

Articles You May Have Missed

“Gettysburg Undergoes Major Renovation,” *Chicago Tribune*, 9/4/2007

Gettysburg is at the forefront of an effort to restore many Civil War battlefields to something more closely resembling their appearance when they were the scenes of bloody struggles between the forces of North and South. At the heart of these rehabilitation projects is a task that would seem an odd undertaking for the National Park Service: cutting down hundreds of acres of trees.

In the 142 years since the war's end, fields that were once farmed have fallen fallow, allowing trees to grow and obscure what were clear lines of fire in 1863. Under a 1999 restoration plan, the park service will cut down 576 acres of woodland at Gettysburg that did not exist at the time of the battle, and replant 115 acres of trees that were there but have since disappeared. A new \$103 million museum and visitors center, designed to resemble a Pennsylvania farm to help it blend into the historic landscape, is under construction to replace the park service's cramped and outdated facility.

Among the highlights of the new museum will be the newly restored Gettysburg cyclorama, a 360-degree painting that depicts the key moment of the battle, Pickett's Charge, when Rebel soldiers came close to breaking through the center of the Union army's position on July 3, the last day of the battle. The massive 1884 painting, by Paul Philippoteaux, measures nearly 360 feet long

and 27 feet high, and it weighs more than three tons. A team of conservators is repairing extensive damage and adding a missing 14-foot strip to the top of the cyclorama.

“Researchers Uncover Leonardo da Vinci's Method Stroke for Stroke,” *CBC Arts*, 9/2/2007

Italian researchers say they have been able to reconstruct for the first time, stroke by stroke, how Renaissance master painter Leonardo da Vinci created his works of art. Investigators at the University of Florence have uncovered Leonardo's method of creating his works by using a scientific device to analyze the painting *Madonna of the Yarnwinder*. In the oil painting, completed in 1501, Leonardo depicts the Virgin Mary holding the child Jesus, who is looking at a yarnwinder being used to spin yarn. The researchers used what they call a nuclear accelerator device that launches particles at high speed to decipher the painting technique.

The examination showed that Leonardo applied thin layers of paint directly on the canvas. Different colours were layered on top of one another to create a rich texture. A high-resolution 3-D laser scan of the Mona Lisa by Canada's National Research Council in 2006 revealed the woman who sat for the Mona Lisa painting may have been pregnant or just given birth. Scientists discovered the Mona Lisa was wearing a translucent

gauze garment over her dress — a garment known to be worn by women of the time during or after their pregnancy.

“Bellingham Woman Restores 200-year-old Pirate Flag,” *The Bellingham Herald*, 9/10/2007

It was truly the luck of the draw that brought Bonnijo Chervenock to her pirate flag and allowed her to save a rare piece of maritime history. As a second-year student at the Textile Conservation Centre in England's Winchester School of Art, her assignment was a crumbling pirate flag that dated to the late 1700s.

It had fallen into over 50 pieces, had a lot of gunpowder on it, and some burns from shot going through it. Though she wanted to remove the dirt and grime that was degrading the fabric, she saw the gunpowder as a telling piece of the flag's sordid past. In order to restore the blood-red flag, Chervenock coated fine silk fabric in adhesive and put the skull and crossbones back together like a puzzle. She then stitched that back onto the cleaned flag. Based on her research, pirate flags like the one she worked on are a relatively rare find. Chervenock will graduate from Winchester when she's done with her dissertation on the effects of gunpowder on textiles — a topic inspired by the pirate flag.

“Out of the Public Eye,” *The Moscow Times*, 7/31/2007

At the Tretyakov Gallery, a team of restorers uses homespun methods to revive the collection of Russian art. In the early 1990s, a few émigrés paid their way West not by smuggling cans of black caviar but by selling another highly prized fish product: sturgeon bladders. Dried flakes from the inner membrane of the fish's air bladder have long been used by Russian conservators as a glue to set loose paint. As sturgeon glue became accessible abroad, Western restorers found that it was more flexible and binding than synthetic alternatives.

Despite all the money and study going into developing new techniques and materials for art conservation, the traditional ones still excel. Restoration at the Tretyakov Gallery has been organized in the same way since 1936, when the gallery founded an in-house conservation department. Moscow's other museums outsource their restoration to a state studio called the Grabar Art Conservation

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Center. Before every restoration, the gallery's leadership and all the restorers hold a meeting to decide on the task ahead.

Conservation remains a closed world -- many of the gallery staff followed their parents into the profession. When a restoration is difficult and “you've spent your own blood coming up with a solution, it is not so easy to give it away,” Tretyakov conservator Orlovskaya said of the mystery surrounding her craft. “We work differently than abroad because we work more visually and intuitively, whereas [foreign restorers] rely more on microscopes and technology, and different lamps and magnifiers to see every ripple of the painting,” she said. “You could say we work using feeling.”

“Admiring the Triumph of Restoration,” *The Montreal Gazette*, 9/10/2007

After a fire ripped through the Sacred Heart Chapel in Montreal's Notre Dame Basilica on Dec. 8, 1978, a 170-year-old work of religious art, *The Triumph of the Virgin*, was badly damaged, rolled up, and locked away. Last year, more than 2,000 hours of work went into restoring the early 19th-century canvas, a copy of a similar work in Paris by 17th-century French painter Charles Le Brun.

The 1810 rendition of Le Brun's work by William Berczy decorated the first Notre Dame church on Place d'Armes in Montreal. The refurbished painting hasn't been seen by the public since the fire almost 30 years ago. It is now the focal point of an exhibition, titled “The Artistic Legacy of the Montreal Sulpicians,” opening in the newest pavilion of the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, the old Erskine and American United Church.

“High and Mighty,” *Detroit Free Press*, 09/19/2007

Tintoretto's enormous *The Dreams of Men* was reinstalled last month in a specially designed octagonal ceiling perch 24 feet above the ground. The painting -- an oil on canvas measuring more than 12 feet long and 7 feet wide and depicting gods and mythological figures -- was painted for the bedroom ceiling of a well-to-do Venetian merchant around 1550.

More than 450 years later, the DIA has returned the work to its original

ceiling orientation, offering Detroiters an exhilarating perspective that no other museum in the United States can match. Conservation measures included cleaning and inpainting as well as removal of a disintegrating lining, and reinforcing the edges of the canvas with new fabric. In 2005 the DIA brought a conservator from Rome to reline the canvas and provide a spring-loaded aluminum stretcher to regulate tension. In recent years, conservators began studying the climate in the ceiling where the painting was to be hung to create a safer environment.

“Storms Blamed for Venice's Falling Masonry,” *The Guardian*, 10/1/2007

Long accustomed to sea surges which swell their canals, swamp their piazzas, and threaten the foundations of their buildings, Venetians are now looking up to the skies with trepidation as freak rainstorms are blamed for bringing chunks of masonry crashing down from landmark palaces.

Locals and tourists fled for cover on Saturday as a 66lb block of white marble dislodged from a window frame at the Ducal palace, close to St Mark's Square, and fell 65ft to the crowded pavement below. The chunk missed a passerby although flying shards of marble from the impact left a German tourist bleeding from a leg wound.

Days earlier, another tourist destination, the Correr museum in St Mark's Square, lost a large piece of marble from its facade which fell into an internal courtyard. As city officials planned an emergency meeting for today, the mayor, Massimo Cacciari, was quick to point out the Ducal palace had been restored just three years ago, but suggested water infiltration due to record rainfall had done the damage.

Mr. Cacciari suggested old iron rods holding the marble blocks in place at the Ducal palace had rusted to the point of disintegration in the heavy rain. City officials have already warned of tiny cracks appearing in Venice's palaces thanks to pigeons which peck at facades while searching for food scraps.

“Goa's Rich Heritage Monuments to get a Midas Touch,” *Mangalorean.com*, 9/22/2007

Goa's rich heritage monuments will get a Midas touch with the state government signing a memorandum of

understanding with New Delhi based Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage. The memorandum is for restoration, conservation, and maintenance of archaeological monuments/sites and heritage structures.

Though small in size, Goa has a large number of archaeological monuments and heritage sites. Restoration, conservation, preservation, beautification, maintenance etc. of these monuments/sites is the responsibility of the central and state governments. Hence regular repairs and periodical conservation, preservation, maintenance of archaeological monuments/sites and heritage structures in the state is being pursued for their proper upkeep.

“Houston Museum Honored With Rare 17th-Century Edo Period Folding Screens,” *HULIQ.com*, 9/19/2007

The National Research Institute for Cultural Properties, Tokyo, has selected a pair of historically important six-paneled screens titled Hie Sanno Sairei-Zu from the collection of Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, to be conserved by experts in Japan.

The screens, created in the 17th-century Edo period by an unknown Japanese artist, depict the Hie Sanno Festival, one of Japan's three most important festivals. Following a comprehensive restoration, Hie Sanno Sairei-Zu, along with ten other objects chosen worldwide for conservation, will be part of an exhibition at the Tokyo National Museum in May 2008 celebrating the Cooperative Program for the Conservation of Japanese Art Objects.

In Japan, the screens will be conserved by the Association for Conservation of National Treasures/Kyushu Branch Studio located at the Kyushu National Museum. The Kyushu Branch Studio specializes in the conservation of Japanese scroll mounting and Asian paper conservation.

“L.A.'s Street Murals Disappearing,” *L.A. Daily News*, 10/22/2007

Los Angeles' iconic murals are disappearing. Once the mural capital of the world, Los Angeles has quietly surrendered that distinction to Philadelphia over the past five years. Artists say 60 percent of them - about 1,800 - now are either gone for good or have been nearly obliterated by tagging and vandalism.

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Officials with the Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs say that in recent years they have been unfairly portrayed as being lax for allowing the murals to decay. They say funding for restoration has plunged in 10 years, from \$400,000 in the late 1990s to \$20,000 for 2007-08 - only enough to restore two murals.

When a mural is defaced, the artist who painted it is required, as part of a permit, to do touch-up work. But many muralists say they're not being notified in time or just can't find the funding. As a result, tagging can linger on murals longer than if it was sprayed on street signs or traffic signals. In fact, taggers have realized that their work will stay on murals longer than on blank walls, so their canvas of choice is the mural.

The Cultural Affairs Department opted to shield the murals in wax so if tagged again, a mural can be blasted with hot water. Still, despite advances in technology, the transportation agency has been unable to find a method to remove graffiti that does not damage the murals. Under city permits, Caltrans has the right to paint over the murals if artists don't maintain them.

“Old World Masterpieces May Benefit from a Nanotechnology Cleaning,” *Nanowork Spotlight*, 10/22/2007

Chemists from the Center for Colloid and Surface Science (CSGI) research group at the University of Florence have created a nanomagnetic sponge that can absorb cleaning solutions, release them onto the surface of paintings, sculptures, and other works of art, and then reabsorb the solutions, after the piece is cleaned. All of this occurs without the human hand ever coming into contact with the art.

Although porous like a sponge, the material is actually a hard, solid hydro-gel. The sponge is made by cross linking magnetic nanoparticles (CoFe₂O₄) through a polyethylene glycol and acrylamide polymer network. When polymerization is complete, the sponge can be immersed in water to achieve full saturation.

The nanomagnetic gel is hard enough to be handled with tweezers or cut with a knife or scissors. This is important because the gel can be cut into a specific shape for cleaning a particular area of the artwork. When cleaning is

accomplished, the gel can be removed with a magnet. The nanomagnetic sponge can also be freeze-dried into a magnetic powder, which will reform the gel when rehydrated. The nanomagnetic sponge appears to be particularly useful for removing Paraloid polymers from marble and frescos.

To evaluate the efficiency of the removal process, the team employed the use of Microreflectance Fourier transform infrared (FTIR) spectrometry. A comparison of spectra collected before and after the treatment showed that signals from the acrylate completely disappeared after the cleaning. Additional analysis through scanning electron microscope (SEM) and, in particular, the mapping of X-ray emission collected by energy dispersive X-ray spectrometry, provided clear evidence that no residue from the nanoparticles remained on the surface of the painting, and the polymer was completely removed. The scientists also tested the process on a damaged fresco, successfully demonstrating its use on plaster.

“ASI Finds Fault with Palace Restoration,” *Chandigarh Newslines* 10/23/2007

The ongoing conservation work of the famous Jagatjit Palace of Kapurthala has come under a cloud as the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) has raised serious objections to the manner in which the project is being carried out.

The ASI objections, raised in a confidential report submitted to the Government of India, is that a tinge of modernity is being added to the original work, and the material used in the palace is destroying its originality. Jagatjit Palace, built in 1906 by the then king of Kapurthala, Maharaja Jagatjit Singh, is inspired from the Palace of Versailles and is considered to be a classic example of French architecture.

According to highly-placed sources in the INTACH, the ASI has sent a report to the Union government, saying that the originality of the palace's architecture was being compromised. INTACH sources said on the ground floor, where the floor was damaged, modern tiles are being installed, and that instead of restoring the old, damaged walls of the original structure, new cemented walls are being constructed parallel to

old walls.

When contacted, INTACH chairman S.K. Mishra claimed that everything was being done according to the original architecture and material of the palace. When asked whether the contractor given the restoration work was an expert in restoration of historical buildings, Mishra said he had no idea about the contractor. However, he quickly added that the contractor “must be an expert,” which is why he had been engaged for the work.

“Eighth Wonder of the World? The Stunning Temples Secretly Carved out Below Ground by Paranormal Eccentric,” *Daily Mail*, 11/22/2007

Nestling in the foothills of the Alps in northern Italy, 30 miles from the ancient city of Turin, lies the valley of Valchiusella. The hillside scenery is certainly picturesque, but it is deep underground, buried into the ancient rock, that the region's greatest wonders are concealed.

Underneath the hillside, 100ft down and hidden from public view, are nine ornate temples, on five levels, whose scale and opulence take the breath away. Narrating the history of humanity, they are linked by hundreds of metres of richly decorated tunnels and occupy almost 300,000 cubic feet. The Italian government was not even aware of their existence until a few years ago.

But the ‘Temples of Damanhur’ are not the great legacy of some long-lost civilisation, they are the work of a 57-year-old former insurance broker from northern Italy, Oberto Airaudi, who, inspired by a childhood vision, began digging into the rock. “My goal was to recreate the temples from my visions,” he says.

The temples of Damanhur - named after the ancient subterranean Egyptian temple meaning City of Light - were begun in August 1978. Volunteers, who flocked from around the world, worked in four-hour shifts for the next 16 years with no formal plans other than Oberto's sketches and visions. By 1991, several of the nine chambers were almost complete with stunning murals, mosaics, statues, secret doors, and stained glass windows.

But time was running out on the secret. The police swooped on the

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community demanding: “Show us these temples or we will dynamite the entire hillside.” Stunned by what they had found, the authorities decided to seize the temples on behalf of the government. Retrospective permission was eventually granted and today the ‘Damanhurians’ even have their own university, schools, organic supermarkets, vineyards, farms, bakeries, and award-winning eco homes.

“This Trash Really was a Treasure,” *Associated Press*, 10/24/2007

A painting stolen 20 years ago was found lying in trash along a street, and now it could fetch up to \$1 million at auction. Elizabeth Gibson didn't know anything about the brightly colored abstract work she spotted on her morning walk four years ago on Manhattan's Upper West Side. Sotheby's auction house will be selling the work next month for the now-widowed original owner.

It turned out that it was a 1970 painting titled *Tres Personajes* (Three People) by Mexican artist Rufino Tamayo, whose work has soared in value in recent years. A Houston couple whose names were not disclosed purchased the work -- an oil on canvas with marble dust and sand worked into the paint -- in 1977 at Sotheby's. It was stolen in 1987 from a warehouse where they had placed it while moving.

Sotheby's said it could bring up to \$1 million when it is sold at its Latin American art auction Nov. 20. Gibson will receive the \$15,000 reward the couple put up when it was stolen, plus an undisclosed percentage of the sale of the painting. Sotheby's says *Tres Personajes* is an important work that represents the artist's mature period.

“Scientific Tools Hunt for Lost Da Vinci Art,” *The Los Angeles Times*, 10/24/2007

Analyzing 500-year-old bricks, engineers in California are searching for a lost Leonardo da Vinci fresco that some researchers believe is behind a wall in Florence's Palazzo Vecchio. The hunt for the *Battle of Anghiari*, an unfinished mural by da Vinci, has captivated art historians for centuries. Laser scanners, thermal imaging, radar, and neutrons will be employed in the project that Culture Minister Francesco Rutelli said is expected to take about a year.

Maurizio Seracini, an Italian engineer, said he and colleagues at the University of San Diego are studying bricks and stonework that were found in a storeroom in the Palazzo Vecchio and were once part of the huge hall. Some researchers believe a cavity in one of the hall's walls might have preserved the mural, which da Vinci began in 1505 to commemorate the 15th-century Florentine victory over Milan at Anghiari, a medieval Tuscan town. The work was unfinished when da Vinci left Florence in 1506. Since Vasari respected the Renaissance masters, some hypothesize that he wouldn't have destroyed da Vinci's work on what is presumed to have been a wall behind one Vasari painted when he decorated the room in the 1560s.

A few years ago, using radar and X-ray scans, Seracini and his team found a cavity behind Vasari's fresco that could indicate a space between walls. And if there's no da Vinci masterpiece behind Vasari's wall? Seracini predicted that art restoration would benefit in any case since the project would pioneer ways for restorers to understand countless paintings that have been covered by white-wash and plaster.

“Preserving the World of Art -- New Conservation Center Should be Finished by Spring,” *Berkshire Eagle*, 11/01/2007

The art of protecting art is about to get a bigger canvas. A new, \$25 million, cutting-edge restoration facility is nearing completion 1,000 feet to the south of the Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute. It will become the new home of the Williamstown Art Conservation Center, currently housed in a building on the Clark's campus.

“This may be the most state-of-the-art conservation center in the country,” said John Skavlem, senior director of development for the Clark. It will be moving into a 32,000-square-foot building designed by Japanese architect Tadao Ando, of which 16,000 square feet will be dedicated to preservation of paintings, sculptures, photography, drawings, vases, furniture, and most other media used in creating works of art.

The facility includes a \$150,000, 100-square-foot lead-lined room that will be used to X-ray art works to help determine their preservation needs and age. Tom Branchick, director of WACC,

anticipates completing the move by the end of March 2008.

The building also includes 2,500 feet of new gallery space, which the Clark will use for exhibits that depart from what the museum has done in the past. Terrace visitors can also watch, through the large windows, the art preservation work in progress. Primary construction will be complete in November, when testing of environmental control systems will begin.

“Aga Khan Trust Revives the Middle Ages,” *Cairo AL-AHRAM Weekly*, 11/1-7/2007

The Khayrbek and Umm Al-Sultan Shaaban monumental complexes, two of the finest examples of Islamic mediaeval architecture in the Darb Al-Ahmar district of Cairo, have been restored. Prince Karim Aga Khan and Culture Minister Farouk Hosni announced the inauguration of the complexes after five years of restoration.

The Khayrbek complex was named after the first of Egypt's Ottoman governors, Emir Khayrbek, and was built in stages during the Mameluke and Ottoman periods. The neighbouring Umm Al-Sultan Shaaban monument, which was built by the Mameluke Sultan Shaaban for his mother Khwand Baaraka in 1368, comprises a mosque, two madrassas (religious schools), a kuttab for children (Quranic school), two mausoleums, a sabil, and a water trough for animals.

Both monuments, like all other Islamic monuments located in heavily populated areas, were suffering seriously from environmental danger including air pollution, a high subsoil water level, a high level of humidity, leakage from the Al-Madiaa (a fountain used for ritual ablution), and an overloaded and decayed sewage system more than 100 years old, not to mention the earthquake of 1992 which significantly increased the number of cracks. Both monuments had been closed to worshippers and visitors.

“Undercover Restorers Fix Paris Landmark's Clock, ‘Cultural Guerrillas’ Cleared of Lawbreaking over Secret Workshop in Pantheon,” *The Guardian*, 11/26/2007

It is one of Paris's most celebrated monuments, a neoclassical masterpiece that has cast its shadow across

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the city for more than two centuries. But it is unlikely that the Panthéon, or any other building in France's capital, will have played host to a more bizarre sequence of events than those revealed in a court last week.

Four members of an underground "cultural guerrilla" movement known as the Untergunther, whose purpose is to restore France's cultural heritage, were cleared on Friday of breaking into the 18th-century monument.

For a year from September 2005, under the nose of the Panthéon's unsuspecting security officials, a group of intrepid "illegal restorers" set up a secret workshop and lounge in a cavity under the building's famous dome. Under the supervision of group member Jean-Baptiste Viot, a professional clockmaker, they pieced apart and repaired the antique clock that had been left to rust in the building since the 1960s.

Only when their clandestine revamp of the elaborate timepiece had been completed did they reveal themselves. "We decided to tell them in the end so that they would know to wind the clock up so it would still work," said Lazar Klausmann, a spokesperson for the Untergunther.

The hardest part of the scheme was carrying up the planks used to make chairs and tables to furnish the Untergunther's cosy squat cum workshop, which has sweeping views over Paris. The group managed to connect the hide-away to the electricity grid and install a computer connected to the net.

Klausmann and his crew are connoisseurs of the Parisian underworld. Since the 1990s they have restored crypts, staged readings and plays in monuments at night, and organised rock concerts in quarries. The Untergunther are already busy working on another restoration mission Paris. The location is top secret, of course.

"Scientist Presents Case Against Possible Pollocks," *The New York Times*, 11/29/2007

A forensic scientist said yesterday that a large group of paintings discovered several years ago and thought by some to be by Jackson Pollock included many containing paints and materials that were not available until after the artist's death in 1956. At least one was painted on a board that was not produced

earlier than the late 1970s or early '80s, said the scientist, James Martin, in a lecture last night sponsored by the International Foundation for Art Research in Manhattan.

Mr. Martin was commissioned to examine the paintings in 2005 by their owner, Alex Matter, the son of Herbert and Mercedes Matter, artists who were friends of Pollock's. Mr. Matter has said he found the paintings, made in Pollock's signature drip style, in 2002 or 2003 in a Long Island storage container that had belonged to his father. The findings add to a growing body of evidence that the paintings — 32 in all, including some ephemera and works on paper — were made by someone other than Pollock or at least that many were substantially altered after the artist's death.

"Hirst to Fix Another Formaldehyde Installation," *The Art Newspaper*, 9/26/2007

Last year we revealed that Damien Hirst was to replace the rotting shark in his *The Physical Impossibility of Death in the Mind of Someone Living*, 1991 bought by collector Steve Cohen from Charles Saatchi, reportedly for £6.5m.

The work is now on loan to the Metropolitan Museum in New York for three years. Now the British artist is to repair his *Mother and Child, Divided* (1993), an installation of a bisected cow and calf in four formaldehyde tanks, in the collection of the Astrup Fearnley Museum of Modern Art in Oslo. The work is leaking and has been sent to the artist's studio in London for emergency repairs.

"A leak emerged due to a flaw in the glass, and some formaldehyde was lost," says Gunnar Kvaran, the museum's director. This edition of the work was displayed at London's Tate Britain in 1995 as part of the Turner prize exhibition. Hirst won the award that year.

"Textile School is Stitched Up," *The Times*, 12/3/2007

Conservators around the world have been shocked by the University of Southampton's decision to "condemn to oblivion," in the words of the UK Institute of Conservation (Icon), the world's leading school for textile conservation.

The Textile Conservation Centre (TCC), which has trained half the world's select group of 800 textile con-

servators, including the winner of this year's £15,000 national Conservation Award, is to close because it no longer fits the university's research and funding criteria.

The president of the International Institute of Conservation, Jerry Podany, of the Getty Museum in California, wrote to the Vice-Chancellor of Southampton, Professor Bill Wakeham, saying the decision is "widely perceived as no less than a betrayal of trust." "We see the university's decision as damaging to the world's textile heritage, the international conservation community, and most sadly a poor repayment for the loyalty, high standards, and dedication of its highly motivated staff," he wrote. However, it is understood that an endowment of £5 million could still save the centre, founded in 1975 in Hampton Court Palace but since 1998 based in Winchester School of Art, with a staff of 16 and 60 students. The TCC is forbidden to discuss the situation publicly but it is said to be devastated by the decision after 32 years of steady development and achievement.

"Anonymous Painting Attributed to Caravaggio," *MSNBC.com*, 12/11/2007

A casual glance at an auction catalog set a British art historian on the path to discovering the brushstrokes of Caravaggio on a painting previously attributed to an anonymous follower of the Baroque master. Experts in Italy believe a copy of Caravaggio's *The Cardsharps* which surfaced at a London auction last year is an earlier version of the 1594 painting now displayed at the Kimbell Art Museum in Fort Worth, Texas.

The previously anonymous work was bought at a Sotheby's auction in December 2006 by art historian and collector Denis Mahon and will be first displayed to the public in the Sicilian city of Trapani at a Caravaggio exhibit starting Saturday, organizers said.

Mahon was at a restaurant when he spotted a painting attributed to a Caravaggio follower in a catalog and quickly linked it to the already known "Cardsharps," said Mina Gregori, an Italian art historian who worked with the British expert to verify his initial hunch. "It was intuition or a stroke of genius," Gregori told the Associated Press in a telephone interview.

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Mahon was struck by the fact that the work belonged to a private collection that had previously sold an original Caravaggio, she said. Maurizio Marini, another Caravaggio expert who has studied the newly found painting, said the work is true to Caravaggio's style, and X-rays have confirmed it is an original by revealing the lead-laced sketch that was drawn to outline the painting.

An analysis of the paint has also come up with traces of very fine sand, another trademark of the artist, he said. Gregori said she was convinced that the London painting was a Caravaggio when she noticed that the face of one of the cheats, though partly covered by the page's hat, had still been sketched out in detail by the artist before being painted over. "That's the ultimate proof," she said. "A copycat doesn't do that."

"Officials Report Mold in a Leonardo Collection," *New York Times*, 12/23/2007

Leonardo da Vinci's Codex Atlanticus, the largest bound collection of his drawings and writings, has been infiltrated by mold. The extent of damage to the Codex — an assemblage of 1,119 pages of drawings and writings dating from 1478 to 1519 on topics ranging from flying machines to weapons, mathematics to botany — is not yet known, but the mold is not spreading, scholars said.

The Codex, which consists of 12 leather-bound volumes, is kept in a vault at the Biblioteca Ambrosiana where temperature and humidity are constantly monitored. The mold was first identified in April 2006 by Carmen Bambach, a curator of drawings at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, and confirmed by conservation experts from the Florence-based state conservation institute, Opificio delle Pietre Dure.

Scientific analysis is required to determine the cause of the mold, which could be the result of several factors, including exposure during exhibition or study, or the unintended consequence of a restoration that began in 1968 and ended in 1972.

The Codex Atlanticus, so named because it was originally compiled as a single volume of miscellany comparable to an atlas, is the largest collection of Leonardo's sheets. Formed at the end of the sixteenth century by the sculptor Pompeo Leoni, it is viewed by some scholars as a

treasured but lamentable compilation, given that Leoni dismembered some of Leonardo's notebooks to create it.

"Away from Limelight, they Shine," *Lucknow Newslines*, 12/30/2007

The best way to do something, is to do it yourself. That's the motto that Saiyed Anwer Abbas has lived by, whether it be the publication of his architectural directory — *Wailing Beauty* — which lists crumbling, lesser-known Lucknow monuments complete with historical and architectural details and archaeological status, or, more recently, his effort to save rare Tughra inscriptions in Imambara Zainul Abidin.

Abbas spent his entire gratuity post-retirement to bring out *Wailing Beauty*, in a bid to highlight the exquisite stuccowork extant on Lakhnavi monuments. His most recent effort is perhaps the first privately-funded conservation bid to protect and preserve ancient Tughra inscriptions on an 18th-century Imambara Zainul Abidin Khan in Old Lucknow.

"Tughra style of calligraphy is not commonly seen - these are calligraphic panels with logos or designs highlighting the names of the Almighty, the Holy Prophet, Imams revered by the Muslims," Abbas says. "As a scholar who has studied Islamic calligraphy in detail, I can assure you such brilliant calligraphy is rare in the Indian sub-continent. Of the 15 archways on which these inscriptions were extant originally, only five remain today."

"France Racing to Save Lascaux Cave Paintings from Fungus," *CBC News* 1/2/2008

The French government is taking emergency action to rescue the celebrated cave paintings of the Lascaux caverns from a fungus. Archeological experts have begun applying a fungicide to halt the spread of grey and black mould in the caverns, dubbed the Sistine Chapel of prehistory.

The French government has closed the caves located about 450 kilometres south of Paris to everyone, including scientists and historians, for three months and will replace an air circulation system that may be partly responsible for the fungus. The system, installed seven years ago, may have been poorly designed, as a similar fungal attack took place after its installation.

Laurence Leaute-Beasley, president of the International Committee for the Preservation of Lascaux, called for the management of the caves to be taken out of the hands of the French government, saying someone who understands the science involved should take over. The French government, not wanting such an important site to be seen as neglected, has decided to accept the committee's advice and act now against the fungus. One of the projects to be halted by the emergency treatment is a survey that was to make a three-dimensional digital record of every painting in the caverns.

And one everyone is sure to have missed:

"Joshua Reynolds Helped to Pirate Old Masters," *The New York Times*, 2/1/1914

Letters which have just been unearthed in the British Museum show that Sir Joshua Reynolds and other artists had a sort of loosely organized "gang" which made a practice of substituting copies for originals of famous paintings owned in Italy and other Continental countries, the originals then being brought to England and sold there.

In one typical instance paintings by Nicholas Poussin were sent to Reynolds in London in 1785 and stored in his house until sold, a confederate working in Italy having contrived their substitution. The British Museum disclosed correspondence where Reynolds himself arranged for a young artist to make two copies of pictures by Rubens, the copies substituted for the originals and the latter brought to England.

Sir Joshua went on record regarding his conscience and shows that he had no moral qualms. "I have not the least scruple about the sending copies for originals."

How far substitution was practiced by the artists of older England no man can say, but the fact that it is now proved that substitution was in vogue successfully by Reynolds and his friends causes two questions to be called to mind. How many scores of canvases now in continental galleries are really copies from English brushes? How many scores of reputed Old Masters, bought at vast figures by Americans from reputable and innocent sources in Europe, are really substitutions made by the coterie of English forgers in the days of long ago?