

Art, Law and Crises of Connoisseurship (London, 1 Dec 15)

The Society of Antiquaries of London, Burlington House, Piccadilly (London, UK), Dec 01, 2015

Registration deadline: Dec 1, 2015

Irina Tarsis

Join us for a one-day international conference dedicated to the topic of art authenticity.

Themes to be explored:

Connoisseurship may be defined as expertise in art in the very narrowest of senses; surprisingly, however, it is also a definition in which many different disciplines intersect.

In the public realms of law and the art world, a 'connoisseur' must be recognized as being an expert, as being capable of giving credible testimony regarding the subject, and as remaining actively engaged with the world in which attributions and authentications are made. This public recognition takes years of work and is hard-won.

Yet, does this public recognition of expertise signify accuracy or truth in the claims that a connoisseur makes about art? This one-day conference investigates the always-interrelated and often mutually-troubled processes by which connoisseurship is constructed in the fields of art and law, and the ways in which these different fields come together in determining the scope and clarity of the connoisseur's 'eye'.

Admission is by ticket only.

For ticket prices and to purchase tickets (exclusively through Eventbrite)

PROGRAMME

8.30 – 9.00: Registration

PART I: The Making of Art and the Power of Its Testimonies

9.00-25: Welcome and Keynote Paper: Michael Daley, "Like/Unlike; Interests/Disinterest"

Michael Daley (UK), Director, ArtWatch UK, an artist who trained for twelve years (with post-graduate studies at the Royal Academy Schools) and taught in art schools for fifteen years before practicing as an illustrator (principally with the Financial Times, the Times Supplements, the Independent and, presently, Standpoint magazine), will suggest that the principles of sound connoisseurship in making attributions and appraising restorations are implicit in fine art training and practice,

and will discuss the trial in Italy of Professor James Beck on a charge of aggravated criminal slander brought in Italy by a restorer against the scholar but not against the newspapers which had carried his reported comments.

9.25-9.40: Euphrosyne Doxiadis, "Perception, Hype and the Rubens Police."

Euphrosyne Doxiadis (Greece), a painter/scholar whose 1996 book *The Mysterious Fayum Portraits: Faces from Ancient Egypt* won the Prix Bordin, the Prix d'ouvrage by the Académie des Beaux-Arts, Institut de France, and, the 1997 "Prize of the Athens Academy", will challenge the Rubens attribution given to the National Gallery's oil on panel *Samson and Delilah* in the 28th year of her researches. Astonished at her first sighting of this painting in the National Gallery, the author will discuss both its manifest artistic disqualifications and the edifice of support that surrounds an attribution first made in 1930 by a leading Rubens scholar who today is notorious for his many excessively-generous certificates of authenticity.

9.40-9.55: Jacques Franck, "Why the Mona Lisa would not survive modern day conservation treatment."

Jacques Franck (FR), an art historian and a painter trained in Old Master techniques, is the Permanent Consulting Expert to the Armand Hammer Center for Leonardo Studies at UCLA, and an editorial consultant to *Academia Leonardi Vinci*. He was a curator/exhibitor in the Uffizi's exhibition *La mente di Leonardo* (2006) and will draw on experiences as an adviser to the Louvre's restorations of Leonardo's *St Anne and Belle Ferronnière*, and his current PhD investigations on Leonardo's sfumato technique at the *École Pratique des Hautes Études* in Paris, to demonstrate the threats presently facing the Mona Lisa in a museum conservation system that he considers inadequate to preserve the masterpiece in the event of it being cleaned at the Louvre.

9.55-10.10: Ann Pizzorusso, "Leonardo's Geology: The Authenticity of the Virgin of the Rocks"

Ann Pizzorusso (US) is a professional geologist and a Renaissance scholar whose work focuses on Leonardo da Vinci as a geologist. She has written numerous scholarly articles on Leonardo and his students, and the artists who preceded and followed him, analyzing the use of geology in their works. Her landmark article, "Leonardo's Geology: The Authenticity of The Virgin of the Rocks" compared the two versions of the paintings. Demonstrating geology as a diagnostic tool – which was in fact Leonardo's trademark – she will attribute only one of the two versions to Leonardo. Her new, four gold medals-winning book, *Tweeting Da Vinci*, discusses how the geology of Italy has influenced its art, literature, religion, medicine.

10.10-10.30: Discussion/Questions: – Irina Tarsis, Center for Art Law, Moderator

10.30-11.00: COFFEE

11.00-11:15: Segolene Bergeon-Langle, "Can science deliver its promises to art?"

Segolene Bergeon-Langle (FR), France's Honorary General Curator of Heritage, is both a scientist and an art historian. A former Head of Painting Conservation in the Louvre and the French National Museums, and a former Chair of the ICCROM Council (Rome), she is presently a member of the Louvre's preservation and conservation committee. She will discuss various restoration cases

showing how scientific analysis can fail properly to understand painters' techniques and the deterioration of paint layers when questions are inadequately framed or when the interpretation of scientific reports is inadequate. Such difficulties can be overcome when connoisseurs themselves ask for scientific analysis to clarify some problem they have encountered, or when they can examine technical reports together with their scientific partners so as to avoid otherwise possible misinterpretations.

11.15-11.30: Michel Favre-Felix, "Overlooked Witnesses: The Testimony of Copies"

Michel Favre-Felix (FR) is a painter, the president of ARIPA (association for the respect of the integrity of artistic heritage), the director of the review Nuances, and the 2009 recipient of the Art-Watch International Frank Mason Prize, will present two restoration cases, studied from the French Museums' scientific files, illustrating how restorations fail by not heeding the testimony of historical copies. He will stress the importance of disciplined arguments and of expert guidance from art historians, in a critical approach, rather than as the endorsement of "discoveries" claimed during restorations by restorers. His cases will demonstrate how successive restorations can impose fresh and compounding misrepresentations on art when supposedly correcting previous errors.

11.30-11.45: Kasia Pisarek, "How reliable are today's attributions in art? The case of "La Bella Principessa" examined."

Kasia Pisarek (Poland/UK), an independent art historian and research specialist on attributions, took an MA at the Sorbonne and a PhD at the University of Warsaw. Her doctoral dissertation "Rubens and Connoisseurship ~ On the problems of attribution and rediscovery", identified many recently fallen Rubens attributions. She will set out a number of interlocking aesthetic, art historical and technical arguments against the recently claimed attribution to Leonardo of the drawing "La Bella Principessa", which work appeared anonymously and without provenance in New York in 1998. Her findings were published in the June 2015 *Artibus et Historiae*.

11.45-12.15: Discussion/Questions: Irina Tarsis, Center for Art Law, Moderator

12.15-1.15: LUNCH

Part II: Righting the Record – Diverse Experts as Authority

1.15-1.20: Introduction: Tatiana Flessas, Cultural Heritage Law, LSE Law, Moderator

1.20-1.35: Brian Allen – "Throwing the baby out with the bathwater – the Demise of Connoisseurship since the 1980s."

Brian Allen (UK) is a former Director of Studies at the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art and is now Chairman of the London Old Master dealers Hazlitt Ltd. He will speak about the gradual demise of connoisseurship in academic art history (especially in the UK) over the past three decades and will consider the effect of this on the study of art history and the art market. Up to the early 1980s few questioned the importance for young art historians of acquiring the skills to determine authorship but as the discipline of art history evolved from its amateur roots in Britain so too did a determination to adopt the theoretical principles of other areas of study. Only now are

we witnessing the consequences of this change of emphasis.

1.35-1.50: Peter Cannon-Brookes, "Reconciling Connoisseurship with Different Means of Production of Works of Art"

Peter Cannon-Brookes (UK) turned from natural sciences to art history and has been active as a museum curator with strong interests in conservation and security. Connoisseurship has been undermined by the decay of museum-based pre-Modern Movement scholarship leading to the growing corruption of reference collections and of connoisseurship enhanced by the detailed study of them. Can the systems of stylistic analysis evolved from the 1940s and social anthropology be reconciled with the actual processes of production of works of art throughout the ages? The business models adopted by Raphael, El Greco and Rubens are by no means exceptional, and the evident disdain of Rodin for those prepared to pay high prices for indifferent drawing-room marble versions of his compositions, encourage re-evaluation of connoisseurship as an essential tool.

1.50-2.05: Charles Hope, "Demotion and promotion: the asymmetrical aspect of connoisseurship"

Charles Hope (UK) is a former Director of the Warburg Institute and will discuss the tension that exists between connoisseurship as a type of expertise acquired by long experience and as an activity based on the use of historical evidence and reasoned argument. Will claim that, in practice, these two aspects are often in contradiction to one another, and that many connoisseurs have been unable or unwilling to provide clear arguments about how they have reached their opinions. Too often, judgements about authorship are decided by appeals to authority, and almost by vote, rather than by evidence.

2.05-2.20: Martin Eidelberg, "Fact vs. Interpretation: the Art Historian at Work"

Martin Eidelberg (US), professor emeritus of art history at Rutgers University, will discuss the reliability and fallibility of provenance and scientific analysis of pictures in determining the authenticity of paintings. Using case histories that he has gathered from his research in preparing a catalogue raisonné of the paintings of Jean Antoine Watteau (1684-1721), he will consider whether such supposedly factual data is reliable, or whether it is subjective and open to the interpretation of scholars.

2.20-2.40: Discussion/Questions: Tatiana Flessas, Cultural Heritage Law, LSE Law, Moderator

2.40-2.55: Robin Simon, "Owzat! The great cricket fakes operation"

Robin Simon (UK) is Editor of The British Art Journal and Honorary Professor of English, UCL. Recent books include Hogarth, France and British Art and (with Martin Postle) Richard Wilson and the Transformation of European Landscape Painting. He will report his discovery (in 1983) that many of the paintings depicting cricket in the MCC collection at Lord's were fakes, most of them made by one person between 1918 and 1948 but purporting to date from the 16th century to the 20th. They had been presented to MCC by Sir Jeremiah Colman (of the mustard family) who acquired them from a variety of agents and dealers. It is quite a tale and turns, among other things, upon an ingenious manipulation of provenance.

2.55-3.10: Anne Laure Bandle, "Sleepers at auction: Boon or bane?"

Anne Laure Bandle (CH) is guest lecturer at the LSE, director of the Art Law Foundation, and a trainee lawyer at the law firm Froriep in Geneva. She wrote a PhD in law on the misattribution of art at auction and more specifically on the sale of sleepers. She will discuss the creation of sleepers at auction by means of different cases, and focus on the attribution process of auction houses and their liability when selling a sleeper.

3.10-3.25: Elizabeth Simpson, "Connoisseurship: Its Use, Disuse, and Misuse in the Study of Ancient Art"

Elizabeth Simpson (USA) is a professor at the Bard Graduate Center in New York, NY; a consulting scholar at the University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology in Philadelphia, PA; and director of the project to study and conserve the collection of wooden objects excavated from the royal tumulus burials at Gordion, Turkey. She will address the use and misuse of connoisseurship in the study of ancient art, the scholarly and methodological divides between archaeology and art history, and the current trend away from connoisseurship in the study of ancient art and artifacts. She will also show how connoisseurship is used to fabricate narratives for looted objects in order to validate unprovenanced works in private and museum collections.

3.25-3.45: Round table discussion: Tatiana Flessas, Cultural Heritage Law, LSE Law, Moderator

3.45-4.15: TEA

Part III: Wishful Thinking, Scientific Evidence and Legal Precedent

4.15-4.20: Intro by Session Moderator, Charles Hope.

4:20-4.35: Irina Tarsis, "Reputation is no Substitute to Due Diligence: Lessons from the closure of the Knoedler Gallery (1857-2011) "

Irina Tarsis (USA), is an art historian and an attorney based in Brooklyn, NY. Founder and Director of Center for Art Law, Ms. Tarsis is an author of multiple articles on the subject of restitution, provenance research, book history and copyright issues. With degrees in International Business, Art History and Law, in her practice Ms. Tarsis focuses on ownership disputes surrounding tangible and intangible property. She will discuss the history of the Knoedler Gallery that closed after more than 160 years in business having sold a cache of misattributed forgeries. Short of a dozen lawsuits were brought against the principles and staff of the Gallery for selling works attributed to the blue chip artists. Ms. Tarsis will discuss the responsibilities of dealers, collectors and art advisors to their clients and the scholarship when handling art in business transactions.

4:35-4.50: Nicholas Eastaugh, "The Challenge of Science: Does 'Fine Art Forensics' Really Exist?"

Dr Nicholas Eastaugh (UK), Founder/Director, Art Analysis and Research Ltd., London, originally trained as a physicist before going on to study conservation and art history at the Courtauld Institute of Art, London, where he completed a PhD in scientific analysis and documentary research of historical pigments in 1988. Since 1989 he has been a consultant in the scientific and art technological study of paint and paintings. A frequent lecturer, he is also a Visiting Research Fellow at the University of Oxford. In 1999 he co-founded the Pigmentum Project, an interdisciplinary research group developing comprehensive high-quality documentary and analytical data on histori-

cal pigments and other artists' materials. This led to the publication of *The Pigment Compendium* in 2004, which quickly became a standard reference text in the field. In 2008 he identified the first of the forgeries to be recognised as by Wolfgang Beltracchi, the now infamous 'Red Painting with Horses'.

4.50-5.05: Megan Noh, "Trends in Authentication Disputes"

Megan E. Noh (USA) is the Associate General Counsel of Bonhams, one of the world's largest international auction houses. Based in the New York office, Ms. Noh practices in a global hub for art transactions, and is uniquely poised to observe the numerous transactions conducted by Bonhams which require its specialists' assistance with the authentication process, as well as the growing body of caselaw and legislative efforts emerging from this key jurisdiction. Ms. Noh's presentation will cover trends in authentication disputes, including the cessation of artists' foundations and authentication boards to issue opinions confirming attribution, as well as increased litigation and reliance of parties on scientific evidence and testimony. She will also elucidate the position of auction houses as a liaisons or "middlemen" in this process, facilitating the flow of information as between collectors (sellers and buyers) and third party authenticators.

5.25-5.0: Final Discussion/Questions: Charles Hope, Moderator.

5.50-5.55: Closing Remarks: Irina Tarsis, Center for Art Law.

6.00-7.30: RECEPTION

For details, contact itsartlaw.com

Reference:

CONF: Art, Law and Crises of Connoisseurship (London, 1 Dec 15). In: ArtHist.net, Nov 26, 2015 (accessed Apr 11, 2026), <<https://arthist.net/archive/11609>>.