
Articles You May Have Missed

“Halting Cultural Evolution; Along the Silk Road, China Begins To Guard Its Heritage,” *The New York Times*, July 15, 2004.

With China's economy expanding and tourism growing even faster, insiders and outsiders worry that China will not take the time and trouble, or have the resources and expertise, to preserve its rich cultural heritage. Much has already been lost.

But success in Dunhuang would help lead the way for other Chinese sites. With its comprehensive approach to managing the site -- including conservation labs, scientific and environmental research arms, fine arts and archaeology institutes, publications and exhibitions units -- “it's a model for the whole of China,” said Li Yang, deputy governor of Gansu province.

The caves -- stretching in tiers for about a mile across the light gold face of Singing Sand Mountain -- had long been abandoned and were largely unknown until about 1900, when a Daoist monk discovered a huge trove of manuscripts in what is today known as the Library Cave.

“Cleaning Of David Finished,” *Yahoo*, (AP), May 24, 2004.

The eight-month cleaning of Michelangelo's statue of David is complete, the museum which houses the Italian Renaissance masterpiece said, almost four months ahead of its 500th anniversary celebrations.

“David's New Look,” *The Guardian* (UK), May 25, 2004.

The overall effect is of a glowing colossus restored to something close to its Renaissance splendour. Visitors to Florence should not expect a dramatic transformation, such as that wrought on Michelangelo's frescoes in the Sistine Chapel in Rome in the 1990s; but, because of the greater uniformity of color, it is easier than before to appreciate the statue's exquisite detail - the vein that stands out ever so slightly on David's upper right arm, for example.

“Maybe It's Time To Switch To Photographs?” *BBC*, July 25, 2004.

Pity the poor British royals. In an era when humans featured on canvas are prone to being portrayed as twisted,

ugly shadows of themselves, royalty is still expected to go out and find an artist of considerable reputation to paint their portraits. It was Prince Philip's turn this year, and he chose portrait specialist Stuart Pearson Wright to commit his royal image to canvas.

Royal spokespersons insist that Prince Philip had seen Pearson Wright's work before selecting him, but the prince was apparently horrified at the artist's first effort. No one is yet showing off that rough draft, but Pearson Wright's signature is to stretch his subjects vertically to distort their features.

“Anyone Want To Protest This One?” *The Guardian* (UK), July 24, 2004.

The noble Rodin sculpture *The Burghers of Calais* made an ignominious exit yesterday from its home of almost a century, hauled out of the gardens beside the Palace of Westminster by a crane, and shipped off to a conservation workshop. The sculpture is being restored to celebrate the centenary of the National Art Collections Fund, which bought it from Rodin as a gift to the nation in 1911.

“Shocker: Survey Says Museum Staffs Paid Horribly,” *The Guardian* (UK), May 4, 2004.

An independent survey published today by the Museums Association reveals that museum and gallery staff earn significantly less than all equivalent professions - such as librarians, university lecturers, journalists - and many earn less in real terms than they did 15 years ago. The MA report shows that starting salaries for highly trained curators and conservators can be too small to pay for all the training the job has required.

“Rebuilding Iraq Museums,” *The Art Newspaper*, April 30, 2004.

The Iraq National Museum could be ready to open in a few months. Physically the building could be opened. The construction work is done. But they don't want to do that until the security contract for physical improvements and upgrades is done. It's up to the Iraq Museum staff to decide when the security situation permits reopening, and how much time they want to put into installing the gallery. Saddam would say, “Have the galleries installed in one month for my birthday.” Now they have time to think about the arrangement.

“The Iraq Museum - One Year Later,” *USA Today*, May 4, 2004.

One year after looters stole some of its most prized antiquities, the Iraq Museum in Baghdad is undergoing a top-to-bottom restoration that its leaders hope will make it one of the premier museums and research centers in the world. The project is being funded by donations from around the world and is not likely to be completed for at least two years.

“Mona Lisa In For Treatment,” *Pretoria News* (AP) (South Africa), May 7, 2004.

Leonardo da Vinci's 500-year-old Mona Lisa is heading for X-ray and a microscope for the first time in a half-century to determine what's causing it to warp.

“Controversial Michelangelo On Show,” *The Guardian* (UK), May 6, 2004.

A small but anatomically perfect wooden Christ on the cross is set to cause a stir in the art world this weekend as it appears in Florence for the first time, billed as a hitherto unknown masterpiece by the city's most famous artist, Michelangelo Buonarroti.

“Major Mayan City Find,” *Discovery*, May 6, 2004.

An Italian archeologist said Tuesday he had uncovered ancient objects that show an unexplored site in Guatemala's Peten region to be one of the most significant preclassic Mayan cities ever found. The city he has discovered could have been home to 10,000 Mayans at its peak, he says.

“Looting Afghanistan: Tricks Of The Trade,” *Institute For War & Peace Reporting*, May 6, 2004.

In Afghanistan, red and white stones are used to warn people where landmines are buried. But instead of protecting civilians, looters are using these symbols to prevent access to sites where they are systematically stealing the country's valuable artefacts. Three years after the world looked on in horror as the Taliban destroyed the giant Bamyán Buddhas, many of the nation's historic treasures continue to be destroyed, this time stolen by looters often aided by local gunmen.

“Saving A Prehistoric Hill By Calling It A Building?” *The Guardian* (UK), May 17, 2004.

Conservationists are attempting to have Silbury Hill in Wiltshire reclassified as a building to protect one of the most enigmatic prehistoric structures in Europe. The move would reclassify the largest manmade mound in Europe.

The guardians of the 4,700-year-old hill have been trying to persuade people to keep off Silbury since 1974, when it was closed to the public, without destroying its appearance with intrusive fencing. The monument came close to destruction three years ago when torrential winter rain seeped into shafts left by earlier excavation, which collapsed. Although English Heritage has carried out repairs, the whole structure is vulnerable.

“Uffizi To Be Greatly Expanded,” *The Art Newspaper*, May 17, 2004.

Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi has decided that the Uffizi should be expanded to rival the size of the Louvre or British Museum. A proposal to enlarge the Uffizi Gallery in Florence, under discussion since the end of World War II, has been fast-tracked by the Italian government. Mr Berlusconi has announced that the \$72 million project to double the size of the available display space from 6,000 to 13,000 square metres is to be completed by 2006.

“A Badger Takes On City Hall,” *City Pages* (Minneapolis/St. Paul), May 19, 2004.

A 47-year-old, radically queer homeless man named Badger is probably not many people’s first vision of what an artist looks like.

But to the residents of New Orleans, Gainesville, Asheville, Minneapolis, and other cities which Badger has temporarily called home who have been lucky enough to come across his work - large-scale installation pieces, usually constructed of found objects, and usually functional enough to double as a temporary shelter for anyone in need - there is very little question that the man is devoted to his work.

The authorities, however, tend to take a dim view of art which they see as encouraging vagrancy, and this spring, Badger has been facing down the parks board of Minneapolis in a desperate fight to preserve what he creates.

“Picasso Stolen From Workshop,” *The Globe & Mail* (Agence France-Presse), May 20, 2004.

A small Cubist painting by Pablo Picasso has apparently been stolen from a workshop at Paris’s Pompidou Centre, where it was supposed to be restored. The disappearance was only noticed this past week, although no one has seen the painting since January 12. The still-life, entitled *Nature Morte à la Charlotte*, is valued at €2.5 million.

“What Really Happened To The Amber Room,” *The Guardian* (UK), May 22, 2004.

For two centuries, the Amber Room - a chamber entirely panelled in amber - adorned the summer palace of the tsars near St Petersburg until in 1941. When the Germans invaded, it was stolen. Since the war, thousands of treasure hunters have pursued ever wilder theories in search of “the eighth wonder of the world.” Yet it is still missing.

Now, an exhaustive three-year investigation into the fate of the Amber Room has revealed the truth: the room was indeed taken by the Nazis and stored in Germany for a time. But a fire at the castle being used for the storage destroyed the room completely in 1945.

“Police Hunt For Person Who Hung Stealth Pictures In Major Museums,” *New York Post*, June 9, 2004.

A nationwide manhunt is underway for someone who hung paintings of presidents Bush and Clinton in the Metropolitan Museum, Guggenheim, National Gallery in Washington DC, and the Philadelphia Museum of Art.

The paintings — 15 inches by 9 inches — portray the commanders-in-chief on a background of ground-up dollar bills. The wacky spree has prompted a sweeping investigation by the US Secret Service and the FBI, as well as local police in three cities.

“US Military Base Damages Babylon,” *Morning Edition* (NPR), June 6, 2004.

The US military has set up a military base right in the middle of the ancient site of Babylon - an extensive archaeological site. Originally sent to protect the site, the base has done “permanent” damage to a valuable piece of cultural heritage.

“15th-Century Fresco Discovered Behind Pigeon Hole,” *BBC*, June 25, 2004.

A 15th-century fresco has been discovered on the ceiling of the Valencia Cathedral in Spain after art restorers became intrigued with pigeons flying through a hole in what turned out to be a false ceiling. The fresco, which depicts four angels against a starry blue background, was painted by two Italians, Francesco Pagano and Paolo de San Leocadio, in the late 1400s.

“Versailles Restoration Slowed By Feud,” *The Art Newspaper*, June 25, 2004.

Restorations of the gardens around Versailles have been completed. But a feud between restoration firms competing for restoration work inside the palace has delayed work on the Hall of Mirrors. The job, which includes repairs to the paintings, 450 windows, and gold-leaf and stucco work, is scheduled to begin next month and to finish in 2007.

“Earliest Village In American Northwest?” *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, July 14, 2004.

Workers in western Washington state unearthed one of the earliest villages ever discovered in the Pacific Northwest. Among the artifacts to surface from the grounds of Tse-whit-zen -- a likely former winter village of the Klallam peoples of the upper Olympic Peninsula that carbon dating so far shows could be as old as 1,719 years -- are remnants of a longhouse and at least two other tribal houses crafted from cedar. Discovery of such structures is significant because they may be among the oldest remnants of homes ever found in the Northwest.

“The Caveman’s Sistine Chapel,” *Discovery*, July 13, 2004.

Artwork dating back 13,000 years has been found in a cave in England. The site of the find, Church Hole Cave at Creswell Crags, is being called the *Sistine Chapel* of the Ice Age because it contains the most ornate cave art ceiling in the world. The ceiling extends the earliest rock art in Britain by approximately 8,000 years and suggests that a primary culture unified Europeans during the Ice Age.