

**“Keep Artists Away From Their Own Work,”** *The Art Newspaper*, 12/14/2006

Speaking as a conservator and restorer of many years standing, I find it imperative to keep artists away from their own works of art. The involvement of the artist with his work of art should end the moment a work of art leaves the studio. It is no longer the artist’s problem or domain to be involved with his or her work after the artist has stopped the creative process.

This has become very apparent recently with Damien Hirst’s involvement in his famous *The Physical Impossibility of Death in the Mind of Someone Living*, which began to deteriorate so was replaced with another, entirely different shark; namely bypassing the restoration process completely. Does this shark have the same personality? What will happen after the artist’s death when the new shark continues to deteriorate? The restorer will then be thrown into the equation and will have to do something with this object.

The writer is a restorer and a conservator in London

**“Trove of Scholarship,”** *Al Ahram Weekly*, 12/14-20/2006

The Coptic monastery known as Deir Al-Surian, or the Monastery of the Syrians, in Wadi Natrun, Egypt, contains more than 3,000 books as well as a vast number of texts in Syriac, Aramaic, Coptic, Arabic, and Ethiopic. They date upwards from the fifth century and today, as a result of the revival in Coptic monasticism in recent years, a new generation of educated monks are anxious to safeguard this heritage.

Both Syrian and Coptic monks are engaged in their conservation, as well as restoration of the monastery itself. Members of the conservation team, with the help of volunteers and on a shoestring budget, are surveying, restoring, cataloguing, and storing the Syriac texts in a suitable environment. A digital photographic record of each manuscript will eventually be made to facilitate access for scholars, and appropriate storage for the manuscripts and facilities for visiting scholars is also planned.

Confirmation of Syrian occupation of the monastery comes from an eighth to ninth-century wall painting discovered during recent restoration. It is a

representation of a saint with children on his lap which has proved to be Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in Paradise.

One part revealed a Syriac text under several layers of plaster which mentions that restoration of the church was completed in the year 992.

**“A Rhino’s Restoration,”** *Los Angeles Times*, 12/5/2007

Like the Mona Lisa or the Venus de Milo, there’s something about French painter Jean-Baptiste Oudry’s life-size, 1749 portrait of Clara — an Indian white rhino imported to Europe by a Dutch sea captain who turned her into an 18th-century superstar by touring her throughout the continent — that invites viewers to be on a first-name basis with art. Mark Leonard, the museum’s head of paintings conservation, says: “She created a sensation everywhere she went. At that time, seeing a rhinoceros was as if today we brought back a creature from Mars.”

Now, for first time in more than 150 years, Clara is on tour again — this time the painting, not the rhinoceros. After languishing in the basement of a German museum for many decades, the Getty Museum is restoring the 10-foot-high, 15-foot-long oil-on-canvas portrait for public view. The public restoration precedes the Getty’s May 1 through Sept. 2 exhibition *Oudry’s Painted Menagerie*.

Images of animals were central to the court of King Louis XV, in part because of the ruler’s obsession with hunting, game, and dogs. Oudry was able to take animal painting to a higher level. In terms of conservation, Oudry was also his own best friend: Leonard says the painter avoided the then-common practice of using sizing, a glue-based material, on canvases to prevent the oil paint from soaking through. “In a lecture he gave in the 18th century, Oudry said: ‘Don’t size your paintings, because it gives a stiffness to the canvas.’” Leonard says. “This may have kept the canvas from cracking.”

**“Salvaged: Restoring The Sirens And Ulysses,”** *Huliq.com*, 12/15/2007

The famous 19th-century artist William Etty considered *The Sirens and Ulysses* to be his greatest achievement. The painting depicts a scene from Homer’s *Odyssey* where the hero, Ulysses, is blindfolded and tied to the mast of his ship to avoid the temptations of the

voluptuous and dangerous Sirens. The condition of the painting has been deteriorating since the middle of the 19th century, and it has not been on public display since the late 1880s because of its poor state of repair. Attention returned to the painting prior to the re-opening of Manchester Art Gallery in 2002, but the sheer scale of the work required prevented the painting from being included in the re-hang. However, the conservation work commenced in the Gallery’s conservation studios in late 2002, and the painting finally moves to Manchester Art Gallery next month.

**“Ancient Techniques Employed to Rescue 5,000 Year Old Egyptian Monument by NYU’s Institute of Fine Arts,”** *Exduco.net*, 01/29/2007

Nearly 5,000 years old, a monument known today as the Shunet el-Zebib, the only surviving example of a series of monumental cultic buildings built by Egypt’s earliest kings at Abydos, has been ravaged by the elements, attacked by animals and insects, and structurally compromised by humans over the millennia; its present day survival seems almost miraculous. In 2001, the experts all agreed that unless steps were taken immediately this massive mud-brick structure would not remain standing much longer.

A conservation and stabilization program was developed, sponsored by New York University’s Institute of Fine Arts, and surprisingly the most suitable methods recommended by the experts for saving the monument turned out not to be highly technical ones of modern construction, but rather those more traditional, and ancient, in nature.

The Shunet el-Zebib is the last and the grandest of the early royal cult enclosures built at Abydos, and it is the only one still standing today. Comprising two concentric enclosure walls, the inner still mostly standing to near its original height of 35 feet and defining a large open ritual space embellished by a substantial mud brick chapel, the monument was built as a setting for King Khasekhemwy’s mortuary cult rituals. He ruled at the end of the Second Dynasty (ca. 2750 BCE) and only some 300 years after the emergence of a politically unified Egyptian state.

After extensive study, the consultants decided that the best means of saving the Shunet el-Zebib was to employ

mud bricks like the ones used to build it. The ancient bricks were scientifically analyzed and new bricks formulated to be technically compatible with the old.

The project's excavations are revealing much about this final stage in the history of the monument. The monks' cells, including traces of both painted decoration and graffiti on the walls, as well as kitchens, storage, and work areas, are all being carefully studied, and many objects from their tenure have been found in the excavations, including items made from cloth, leather, and wood, as well as a few fragments of papyrus and parchment documents.

**"Restoring Penang's Heritage,"** *Malaysia Star*, 12/27/2007

Architect Tan Yeow Wooi's life revolves around conserving and restoring old buildings, especially structures of traditional Chinese architecture. Visiting the office of conservation architect Tan Yeow Wooi, 47, in Penang is a humbling experience for those concerned about the protection and restoration of heritage buildings in Malaysia.

Says Tan, "Penang is a historically important state. It has the highest number of heritage buildings, compared to other states in Malaysia. It still has the largest number of old temples, mosques, churches, association buildings, dwellings, and pre-war shophouses. However, after the repeal of the Rent Control Act in 2000, numerous pre-war buildings have been renovated or re-built beyond recognition or even demolished. In 2006 alone, there were 96 buildings in the city that were either demolished or marred by indiscriminate renovation with 80% of the original structure destroyed."

Tan is on a one-man mission to personally document and convince those in power to restore what's left of the built-heritage of this country. While he is noted for his meticulous work on buildings of Chinese architecture, he is equally concerned about mosques, Hindu temples, and even humble dwellings that are architecturally and historically significant. "But the best form of protection is to educate the public especially property owners on why such heritage buildings ought not to be destroyed. The general public should learn to respect and appreciate heritage buildings. They represent the cultural characteristics of a place which give us a sense of identity."

**"Restored Pulpit Back at Al-Aqsa,"** *Haaretz*, 02/05/2007

Thirty-eight years after his father delivered the last sermon from the grand pulpit of the Al-Aqsa Mosque before the pulpit burned, Sheikh Ikrama Sabri, the head of Jerusalem's Supreme Muslim Council, delivered the first sermon Friday from the now refurbished pulpit.

The original pulpit, or minbar in Arabic, was donated to the mosque over 800 years ago by the Muslim warrior Saladin. It was destroyed in 1969 when a disturbed Australian Christian, Michael Rohan, set fire to the shrine. The restoration of the pulpit, which was carried out in Jordan and other Muslim countries, involved painstaking work and intricate carving of walnut wood.

Its return to the Al-Aqsa Mosque on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem involved political struggles no less intricate. Over the years since the 1969 blaze, the mosque has undergone restoration, and other development, and conservation work has taken place on the Temple Mount and the Dome of the Rock, with the assistance of hundreds of millions of dollars in donations. Only the restoration of the pulpit was delayed. In the Muslim Museum adjacent to Al-Aqsa, a few remains of the burnt pulpit were kept on display in the offices of the director of the Muslim Religious Trust (Waqf), Adnan al-Husseini.

The rumor as to why the pulpit was not restored was that Yasser Arafat was delaying progress on the work because he wanted to be the leader who would bring the pulpit back to the mosque when it was returned from Israeli rule. It was said that Arafat believed the liberation of Jerusalem and Al-Aqsa to be possible and promoted this idea, while at the same time pushing aside the idea of a return of Palestinian refugees, which he believed to be an unattainable goal.

Meanwhile, the Jordanians set up a team of experts from Egypt, Turkey, Indonesia, and European countries to restore the pulpit, led by Dr. Mahmoud al-Balbisi of the department of Islamic art at Al-Balqa Applied University in Salt, Jordan. Ten days ago a caravan of trucks carrying 25 crates containing the parts of the pulpit came from Amman, and the work of putting it back together began.

In his sermon Sheikh Sabri called for a dialogue among Palestinian

factions in order to protect the sanctity of Muslim blood and to safeguard Al-Aqsa from damage by Israel.

**"What Surrounds a Legend? A 3,000-Pound Gilt Frame,"** *New York Times*, 02/19/2007

One of the most complex restoration and reframing projects in the history of the Metropolitan Museum of Art has collided with a 9-foot-3-inch-high doorway. The doorway won.

Emanuel Leutze's heroic and stupendously popular 1851 *Washington Crossing the Delaware*, familiar to generations of schoolchildren, is one of the largest paintings in the museum, measuring 21 feet wide and 12 feet high. It is heavy too, and will be getting heavier, because curators are currently assessing the best way to carve an elaborate new 3,000-pound basswood frame that would replicate the original, missing for more than a century.

After years of detective work, an image of the frame was recently discovered in a 143-year-old Mathew Brady photograph. Since the canvas cannot be removed through the doorway of its home on the second floor of the museum's American Wing, its years-long refurbishment will be carried out within the gallery.

After its conservation the painting is likely to be installed first, attached to steel beams embedded in a grand room of the new galleries. Then the frame will be placed around the canvas, attached to the wall separately. Gilding such an enormous frame will require more than 12,500 3.5-inch square sheets of gold leaves, 1/250,000th of an inch thick, at a cost of more than \$12,000. The Met would not estimate the cost of the total refurbishment, as research and planning are still under way. But some experts said the project could not be accomplished for less than \$500,000.

**"To Freeze or not to Freeze?"** *The Hindu*, 02/16/2007

Opposing views towards conservation can be found in two splendid havelis in Nawalgarh, Rajasthan. Should history be preserved or should it be continued?

This debate finds form in the havelis of Nawalgarh. Situated 250 kms from Delhi in Rajasthan, these havelis are often described as large "open-air art galleries." The cityscape is dotted with

them; some are guarded secrets to be chanced on. Others stand on alleyways like loud announcements.

The two main attractions are the Morarka Haveli Museum and the Dr. Ramnath A. Podar Haveli Museum. Built in 1900, the Morarka Haveli is characterised by its frescoes of religious, mythological, and secular themes. Its touted uniqueness is a fresco of Jesus Christ. Located on the underside of an awning, it can be easily missed.

Dr. Hot Chand, Director (Conservation), passionately explains that the art of frescoes originally passed from the Italians down to the Mughals. The Podar haveli has incorporated a different philosophy toward restoration. The haveli is striking for its profusion of paintings and freshness of colour. Bhairulal Swarnakar, a painter by profession, has chosen to adapt the traditions. Hailing from Bhilwada he has been working here for the last 10 years. Swarnakar has maintained and carried forward the artwork of the haveli, which was built in 1902 by Dr. Ramnath A. Podar. He has painted frescoes in the blank spaces in the 52-room haveli. While using the original natural colours he has adapted the traditional with the contemporary.

**“When Chemistry Meets Culture: Scientists Helping Save Rare Art,”**  
*Stamford Advocate*, 02/24/2007

When white masquerades as yellow and green might actually be blue, a call goes out to Henry DePhillips. DePhillips, a Trinity College chemistry professor, is among a cadre of specialists using cutting-edge science to solve the color mysteries of paintings and other cultural treasures often several centuries old.

Using minuscule samples from the pieces, chemists can now pinpoint the blends of iron oxide, mercury, titanium dioxide, lapis lazuli, and other substances that make up certain colors. The implications go beyond aesthetics to cold cash. For example, the use of pure Prussian blue - the first synthetic color of the Industrial Revolution - can cause a painting's value to skyrocket.

The analysis work has also launched an academic niche that introduces art students to the tenets of chemistry and vice versa. DePhillips, who has been a chemistry professor at Trinity since 1963, has a lengthy waiting list for his class, “Science and Art.” Several

other universities, including Carnegie Mellon in Pittsburgh and Truman State in Missouri, have recently launched similar courses. Educators such as DePhillips say they welcome the new generation of specialists, which they think will benefit the art world as a whole.

**“Put Out More Buckets! - Parish Priest's Solution to the Big Drip,”**  
*Tenerife News*, January 2007

The storm that lashed the Canary Islands over the last weekend of January took its toll on one of Tenerife's oldest and most lovely churches - and one that happens to house a priceless piece of art.

Structurally, the church of Las Nieves in Taganana is in deplorable condition. Last year it celebrated its fifth centenary. The cracks have been evident for more years than anyone can remember, but the recent heavy rains are likely to have caused even more damage to its crumbling fabric, judging by reports that the parish priest of Taganana was obliged to place more than fifty plastic buckets throughout the building to catch the drips that filtered through the ceiling.

Not only that but Father Vicente Spouy had to hold a church service, shouting above the noise of the buckets being filled, drip by damaging drip. He hopes that the publicity gained from the buckety *misa* will bring home the urgency of the situation to the authorities.

The little church's famous art treasure, the Flemish triptych of *The Adoration of the Magi*, attributed to a follower of Van Eyck, is not said to be in immediate danger, but it is obvious that its surroundings are hardly ideal for the conservation of a painting older than the church itself.

**“Entertaining Workplace,”**  
*The Spokesman Review*, 02/25/2007

Beneath five coats of paint inside the men's lounge of Spokane's historic Fox Theater, restoration experts have uncovered murals of a javelin thrower, pool diver, polo player, and other sports figures.

The murals were painted over when the 1931 art deco theater was converted to a triplex movie house in 1975. “We didn't expect to find all of this in this room,” said Michael Carpenter, head of the New York-based paint conservation team Evergreene that is part of the

\$26.5 million renovation of the storied landmark at Sprague and Monroe.

The murals in the men's lounge are a fraction of the dazzling paint schemes, glass, and metalwork being brought back to life in the old Fox. The trick is to modernize the landmark so it can serve as the new home for the Spokane Symphony Orchestra while maintaining its historic luster.

The men's lounge figures, originally finished in painted felt in a technique called fabric appliqué, were scraped off and damaged to the point where they cannot be restored. As a result, Carpenter's crew began tracing outlines of the figures on see-through Mylar sheets from which they will make stencils to replicate the figures, probably on site. All replications will be attached to walls so the underlying remnants will not be damaged. Thus, if new restoration processes develop, what's left of the old murals will remain.

**“Leif Erikson Finally Moved,”**  
*Los Angeles Times*, 03/04/2007

Leif Erikson stood his ground in Seattle's Shilshole Bay Marina, just as he had since 1962 - despite his appointment with makeover artists in Kent, 15 miles to the south, and the efforts of a crew working full time to dislodge the 17-foot bronze Viking.

Workers tried concrete drills and jackhammers, and even tried to lever him out with a crane wielding 20,000 pounds of force. “He's just not going anywhere,” said Kristine Leander, president of the Seattle-based Leif Erikson International Foundation, three days into the effort.

Leander's nonprofit foundation, which formed in 1994 and presented duplicates of the Seattle statue to Norway in 1997 and Greenland in 2000, is working with the Port of Seattle and the local Scandinavian community in a marina renovation to memorialize Scandinavian immigrants. The statue is the centerpiece of the new memorial.

Artech, the company hired to remove the statue, discovered a hatch on the rear of the statue that had been used to pour concrete into the legs, solidly connecting Leif to his 30-foot-high base. “So then we knew we needed to chisel through the base. And we kept finding more and more rebar, which really slows things down.” It didn't help that the work was being done high in the air in wet and windy weather.

Leif Erikson is known as “Leif the Lucky” for, among other feats, reaching North America. “Here in Seattle,” Leander adds, “we’re thinking of changing that nickname to Leif the Stubborn.”

**“Disney to Animate Film by Hand, not Computer,”** *Los Angeles Times*, 03/09/2007

Disney plans to release a 2009 movie that will be animated the old-fashioned way, by hand-drawing the images rather than letting computer wizardry do the job.

Although other Disney animated movies will open between now and then, *The Frog Princess* is the first to be conceived since Disney’s 2006 acquisition of Pixar Animation Studios. So why would Disney return to its roots after spending \$7.4 billion to buy the pioneer of computer animation, which has since become the dominant form for these movies in Hollywood?

*The Frog Princess* will be a musical set in New Orleans, with songs composed by Randy Newman. The central figure, Maddy, will become the first African American among the Disney princesses, the company’s collection of heroines responsible for more than \$3 billion in annual retail sales. Because many of Disney’s animators are computer specialists, the company will have to hire more experts from the old school of hand-drawing. Except in Asia, almost no animated movies are made by hand.

**“Unfurling the Hidden Work of a Lifetime,”** *New York Times*, 03/18/2007

On a recent cloudy day the British art historian David Anfam stood outside a warehouse, a long concrete slab with a steel roof on the outskirts of a nondescript suburb, and confided, “I feel like the archaeologist Howard Carter about to enter Tutankhamen’s tomb.”

The secret cache of art Mr. Anfam had traveled from London to see — 2,393 works, to be exact — has been hidden from public view for decades. Most of it has never been seen by the public at all, thanks to the fierce privacy and bilious contempt for the art world of its creator, the Abstract Expressionist Clyfford Still, who died in 1980 at 75.

He left behind a one-page will, nearly 95 percent of the work he ever made (he sold or gave away only 150 pieces in his lifetime), and a widow de-

termined to follow his final testament to the letter. The demands were these: His estate could be bequeathed only to an American city, one that would build a museum to serve as a temple to his art and to nothing else. No works could ever be sold. No other artist could ever show a single piece alongside his. All Clyfford Still, all the time.

In 2004 his widow, Patricia Still, after decades spent spurning other metropolitan suitors, had chosen Denver as host of a Clyfford Still Museum, largely because of the overtures from the city’s ambitious mayor, John Hickenlooper. According to Barbara Ramsay, the conservator hired to survey the collection, about 10 percent of the paintings she has examined so far have significant conservation problems.

**“1930s School Murals Rise from the Ruins,”** *Chicago Tribune*, 12/16/2007

When a roof leaked and rainwater damaged the plaster walls at Evanston’s Oakton Elementary School several years ago, there was no money to repair the decades-old murals painted by unknown artists. Huge chunks of the paintings that told the story of Charlemagne, the medieval king who conquered Rome, had flaked away, exposing the brick underneath.

Fortunately, members of the Chicago Conservation Center had made tracings of the murals 12 years ago during a previous intervention. “If we had not had those tracings, the murals would have been incredibly difficult to restore,” said Heather Becker, the center’s chief executive officer. “Thank God we thought to do it when we did.”

In September, plasterers fixed the walls, and restoration started. The fresh plaster was covered with the tracings, and the lines of the original paintings were duplicated using a pizza-cutter-like instrument made of a roller and tiny pins. Working in watercolor first, then acrylic, the colors were matched using photographs. Salt residue from the water had corrupted much of the old paint, so much of the old plaster had to be removed.

**“Pakistan’s Ancient Ruins Fast Disappearing,”** *MSNBC*, 03/19/2007

Many Pakistani archaeological sites from its thousands of years of rich history are crumbling away as officials tussle over who should look after them.

A cradle of ancient civilizations and crossroads of Greek, Buddhist, Hindu, and Muslim cultures, Pakistan has a treasure-trove of ruins but many are being built over, pilfered by art thieves and villagers, or succumbing to the elements.

The federal government’s archaeology department has control over most of the country’s main sites but provincial officials argue they should be in charge of looking after their ruins. Only about a third of Pakistan’s sites had been excavated. Villagers often looked after old mosques, but Buddhist and Hindu ruins were often pillaged by thieves supplying artifacts to the international black market, and picked over by people looking for masonry to build their homes.

Another huge problem for whoever is in charge is encroachment. Sites are meant to be protected by a 200-foot buffer zone, but unregulated construction crowds many. The ornate pavilions and fountains of the Shalimar Gardens, built by the Mughal emperor Shah Jahan in 1642, are an island of tranquillity in a traffic-clogged Lahore suburb. Up to now, the garden’s walls have kept out most of the din and fumes and kept at bay the sprawl of concrete and tarmac. But illegal construction up against the thick, white walls is causing flooding and damaging artwork inside the gardens, experts say.

**“Model Captures Never-Built U.K. Church,”** *Happynews.com*, 3/18/2007

A monumental wooden model of a domed cathedral, now on display at the Walker Art Gallery, is the only visible realization of Edwin Lutyens’ vision of an enormous church for the Roman Catholic archdiocese of Liverpool.

Consider that it took 13 years and \$1 million to restore the model, and you get a good idea of why the dream was never translated into stone. The model was not in very good condition when the Walker gallery acquired it in 1975. The 70-year-old model is a snapshot of an evolving dream, because Lutyens’ ideas changed after the model was displayed at the Royal Academy in 1934.

The restoration team worked from surviving drawings to produce a composite of the architect’s intentions, completing and updating the interior in accord with later drawings. The design, commissioned by Archbishop Richard Downey, was a thumping gesture of ec-

clesiastical one-upmanship, designed to dwarf one of the world's largest churches, Liverpool's neo-Gothic Anglican cathedral. The cross atop the dome would have stood 520 feet high, nearly 200 feet higher than the Anglican cathedral, and even taller than the 489-foot dome of the world's biggest church, the Basilica of Our Lady of Peace in Yamoussoukro, Ivory Coast.

Created in the same 1:48 scale as a Lionel toy train, the model soars 12½ feet high and 17 feet long. The cathedral model was damaged during the war when the crypt was used as an air raid shelter. The conservation team replaced missing spires, belfries and a tower, and revived old techniques to create the delicate moldings and friezes to complete the interior. They crafted 175 miniature statues to go with the one statue that had survived; some 900 pieces of wood were used to re-create the lantern atop the dome.

**“A Dilapidated Mies Landmark in Dispute,”** *International Herald Tribune*, 03/22/2007

From the outside, the Tugendhat House doesn't look like one of the most important residential buildings of the 20th century: it's just two white stucco cubes separated by an opening through which a few spiky treetops protrude.

The house, a World Heritage site, was “fundamental to the development of Modern architecture,” according to Barry Bergdoll, the chief curator of architecture and design at the Museum of Modern Art. But it is also growing increasingly dilapidated, or “wasting away,” as *The Prague Post* put it in a recent article.

The house's condition has sparked a battle over who will control its future and ensure its survival: the city of Brno, which owns it, or the heirs of the original owners, Jews who fled Czechoslovakia in 1938.

The house embodies some of Mies van der Rohe's most influential ideas, which went on to become hallmarks of Modernism: free-flowing, open living space; a connection to the outside through transparent walls; the use of a grid of columns instead of load-bearing walls. It was also a project for which Mies designed every detail, from the doorknobs and light fixtures to the Tugendhat and Brno chairs, now classics of 20th-century design produced and sold by Knoll.

**“The Network Group for Composites in Construction Reviews FRP's in Restoration and Conservation,”** *Azom.com (The A to Z of Materials)*, 03/26/2007

The Network Group for Composites in Construction (NGCC) has undertaken a state-of-the-art review of the use of fibre-reinforced polymers (FRP) in restoration and conservation. Experts from UK industry and academia met in London in January 2007 to discuss the latest challenges in the field and present case studies. The workshop identified the significant potential of FRP in the preservation of historical structures.

Much work has already been done to enable their advantages to be exploited in the preservation of historic structures, particularly their high strength, durability, cost effectiveness, and the potential for minimal aesthetic impacts. The workshop findings have led to the production of a new NGCC technical sheet “TS06: FRPs in restoration.” The publication and workshop presentations can be downloaded from the NGCC members' e-library on the NGCC website.

**“Eye Surgeon May Help Restore Munch Works,”** *The Guardian*, 04/11/2007

The theft-damaged Edvard Munch masterpieces *The Scream* and *Madonna* may require treatment by an eye surgeon to remove tiny splinters of glass during their restoration, the Munch Museum director said Wednesday. She said an eye surgeon has skills and equipment for the removal of glass fragments without damaging the surrounding area.

The paintings were recovered by police on Aug. 31, about two years after they were stolen by masked gunmen in a brazen daylight heist at Oslo's Munch Museum. Both were damaged and are being repaired. She said because the frames and glass on both works had been broken during the theft, tiny glass fragments were embedded in the paintings, with *Madonna* being especially hard hit.

**“A Museum with Impeccable Manners,”** *The Times (UK)*, 04/30/2007

There's been quite a hullabaloo in Madrid about the Prado's new building. People have taken to the streets. Questions have been asked in parliament, petitions heard in the supreme court. Spanish

nimbys might call it a “carbuncle on the face of a much loved friend.” But such, says architect Rafael Moneo, “are the perils of building on such a site. It is like all of Spain is watching you.”

But beneath the pomp and circumstance the Prado is a rather weak building, whose illustrious contents and sentimental place in the national consciousness mean that Spaniards overegg its merits and overlook its failings. It is a handsome, solid Neo-Classical building, sure enough. But extending it is not, as one placard blasted, like “scribbling on a Goya.”

In 1998 the trustees bit the bullet, recommending Moneo's plan to build up the slope behind. And that's when the problems really began. For up the slope lay the cloister of the Jerónimos, a 17th-century relic of an old monastery. Being a relatively modern city, Madrid has few 17th-century buildings.

Moneo has returned the slope and built his extension underneath, the natural rise of the hill giving him the volume required for the new temporary exhibition galleries, the auditorium, the conservation department, and storage facilities – increasing the Prado's space by 50 per cent and releasing 40 rooms in the main building for more Goyas. Ascend the escalators and all becomes clear as you emerge, miraculously, in San Jerónimo's cloister, there all along, in its old position too, but meticulously reconstructed, scrubbed up, as the central courtyard for the palazzo.

**“SGPC, Spare a Thought for Heritage,”** *Chandigarh Newslite*, 03/03/2007

In the recently passed budget of the cash-rich Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee, not even a penny has been earmarked for preservation and conservation of historic gurdwaras, Sikh art, and creating awareness about heritage buildings.

Angered by this, conservationists, artists, and social workers feel that the religious body managing gurdwaras in northern India must set up a heritage cell so that the history can be preserved and documented. The artists feel that the biggest danger to the Sikh art – comprising paintings, murals, and frescoes decorating walls of the sanctum sanctorum of the Golden Temple – is from its custodian, the SGPC. Recently, the SGPC came under condemnation for damaging

heritage in the name of 'kar sewa' at various gurdwaras as murals were painted white, paintings destroyed, and traditional Nanakshahi bricks were replaced with marble and shining stones.

"They (SGPC) and kar sewa babas have done more harm to the buildings than anyone else. The murals and frescoes at the Golden Temple are peeling off and the restoration at some sections has been improperly done, without taking care of the originality," rued state convener of the Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH) Dr. Sukhdev Singh.

SGPC chief Jathedar Avtar Singh, denying that the SGPC was unconcerned, said he would take up the matter in the executive body meeting, and if decided, they would seek help of the experts.

**"Man Kicks Foot Through Priceless Painting At Milwaukee Museum,"**  
*KSDK St. Louis, MO, 04/09/2007*

A man is in jail after kicking his foot through a priceless painting at the Milwaukee Art Museum. The Ottavio Vannini painting, called *The Triumph of David*, dates back to the 1640s and depicts David holding the severed head of Goliath. A man that museum staffers claim has a history of mental illness destroyed it. He told museum officials the painting disturbed him, and that he didn't like seeing Goliath's severed head.

"This is a very isolated, infrequent type of action," says Chief Curator Joe Ketner. The entire incident was caught on surveillance video and the man could now face felony charges. The museum admits the man had time to destroy the painting before security arrived and now say they are working on a new security plan. The painting is now under lock and key in the museum's conservation area. Experts are deciding the best way to repair it.

**"Fears for Gaudi Masterpiece as Rail Tunnel Approved,"**  
*The Guardian, 04/26/2007*

The chief architect working on the Sagrada Familia in Barcelona yesterday condemned a plan to build a bullet-train tunnel less than two metres from Gaudi's unfinished masterpiece.

Backed by local civic groups, the advisers to Unesco in Spain, and architects and engineers from 50 uni-

versities around the world, Jordi Bonet i Armengol, who has worked on Gaudi's daring church for 40 years, said yesterday: "I am astounded by this brutality. This is an attack on culture of the highest order, something one would only expect of a third-world country."

Last week, the mayor of Barcelona, the Catalan premier, and the public works ministry approved the plan, which awaits an environmental impact review by the national government, according to a city spokesman. The city of Barcelona wants to build the rail tunnel to provide a high-speed link between Madrid and Barcelona, and on to France. The high-speed Ave line is expected to link Madrid and Barcelona by 2007. The tunnel to France is due to be completed by 2009.

**"Museums at War Over a Flying Visit Home for Queen Nefertiti,"**  
*The Times (UK), 04/26/2007*

The exquisite Queen Nefertiti is at the heart of an imminent museum war between Germany and Egypt. The 3,400-year-old bust of the wife of the Sun King Akhenaten has been in German hands since it was dug out of the desert by the archaeologist Ludwig Borchardt in 1912. It was smuggled out of Egypt and became a central part of Berlin's museum collection.

Now the Egyptians want it back, if not for keeps, then at least on loan to mark the opening in 2012 of a new Grand Egyptian Museum, near the Pyramid at Giza. If the Egyptian Museum in Berlin does not agree, says Zahi Hawass, there will be trouble. "We will make the lives of these museums miserable," the secretary-general of the Supreme Council of Antiquities in Egypt said. "It will be a scientific war."

German officials say that the bust is too fragile to travel. Mr. Hawass has sent the Germans an ultimatum: "We will never again organize antiquities exhibitions in Germany if it refuses the request, to be issued this week, to allow the bust to be displayed in Egypt for three months."

Ironically, the only official who ever considered giving it back was Hermann Goering, the Nazi air force chief, who later plundered Europe's art collections. Hitler overruled him: Nefertiti was to be the jewel in the crown, he said, of a redesigned Berlin that was to be called Germania, the capital of the Thousand-Year Reich.

"I really want it back," Mr Hawass says of Nefertiti, and most Egyptians seem to agree. They were as upset as him in 2003, when the Egyptian Museum let two artists place the bust on top of a nearly naked female bronze for a video spectacle. Egyptian cultural officials were so outraged by what they said was the abuse of Nefertiti that they banned further German exploration in their country. "I thought it was disgusting," Mr Hawass said.

On that occasion the Germans backed down, and the video of Nefertiti was not sent, as planned, to the Venice Biennale modern art festival. This time, it seems, the Germans are not prepared to give ground.

**"High Museum Unlocks Gates of Paradise,"**  
*CNN.com, 04/30/2007*

When the artists of Florence, Italy, swung open the doors of the Baptistery of the Duomo now known as the *Gates of Paradise* in 1452, a new world was waiting on the other side. Twenty feet tall and weighing three tons, this single work is considered the gateway to the Italian Renaissance.

And as the High Museum of Art opens its exhibition of three of the doors' 10 gilt panels on Saturday, the conservation effort that brought them here will have lasted 25 years -- just two years less than it took to make the work itself. The panels then will be moved back to Florence to be reassembled in the original doorway for permanent, hermetically sealed display at the Museo dell'Opera del Duomo. They are expected never to travel again.

Exhibition curator Gary Radke of Syracuse University says that the special alloy of bronze developed in the 15th-century workshop of Lorenzo Ghiberti for the doors had resulted in a corrosion that had dulled the dull surfaces of the square relief-sculptures and other gilt ornaments on the doors. However, thanks to a specially developed laser-and-distilled-water technique, what you now can see on display is not a restoration -- not new gold leaf added, or reconstructed bronze modeling -- but the same metals Ghiberti worked with himself. "We found out it wasn't just dirt but was actually chemical reactions between the surfaces of the gold and the bronze."