

STOLEN ART



TRUST ME?

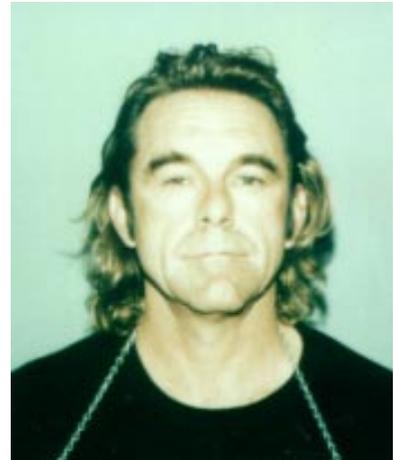


Diego Rivera's
El Tocado de Plumas

A businessman consigned a Diego Rivera gouache worth \$50,000 to the Carthew Thompson Gallery in Beverly Hills in 1995. Steven Vasconcellos, who identified himself as the executive director of the gallery, handled the transaction. Vasconcellos never told the gallery owners of the consignment and the artwork was never exhibited or placed on display. When Vasconcellos was later fired from the gallery, he kept the painting. He wanted to open his own art gallery so he decided to float a loan by taking the Diego Rivera to a pawnshop where he pawned it for \$12,000. When the loan matured after four months, he didn't have the money to redeem the artwork so the pawnshop sold the gouache to a buyer in northern California. When the true owner of the painting inquired on the status of his art, Vasconcellos went to LAPD's Art Theft Detail, reported the painting stolen, and fabricated a story to explain its absence.

The scheme unraveled when the investigation revealed inconsistencies in Vasconcellos' statements. Witnesses later identified him as the person who pawned not only the Diego Rivera but other art that had been consigned to the gallery. Steven Vasconcellos was arrested on multiple counts of grand theft and embezzlement. He was held on \$100,000 bail and is currently awaiting trial. The art was located and seized as evidence.

Detectives learned Vasconcellos had a pattern of similar consignment frauds. He had earlier owned a gallery in Hawaii called Gallery of the Pacific which went out of business. He subsequently failed to return art consigned by an artist which resulted in a criminal investigation by Hawaii police. He moved to California where he worked for a fashionable gallery in Beverly Hills. While there, the gallery received a Tony Curtis painting on consignment. Vasconcellos handled the transaction. Again, he never notified the gallery owners of the consignment and kept the painting at home. He was later fired. Beverly Hills detectives arrested him and the art was recovered. Despite this, he got a job as "executive director" of the Carthew Thompson Gallery where the Diego Rivera transaction took place.



Steven Vasconcellos

Requesting any information on . . .

1. **Ayn Rand letters** - (9) typed letters, from 2-18 pages each, signed "Ayn"- with salutations of either "Dear John" or "Dear Professor Hospers" - dated between 4/17/60 through 3/31/61.
(98-0661024 • 11-3/98)
2. **Alfred Haigh** - (3) paintings - oil on canvas - depicting horse heads, one with name "Weary" and another with name "Uncle Bill" on halters - 14" x 17" - signed. (98-0822652 • 10-4/98)

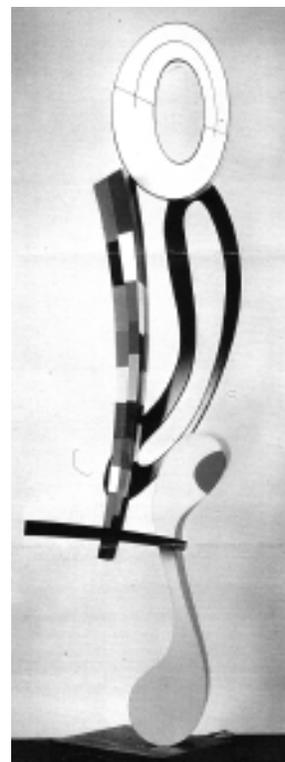
ADDITIONAL STOLEN ART



98-0632326

11-1/98

DESMOND, Kenneth
1997
untitled
acrylic on canvas
52" x 66"
signed "Desmond" lower right
actual painting depicts the woman
holding wheat in raised right hand



98-0121335

9-3/98

HOWE, Brad
1998
Bala
painted steel & stainless steel sculpture with
polyurethane on a stainless steel pedestal
96" x 30" x 35"
signed "Brad Howe 1998" on lower portion



98-1523545

7-3/98

KING, John
Van Gogh Paints the Flying Nun
oil on watercolor paper
22 1/2" x 30"
signed lower right
taken during Humor in Art exhibition

ADDITIONAL STOLEN ART

DALI, Salvador
(1904-1988)
Simoniacs (Inferno 19)
wood engraving in color on Rives paper
GA #25/25
signed lower right
raised stamp "Les Heures Claires"
9 7/8" x 7"



97-1022989

6-6/97



BERGE, Edward
bronze sculpture
42" x 11"
signed "BERGE" on base
depicts boy holding a frog

98-2740069

UCLA



JACKSON, Jeanne
1993
The Visitor
#1/50
bronze sculpture with black patina
13" tall
signed & dated

ADDITIONAL STOLEN ART



98-0817424

Qum silk rug
4' x 7'
tree of life

Napoleon III styled Dove mantle clock
30" x 24"
male & female figures depicted on top



98-0817424

SEVERANCE PAY



Kia Dawson

A major hotel in West Los Angeles maintains a large collection of Erte art that decorates the interior of the hotel. In June of 1998, hotel security discovered one of these artworks missing from the wall of a banquet room.

The investigation led to the arrest of Kia Dawson, 25 years old, who was working as the night manager at the hotel. She decided to resign her position in order to get into the movie industry. The theft occurred on her final night of work at the hotel. She chose a time when there were few people in the vicinity of the artwork. With her knowledge of the hotel, she managed to carry the Erte out a back exit where she stashed the art in her car. Money was also discovered missing from the hotel safe deposit box. This theft was also traced to Dawson.

The Art Theft Detail served search and arrest warrants on Kia Dawson when she returned to Los Angeles after working an out-of-state movie job. She was arrested for grand theft and is currently awaiting trial. The art has not yet been recovered and its location remains unknown.



ERTE
1980
Woman and Satyr
#136/300
serigraph
26 3/4" x 18 7/8"

98-0815028

6-6/98

still missing