

STOLEN ART



WELL-TRAVELED RENOIR

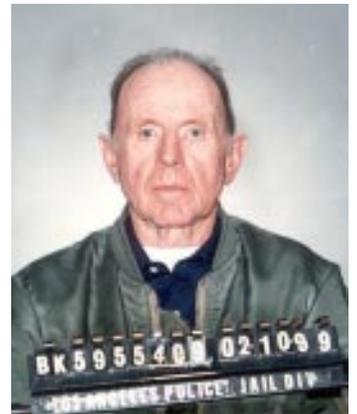


fake *La Loge* Renoir

Jesaia “Bob” Venger obtained a fake Renoir oil painting entitled “*La Loge*.” He also obtained a repudiated certificate of authenticity for the painting. Venger was informed of the history of the fake Renoir. Despite this, Venger used the invalid certificate of authenticity as well as various catalogues on the real *La Loge* to repeatedly attempt to sell the fake Renoir as authentic for as much as \$350,000. During this time, prospective buyers had the painting hand-carried to Renoir expert Francois Daulte in Switzerland and to Sotheby’s and Christie’s in New York where the painting was examined by experts who reaffirmed the fraudulent nature of the artwork.

Despite being thwarted in his attempts to sell the painting, Venger continued looking for a sucker who was less diligent in pursuing the work’s authenticity. Along with the dubious paperwork, Venger fabricated stories about the provenance of the painting. On one occasion, he claimed the Renoir belonged to an elderly man who was on his deathbed and was forced to sell the painting at a sacrifice.

The Art Theft Detail learned of the fraud and seized the fake Renoir. As the investigation continued, the detectives learned that Venger has been the target of various civil suits by galleries, artists and dealers who claimed he had defrauded them in connection with art purchases. One dealer bought two German artworks from Venger including a gouache by Carl Hofer and a watercolor by Hans Purrmann. Both turned out to be fraudulent. Another dealer purchased a painting by a Canadian artist that also turned out to be a fake. There have also been complaints of Venger selling fake historical documents and celebrity signatures. In the past, Venger has been the target of an investigation involving stolen Texas historical documents.



Jesaia “Bob” Venger

The Art Theft Detail also learned that Bob Venger committed credit card fraud by processing three fraudulent credit cards through the merchant account of his stamp shop. He wrote fictitious receipts totaling \$68,000 claiming a Modigliani artwork and antique guns were purchased by the cardholders.

The Major Frauds Section of the District Attorney’s Office filed five felony counts of grand theft and attempt grand theft against Venger. An arrest warrant was obtained and Venger was taken into custody with a bail of \$148,000. If you have had similar business dealings with Bob Venger, please contact the Art Theft Detail at (213) 485-2524.

For additional art crime information, visit the Art Theft Detail website at: www.lapdonline.org/art_theft

ADDITIONAL STOLEN ART



99-0710652

3-4/99

PEANUTS animation cels

Trick or Treat

acrylic paint on clear transparency - no background

(60) cels - #246-275 & #381-410

out of total production of 500

10 1/2" x 12 1/2"

signed "Bill Melendez" & numbered lower right

PEANUTS animation cels
Halloween Night
acrylic paint on clear transparency - no background
(50) cels - #201-250
out of total production of 500
10 1/2" x 12 1/2"
signed "Bill Melendez" & numbered lower right



99-0710652

3-4/99

CHAMBERLIN'S

Fine Art Auctioneers and Appraisers since 1967

Chamberlin's, an auction house on Ventura Blvd, was purchased by Arvin Aurora in July of 1995. Under this new ownership, the auction house has generated criminal inquiries and civil litigation. This includes allegations of unethical or illegal auction practices such as reporting false auction bids, failing to pay consignors, "losing" consigned property, failing to return unsold property, and knowingly selling fake art as authentic. Criminal complaints were initiated against Aurora for operating a business without a secondhand dealer's license, failure to report transactions, and failing to display business permits. He was prohibited from continuing to receive property on consignment and has since declared bankruptcy.

ANY INFORMATION,
PLEASE CONTACT:

Detective Don Hrycyk - LAPD Art Theft Detail

150 N. Los Angeles St., Room 319, L.A., CA 90012 • (213) 485-2524 • fax (213) 628-4823

ADDITIONAL STOLEN ART



99-0710652

3-4/99

PEANUTS animation cels
Losing Altitude
acrylic paint on clear transparency - no background
(15) cels #306-320
out of total production of 500
10 1/2" x 12 1/2"
signed "Bill Melendez" & numbered lower right

PEANUTS animation cels
Dress Rehearsal
acrylic paint on clear transparency - no background
(75) cels #201-260 & #331-345
out of total production of 500
10 1/2" x 12 1/2"
signed "Bill Melendez" & numbered lower right



99-0710652

3-4/99



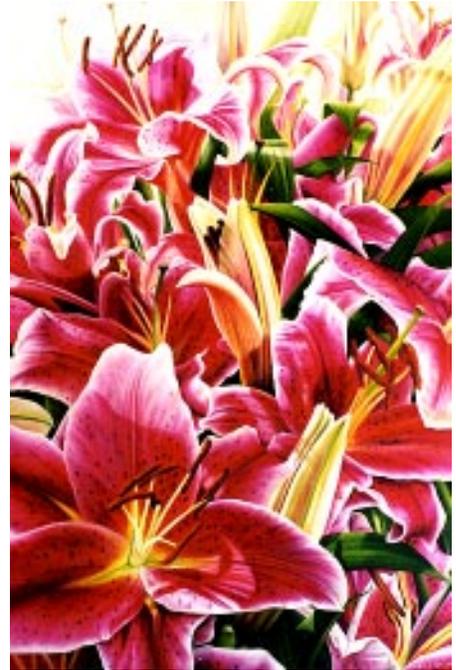
99-0710652

3-4/99

PEANUTS animation cels
Wanna Bite, Sweetie?
acrylic paint on clear transparency - no background
(40) cels #101-140
out of total production of 375
10 1/2" x 12 1/2"
signed "Bill Melendez" & numbered lower right

ADDITIONAL STOLEN ART

VALENCIA, Michael
1998
Stargazers
oil on canvas
60" x 40"



980027911

LBPD



980027911

LBPD

VALENCIA, Michael
1996
Orchids #1 Triptych
oil on canvas
84" x 90" (each panel 30" wide)

VALENCIA, Michael
1996
White/Purple Cattleyas
oil on canvas
54" x 54"



980027911

LBPD