

D.A. Vance: Michael Steinhardt Surrenders 180 Stolen Antiquities Valued At \$70 Million

NEW YORK CITY — Manhattan District Attorney Cy Vance, Jr announced December 6 that Michael Steinhardt, one of the world's largest ancient art collectors, has surrendered 180 stolen antiquities valued at \$70 million and received a first-of-its-kind lifetime ban on acquiring antiquities, following the resolution of a multi-year, multi-national investigation into his criminal conduct. The seized pieces were looted and illegally smuggled out of 11 countries, trafficked by 12 criminal smuggling networks, and lacked verifiable provenance prior to appearing on the international art market, according to the Statement of Facts summarizing the investigation.

"For decades, Michael Steinhardt displayed a rapacious appetite for plundered artifacts without concern for the legality of his actions, the legitimacy of the pieces he bought and sold, or the grievous cultural damage he wrought across the globe," said District Attorney Vance. "His pursuit of 'new' additions to showcase and sell knew no geographic or moral boundaries, as reflected in the sprawl-

ing underworld of antiquities traffickers, crime bosses, money launderers and tomb raiders he relied upon to expand his collection.

"Even though Steinhardt's decades-long indifference to the rights of peoples to their own sacred treasures is appalling, the interests of justice prior to indictment and trial favor a resolution that ensures that a substantial portion of the damage to world cultural heritage will be undone, once and for all. Accordingly, this agreement guarantees that 180 pieces will be returned expeditiously to their rightful owners in 11 countries rather than be held as evidence for the years necessary to complete the grand-jury indictment, trial, potential conviction and sentence. This resolution also enables my office to shield the identity of the many witnesses here and abroad whose names would be released at any trial, to protect the integrity of parallel investigations in each of the 11 countries with whom we are conducting joint investigations, and to avoid overburdening resource-scarce nations who would be called upon to provide witnesses in

any grand jury or trial. Finally, this agreement establishes that Steinhardt will be subject to an unprecedented lifetime ban on acquiring antiquities.

"Steinhardt viewed these precious artifacts as simple commodities — things to collect and own. He failed to respect that these treasures represent the heritage of cultures around the world from which these items were looted, often during times of strife and unrest," said HSI New York Acting Special Agent in Charge Ricky J. Patel. "The outstanding collaboration between the Manhattan District Attorney's Office and Homeland Security Investigations revealed the breadth of Steinhardt's plundering and this collaborative effort has yielded the remarkable results announced today."

According to documents filed in court, the criminal investigation into Steinhardt began in February 2017. While investigating the Bull's Head stolen from Lebanon during the Lebanese Civil War, the D.A.'s Office determined Steinhardt had purchased the multimillion-dollar statue then subsequently loaned it

to the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Months after seizing the piece, the D.A.'s Office announced the formation of its Antiquities Trafficking Unit with the repatriation of the Bull's Head and the Calf Bearer, a second multimillion-dollar marble statute seized from Steinhardt, to the Lebanese Republic in December 2017.

In the process of uncovering the Lebanese statues, the D.A.'s Office learned that Steinhardt possessed additional looted antiquities at his apartment and office, and, soon after, initiated a grand jury criminal investigation into his acquisition, possession and sale of more than 1,000 antiquities since at least 1987. As part of this inquiry into criminal conduct by Steinhardt, the D.A.'s Office executed 17 judicially-ordered search warrants and conducted joint investigations with law-enforcement authorities in 11 countries: Bulgaria, Egypt, Greece, Iraq, Israel, Italy, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Syria and Turkey.

Of Steinhardt's acquisitions, the D.A.'s Office developed compelling evidence that 180 were stolen from their coun-

try of origin. In addition to their universal lack of provenance, the pieces exhibited numerous other evidentiary indicators of looting. Prior to Steinhardt's purchase, 171 of the 180 seized antiquities first surfaced in the possession of individuals who law-enforcement authorities later determined to be antiquities traffickers — some of whom have been convicted of antiquities trafficking; 101 first appeared dirty (or unrestored) in photographs; and 100 appeared covered in dirt or encrustations prior to Steinhardt's purchase. Many of the seized antiquities were trafficked following civil unrest or looting.

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Tacoma Art Museum Exhibits Haub Family Landscape Paintings

TACOMA, WASH. — The homelands of more than 75 Native American communities are pictured in paintings of 14 notable landscapes in Tacoma Art Museum's exhibition, "On Native Land: Landscapes from the Haub Family Collection," which is now on extended view. These communities will be recognized in written land acknowledgments that appear on labels next to each painting in the gallery.

Landscape painting as a genre focuses often on a single place, environment or moment in nature. As meditations on the power of the natural world, landscapes are often devoid of signs of human presence. "On Native Land" expands the ways in which viewers interpret these landscapes by adding historical contexts that recognize the many different Native American communities whose homelands are illustrated in the paintings.



"White Cliffs of the Missouri" by Clyde Aspevig, 2009, oil on board, 40 by 60 inches. Tacoma Art Museum, Haub Family Collection. Gift of Erivan and Helga Haub.

"We invite visitors to learn and share with us about land ownership, treaty rights, reservations and Indigenous place names while considering the history of the land," says

Faith Brower, Haub Curator of Western American Art. "By connecting with members of the tribes whose homelands are depicted in "On Native Land," my hope is to learn

more about how these places remain vital and meaningful to Native American communities today."

The exhibition shares perspectives about the subject of land acknowledgments in articles, videos and other resources in the gallery and online. QR codes in the gallery will encourage visitors to engage with online resources highlighting Native American voices and responses that are pertinent to the lands depicted in works on view.

Outreach to Native American communities to further research the lands pictured continues. The exhibition and related online materials will be updated as additional information about the landscapes is gathered. The exhibition will be on view through 2023.

The Tacoma Art Museum is at 1701 Pacific Avenue. For information, 253-272-4258 or www.tacomaartmuseum.org.

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Shaheen Gifts To Norton: From Hassam To Wyeth

WEST PALM BEACH, FLA. — On view through March 13 at the Norton Museum of Art is "From Hassam To Wyeth: Gifts from Doris and Shouky Shaheen." This exhibition celebrates Doris and Shouky Shaheen's recent gift of 12 American oils and watercolors to the Norton Museum of Art. Ranging in style from Impressionism to Realism, the works demonstrate how American painters continued to depict the nation's distinctive and evolving landscape from the late Nineteenth into the Twentieth Centuries. In addition to Childe Hassam

and Andrew Wyeth, artists represented include William Glackens, Jane Peterson, Edward Henry Potthast, John Henry Twachtman, Guy Wiggins and Wyeth's son, Jamie.

The Norton Museum of Art is at 1450 South Dixie Highway. For more information, www.norton.org or 561-832-5196.

"The Lobster Trap" by Andrew Wyeth (American, 1917-2009), 1937, watercolor on paper, 20 3/4 by 29 inches, ©2021 Andrew Wyeth / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York City.



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