

NEWS AND NOTES

LOST & FOUND

Two paintings by J.M.W. Turner have been returned to the Tate Gallery in London 8 years after they were stolen from an exhibition in Germany. A third painting by Caspar David Friedrich is still missing.

Lost: A Salvador Dali depicting the Crucifixion was stolen from the men's jail at New York's Rikers Island. The work, which hung in a locked display case, was replaced by a bad copy. The Dali had been at the jail since 1963 when, too ill to deliver a promised speech for an art-therapy program, the artist sent the painting instead. So far, the NYPD said they had no leads on who had stolen the work.

No returns, please. British Library refuses to return artefact. A set of ancient religious manuscripts at the centre of a centuries-old row are unlikely ever to be returned to the church from which they were allegedly stolen, their owners said recently. Campaigners in the North East have long sought the return of the 7th-century Lindisfarne Gospels, which were spirited away from Durham Cathedral in the 16th century. Since then the intricately illustrated books have been housed in the British Library in London, hundreds of miles away from Holy Island monastery where they were produced.

But recently the Library insisted that while recognising their importance to the region, the Gospels would remain in the capital where they could be seen by visitors from around the world. Curator Michelle Brown said: "The Lindisfarne Gospels are on a par with Leonardo Da Vinci's Mona Lisa in their importance to the world's heritage. "It's even more fragile than that famous painting and requires highly sensitive handling and security."

A spokeswoman later added that because of the fragility and age of the artefacts it was unlikely they would be ever moved from London again. The last time the manuscripts were seen in their native region was at an exhibition at the Laing Art Gallery in Newcastle in 2000, visited by more than 200,000 people.

Found: in a rare gesture, the head of a Buddha that was stolen from a pagoda in China in 1997, has been returned to its torso by the good graces and perseverance of a Buddhist Leader in Taiwan, making the statue in Mainland China whole. The Buddhist master had received the missing head from his followers as a gift and realized through detective work that it belonged to the Four Gate Pagoda which was previously under Communist government's tourism route, but was

intended when it was built by the monks who helped bring Buddhism to China from India, via central Asia.

Found: Irish police recovered five stolen paintings, including two by Rubens, from the attic of a Dublin public housing project. Three people were arrested. They were found nearly 3 months after they disappeared from Russborough House, the home of the late collector and philanthropist, Sir Alfred Beit. It was the fourth time thieves had targeted the house south of Dublin, which is open to the public. The paintings, found minus their frames, were in excellent condition.

Found: A Rembrandt self-portrait hidden for centuries after it was painted over by another artist was exhibited in Amsterdam in January following years of art detective work to reveal the 17th century Dutch masterpiece. Years of painstaking restoration revealed this 1634 self-portrait of a 28-year-old Rembrandt with long hair, mustache and a beret.

Found: A previously unknown Van Gogh, a dark profile of a frowning middle-aged woman in a white bonnet, now worth at least \$25,000, was reclaimed two days before it was scheduled to be auctioned in Tokyo. It was part of the collection of Kazumasa Nakagawa, who died in 1991. It was painted between 1884 and 1885, believed to have been restored twice in the 1950s, degrading its value.

Found: The police recovered a pair of 2,000-year-old frescoes stolen from a villa at the ruins of Pompeii, but the thieves had vanished. The ancient treasures—one a depiction of Cupid and the other of a rooster pecking a pomegranate—were found slightly damaged and packed up, ready to ship, in a nearby abandoned building. The frescoes, hacked off the walls of the House of the Chaste Lovers in early April, date from 45 A.D. to 79 A.D., when Vesuvius erupted and buried Pompeii in ash. Excavations at the villa, named for a fresco of two clothed lovers, began in 1987. It has never been opened to the public.

Rebuilding: The Baphuon temple was destroyed by French archaeologists in order to save it, taking apart the fragile temple in Cambodia block by block, keeping meticulous records of their work, planning to put it back together again as a more stable structure. Only after the war with the Khmer Rouge in 1995 did they return, finding 300,000 heavy stone blocks strewn among the trees—the biggest jigsaw puzzle in the world. What is missing is the key, but the

restoration is going on slowly but well. The team is relying on memory of the different shapes of stones

Found: A treasure trove of Hebrew manuscript fragments hidden for centuries inside medieval book covers have been found in Girona, Spain, one of the most important Jewish population centers in the country before the expulsion of non-Catholics in 1492. Found in 165 books thus far, the fragments are remnants of texts from the Torah as well as marriage and business contracts. The Provincial Historic Archive in Girona is seeking financial support to recuperate all the texts.

Found: Another army of remarkable dimensions, hundreds of foot-tall terra-cotta warriors, along with horses and chariots, found in the province of Shandong, near Weishan Mountain. There are several thousand figurines covered with colorful painted decoration.

Lost and Found: An original copy of the Bill of Rights, stolen from the North Carolina statehouse during the Civil War, was recovered in an undercover sting in Philadelphia. The FBI executed a sting, with an FBI agent posing as a philanthropist trying to buy the document for the National Constitution Center being built in Philadelphia. After the figure was agreed upon, a courier appeared with the document in a cardboard box, and the authorities took possession of the rare document.

MUSEUMS

A new museum, the James E. Lewis Museum located at Morgan State University in Maryland, features more than 4,000 objects by artists from all over the world from 17th century Dutch genre scenes to Impressionism, Harlem Renaissance and African-American artists. Also included are African masks, sculpture and ceremonial objects that occupy pride of place in the collection.

• **Sharron F. Patton**, director of the Allen Memorial Art Museum at Oberlin College, has been named director of the Smithsonian's National Museum of African Art, replacing Roslyn A. Walker.

• **Dennis Szakaacs**, deputy director of the New Museum of Contemporary Art in SoHo since 1996, was appointed director of the Orange County Museum of Art in Newport Beach, California, beginning in April.

• **The Metropolitan Museum of Art** has been given more than 100 works of art by the most prominent masters of the 20th century, including nearly 50 paintings, sculptures, drawings and prints by Matisse,

thanks to the Pierre and Maria-Gaetana Matisse foundation.

• **The Southwest Museum and the Antry Museum** in Los Angeles have agreed to merge, with 20,000 sq. feet of exhibition space and 20,000 sq. feet of viewable storage space to be added at the Antry site in Griffith Park to make room for parts of Southwest's vast collection of art and artifacts to be seen and accessed.

Guggenheim Rio to be built with \$170 million to be paid by the Rio de Janeiro government, designed by Jean Nouvel. Critics call it "a cultural Titanic." Nouvel will get \$12 million for his design, which includes a compound with about 240,000 sq. feet of interior space, and even tropical gardens, some below sea level.

Reopenings: The Asian Art Museum of San Francisco re-opened in the old Beaux-Arts-style former San Francisco Public Library building, redesigned by Italian architect Gae Aulenti in March.

The Albertina Museum in Vienna, closed for nearly a decade, opened in early March with expanded exhibition space, a new restaurant and a four-story study center for its collection of graphic arts from the late-Gothic to the Modern eras. There is a retrospective exhibition honoring Edvard Munch with 100 paintings plus 150 works on paper. There is also an exhibition "Eye and Camera" covering the history of photography, and much more.

ART & SCIENCE IN NEW YORK

New York City is celebrating the 50th anniversary of the discovery of the double-helix structure of DNA with "Genomic Issue(s): Art and Science" through 5 April at the Gallery of the City University of New York Graduate Center, with "How Human: Life in the Post-Genome Era" at the International Center for Photography through 8 June with 30 artists from 9 countries.

BOXES READING "FEAR"

It was only an art class project, but the police were led to evacuate one of New York's busiest subway stations and call out the bomb squad, because Clinton Boisvert placed 37 boxes with "Fear" painted on them inside the Union Square subway station. He was eventually charged with reckless endangerment, a misdemeanor punishable by up to a year in jail, and disorderly conduct. The scare happened on 11 December. The boxes were in a stairwell, on platforms, and attached to walls, benches and floors. The assignment was for "placement of art."

AUCTIONS

Upcoming auction of Seagram's art collection, including Miro, Rothko, Larry

Rivers, Stieglitz, Steichen, and scores of drawings by world-class sculptors.

• Auction of André Breton's collection of books, art catalogs, journals, sculpture, paintings, drawings, photos, popular art, primitive art. 1- 18 April at Hotel Drouot-Richelieu in Paris.

• Auction to be held in May of 10 major works from Enron's Art Collection including Claes Oldenburg's *Soft Light Switches*, works by Don Judd, Bridget Riley, with another auction in the fall of 25 photographs.

• A painting by Andrea Mantegna, *Descent into Limbo*, painted around 1492, fetched \$28.56 million at Sotheby's in January. This was the highest ever paid for any Mantegna at auction.

• A self-portrait by Rembrandt done at the age of 28 came into the possession of a family in 1960s, is now confirmed as executed by the painter and will be auctioned off for more than \$8 million at auction at Sotheby's in London on 10 July.

DATELINE: Graz

To celebrate its tenure as the 2003 European Union Cultural Capital, Graz has commissioned Vito Acconci to create an artificial island in the Mur River. This floating plaza made of steel, glass and Lucite-based on the idea by the Graz-born architect Robert Punkenhofer and designed by the Acconci Studio in Brooklyn—houses an open-air theater, a children's playground and a cafe. It resembles an open clamshell, serving as a bridge between the city's historic center and the Mariahilferplatz on the Right Bank in the heart of the new gallery district near an art museum that will open in the fall.

CHRISTO AND CENTRAL PARK

In 2005, a project that Christo and Jeanne-Claude proposed in 1979 for the city of New York in Central Park will finally be realized for 16 days in February 2005, whereby 7500 Gates, 16 feet high and a width varying from 6 - 8 feet will follow the edges of the walkways and will be perpendicular to the selected 23 miles in Central Park. Free hanging saffron colored fabric panels suspended from the horizontal tops of the gates will come down to approximately 7 feet above the ground.

DATELINE: Iraq

Booksellers in Baghdad have begun to reopen in their tiny bookstalls, able to sell whatever they please for the first time in decades, without being terrorized by Saddam Hussein's security apparatus, including once-forbidden newspapers. Iraqi appetite for literature is summed up in an Arab-world adage: "Cairo writes, Beirut publishers, and Baghdad reads."

• As of this writing, losses at the National

Museum of Iraq and the National Center of Books and Archives are much reduced. At the Library, 90 percent of its books and documents had been removed for safekeeping before the war. However, the Awgaf or Religious Endowment Library, was burned and it lost 6,500 Islamic manuscripts. The Central Library of Baghdad University and the Science Academy were also looted and destroyed by fire. 50,000 Islamic and Arab manuscripts, dating back 14 centuries, were saved from the Saddam House of Manuscripts. The director-general of manuscripts in the Ministry of Culture had his entire collection removed to a safe place one week before the war began in March. He also took 150 boxes of books and catalogs from the library of the National Museum for safekeeping.

DATELINE: London

Damien Hirst, British artist, plans to use a pickling technique to create a sculpture of three cows being crucified.

DATELINE: Indianapolis

About 20 hand-painted and decorated large model Indy cars were recently unveiled along the south steps of Monument Circle to do for Indianapolis what the painted Cows on Parade did for Chicago in 1999. Called "Art in Motion", this project of "art cars" originally called for 33 full-size cars, but when they sold out, "half-size" cars were added to the mix. Artists received subsidies for materials. Most artists are local except for Peter Max, cartoonist Jim Davis and retired race-car driver Johnny Rutherford. There will be an auction on 23 May, and a souvenir picture book called "Art in Motion" will be published at \$34.95 available in Indianapolis.

DATELINE: Vancouver, BC

Expect Delays is a two-month series of public-art interventions subversively being staged in bathroom stalls, back alleys, streets and parks all across Vancouver until the end of May. It aims to expand the definition of public art beyond static sculpture. 8 artists have been invited from Montreal, Toronto, Vancouver and New York to gently infiltrate the city in quiet, almost imperceptible ways that challenge social conventions. For example, Diane Borsato of Montreal intends to touch 1,000 people while going about her daily routine during a 10-day visit to Vancouver. Another artist from Vancouver, Sarah White, plans to recite monologues in public bathrooms from 4 - 10 May. Christy Thompson from Toronto has surreptitiously scattered 100 plastic gold trophies on supermarket shelves, in telephone booths, atop street signs and along the seawall in Stanley Park. The victory statues of a winged, robed woman are engraved with the congratulatory phrase: "Good for You."