

TOP 10 MOST WANTED STOLEN ART 2020 LONDON, 1 JANUARY 2020 A New Year Resolution for the Art World: ART RECOVERY INTERNATIONAL'S TOP TEN MOST WANTED STOLEN ARTWORKS FOR 2020
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A New Year Resolution for the Art World:

ART RECOVERY INTERNATIONAL'S TOP TEN MOST WANTED STOLEN ARTWORKS FOR 2020

It's that time of year again. "Top Ten" lists abound for everything from "Top Ten Tourist Destinations for the New Year" to "2020's Top Ten Must Have Sandwiches." Art Recovery International ("ARI") has its own list: our "Most Wanted Stolen Artworks for 2020." The list, of course, is by no means exhaustive and does not include cases we are close to solving but represents some of our most sought-after recoveries for the new year. Perhaps with the help of some intrepid art world participants, tipsters, and law enforcement professionals, we can make some of these a reality.

1. ISABELLA STEWART GARDNER MUSEUM THEFT (1990)



2020 marks a rotten anniversary for any art-lover: thirty years since thieves bolted off with 13 precious artworks from the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum in Boston, Massachusetts. Two robbers dressed to impersonate police officers carried out this infamous heist, considered to be the biggest unsolved art theft in world history. Since that night in 1990, quite a few real police officers have joined the international hunt for the 13 artworks, not to mention lawyers, art experts, and lately even podcasters. Valued at over \$600 million (although valueless in the marketplace as stolen objects) the search for masterworks by the likes of Vermeer, Manet, Rembrandt, and Degas stays alive and relevant thanks to current museum security director Anthony Amore, whose museum is offering the largest reward ever offered by a private institution — \$10 million for information leading to the art's recovery. What is keeping someone from turning in the art and collecting a cool \$10 million? Perhaps mistrust of the FBI's and local prosecutors' promise that no one will be prosecuted for the crime. That's why Art Recovery International's founder and lawyer Christopher A. Marinello has, with the consent of law enforcement, offered to serve as a pro-bono intermediary between the possessors and the museum. ARI will happily exchange the reward and artwork through attorney's escrow. In this way, those collecting the reward will never have to deal directly with museum security or law enforcement. Marinello's message to the possessors is simple: "Thirty years is enough; you are not going to get a better deal than the one on the table. Return the artwork and pocket the \$10 million before someone else goes around you and collects it for themselves".

2. JAMES BOND'S STOLEN ASTON MARTIN DB5 (1997)



James Bond's trusty 1964 Aston Martin DB5 sports oil jets, machine gun mounts, and an array of other gizmos. Still, all those anti-theft gadgets were foiled in 1997 when criminals dragged the classic car away from a Boca Raton, Florida, hangar. Called "the most famous car in the world," the iconic vehicle is one of just two made to share the screen with Sean Connery in Goldfinger. The theft victim paid \$250,000 for the movie-making coupé in 1986, but the car could fetch \$12 million today. Current intelligence suggests the storied prop is in Kuwait, but numerous overtures to collectors and museums in the area have failed to shake out the possessor despite the six-figure reward being offered to anyone with information leading to its recovery. Marinello admonishes the secretive collector, "you're in possession of a stolen vehicle which tarnishes the rest of your collection. This car cannot be sold or exhibited until the title issue is resolved. If you have any sense of a moral code, you will contact ARI to discuss a discreet resolution in 2020 before we can publicly confirm your identity."

Information originally from January 1, 2020 email blast by Art Recovery International

3. GIOVANNI BELLINI'S STOLEN MADONNA AND CHILD (1993)



Worshippers gather in prayer at Venice's Madonna dell'Orto church today just as worshippers have done for over 700 years. Unlike most of that time, though, today's congregation gathers without Giovanni Bellini's beautiful altarpiece, Madonna and Child which was stolen (for the third time) on the night of 1 March 1993. A mere facsimile sits in the chapel where the original, a tempera example predating Bellini's embrace of oil paint, should hang. Marinello believes that the painting has not travelled far and that the time has come for the selfish possessor to come forward and return the work, no questions asked. Confidential tips can be forwarded to Art Recovery International, who will handle the recovery on a pro-bono basis.

4. DRESDEN GREEN VAULT MUSEUM THEFT (2019)



Some things should be left in the past as we enter the new year and new decade. That includes brutal smash-and-grab robberies of priceless cultural property, like the one that shocked the Dresden Green Vault in November, 2019. Burglarizing much of a jewel-encrusted collection first owned by Saxony's ruler Augustus the Strong and now the people of Saxony, thieves may hope to break up and melt down pieces equivalent to crown jewels in terms of cultural importance. Former Israeli security agents have been hired to hunt down the criminals who appear to be scoffing at the private and public rewards being offered for the collection's return. Our advice to the current possessors of the jewelry? Make a deal with the authorities before one of your associates turns you in. It's only a matter of time.

5. LOOTING OF AFRICAN CULTURAL HERITAGE (1884-1914)



This year should be a watershed moment for recovering property from a different manner of theft, less flashy but just as painful to victims. Museums in Europe, North America, and elsewhere must double-down on recent (encouraging, if minimal) efforts to return African artifacts to their countries of origin. With changes to government policies as well as non-governmental support, these initiatives are increasingly able to right historic wrongs on a major scale. The goal of the art establishment in 2020 should be to turn promises into first steps, and first steps into active programs of restitution. With hundreds of thousands of African cultural objects behind glass or in museum storage—totaling approximately 90% of the African continent’s material cultural legacy—there remains before us a massive amount of restitution work, all of it meaningful.

6. LOVIS CORINTH’S TYROLEAN WOMAN WITH A CAT (1940)



While not a particularly high value work in monetary terms, at 60,000 euro, this painting was looted by the Nazis in the 1940s prior to the murder of Jewish banker Fritz Goldschmidt and his wife Thea at Auschwitz. It is profoundly valuable to Goldschmidt heirs. The painting was offered for sale in the German auction market at Lempertz (twice) and Villa Grisebach before selling at Im Kinsky in 2008. The surviving family members were finally able to submit a well-researched claim to Im Kinsky founder, Ernst Ploil in 2018. Frustratingly, they were met with considerable resistance. In 2019, ARI approached

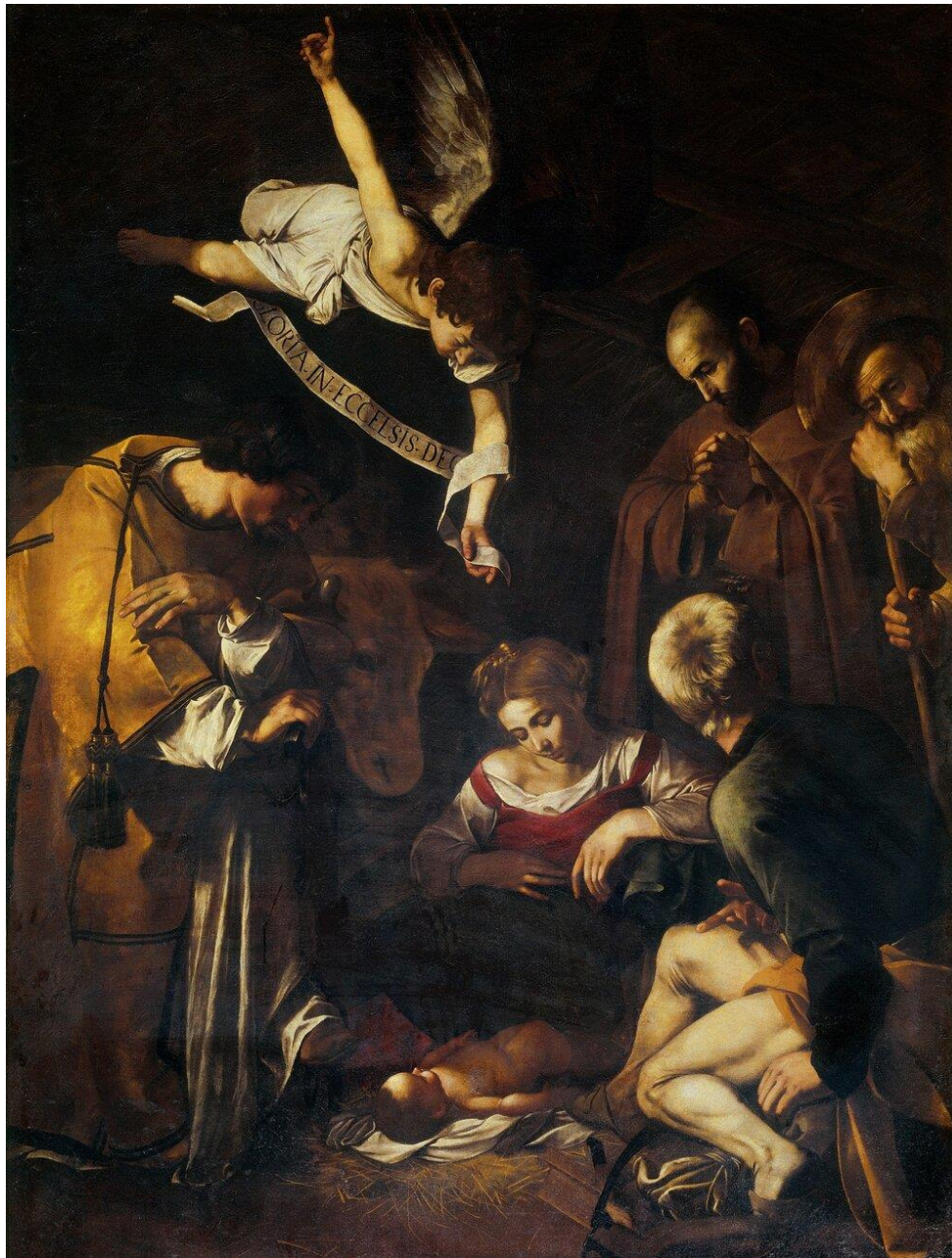
Neue Museum founder Ronald Lauder, an acquaintance and fellow Neue Board Member of Ploil to intervene. Unfortunately, Lauder seems less willing to help Holocaust survivors reclaim their Nazi-looted art than to simply speak out about Nazi looting in general terms on the world stage. This would be the first and only item restituted to the heirs of Fritz and Thea Goldschmidt. We look forward to a 2020 that reunites the family and their art, hopefully with the help of the Austrian and German governments and law enforcement, if necessary

7. JOSHUA REYNOLDS' PORTRAIT OF MISS MATTHEW (1984)



This Joshua Reynolds portrait was stolen in a horrific burglary in the UK in 1984. The art trade did their ignoble part by looking the other way and selling the work several times (including a sale by Sotheby's in 1988, just four years after the theft). The Tokyo Fuji Art Museum purchased the painting in 1990 and has refused to even meet with the theft victims' heirs to discuss a possible resolution. The Museum is a member of the International Council of Museums (ICOM), which has sadly proven ineffective at enforcing their own guidelines in this case. The only action taken by the Museum has been to remove the stolen Reynolds from a list of paintings available for international loans and exhibitions, a rather telling response. Here's hoping that this year, diplomatic intervention will encourage the museum to honour the principles of its founder, noted citizen-diplomat Daisaku Ikeda, and return the ill-gotten picture.

8. CARAVAGGIO'S NATIVITY ST. FRANCIS & ST. LAWRENCE (1969)



In the Catholic Church, St. Lawrence is considered the patron saint of cooks. The story cooked up about the fate of Caravaggio's nativity picture of him seems decidedly unsaintly, though. Cut from its frame in the Oratory of Saint Lawrence in Palermo over fifty years ago, the painting was chewed up by pigs—that is, at least according to a Sicilian mafia informant. There's reason to doubt this claim and we would be happy to assist the possessors with a no questions asked return of this important devotional work. It would not be the first time we negotiated a discreet restitution with Italian organised crime figures. Our 2020 message? Leave the Caravaggio, take the cannoli.

9. STOLEN MEXICAN NATIVE MANUSCRIPTS OR CODICES (2016)



Thieves scaled the walls of an adjoining building to reach the roof of a Mayfair gallery and entered the building through a second-floor window in a brazen early morning raid on 11 April, 2016. Once inside, and despite tripping the alarms, criminals made off with numerous rare books and medieval manuscripts that had been sold by the auction house but were awaiting collection, as well as others that had recently been consigned for sale. Following the loss, the gallery's Insurer appointed Art Recovery International to locate and recover the stolen books. In March of 2017, four of the books were identified during the due diligence process as the books were consigned to some of the most prestigious rare booksellers in the trade. Still, the most valuable items from the theft remain missing: two Mexican native manuscripts (or codices) valued at over \$1M. The rare book trade does a good job of policing its own and it is only a matter of time before these important works surface in the hands of someone who did not ask the right questions.

10. PICASSO'S WOMAN IN A HAT HOLDING SHEEP'S HEAD (1979)



Painted in 1939, this important Picasso was stolen from a gallery exhibition in Toronto, Canada in 1979 and could fetch over \$100 million today at auction. Appointed by the gallery's insurer, Art Recovery International's Christopher Marinello has come close to recovering this work on several occasions. The incarceration of one possessor (who held the key to a Dutch storage facility), the disappearance of an 80-year-old art thief looking for a reward, and finally a greedy French lawyer looking for a better deal have all set back recovery efforts. With diligence, perseverance, and luck, this Picasso will resurface in 2020.

All tips provided to Art Recovery International will be kept strictly confidential.

Christopher A. Marinello & Timothy Devine for Art Recovery International

Christopher A. Marinello, Esq., Founder of Art Recovery International, is one of the world's foremost experts in recovering stolen and Nazi-looted works of art and has recovered nearly £400M (\$510M) worth of fine art, classic cars and jewelry. www.artrecovery.com +44 (0)7702 206 913



Art Recovery International, LLC, c/o Mazzola Lindstrom LLP, 733 Third Avenue, 15th Floor, New York, NY 10017