks the same - is that OK? Dogs are non-fungible. Non-fungible things have a unique identity that affects its identity and its value. Even the best forgeries have a value that is a fraction of the original because a famous creator adds a unique fascinating history, an aura. Non-fungible tokens bring real-world value into the digital space. NFTs have provable ownership (only you have the password) and you can sell it, transparency as all transactions are stored and visible so someone else knows you are the unique owner, interoperability, because tokens are now defined by a common standard so can be used by different organisations

(while you remain the owner) (See https://enjin.io/blog/nft-beginners-guide?utm_source=google_ads&utm_medium=cpc&utm_campaign=UK_generic_nft&gclid=Cj0KCQiA64GRBhCZARIsAHOLrI1xhKAdrGGnk-HV2a-Qz5B1-EoV2iYd5J1d1p1Qel73BjLT0i8tvaMaAlgnEALw_wcB)

NON-FUNGIBLE TOKENS REFERENCES

See <https://www.masterclass.com/articles/nft-art>

And

<https://www.mastercard.com/news/perspectives/2022/blockchain-nfts-and-brand-loyalty/>

And <https://ethereum.org/en/nft/>

And <https://forkast.news/headlines/south-korea-nfts-graduates-hoseo/> degree certificates as NFTs

IDENTIFYING GENUINE WORKS

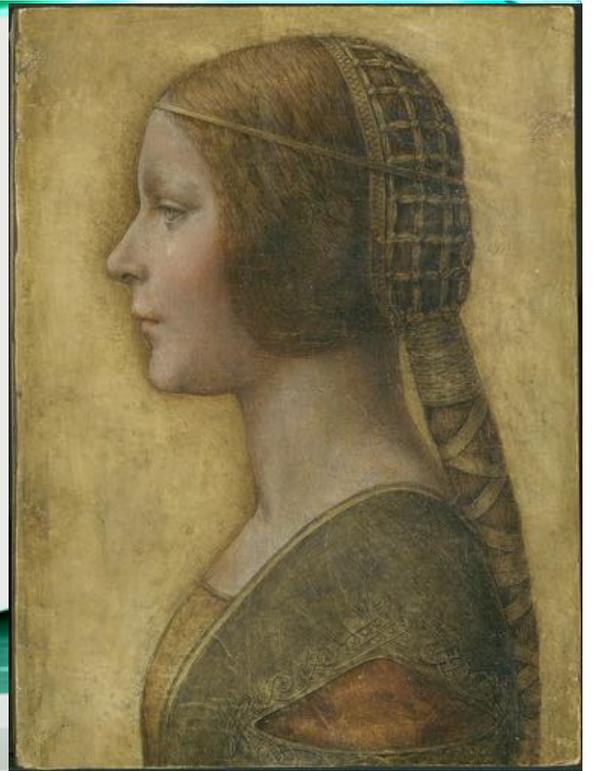
- Art works could be protected by including the artists DNA, Do paintings already include the artists DNA from skin cells?
- In 1996 the former director of the Metropolitan Museum of Art Thomas Hoving stated that 40% of all art in museums is fake. Camille Corot painted 3,000 paintings, 5,000 of which are in the United States. The Museum of Elne (Pyrénées-Orientales) indeed holds the rope, with 60%. As for the Mimara Museum in Zagreb, almost all of the 3,754 works are allegedly counterfeit.
<https://www.vwart.com/post/counterfeiters-art-or-scam-the-met-has-40-fakes-part1>
- <https://www.vwart.com/post/50-of-art-in-circulation-is-fake-2>
- 50 % of art in circulation is fake <https://www.vwart.com/post/50-of-art-in-circulation-is-fake-3>

PERFECT COPIES

- 3D printed copies made in the future could be perfect?
- Walter Benjamin, aura, copies so good the original no longer has value

THE GREATEST ART FORGERS

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- So, who is the greatest art forger? I think it depends on **what basis you are judging**, the most skilled copyist, the most devious scams, the largest number of forgeries or the biggest scam in terms of total value of the forgeries.
- My vote to Shaun Greenhalgh as he is a very British forger and I like the fact that he worked out of his garden shed, could turn his hand to many different media and fooled the British Museum. But you probably have your own favourite.
- Thank you for your attention.