

The Deadliest Laptop in the World Is Up for Art Auction & More Art World Headlines



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The following are summaries of news reports pertaining to art law and art markets, organized by geographic regions for your browsing convenience.

UNITED STATES

Computer Viruses as Contemporary Art

Chinese internet artist Guo O Dong created the artwork titled “The Persistence of Chaos” by infecting a 2008 Samsung notebook with six of the worst computer viruses in the world. Now, the artwork is to be sold at auction and potential buyers have already made several hundred bids on the laptop, increasing the current going price to \$1.2 million. Luckily the computer, presently “quarantined” in solitary confinement in New York, is firewalled from other computers and cannot spread its

malware.

- ArtNet: [**A Laptop Infected With Six of the World's Most Dangerous Computer Viruses Is Up for Auction. The Bid Is Now More Than \\$1.2 Million**](#)
- Forbes: [**A Laptop With 6 Of The Most Destructive Malware Threats Ever Is Up For Auction**](#)

Supreme Court Declines to Hear Nazi-Looted Art Appeal

Since the 1990s, Marie von Saher has sought restitution of two Nazi-looted paintings by Lucas Cranach the Elder. Von Saher is the heir of Jacques Goudstikker, a Dutch Jewish art collector and dealer who fled the Netherlands when the Nazis invaded in 1940. A high-ranking Nazi official acquired the pieces in question in a forced sale. After the war, the paintings were eventually acquired by renowned collector Norton Simon. The U.S. Supreme Court recently declined to hear an appeal of last year's Ninth Circuit ruling, which confirmed the Norton Simon Museum's title to the works based on the act of state doctrine, holding that the issue of ownership had already been decided by the Dutch authorities. The works will remain in the possession of the Norton Simon Museum.

- The Art Newspaper: [**US Supreme Court declines to hear appeal on Nazi-looted art**](#)
- Artsy: [**The U.S. Supreme Court will not hear an appeal in a Nazi-looted art case**](#)

Seattle Man Discovers Long-Lost Weegee Photographs

David Young purchased 73 vintage photographs in the 1970s from a second-hand store in Philadelphia. He recently rediscovered the photographs in his Seattle home and realized that they were taken by Arthur Fellig a/k/a Weegee, a photographer famous for his crime-scene photography, particularly of New York City in the 1930s and 1940s. None of the newly discovered photographs were previously catalogued in the archives of Weegee's estate at the International Center of Photography and only a few were ever published in newspapers.

- ArtNet: [**A Seattle Man Discovered a Trove of Long-Lost Weegee Photos From 1937 in His Kitchen Cabinet**](#)

EUROPE

British Museum Considers Long-Term Loan in Wake of Repatriation Demands

The British Museum has received numerous demands to repatriate artifacts over the past few years. One of these requests concerns 11 sacred Ethiopian *tabots* (tablets), which the British allegedly took from Ethiopia in 1868. The *tabots* symbolically represent the Ark of the Covenant, and the Ethiopian Orthodox Church believes that they should never be viewed by anyone other than its priests. The British Museum has agreed to discuss with its trustees the possibility of a long-term loan of

the *tabots* to the Ethiopian Orthodox Church – rather than repatriation. The UK’s culture secretary advised last month that he was ruling out repatriation legislation, choosing to focus on long-term loans in order to gain goodwill.

- The Art Newspaper: [British Museum considers loan of ‘invisible’ objects back to Ethiopia](#)

A Master Forger to Auction His Art at the “Scene of the Crime”

Shaun Greenhalgh, one of the most notorious art forgers, is known for creating numerous forgeries that went up for auction at Bolton Auction Rooms. After he was discovered, Greenhalgh described his escapades in an autobiography, *A Forger’s Tale: Confessions of the Bolton Forger*. Greenhalgh created all of his forgeries in a shed with the assistance of his father. In 2003, Greenhalgh sold one of his forgeries to the Bolton Museum for £440,000. Greenhalgh is now selling some of his original work at an upcoming auction in Bolton on July 4.

- The Bolton News: [Infamous Bolton forger’s art to go under the hammer](#)

Nuremberg Will Conserve But Not Restore the Zeppelin Grandstand

The city of Nuremberg is embarking on an €85 million plan to conserve the Zeppelin Grandstand, a former Nazi party rally grounds designed by Hitler’s architect, Albert Speer. The rally complex accommodated large crowds and was the site of military parades and the primary location for Hitler’s speeches. The city has struggled with the decision for years while the site continues to decay from dry rot and mildew. Nuremberg’s chief culture official, Julia Lehner, stated that the city will not rebuild or restore the site, but will provide conservation efforts. Ms. Lehner further attested that the site has educational value, allowing us “to see how dictatorial regimes stage-manage themselves.”

- The Art Newspaper: [Nazi site in Nuremberg to be preserved but not restored](#)
- Architect: [Nuremberg will stop Nazi rally grounds from further decay but won’t restore them](#)

Parisians Can Now Tour the Louvre When It Is Closed to the Public

The Louvre and Airbnb have partnered to launch exclusive tours and evening concerts at the museum. The low-key announcement—the press statement on the Airbnb website is in French only—seems in line with the museum director Jean-Luc Martinez’s aim to attract more Parisians to the institution. Visitors can now book a guided tour of the museum when its galleries are empty. The cost is €30, or about \$33, for a two-hour tour. The best part? The tour is limited to 15 people. The concerts allow for 50 attendees and cost €20 (approximately \$22). Happily, this is still a far cry from attempting to navigate the tourist-packed halls during the day.

- ArtNet: [For Just \\$33, You Can Take a Tour of the Louvre When the Museum Is Normally Closed to the Public](#)
- Hyperallergic: [The Louvre Will Offer Private Tours for Just \\$34 During](#)

[Closed Hours](#)

Ai Weiwei Sues Volkswagen for Copyright Infringement

Chinese artist Ai Weiwei sued Volkswagen in a Denmark court, alleging copyright infringement after Volkswagen used one of his art installations as a backdrop in a 2017 advertisement. The advertisement features an orange car and is set in front of Weiwei's work, *Soleil Levant* (2017), an installation comprising 3,500 bright orange life jackets created by the artist for World Refugee Day. The life jackets belonged to the migrants fleeing persecution, who discarded these jackets upon landing on the Greek island of Lesbos. The lawsuit comes after several years of unsuccessful negotiations with Volkswagen. Weiwei alleges that Volkswagen failed to credit his work and cropped the installation in the advertisement without permission.

- ArtNet: [Ai Weiwei Is Suing Volkswagen for Using His Installation of Refugee Life Jackets in an Advertisement](#)

Banksy Gets Kicked Out of Venice Piazza

Banksy posted a video to his Instagram account allegedly showing him getting kicked out of the 2019 Venice Biennale by Italian police. The video depicts Banksy (or more likely one of his agents) setting up a series of paintings before being asked to leave because he does not have a permit. Viewed together, the paintings show a gargantuan cruise ship passing through Venice. The paintings are thought to be a comment on the problem of “over-tourism” affecting the city. As the person in Banksy's video wheels away his cart, a cruise ship like the one in his paintings materializes in the background.

- ArtNet: [Banksy Got Thrown Out of the Most Famous Piazza in Venice for Illegally Selling His Art—and You Can Watch a Video of It Happening Here](#)
- Artsy: [Banksy tried to crash the Venice Biennale](#)

SOUTH AMERICA

New Airport near Machu Picchu Sparks Opposition from Archaeologists

Machu Picchu draws more tourists than any other Inca archaeological site. In an effort to get tourists much closer to Machu Picchu, the Peruvian government is constructing a multibillion-dollar international airport. Bulldozers are presently clearing the grounds in the nearby town of Chinchero, which is the gateway to the Sacred Valley. Archaeologists attest that the new planes would fly too low over the archaeological site of Ollantaytambo and its vast archaeological park, causing damage to the Inca ruins. Other critics are concerned that the airport would deplete the Lake Piuray watershed and negatively impact the local residents. Opponents will submit a petition to stop the construction to Peruvian President Martin Vizcarra.

- The Guardian: [‘It would destroy it’: new international airport for Machu Picchu sparks outrage](#)

AUSTRALIA

Australian Art Biennial Shuts Its Doors

Set to be “the largest ever showcase of Australian artists,” the inaugural Biennale of Australian Art (BOAA) has folded allegedly due to debilitating debt and failed ticket sales. The BOAA was intended to boost tourism in the small town of Ballart, Victoria, which is famous for its role in the 19th century gold rush. The exhibition opened in the fall of 2018 and included more than 1,500 works and some 60 performances throughout the city.

- ArtNet: [Crushed by Debt, the Biennial of Australian Art Has Folded With Dozens of Artists Still Awaiting Payment](#)

AFRICA

The New Look of Nigerian Bride

As Nigerian weddings have grown into a vast industry of grand, colorful celebrations and extensive guest lists, Nigerian artist Lakin Ogunbanwo has introduced a new, vivid and regal image of a modern Nigerian bride in his photographic portraits series, which shows brides dressed in colorful veils and draped fabrics. Many different tribes are represented in the images as Ogunbanwo sought to emphasize that each African country has its own distinct culture. The series, “*e wá wo mi,*” translated as “look at me,” is on exhibit in Cape Town until June 8.

- Artsy: [The Photographer Taking Regal Portraits of Nigerian Brides](#)

ASIA

Global Financial Services Company Nomura Announces Emerging Artist Awards

Nomura Holdings awarded \$100,000 grants each to two emerging artists to advance ambitious projects that the traditional art market likely could not support. The recipients of the Nomura Emerging Artist Awards are Cameron Rowland, a conceptual artist from New York, and Chen Ran from Hangzhou, China, who specializes in video and installation. The awards panel comprised the director of the Robert Rauschenberg Foundation and representatives from the Museum of Contemporary Art, the Tate, Sotheby’s, and the Metropolitan Museum of Art, among others. More than a dozen anonymous nominators submitted suggestions for as-yet-undiscovered artists for the award.

- ArtNet: [Nomura, the Company Behind the Biggest Monetary Prize in Contemporary Art, Just Awarded Two Grants to Emerging Artists](#)

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