

Over 19,000 pieces of stolen artwork found

11th May, 2020



Creative Commons 2.0
via Liz West on flickr.com

Police from around the world have worked together to find lots of missing art. The detectives were from Interpol, Europol and many national police forces. The World Customs Organization also helped with the search. The police officers found more than 19,000 items of artwork. These include an ancient Colombian gold mask that is over 600 years old. There was also a carved Roman lion, centuries-old jewellery, and thousands of ancient coins. Many of the items the police recovered were stolen from museums and archaeological sites. A lot of them were taken from countries at war. The thieves took cultural treasures while countries were in a mess because of fighting civil wars or wars against other countries.

The police arrested 101 art traffickers around the world. The art thieves were from Spain, Colombia, Latvia, Afghanistan and Turkey. Interpol said they spent a long time monitoring online marketplaces to find the art and the thieves. Interpol's secretary-general Jürgen Stock spoke to journalists about how big the operation was. He said: "The number of arrests and objects shows the scale and global reach of the illicit trade in cultural artefacts, where every country with a rich heritage is a potential target." Interpol added: "Organised crime has many faces. The trafficking of cultural goods is one of them. It is not a glamorous business run by flamboyant gentlemen forgers, but by international criminal networks."

Sources: theguardian.com / cnn.com / smithsonianmag.com

Writing

We should all spend much more time creating and looking at art. Discuss.

Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

police / art / detectives / gold / mask / ancient / coins / museum / civil war / countries / traffickers / thieves / online / arrests / heritage / target / organised crime / networks

True / False

- a) Police all over the world worked together to find missing artworks. T / F
- b) Police found a gold mask that was 6,000 years old. T / F
- c) The artwork included many very, very old coins. T / F
- d) Thieves steal art from countries that are in a civil war. T / F
- e) The police arrested over 100 art traffickers. T / F
- f) The police checked online marketplaces to catch the thieves. T / F
- g) Interpol said any country with a rich heritage is a target for the thieves. T / F
- h) Interpol said art trafficking is a glamorous business. T / F

Synonym Match

(The words in **bold** are from the news article.)

- | | |
|-----------------------|---------------|
| 1. find | a. very old |
| 2. helped | b. possible |
| 3. items | c. checking |
| 4. ancient | d. assisted |
| 5. treasures | e. reporters |
| 6. monitoring | f. pieces |
| 7. journalists | g. illegal |
| 8. illicit | h. locate |
| 9. potential | i. attractive |
| 10. glamorous | j. riches |

Discussion – Student A

- a) What do you think of art?
- b) Why do people like art so much?
- c) How good were you at art?
- d) What kind of art do you like?
- e) Would you like to be an artist?
- f) What art do you have in your house?
- g) Who is your favourite artist?
- h) What punishment should the art traffickers get?

Phrase Match

- | | |
|---|--------------------------|
| 1. worked together to find lots | a. marketplaces |
| 2. many national police | b. than 19,000 items |
| 3. police officers found more | c. wars |
| 4. These include an ancient Colombian | d. traffickers |
| 5. fighting civil | e. networks |
| 6. The police arrested 101 art | f. forces |
| 7. they spent a long time monitoring online | g. a potential target |
| 8. illicit trade | h. gold mask |
| 9. every country with a rich heritage is | i. in cultural artefacts |
| 10. international criminal | j. of missing art |

Discussion – Student B

- What do you think about what you read?
- How important is art?
- How do the traffickers make money from the art?
- Which country has produced the best art?
- What do you think of the art your country has produced?
- What kind of art is best - painting, sculpture, jewellery or other?
- What piece of art would you like in your house?
- What questions would you like to ask a famous artist?

Spelling

- The ceetvstdie were from Interpol
- national police serofc
- an eitannc Colombian gold mask
- iutesnrce-old jewellery
- the items the police evecedro
- ltluaucr treasures
- The police etrredsa 101 art traffickers
- motrniiogn online marketplaces
- find the art and the tvsiehe
- every country with a rich iegthear
- a oattnpiel target
- It is not a sgruaomlo business

Answers – Synonym Match

1. h	2. d	3. f	4. a	5. j
6. c	7. e	8. g	9. b	10. i

Role Play

Role A – Manga

You think manga is the best art form. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their art. Also, tell the others which is the worst of these (and why): graffiti, computer graphics or cave paintings.

Role B – Graffiti

You think graffiti is the best art form. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their art. Also, tell the others which is the worst of these (and why): manga, computer graphics or cave paintings.

Role C – Computer Graphics

You think computer graphics is the best art form. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their art. Also, tell the others which is the worst of these (and why): graffiti, manga or cave paintings.

Role D – Cave Paintings

You think cave paintings are the best art form. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their art. Also, tell the others which is the worst of these (and why): graffiti, computer graphics or manga.

Speaking – Art

Rank these with your partner. Put the best kinds of art at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- | | |
|------------|---------------------|
| • Cubism | • Renaissance |
| • Graffiti | • Cave paintings |
| • Manga | • Computer graphics |
| • Pop art | • Impressionism |

Answers – True False

a	T	b	F	c	T	d	T	e	T	f	T	g	T	h	F
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.