26 Famous Art Heists - mental_floss on YouTube (Ep.207)

List Show
https://youtube.com/watch?v=okVx9YKAb64
https://nerdfighteria.info/v/okVx9YKAb64

Hi Youtube, it's Akilah, obviously, and if you click on my face you can check out my channel, Smoothiefreak. But this is mentalfloss on YouTube. Did you know that art theft has caused about four to six billion dollars in losses around the world? And that the only more costly crimes are drug trafficking, money laundering, and arms dealing? Plus, the average recovery rate for stolen art is only about two to six percent. Today, I'm going to tell you about some art heists. So let's get started.

In 1990, two men, posing as police, demanded to be let into Boston's Isabella Stewart Gardener Museum. They tied the two museum guards up in the basement, then raided the museum. In the largest property theft in U.S. history, the pair collected over six hundred million dollars worth of art, including five pieces by Degas. Not a single painting has been recovered.

Also in Boston, Myles Jay Connor Jr stole a Rembrandt portrait from the museum of fine arts in 1975 on the same day jurors were being picked for his trial in another burglary case. Nine months later, Connor brokered the painting's return for a reduced sentence in another case. He ended up with a four year sentence rather than fifteen years. He was in jail at the time of the Gardner museum heist but some suspect Connor to have somehow been involved.

There are four different versions of Edvard Munch's '*The Scream*', so it has technically been stolen twice. In 1994 it was taken from Oslo's national gallery, then recovered three months later. On August 22nd 2004, a different version was stolen from Oslo's Munch museum in broad daylight. Armed thieves took it right off the wall. Police found the getaway car containing two empty frames, but the painting was recovered two years later.

Also on August 22nd, this time in 1911, Louvre handyman Vincenzo Peruggia stole the '*Mona Lisa'*. Suspects included J.P. Morgan and Pablo Picasso, which made the crime, and the painting, infamous. So it was impossible for Peruggia to sell it off quickly. Two years later, Peruggia tried to sell the '*Mona Lisa'* to an art dealer in Florence who promptly turned him in. Peruggia was sentenced to eight months in prison.

Another Da Vinci piece, '*Madonna with the Yarnwinder'*, was stolen in 2003 when two men, posing as tourists at the Drumlanrig castle in Scotland, used an axe to grab it during the tour. Security cameras captured them leaving the castle with a fifteen million dollar painting casually tucked under one arm. In 2007, officers recovered the painting and arrested four men.

For thirty years, Hungarian Elmyr de Hory sold forgeries of paintings like Picasso, Matisse, and Degas. His forgeries were so detailed that they could trick extremely experienced art buyers. He attracted his own following and, eventually, his own forgers.

On August thirteenth, 2011, a Rembrandt drawing, worth around two hundred and fifty thousand dollars, was lifted from the Marina Del Ray Ritz-Carlton. The hotel's curator was actually right there, but distracted by a guest. The piece was recovered two days later in a pastor's office in Encino, California. He wasn't a suspect.

In 1937, a private collector loaned Renoir's '*Landscape on the Banks of the Seine'* to the Baltimore museum of art, where it was stolen in 1951. In 2012 is resurfaced at a West Virginia flea market, when a woman payed seven dollars for it! It's worth at least seventy five thousand dollars. A judge ordered that the painting be returned to the Baltimore museum.

'*The Adoration of the Mystic Lamb',* a twenty-four panel piece by Jan Van Eyck has only had twenty-three panels since 1934 when a panel, known as '*Just Judges'*, was stolen from a cathedral in Ghent. The police showed up late to the crime scene, and didn't stay long, because they were in the middle of investigating a cheese theft. But we all know the real cheese theft culprit.

Thirteen subsequent ransom notes sent to the bishop promised his return in exchange for one million Belgian Francs. Shockingly, the bishop wasn't interested in negotiating with the criminals, the piece remains missing.

A decade after he died, Texan Joe Meador became the prime suspect in the 1945 theft of a collection of medieval artworks and manuscripts from the town of Quedlinburg. The pieces were moved to a mine shaft during WW2, which is where they disappeared from; just days after American troops, including Meador, occupied the area.

In December 2011, a bronze sculpture by Barbara Hepworth was stolen from its perch in London's Dulwich park. Investigators speculated that the culprits were metal thieves, rather than art thieves. Once melted down for scrap, the piece would be worth $1250. In its art form, more than $800,000.

I wonder how much money we'd get if we melted down this belt buckle?!

Something similar happened in December 2005, when a Henry Moore sculpture was stolen from the Henry Moore Foundation Estate in Hertfordshire. Thieves used a crane and truck to remove the sculpture quickly. It was originally worth $5 million, but the thieves went the scrapyard route and received around $2,500.

In 2006, during Rio De Janeiro's annual carnival, four armed men were able to grab approximately $50 million in paintings from the Chacara do Ceu art museum. Including works by Picasso, Monet and Dali. Then they managed to disappear into the crowd of party goers. This made the FBI's top 10 art crimes.

Speaking of Monet, a cardboard copy of '*Beach in Pourville'* was left in place of the original, and almost fooled authorities at the national museum of Poland, who were unknowingly robbed in September 2000. It took police a decade to catch the thief, who had the original artwork hanging on his wall.

In April 2003, at the Whitworth Art Gallery in Manchester, thieves eluded alarms, guards and security cameras while the museum was closed. They took off with paintings from Gauguin, Van Gogh and Picasso. All three were recovered in a public bathroom less than a quarter mile away with this note: "The intention was not to steal, only to highlight the woeful security."

On May 20, 2010, a burglar took five paintings from the Musee d'Art Moderne in Paris. He broke a padlock and smashed a window to take paintings by Picasso, Matisse and Modigliani, worth more than a hundred million dollars. Officials partially blamed the incident on the new alarm system, which wasn't functioning properly.

In 1991, what could've been one of the art world's most expensive heists, turned out to be one of its shortest lived instead. Two men stole twenty paintings from the Van Gogh museum, only to abandon all of them in a getaway car thirty-five minutes later.

The Van Gogh museum was also a target in December 2002, when burglars took two paintings. Thanks to DNA evidence and eyewitness accounts, them men were quickly caught and sentenced to more than three years in prison a piece. The paintings haven't been recovered.

In July 2002, five paintings were stolen from the National Fine Arts museum Paraguay, which was hosting one of the biggest exhibitions in its history. The thieves had rented a shop eighty feet from the museum, then recruited people to help them dig a ten foot tunnel into the museum.

In 2010, thieves stormed Stockholm's national museum with a machine gun, stole $30 million worth of paintings (a Rembrandt and two Renoirs) and escaped on a speed boat. They distracted the police with decoy bombs, making the heist possible. The paintings were eventually recovered and eight men were convicted. Here on MentalFloss we have our own decoy bomb.

On February 10th 2008, three masked men arrived at the entrance of the E.G. Bührle collection in Zurich, forced employees onto the ground and stole paintings by Cézanne, Degas, Van Gogh and Monet, worth an estimated $163 million.

Two of the paintings were found about a week later in a car parked in a nearby hospital parking lot. The Cézanne and Degas paintings were recovered separately in 2012.

In August 1961, Kempton Bunton climbed through an unlocked window in a restroom of London's National Gallery and allegedly stole Francisco Goya's Portrait of the Duke of Wellington. Goya (*Bunton) was a 61-year-old retired bus driver who stole it in protest of the government's decision to pay hundreds of thousands of dollars to keep the painting in Britain. He confessed in 1965 but was

only convicted of stealing the frame and served three months. The story got weirder in 2012 when Bunton's son confessed to the crime, even though his father had already been tried. No charges were filed.

On an early December 1966 morning, someone took a drill to a door at London's Dulwich picture gallery. They stole eight pieces, including Rembrandt's *Jacob de Gheyn III.* All of the paintings were recovered less than a week later. This same painting was stolen and recovered three more times. It holds the Guinness World Record for world's most frequently stolen artwork.

In 1946, three paintings by Georgia O'Keeffe were stolen from an American place, a gallery run by her husband, Alfred Stieglitz. She didn't want to upset him, so O'Keeffe didn't report them missing until 1972. In 1976, the paintings were sold to the Princeton Gallery of Fine Art. O'Keeffe filed a lawsuit for the return and though the statute of limitations had expired, the court sided with her.

On November 17th, 1969, thieves picked the lock of art dealer Stephen Hahn's gallery in New York City and stole seven paintings, including works by Cassat and Monet worth approximately $500,000. Ironically, while his gallery was being robbed, Hahn was with the board of directors at the art director's association of America discussing art theft.

Finally, I return to the salon to tell you about the largest robbery in Israel's history. In 1983, 106 paintings, artifacts, and watches were stolen for the L.A. Mayer Museum for Islamic Art in Jerusalem. This included a $30 million pocket watch made by Abraham-Louis Breguet made for Marie Antoinette. In 2004, notorious criminal Naaman Diller admitted the theft to his wife on his deathbed. She was convicted of receiving stolen property in 2010, and was sentenced to five years probation and 300 hours of community service. One of the many reasons not to marry notorious criminals.

Thanks for watching mental floss on YouTube, which is made with the help of all of these nice people! Every week, we endeavor to answer one of your mind-blowing questions. This week's question comes from Mindy Buttons, who asks "When did people start using wallets?" Well, people have used some form of wallet basically since coins started becoming currency and they needed somewhere to stash them. The modern bi-fold wallet with all of the card slots, became standardized in the early 1950s when credit cards were first introduced. If you have a mind-blowing question you'd like answered, leave it in the comments and we'll try to answer it. Thanks for watching! I'm Akilah, and Don't Forget to the Awesome!