

Illustrated Art Press Book Proposal

FAKES *A History and How-To of Art Forgery*

A Book Proposal for Phaidon

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Overview

This book will be an illustrated history of art forgery combined with an accessible manual on how to spot fakes yourself. I aim to write the definitive account. *Fakes* will use as case studies the criminal adventures of famous forgers, examining both how they succeeded in tricking the art world, and how they were eventually caught through shrewd detective work, scientific examination, and a good measure of luck. To ensure the book's broadest possible appeal and audience, I will cover a wide variety of forgeries across a large time period: from ancient Roman copyists churning out fake Hellenistic sculptures to the copying factories of 21st century Dafen, China; from a Romanian linguist who claimed to have discovered a lost language based on plates that were made in a 19th century nail factory, to Peter Paul Biro's use of cutting-edge technology to insert, and then "discover," the fingerprints of famous artists on questionable works; from an untrained craftsman who fooled the British Museum from his garden shed in Bolton to a Dutch forger who was tried for having sold to the Nazis what the world's experts thought was Vermeer's masterpiece—the Dutchman had to prove that he *had* forged the painting, or be executed for high treason. These prominent historical and contemporary true-crime stories are fascinating, illuminating, and often bizarre: a young, unknown Michelangelo schemed with a crooked art dealer to break and bury one of his sculptures in the dealer's vegetable garden, then dig it up and sell it as an ancient Roman original; and, after seventeen years of success, a contemporary master forger was caught when he misspelled a single word in cuneiform.

This history of art forgery is filled with such entertaining, but likewise informative, anecdotes that are still relevant today. As I relate these stories—supported by lavish illustrations—readers will in effect also start to learn how to become art detectives themselves, a skill which they can put to practical use, hopefully telling fakes from originals and identifying authentic gems, whether on a visit to a storied museum or hunting for hidden treasures at a car boot sale.

What fascinates people about art forgery? In any given case we find an intriguing amalgam of the desire for fame, money, revenge, and the expression of genius. The renowned forger Eric Hebborn had his original works dismissed by the art community, who considered

him talentless. To make matters worse, when he found what he thought was an original Old Master drawing at a car boot sale and brought it to the storied Colnaghi Gallery, they bought it for him for a lowly sum, saying that it was of little value. When Hebborn walked past Colnaghi the following week, he was enraged to see that very drawing in the window, priced at ten times what he had been paid.

Revenge against first Colnaghi and then the art world collectively prompted Hebborn to introduce some of his own attempts at “Old Master drawings” into the art market. The wealth that he would accumulate by selling forged Old Masters was the icing on the cake. And when his career had run its course, his own abilities and genius proven at the expense of art experts who mistook his drawings for the work of 16th century masters, Hebborn wrote several memoirs about his exploits, adding the desire for fame to the motivations of revenge, money, and proving his genius.

Art forgery explores and exploits the art trade, and involves incredible talent, treachery and detection, forensic science and a measure of mysticism—for the art world still relies on the word of individual experts, connoisseurs whose personal opinion can shift an artwork’s value by millions. Thanks to the widespread fascination with art forgery and the discovery of lost art treasures which forgers exploit, as evidenced by the sell-out success of the V&A’s “Fakes and Forgeries” exhibitions in 2009 and 2010 and the popularity of television series like “Cash in the Attic” or the new “Fake or Fortune” (for which I was consulted), this book will primarily target a general readership, with a strong secondary audience in professional and academic circles.

Though a topic that captures the popular imagination, there are relatively few books on art forgery. Among them are several memoirs of forgers, and some rather cursory journalistic histories of forgery, but none of note published within the last thirty years. The only books on forgery that are lavishly illustrated are technical publications aimed solely at professional conservators—which is another reason why my book would benefit from high-end production values of the kind at which Phaidon is skilled.

Although *Fakes* will focus on art forgeries, it will touch on anthropological deceptions (the Piltdown Man skull) and literary frauds (the Hitler diaries), to show how forgery in general damages not only those involved in the fraud, but can also infect the historical record, through the contamination of archives and oeuvres with fake material. Because British con man John Drewe slipped fake archival material into real archives, in order to establish the provenance of forgeries created by his partner, John Myatt, future generations of historians will trawl through libraries that may be tainted with the inclusion of such deceptive material. The work of forgers can forever damage what historians believe: not only is there the risk that false information will become an “authentic” part of the past, but the flip side is that historians might come to doubt genuine archival documents because they know that criminals like John Drewe may have tampered with them. Another area that I will address in passing is the grey one of disputed attributions, exemplified by the Getty’s Kouros—recognized as a forgery by many, except for the munificent institution that bought it. The long-running saga of the Turin Shroud conforms to a similar type.

Many of the most dynamic and intriguing stories have never been published in English: from the above mentioned Romanian linguist to a pair of German painters charged with restoring a church after the Second World War, convincing the world that they had uncovered long lost medieval frescoes. Later, they admitted that they had painted the frescoes themselves, yet only after the West German government had issued two million stamps bearing a reproduction of the frescoes as excellent examples of medieval Germanic painting.

Rich in pictures, details and accessible diagrams, this book will fill the glaring gap in publications on forgery, combining the popular interest in the subject with thorough scholarship, all presented in the author’s trademark approachable and entertaining prose.

This book might be a quite concise, low-priced introductory one or could usefully make the most of a larger format and be more expensive, effectively almost a coffee-table type volume about forgery—encompassing paintings, works on paper, sculptures, antiques and many other diverse objects. Although I much prefer the latter option, I can do either. I estimate very approximately 50,000 words of text, enhanced by a picture-driven focus, taking full advantage of Phaidon’s superb handling of images and layout, including side bars, diagrams, and caption commentary, all in a fairly compact format. A narrative-driven introduction would segue to a focus on images—ranging from Egyptian statuary, Michelangelo and Picasso to the most sophisticated counterfeits—complemented by concise texts.

Overall, the content will be divided into two sections. Part One will be a history of forgery, including a gallery of famous forgers, from Michelangelo to John Myatt, full of images of the forgeries and the originals they sought to copy. Part Two will detail past successful forgery and deception techniques, how the art world was tricked, and how the majority of forgers were finally undone by astute detectives, scientists, and art historians. By illustrating and relating the successes of past forgers and the genuine, often fabled art that they sought to duplicate, this section will present a sort of how-to manual for future art detectives, revealing the tricks of the trade and how best to distinguish originals from fakes. In this way the book will entertain and inform, but in the process it will present practical lessons from history that may be applied today, from visits to major museums to shopping trips to local antique shops—a user’s guide to what is real and what is not.

Part One: The History of Art Forgery

Art has been copied, misattributed and forged since long before the Biblical era. Indeed, the authenticity of artworks was already a concern in ancient Rome, where Greek vases and sculptures were prized above Roman copies of them. In the Middle Ages a lively trade in fake religious relics of course flourished along pilgrimage trails. The history of art forgery is as old as the history of the art trade.

The historical portion of this book will profile a pantheon of famous forgers of the past, their methods, stories of success and failure, and most importantly, images of their fakes and the originals they sought to emulate. To provide a sense of the range of content, these forgers will include the following (although of course I will treat them as elements in an unfolding story, not as a list):

Michelangelo Buonarotti (1475-1564)

Few non-specialists realize that Michelangelo began his sculpting career as a forger. His first extant sculpture, the *Bacchus* (carved when he was only 21) now on display in Florence’s Bargello Museum, was made to look like an ancient Roman statue. Along with an unscrupulous dealer, Michelangelo intentionally damaged and buried the sculpture in the dealer’s yard, unearthing the “discovery” as an ancient sculpture, which fetched a much better price than a work by the unknown young Michelangelo.

Marcantonio Raimondi (1480-1534)

An excellent printmaker and the creator of the first printed work of pornography (*I Modi*, text by Pietro Aretino, 1524), the Venetian artist got into trouble when he hand-carved identical plates to those of the more famous Albrecht Dürer, including Dürer’s signature, selling them as originals.

Luca Giordano (1634-1705)

Renowned in his own right, this Baroque artist once painted a work in the manner of the oft-forged Dürer. One of his own patrons bought it thinking it was a Dürer original, and proudly showed it off to Luca. Luca couldn't resist telling his patron that it was, in fact, his handiwork. He had to prove it by pointing out his hidden signature in the painting.

William Sykes (18th century)

The libertine William Sykes is best known for having convinced the Duke of Devonshire that a real, anonymous 15th century Flemish painting of an unidentified saint (currently in the National Gallery of Ireland) was actually a portrait of Saint Thomas a Becket, commissioned by King Henry V of England and painted by Jan van Eyck, whose works claimed the highest prices at auction of any artist in this period. A good instance of how forgery is not necessarily an issue of manual skill alone and may instead involve social ones.

Reinhold Vasters (1827-1909)

The German master goldsmith was responsible for scores of fake Renaissance pieces of jewelry, a number of which are now on display at the V&A Museum in London, in a gallery dedicated to fakes and forgeries. More than one thousand of his drawings were also discovered in the V&A archive in 1979, first acquired as original Renaissance sketches.

Bogdan Petriceicu-Hasdeu (1836-1907)

A brilliant scholar of the Romanian language, Petriceiu-Hasdeu was also behind the forgery of a linguistic and archaeological “discovery:” the so-called Dacian lead plates. These plates were created not for profit but to provide physical evidence to support the nascent Romanian nationalism of the 1880s. They were made at a nail factory in Sinaia, Romania in 1875 and planted in the archives of the Bucharest Museum of Antiquities, so that they would be discovered by enthusiastic scholars and studied as long-lost originals.

Alceo Dossena (1878-1936)

The Italian sculptor claims not to have set out to deliberately copy antiquities, but he enjoyed the fact that, without his intervention, collectors and museums convinced themselves that his works were by past masters. Technically, his artistic skill is arguably in line with some of the great Renaissance sculptors. Two of his relief sculptures may be seen on display in the V&A Hall of Fakes and Forgeries.

Bernard Berenson (1865-1959)

Perhaps the most famous art connoisseur of the 20th century, Berenson was certainly not a forger in the traditional sense, but he was surely involved in willful misattribution of artworks for personal profit. He collaborated with the renowned art dealer, Joseph Duveen, to authenticate a Titian painting as a Giorgione, whose work is rarer and more valuable. Berenson received as payment a percentage of the sale price, so it was in his interest that any given artwork be sold for as much as possible, even when the truth was bent in the process.

Icilio Federico Joni (1866-1946)

Joni is author of *Affairs of a Painter* (published in 1936), a memoir of his many years as a successful art forger, which a consortium of antiques dealers tried to bribe him *not* to publish. His forgeries fooled the aforementioned art historian extraordinaire, Berenson himself. When Berenson later realized that he had purchased a handful of Joni fakes, he traveled to Siena to meet the forger and express his admiration. In what may be an apocryphal coda, it is said that Berenson sold on several of Joni's works as originals, enjoying the deceit, while keeping a few pieces in his own collection, as a reminder of having been gulled.

Jef van der Veken (1872-1964)

A renowned restorer and Belgian Surrealist, Van der Veken was known for his heavy hand in restoration, in which his own handiwork was often more visible than what he was conserving. This led to an exhibition about his career entitled “Fake or Not Fake,” and he has been accused of forging a panel by van Eyck in order to aid a criminal in surreptitiously returning a stolen panel.

The Wacker Family (circa 1900)

The family of Otto Wacker was involved in some of the highest profile attribution cases ever raised, when they went to court claiming that the Van Goghs in their family collection were authentic, and that the critics who dismissed them were liable for damages. The trial didn’t go according to plan: it came to light that the Wacker family had been forging art for generations, including the “Van Goghs” in their possession.

Han van Meegeren (1889-1947)

The Dutch forger, a failed and dismissed original artist, developed a seemingly undetectable means of forging paintings. He was uncovered after World War II, when the Allied Art Commission found a previously unknown “Vermeer” painting in the collection of Nazi leader Hermann Göring. The sale of the painting was traced to Van Meegeren, who was charged in May 1945 with selling a Dutch national treasure and collaborating with the enemy—a treason punishable by death. Van Meegeren confessed in court to having forged the painting, in order to escape with his life. But it had fooled so many experts, that he was forced to prove his capability by creating another forged painting—while he was in prison.

Elmyr de Hory (1905-1976)

The subject of Orson Welles’ documentary film *F is for Fake* (1975), the Hungarian forger claims to have produced nearly one thousand works of modern art, including paintings by such artists as Chagall, Matisse, Modigliani, and Picasso.

Tom Keating (1917-1984)

The British forger of Old Masters was as loveable as he was infamous. He turned to forgery to prove his artistic talent when his original works were dismissed by the art world. He created more than two thousand forgeries of the works of over one hundred artists, including an (in)famous version of Constable’s *The Haywain*, which he simply painted as a mirror of the original. After he was caught and served his time, Keating became the star of the popular 1976 British television series on Channel 4, in which he taught aspiring painters how to copy famous pieces. In the year of Keating’s death, Christie’s auctioned 204 of his works.

Lothar Malskat (1913-1988)

The German master forger Lothar Malskat created around two thousand fakes in the style of at least seventy-one artists, from ancient works to Chagalls. He claimed that it took him only one day to craft a fake painting that would fool experts. Malskat and a colleague, Dieter Fey, were caught when they were commissioned to restore frescoes at the Marienkirche in Lübeck, Germany, which had been damaged in the Second World War. When the restoration was finished in 1951, scholars were shocked to find that the restorers had uncovered previously unknown medieval frescoes. The discovery was so important that the West German government printed two million postage stamps depicting the newly discovered frescoes. Malskat’s impressive run came to an end when his pride got the better of him. He announced in 1952 that he had painted the frescoes himself.

Antoni Pitxot (b. 1934)

Salvador Dali's painterly abilities and drive dried up in the last decades of his life, while his productivity increased. Dali employed a protégé, whom he referred to as "the other Dali," who painted Dali "originals" in secret from Dali's own home. His works were so well-executed that Dali himself often could not tell which were his and which were the creations of his protégé.

Eric Hebborn (1934-1996)

A graduate of London's Royal Academy of Art, Hebborn claimed to have produced approximately one thousand Old Master drawings, purported to be by Rubens, Raphael, Van Dyck, Poussin, and Tiepolo, among many others. These drawings were sold by noted auction houses to numerous prestigious collections, including The Getty. He was inspired to forge after a real drawing which he owned was knowingly undervalued by the famous London dealer Colnaghi. The dealer bought the drawing from him and then sold it on a few weeks later for many times the price. Hebborn wanted to get even...and he certainly did. He would later write two memoirs about his career, including *The Forger's Handbook*, in which he teaches his tricks to aspiring forgers.

Geert Jan Jansen (b. 1943)

Jansen has been called the most prolific forger in history, earning over \$12 million (seized in his Swiss bank accounts) and the owner of at least three false identities. When police burst into Jansen's studio, in a castle in the Netherlands, they found sixteen-hundred forged paintings, primarily in the style of Post-Impressionists like Matisse and Dufy, and of course Picasso, the most frequently stolen and forged artist in history.

John Myatt (b. 1945)

Over ten years Myatt forged works by Chagall, Giacometti and many more, to accompany provenance forged by his dealer, John Drewe, which was surreptitiously inserted into real archives, to later be "discovered" by scholars. This not only causes problems with the forgeries in question, but also leads to collateral damage—scholars study archives which may contain fraudulent material that they will assume is real. Thus, investigators have recovered 60 fakes, but another 140 remain unfound. After serving a very short prison sentence, Myatt helped the police track down other forgers still at large. He proves that crime can pay: he now sells "genuine fakes" bearing his signature for six-figures, and George Clooney optioned his life story to be made into a Hollywood film.

Ely Sakhai (b. 1952)

The New York art dealer Ely Sakhai developed a clever scheme to take advantage of the reliance of the art trade on provenance, that is, the documented history of an object, to determine authenticity. If the provenance of an artwork looks good, then dealers tend to assume that the work is legitimate, and may not examine the piece itself in any great depth. Knowing this, Sakhai took to purchasing authentic paintings, accompanied by legitimate provenance. He then hired a team of Chinese copyists to forge near-identical copies of the paintings he had bought. He would then use the legitimate provenance to accompany the new forgeries, and sell them to unsuspecting victims.

Shaun Greenhalgh (b. 1961)

The most recently captured master forger, Greenhalgh was only convicted in November 2008. He and his octogenarian parents were involved in the most wide-reaching forgery campaign

of all time. Greenhalgh successfully fooled Christie's, Sotheby's, and The British Museum among many other illustrious victims, and created works of astounding diversity, from 20th century British sculpture to an Egyptian statue purportedly from 1350BC. He and his family were finally caught when a British Museum expert noted that Assyrian sculptural relief tablets, ostensibly from Sennerachib's palace in 700 BC Mesopotamia, contained a single misspelling in cuneiform.

Mark Landis (b. 1955)

Arrested in 2010, Landis was a prolific forger of primarily 19th century American paintings, but he never sought to profit financially from his work. Instead, he posed as a philanthropist under various aliases (including that of a priest) and donated his forgeries to museums, claiming that they were valuable originals from his private collection. The museums, not wishing to look a gift horse in the mouth, welcomed the donated paintings, and did not question their authenticity. Landis' motivation seems to have been purely psychological and social—he wanted to be admired and welcomed into the social circles of the art world, all the while knowing that he was pulling the wool over their eyes in more ways than one.

Peter Paul Biró (b. 1964)

At first a renowned forensic art historian who found fingerprints of famous artists in questionable works (including a Jackson Pollock bought at a tag sale and a Leonardo painting), Biró's success has been recently called to question. A 2010 *New Yorker* article revealed that he and his family are now thought to have forged numerous paintings, and also committed fraud in planting false fingerprints into works to "prove" their authenticity.

This history section of the book would consist of around 25,000 words, a mixture of text with images, photographs, and diagrams.

Part Two: How to Spot Fakes & Forgeries

While the "history" part of the book will be narrative in presentation, complemented by numerous images of forgeries and forgers, the "how-to" section has the flavor of a guidebook exploring forgery techniques and the counter-science of authentication. There can even be a slightly subversive undertone: the material presented as lessons to future forgers. This echoes the bravura attitude of forgers trying to raise two fingers to the art world, often seeking revenge against it after members of the art community dismissed their original artistic creations.

The focus of the how-to portion will be the duel between fakers and authenticators, including the psychology, technology, and discussions about the art market and why it is prone to hang itself by the nooses fashioned by tricksters. By showing how forgers have succeeded in the past, measures may be taken against the repetition of past mistakes. This book will help the art world know its enemy, and will empower individual readers by giving them a sense of how to distinguish fakes from originals themselves.

The how-to portion of the book will include the following sub-sections:

Four Categories of Forgery

One can map and analyze the ways in which deception has been used to profit criminally from the sale of artworks. Based on police files and historical studies, we may distinguish four basic categories of forgery and deception:

1) Wholesale Forgery

The creation of a new completely original work of art, professed to have been done by someone else whose authorship will result in a greater sale value of the object.

2) Alteration of Authentic Work

The alteration of, or addition to, an authentic work of art to suggest a different authorship or subject matter that results in a greater sale value of the object.

3) Misattribution of Authentic Work

A confidence trick to convince a potential buyer that a work is of greater value than it actually is. Or inversely, to convince a potential seller that a work is of lesser value, therefore swindling the seller out of higher pay. Misattribution is difficult to prove, as those involved can claim to have made a mistake in their attribution. It is only a criminal matter if a priori intent to deceive can be proven.

4) Provenance Traps

An oft-used con in which the front man lays no claims as to the authenticity, nature, or value of the work he proffers, but leaves a clue as to its origins that the buyer can search out and discover himself. There are several variations on the “provenance trap.”

A fake work can be created to match the existing, real provenance for a lost artwork, the trick used by the Greenhalgh family. Fake provenance may be inserted in real archives, to be “discovered” by investigating scholars, as used by Myatt and Drewe. Or an authentic work with authentic provenance can be purchased, and then a copy made and sold on with the accompanying original provenance, as in the case of Ely Sakhai. In each instance, the buyer or authenticator brings himself to the exciting conclusion that the object proffered is the missing artwork mentioned in the real provenance. This con takes advantage of the enthusiasm of discovery on the part of the buyer, who gleefully steps into the bear trap laid out by the con man.

Value = (Perceived) Rarity + (Perceived) Authenticity + (Perceived) Fashion

The concept of value in art is nebulous. On one day a painting may be worth \$100,000 and three months later it might be worth \$1 million. A basic understanding of the concept of value—a mixed potion of rarity and authenticity—is key to any discussion about the art market and profiting from it, either legally or illegally.

Over-Enthusiasm & Wishful Thinking: How to Make the Art World Fall for Your Con

The nature of the art market is such that a great deal more misattribution of artworks goes on than proactive criminal deception. If an exciting, newly-discovered artwork comes on the market, it is in no one’s interest for it to be found to be fraudulent. The owner suddenly owns something worthless and may be criminally liable. The dealer loses his commission. Scholars lose a potentially important clue to understanding the past, and buyers lose out on a trophy. This section will analyze how the art market blissfully steps into the traps laid out for it.

Connoisseurship v Science: Authentication Technology & Tricks to Outwit It

What was once the realm of connoisseurs like Berenson and his predecessor, the Italian art historian Giovanni Morelli, who claimed an almost preternatural sense for authenticity that was beyond scientific explanation, has evolved into a hi-tech world of machines that help to detect what is genuine. From infra-red to x-rays, black-lights to carbon dating, technology has overtaken human opinion. But machines can be fooled. Here’s how.

Spot the Difference: Fake versus Real Images, with Annotations

Could you tell a real Mondrian from a computer-generated fake? At first glance they look the same. But when reproductions of a fake and original were printed in a newspaper and a poll was taken, 80% of the people could spot the original. This section will show images of key

forged artworks side-by-side with their original counter-parts, including diagrams and annotations that point out differences.

Authenticity Guide: Telling Fake versus Real at the Antiques Market

This section comprises a practical mini-guide for buyers at flea markets, antique shops, and strollers along the Portobello Roads of the world. It will include basic tips on what to look for and what to guard against.

What to Fake & How

What are the easiest works to forge and those least likely to be found out? What methods have been used to evade the scientific and research-based authentication techniques? How much easier is it to fake a minimalist 20th century painting than an Old Master?

The Van Meegeren Method: Recipe for the Perfect Vermeer

When he was brought to trial, the Dutch Vermeer forger van Meegeren had a great deal of trouble convincing the judge that he had, in fact, painted the “Vermeer” that the world’s leading Vermeer experts were convinced was original. Not until he narrated his methods step-by-step, provided photographs of himself in the process of painting the Vermeer, and actually painted a new “Vermeer” from scratch while in prison, did the experts believe him. If van Meegeren were to write a recipe for creating a Vermeer that will fool the experts, this is what it might look like.

Top Ten Most Common Mistakes Amateur Forgers Make

When forgers fail, what brings about their downfall? This section will cover errors such as the use of extemporaneous materials, artificial craquelure, over-reliance on signatures, overlooking the support, and hiding inside-jokes in artworks that result in a “forger’s signature.”

Forger versus Detective: Interviews with Experts from Both Sides of the Duel

Meet a famous forger and a famous art detective who spent the past decade tracking down forgers. John Myatt is now a celebrity, after serving time for forgery—he helps police with investigations and sells his copies, now signed with his own name instead of that of the painters he copies, for respectable sums. This section will feature a fresh interview with Myatt about his career pre- and post-arrest.

The section will also have an interview with Vernon Rapley, who served for years as the head of Scotland Yard’s Arts and Antiques Unit. During his tenure, art theft in London dropped by nearly 80%, and he was able to concentrate primarily on chasing forgers. Among his many successes, he is the man who arrested the Greenhalgh family. Rapley is now the head of security at the V&A Museum, where he and I give talks together on forgery—we are also developing a television series on art crime. Rapley will discuss the mechanics of investigating forgery cases. (Note: Rapley would be willing to write a short Foreword to this volume, if that would be of interest).

Forensic Criminology and Art

This section examines some renowned cases in which works were un-authenticated thanks to the investigation of forensic scientists. Case studies include the Shroud of Turin, the James Ossuary, the Piltdown Man skull, the archaeoraptor fossil, and *La Bella Principessa*, purported to be by Leonardo. This provides a chance to discuss the technology used by conservators and forensic scientists to expose forgeries.

Fakes in World Collections

Scotland Yard and the V&A Museum in London have twice put on a sold-out exhibition featuring seized forgeries from recent cases and the V&A's collection of fakes and forgeries. A section of the museum is dedicated to the work of forgers who have become more famous, and their works more desired, than the artists they set out to copy. The Albert Barnes Collection in Philadelphia recently moved to a new museum space, and the entire collection was re-evaluated for the first time since Barnes purchased the works a century ago. Nearly every one of the Old Masters in the collection were found to have been misattributed, over-optimistically, to famous artists when in fact they were most probably copies after famous artists. Were they forgeries or simply mistaken by Barnes' evaluators? Some studies go so far as to claim that 10-20% of all art in museums around the world is fake. It is safer to say that a greater percentage still, while not necessarily the result of criminal intent, has been misattributed. This section examines fakes in world-renowned collections.

The Ease of Faking Antiquities

Trade in illicit antiquities comprises most of the world's art crime today, perhaps as much as 75%. Antiquities may be looted from the earth or the sea in illicit excavations, or fake antiquities may be created from materials of the proper age. Log on to eBay on any given day, and one can find Greek coins and Pre-Columbian figurines, virtually every one of which is either looted or fake. The nature of the antiquities trade is such that a majority of items were removed from their resting place or country of origin illegally. As a result, antiquities are often sold without the proper care to check provenance. Thorough checks would result in so many questionable objects that the antiquities market would slow to a crawl. This section deals with the issue of fake antiquities, which is ever more severe as the industry has been taken over by organized crime.

At War Over Authenticity: Pollock and Warhol Experts versus Collectors

In 2005 a dispute arose over the authenticity of 32 recently discovered works thought to be by Jackson Pollock. A heated debate ensued between Pollock scholars at the Pollock-Krasner Foundation, whose duty it is to preserve the legacy of the artists and to authenticate questionable works, and a dealer, Mark Borghi, who represented the owner of the cache.

In a parallel case, the body in charge of authenticating the work of Andy Warhol denied the authenticity of a piece that is not only signed by Warhol, but which can be seen in a photograph, being handed by Warhol to its present owner.

Ego also enters these debates over authenticity, as in the case of the distinguished scholar Abraham Bredius, who claimed that van Meegeren's "Vermeer" was authentic, and had to uphold that claim when evidence indicated otherwise as van Meegeren went on trial, or else Bredius would be admitting to the world that he, the world's leading Vermeer expert, had been fooled. With millions of pounds on the line, the battles between owners and experts can grow heated.

Expert against His Own Museum: The Getty Drawings Scandal

In 2001 the curator of drawings at The Getty, Nicholas Turner, raised an alarm, believing as he did that a group of drawings recently acquired by the museum, thought to be by Old Masters including Raphael, were actually forgeries. Not only did Turner feel that the drawings were "wrong," but he thought he knew the forger—Eric Hebborn. But the Getty refused to test the newly-acquired drawings, and went so far as to fire Turner and attempt to blacklist him. This example of a museum turning on its own expert aptly illustrates the tension, drama, and embarrassment caused by even the accusation of having been fooled by a fake.

Scientific Forgeries

While this book is primarily about art forgery, we will also consider the damage done, particularly to the historical record, by forgeries in other fields. Anthropological and biological forgeries will be examined in the case of the Piltdown Man skull, a skull found in 1912 and thought to prove Darwin's theory of evolution, and the archaeoraptor fossil, thought first to be the "missing link" between dinosaurs and birds—both were later determined to be forgeries created by individuals who wished to garner scientific acclaim.

Literary Forgeries

The hunger to make a great discovery and thereby earn one's name in the world of academe has prompted numerous forgeries, all of which were propelled by the desire of the general public to find what the forger provided. We will briefly touch upon two famous literary forgeries which expose this motivation: William Henry Ireland's 18th century fake Shakespeare documents, and the 1983 "Hitler Diaries," at first sensationally authenticated by the celebrated English historian, Lord Dacre (Hugh Trevor-Roper)—yet in fact written by Konrad Kujau, who passed them off as the original diaries of the Führer.

Art Copying as Industry: Daafen and Jingdezhen

Industries have risen with the express purpose of faking antiquities—sometimes for sale as a copy, but often to be passed off as originals. China has limited intellectual property laws, and has therefore become the preferred workplace for master forgers at what amounts to an industrial level. Entire cities are dedicated centers for art copying—Daafen for paintings and Jingdezhen for sculpture and porcelain. This phenomenon will be examined as the future horizon of art forgery, and also as a chance to contrast the concept of "fakes" in Asia versus the West.

This latter section would be best presented in a compendium or gazetteer style, with more images than text, in the form of diagrams, cutaways, sidebars, and caption commentary (approximately 10-15,000 words).

Images

In both the history and the how-to sections of this book, it will be of interest to compare images of authentic works with their fake counterparts, including diagrams pointing out differences, cross-sections of paint to demonstrate technique, x-rays to show pentimenti, and other visuals that will facilitate an understanding of the duel between forgers and authenticating experts. Such visuals will range from the extraordinarily accomplished (Michelangelo's *Bacchus* sculpture) to the far less sophisticated (the doodles of the Nuremberg madman who tried to claim his works were by Dürer). Please find some sample images at the end of this proposal—numerous others are available on request.

Needless to add, I will collaborate with the publisher in seeking out and selecting relevant images, as well as creating diagrams that may be integrated in the text. I envision approximately 250 images in total, 200 in color and around 50 in black and white.

My wife is a professional graphic designer and photographer and, if desirable, could collaborate and assist in preparing diagrams and images.

Audience & Marketing

Fakes will be the go-to book for any reader interested in the subject of art forgery. It is distinguished by, in all immodesty, the pre-eminence of its author in the field of the history of art crime, as well as by the fact that no similar book exists on the market.

Because of the perennial fascination in art forgery and all of its component parts, this book will primarily target a general audience. There will also be a secondary readership in professional and academic quarters, for while this will be written in an entertaining, accessible manner for the general reader, my expertise and the depth of the research, along with the very small number of titles in print on the subject, mean that *Fakes* will also be the preferred point of reference on forgery for students of art, conservation, forensic science, archaeology, and policing.

Volumes on art forgery currently available are either technical textbooks aimed at professional conservators and forensic scientists (Craddock, Paul *Scientific Investigation of Copies, Fakes, and Forgeries* Butterworth-Heinemann 2009); general, journalistic accounts of famous fakes, with few illustrations and almost no analysis (Innes, Brian *Fakes and Forgeries: the True Crime Stories of History's Greatest Deceptions* Reader's Digest 2005); or biographies of individual forgers, containing almost no images (Salisbury, Laney and Aly Sujo, *Provenance: How a Con Man and a Forger Rewrote the History of Modern Art* Penguin 2010). No book currently available resembles the one proposed here.

I am widely considered to be the leading scholar in the study of art crime, and as such this thoroughly researched book will be a useful academic text, employed by students and professors of criminology, sociology, conservation, and art history. The book would become a primary text for the Masters program in Art Crime Studies that is run by ARCA (Association for Research into Crimes against Art), on which I teach—I have taught similar courses at Yale University and American University of Rome.

Because art crime incorporates a number of different disciplines and fields, the marketing possibilities are broad. University art history, criminology, sociology, law, and history departments would all be interested. But it will also be of practical, informative interest to professionals such as security personnel, museum staff, conservators, curators, art historians, art police, art lawyers, etc.

Above all, I intend the book to appeal to lay readers who wish to know truths and hard facts about art forgery, readers whose interest may also have been whetted by the many popular films (including *The Thomas Crown Affair*, *Ocean's Twelve*, *Topkapi*, *To Catch a Thief*, *F for Fake*), novels, or news stories about real-life forgeries and art-related crime.

In the UK in particular there is a real interest in the discovery of hidden art treasures, from the popular books about finding masterpieces buried in granny's attic (*Sleuth* and *The Art Detective* by Philip Mould), to television programs like "The Antiques Road Show," the "Cash in the Attic" series, and Mould's current "Fake or Fortune" (for which I was consulted). The How-To aspect of this book will appeal to the same audience, in that it would teach them, through text, images, and diagrams, how to identify authentic works from copies and forgeries, allowing readers to become art detectives themselves, trawling antique shop and Portobello Road and, this book in hand, separating the junk from the gems.

The market for this book will be helped by my other critically acclaimed and best-selling titles.

There is another marketing opportunity with the Victorian & Albert Museum. As mentioned above, the current head of security there, Vernon Rapley, a friend and colleague of mine, was until recently the head of Scotland Yard's Arts Unit. He has twice mounted a hugely popular exhibition on fakes at the museum, which itself boasts a hall of fakes and forgeries from its permanent collection. The museum and the exhibition, which will be repeated in the future and perhaps taken on tour, would make for a good publicity opportunity.

Multimedia Opportunities

I am very aware of the changing face of fine art publishing in an age of new technologies. Consequently, I believe that this book would also lend itself to various complimentary

multimedia products, which could be sold or used for promotion. For instance an iPhone/iPad application would allow users to explore forgeries by “zooming in” to details. An e-book version (which would work particularly well in color, on the iPad for example), or even a DVD in which I present the material in video format, are other possibilities (I work as a TV presenter, as well, so this would be a viable option). In addition to the obvious benefits of an e-book, an audio version (which I could narrate), would also promise to do well.

Likewise, a video game version of this book is another possibility. My US agent represents a video game programmer who has been commissioned by museums like the Smithsonian to create intelligent, problem-solving games for use both during museum visits and for educational play at home. He designs these with authors and curators, and he would be interested in developing this book as a video game, for iPad, iPhone, or computer.

I recently appeared as a guest expert in art crime on BBC’s “The One Show” and I am a regular commentator on BBC Radio programs, including “Front Row with John Wilson.” Further, this fall there will be a large feature article on my work in the study of art crime in the UK edition of *Wired* magazine it—it would be an excellent opportunity to announce the preparation of this book (which, if approved, would probably take me around eighteen months maximum to write) for Phaidon.

It should also be noted that I have two art crime documentary series currently in development for UK television, which I would co-present and co-write with Rapley. Should either of these come to fruition, they would obviously provide invaluable promotion—this book could even be considered as a tie-in for the documentary series, which will feature both art theft and forgery.

A multimedia approach to book projects such as this one provide a wider array of potential profit sources for both the publisher and author, complimenting the book sales through advertising but also providing income themselves. Phaidon could control all of these media options on the primary text, getting multiple benefits out of one project.

About the Author

I am a professor and an international author of fiction and non-fiction, specializing in the fields of art history and art crime. I am the founder and president of ARCA, the Association for Research into Crimes against Art, a non-profit research group (www.artcrime.info). My work in the field of art crime has been praised in such forums as The New York Times Magazine, Time Magazine, Sunday Times (UK), BBC Radio, National Public Radio, El Pais, Corriere della Sera, Vogue, and Vanity Fair. In the past months I have appeared as a guest expert and presenter on BBC “Front Row” and “The One Show.”

I am the author of numerous articles, including a regular column in the e-magazine ArtInfo called “The Secret History of Art” which draws c.20,000 readers a month. My publications include a novel, *The Art Thief* (Atria/Simon & Schuster 2007), currently translated into seventeen languages and a best-seller in five of them; the *Museum Time* series, guides to museums in Spain (geoPlaneta 2010); *Stealing the Mystic Lamb: the True History of the World’s Most Coveted Masterpiece* (PublicAffairs 2010); and my most recent book is an extended essay, *The Thefts of the Mona Lisa: On Stealing the World’s Most Famous Painting* (ARCA Publications 2011). Also, I edit *Art & Crime: Exploring the Dark Side of the Art World* (Praeger 2009) and am the editor-in-chief of *The Journal of Art Crime*, a biannual peer-reviewed journal on the subject.

Trained in art history at The Courtauld Institute, Cambridge University, and University of Ljubljana, I have taught for many years, for Yale and Brown University, and in Cambridge, Florence, Rome, and Ljubljana. I am now a professor of art history at the American University of Rome.

Other Projects for Phaidon

I have corresponded with David Anfam for several years now and we have begun to discuss other projects on which we might collaborate for Phaidon in the future, should this book prove successful. Proposals for these are also available for future discussion. I am a great admirer of Phaidon and would love to develop a relationship in which Phaidon would remain my publisher for all illustrated books.

These projects include *Lost Art: the Theft and Destruction of Art through the Ages*, an illustrated history of “lost” art, masterpieces that have been destroyed, stolen, or have simply vanished over the centuries; and the *Phaidon World Museum Guides*, a series of illustrated guidebooks to the best museums of Europe, based on my guides to museums in Madrid, Barcelona, Seville, and the Basque Country (published in Spain by geoPlaneta).

Sample Draft Excerpt from the Introduction

Hold! You crafty ones, strangers to work, and pilferers of other men's brains! Think not rashly to lay your thievish hands upon my works. Beware! Know you not that I have a grant from the most glorious Emperor Maximilian that not one throughout the imperial dominion shall be allowed to print or sell fictitious imitations of these engravings? Listen! And bear in mind that if you do so, through spite or through covetousness, not only will your goods be confiscated, but your bodies also placed in mortal danger. – Albrecht Dürer

This may well be the most belligerent copyright notice ever penned. It appeared in the colophon to an engraving series called *Life of the Virgin*, published in Nuremberg in 1511. Its author and the creator of the engravings, the great painter and printmaker Albrecht Dürer, had good reason to fear forgers.

Five years earlier, Dürer had been sent from Venice one of his prints from the original 1502 *Life of the Virgin* series. Dürer's prints were wildly popular throughout Europe, considered highly collectible and yet a more affordable alternative to commissioning an original painting. Dürer cultivated his status as a celebrity artist, one whose name alone, associated with a print or painting, would raise its value. He was perhaps the first internationally self-promoting artist in history, more akin to a Jeff Koons or Damien Hirst, from a publicity standpoint, rather than the solitary, morose likes of his contemporaries, such as Giorgione or Pontormo. He even created what some consider the first artist's trademark: a stylized monogram signature featuring a small upper-case letter "D" between the legs of a large upper-case letter "A." The authenticity of Dürer's prints was assured by the inclusion of his famed signature.

In 1506, in his Nuremberg studio, Dürer examined the woodcut engraving from his *Life of the Virgin* series. He discovered that it was nearly identical – but it was not his handiwork.

It was the work of a master forger.

Dürer's name, monogram, and prints were of such renown throughout Europe that, as early as 1494, at least six different printmakers were producing copies of Dürer prints and selling them as originals. Dürer was determined to fight to protect his name and his work from piracy. He would bring what might be considered the first Intellectual Properties lawsuits—first against a madman in his native Nuremberg, who was doodling nonsense onto canvas and selling it in front of the town hall as Dürer paintings; and then, in 1506, when a more serious case was held in Venice.

One of Dürer's friends had sent him one of these fraudulent woodcut prints from Venice, where it had been published by a family of printers by the name of Dal Jesus. A quick investigation led to the artist behind the copies, a master print-maker (and sometime pornographer) called Marcantonio Raimondi.

Raimondi had purchased original Dürer prints while in Venice in 1506. From these he created woodcut plates from scratch, including the famous "AD" monogram signature. The Dal Jesus family used these plates to produce prints which were then sold as Dürer originals.

But the case was far from straight-forward, for while Raimondi had copied every detail of Dürer's incredibly intricate prints (a work of miraculous and admirable skill on the part of the forger), he had included three alterations to the original design which distinguished his creations as copies—and which would eventually be used as an escape clause to get him off the hook.

Raimondi included his own monogram, an intertwined “MAF” inspired by Dürer’s trademark. He also added the device of the Dal Jesus publishing house, the “YHS” of Christ placed inside a squared quatrefoil. Finally, Raimondi included two triangles arranged in the shape of an hourglass, which were included in the sign on the Dal Jesus print shop. It took close examination to notice these additions, but they were there. They raised the question as to whether Raimondi himself intended these prints to be passed off as Dürer originals, or if he merely intended to make an homage after Dürer. In that case, it looked like the Dal Jesus family firm which sought to increase its revenues by selling them as originals—for a Dürer would fetch many times the price of a Raimondi copy after Dürer.

The dynamic and ingenious Dürer had had quite enough of forgers profiting from his work. He sued in Venice, in an effort to prevent the Dal Jesus printers from publishing and selling more of these copies. He thought that this, too, might set an example and dissuade future forgers.

The suit proved only partially successful. The Venetian authorities declared that because Raimondi had hand-carved the engraving plates, and because he made three subtle alterations to the original design, the prints were not exact copies, but merely excellent imitations. Raimondi should not be blamed for being as skilled an artist as Dürer, and Dürer should be flattered that his work was considered important enough to copy. Raimondi was required to remove Dürer’s signature from the plates, and the Dal Jesus family was forced to sell Raimondi’s versions as copies, revoking the claim that they were Dürer originals.

Dürer stormed off back to Nuremberg, unhappy with the result. He had heard the argument before, that he should be flattered that his work was so famous as to draw copyists—but the last time he had heard it, it related to the crazy old man selling doodles “by Dürer” outside the Nuremberg town hall. When he came to publish his complete 1511 edition of *The Life of the Virgin*, Dürer was careful to include his vituperative copyright warning.

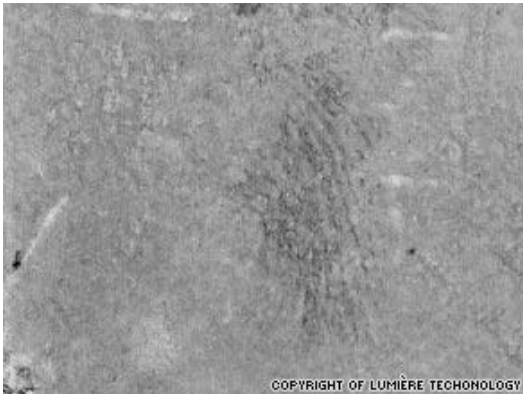
Sample Images with Captions

Please find below some sample images for inclusion in this book, which will give a hint as to the breadth of visuals available. Portraits of forgers and their creations make for obvious inclusions, as do juxtapositions of original with fake works, and have not been listed here, but rather I have included more particular image types as samples.

1.



Above, *La Bella Principessa*, thought to be by Leonardo and authenticated by scholars and by Peter Paul Biro, who discovered Leonardo's fingerprint on the drawing (below). It would later come to light that Biro had planted the fingerprint himself. The authenticity of the work is still debated.



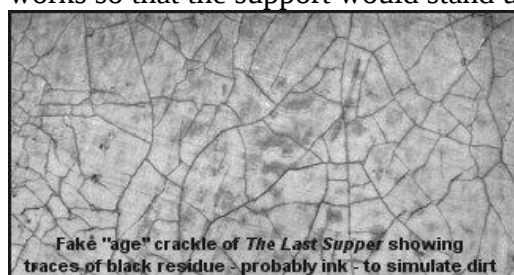
2. Inspector Vernon Rapley, the man who arrested the Greenhalgh family after seventeen years of successful art forgeries, photographed in the small garden shed in Bolton which served as the studio of the master forger, Shaun Greenhalgh.



3. The Dutch forger Han van Meegeren was put on trial for high treason for having sold a painting which the world's experts believed to be a Vermeer, and therefore Dutch national patrimony, to Hermann Göring—a crime punishable by death. In fact the “Vermeer” was by van Meegeren, but no one would believe him. On trial for his life, he was obliged to prove that he was the painter, relating his forgery method step-by-step and ultimately having to paint an entire Vermeer while in prison to prove the experts wrong.



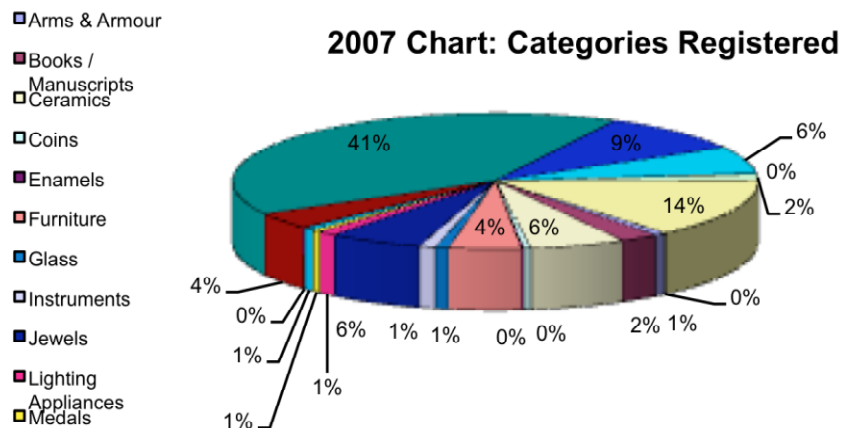
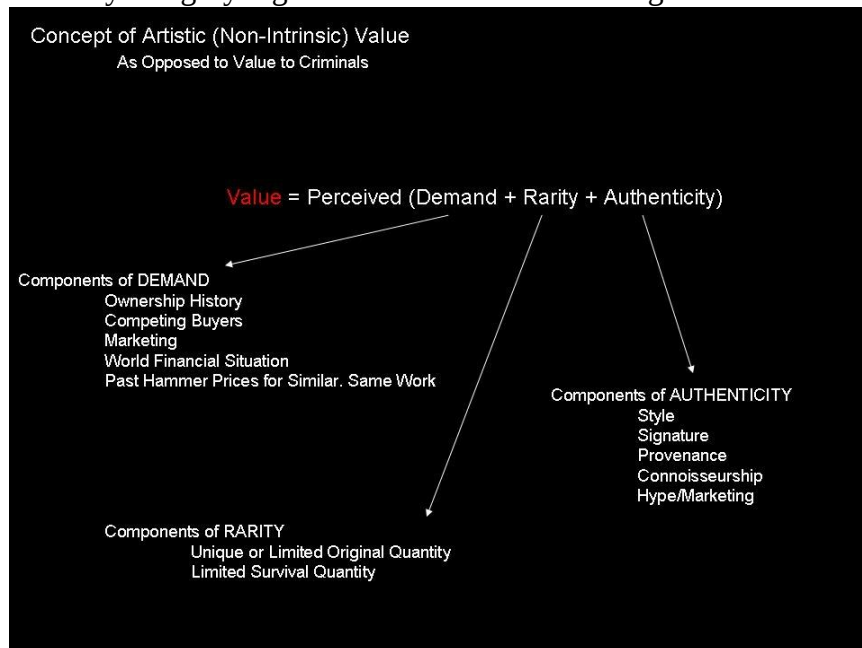
Above, van Meegeren painting a “Vermeer” while in prison. Below, a close-up of the craquelure in van Meegeren’s artificially-aged “Vermeer,” and a cross-section of paint layers on one of van Meegeren’s “Vermeer” paintings—he painted over authentic 17th century Dutch works so that the support would stand up to forensic tests.



4. This crucifix, which some Italian experts claim was made by Michelangelo, was purchased by the Italian government. But most scholars feel that this is not the work of Michelangelo, and that its “authentication” was merely a means of paying government money to its owner, a friend of those in power.



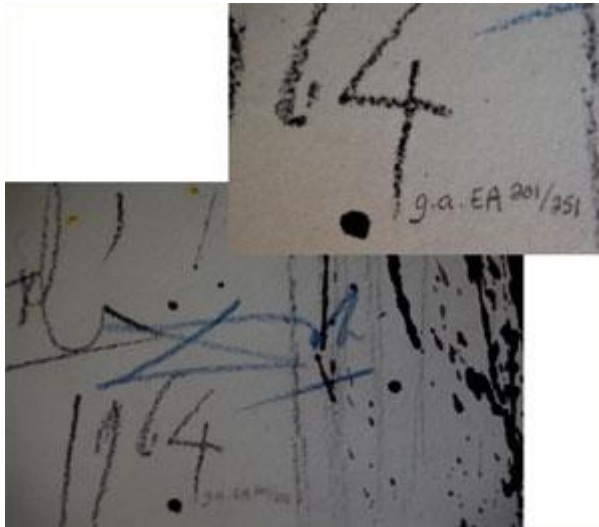
5. Tables and graphs, which I will develop in conjunction with Phaidon and with my wife, a graphic designer, will serve to illustrate concepts. Rough drafts of two such examples are below, above a map of the non-intrinsic, non-criminal value of art, and the other of art thefts by category registered with the Art Loss Register in 2007.



6. In 2005 a dispute arose over the authenticity of 32 recently discovered works thought to be by Jackson Pollock. A heated debate ensued between Pollock scholars at the Pollock-Krasner Foundation, whose duty it is to preserve the legacy of the artists and to authenticate questionable works, and a dealer called Mark Borghi who represented the owner of the 32 works. We will juxtapose authenticated Pollocks (see the image above) with some of the Borghi “Pollocks” (see the image below), and provide analysis of similarities and differences.



7. There is a thriving industry in fake prints, particularly by early 20th century artists like Picasso, Miró, Chagall, and Dali. Picasso is the most frequently stolen, and most frequently forged, artist in history. But fake Dali prints continue to flood the market, and are remarkably easy to forge. We will examine how to forge them, and how to identify forgeries, in a section dedicated to helping inform collectors on how *not* to be fleeced. We will also include an exclusive interview with a now-famous crime novelist who spent several decades earning his keep by selling fake Dali prints.



Detail of original date by Dali (below) and forged hand-written date on a fake Dali lithograph (above)

Proposal ends