

6 of the World's Most Famous Stolen Paintings That Have Never Been Found!



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The subject of many a crime thrillers and Hollywood blockbusters, art-heists are not your average robbery. Complicated to execute and often dramatic, they are notorious for the glamour they command. While many artworks are swiped for ransom, the disappearance of some remain a true mystery! Here are some of the most famous stolen paintings in the world that are yet to be found!



The Storm on the Sea of Galilee, Rembrandt

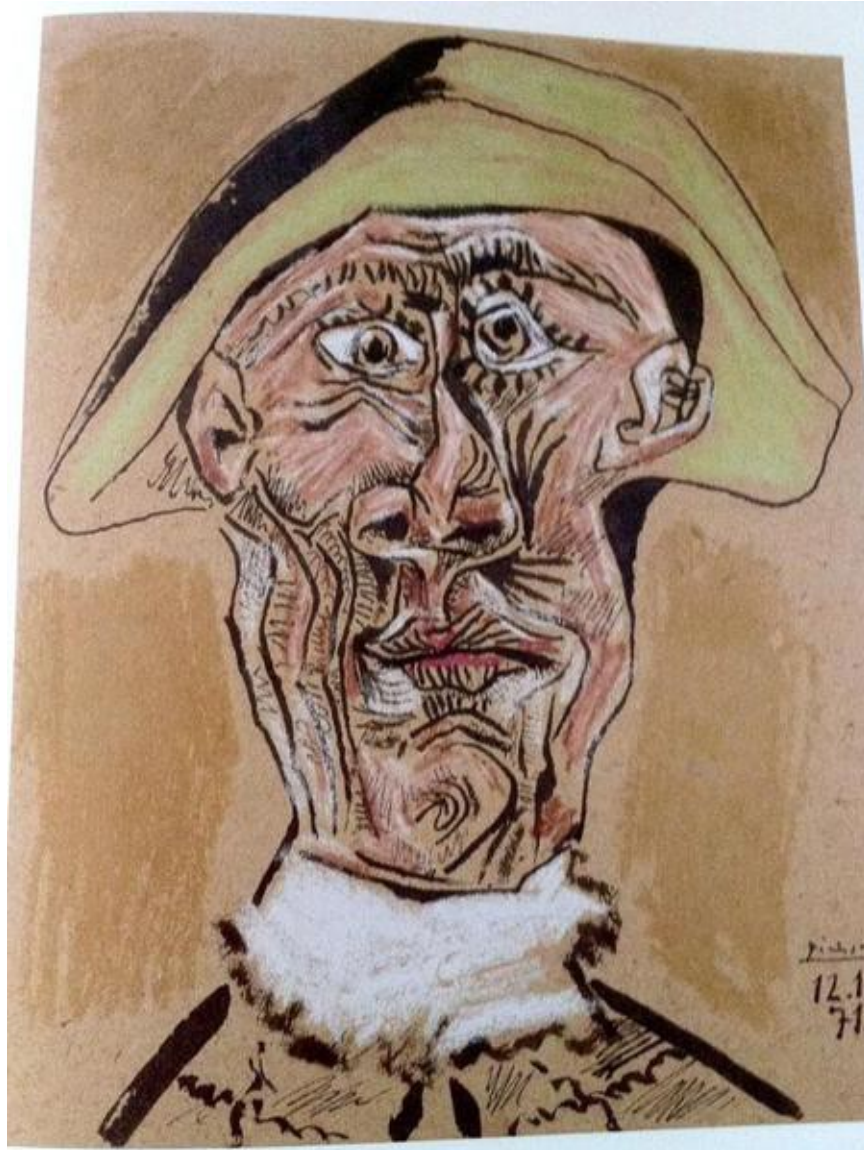
One of the most valuable missing pieces of art in the world, this 1633 painting depicts a scene from the Bible, where Jesus calms a storm at sea that he and his disciples get caught in. The painting was stolen from the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum in Boston, Massachusetts, in one of the largest art-heists in history! The painting was stolen along with 12 others on the night of March 18, 1990 by two men who gained access to the museum by pretending to be Boston police officers. Another artwork stolen on the same night is “The Concert” by Johannes Vermeer, which is the most valuable missing artwork in the world, with an estimated worth of \$200 million!



The Storm on the Sea of Galilee by Rembrandt

Harlequin Head, Pablo Picasso

Another art-heist that goes down in history for its notoriety is the Kunsthall Museum robbery in October 2012. Termed as ‘the heist of the century’, this particular case could well be a movie plot! The Kunsthall Museum theft is infamous for the ‘efficiency’ with which the thieves walked away with 7 masterpieces, by some of the biggest names in art history like Picasso, Gauguin and Monet. They broke in through an emergency exit and removed the paintings from their frames within 3 minutes! While the thieves were eventually caught and convicted, the paintings are yet to be found, with the Picasso, the most famous piece from the lot, being feared as destroyed by one of the thieves’ mother upon her son’s arrest.



Harlequin Head by Pablo Picasso

Le Pigeon Aux Petits Pois, Pablo Picasso

Pablo Picasso holds the record for the artist with the most stolen artworks in the world, with more than 1,000 of his artworks reported missing. This painting, also known as The Pigeon with Green Peas, was stolen in May 2010 along with 4 other artworks including

pieces by Matisse and Braque, from the Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, in France. This heist was executed by just one man and the only evidence that the police found at the crime-scene was a smashed window, a broken padlock, and the empty frames, from which the paintings were carefully removed. The man responsible for the crime was later arrested, and stated that he threw the Picasso into a trash can, but the claim hasn't been verified.



Le Pigeon Aux Petits Pois by Pablo Picasso

The Just Judges, Jan Van Eyck

One of the most precious artworks in the world, the 12-Panel Ghent Altarpiece at the Saint Bavo Cathedral in Ghent, Belgium, dating back to 1432, has been a victim of many crimes. The most mysterious one concerns the lower-leftmost panel of the artwork, called 'The Just Judges', which was stolen in 1934 and replaced by a note that was written in French, saying: "Taken from Germany by the Treaty of Versailles". This was followed by a series of notes exchanged by the thief and the Belgian government

regarding ransom demands. When local Belgian politician Arsène Goedertier, was on his deathbed in November 1934, he confessed to his lawyer that he knew about the location of the missing panel but he would take the secret to his grave. This led to him becoming the prime suspect of the crime, as the baffling mystery of the missing panel remains unsolved till date. The missing panel was replaced in 1945 with a copy made by Jef Van der Veken, a Belgian art-restorer, to complete the Altarpiece.



The Ghent Altarpiece (all 12 panels)





Left: A photograph of the original *The Just Judges*, Right: A copy of the painting made by Jef Van der Veken, used as a replacement for the missing panel

Portrait of A Young Man by Raphael

This 16th century painting by Italian High Renaissance master, Raphael was stolen during World War II. Initially the property of the Polish noble family, Czartoryski, the painting was one of the many taken by the Nazis during Hitler's rule. This particular painting was confiscated by one of Hitler's senior officials, Hans Frank, who took it for Hitler's Führermuseum. The painting was last seen in Frank's residence in 1945 and it has been missing ever since. Claims that the whereabouts of the painting have been located surfaced on the internet in 2012, but they were confirmed as being untrue.



Portrait of A Young Man by Raphael

Portrait of Francis Bacon, Lucian Freud

Another strange disappearance was the portrait of artist Francis Bacon, painted by his friend and fellow artist, Lucian Freud, the grandson of Sigmund Freud. This small painting went missing in 1988 from a gallery in Berlin that was full of people. With no ransom-notes or clues being discovered, the artist concluded that the artwork could have been stolen by a Francis Bacon fan. The artist appealed for the return of his artwork by putting up 'wanted' posters along with a reward all over Berlin, in hopes that it would resurface before an exhibition of his works at the Tate Britain Gallery in 2001, but the painting remains missing to this date.



Portrait of Francis Bacon by Lucian Freud

While art-heists are excitingly romanticised in big screens and story-books, we must not forget what is being lost each time an artwork goes missing. These thefts are in reality, devastating, because so much history is lost with the disappearance of artworks by renowned Masters.

Source:

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Stolen Art

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