



## Sheetal Mafatlal had got the fake paintings made?

Saturday, 29 March 2014  
Somendra Sharma

The Mumbai crime branch has almost wrapped up the investigations into the alleged painting theft case lodged by socialite Sheetal Mafatlal. Photographer Vikram Bawa, reportedly in his statement to the police has said that he had made copies of some paintings on the instructions of Sheetal in 2011. According to the police, another photographer also made copies of the paintings. Bawa and the other photographer will be the prime witness.

According to the crime branch sources, Bawa said that Sheetal had contacted him to get certain paintings copied. "Bawa had also stated that Sheetal had sent around 11 to 12 paintings to his studio and had asked him to get it digitally photocopied. Bawa had quoted over Rs35,000 to get the work done," said a crime branch officer, privy to the investigation.

He added that Sheetal had again asked Bawa to get more paintings copied. "But this time, Sheetal wanted this work to be done out Mumbai, which Bawa refused as he was busy. Sheetal then asked Bawa, if he could suggest someone else's name for the work. Bawa then suggested another photographer's (a woman) name," the officer said.

The police have recorded statement of the woman photographer too. The police might soon approach the court to decided further course of action.

"After the case was transferred to crime branch for investigation, we worked out the clues in diligent fashion and we have found out the original paintings. Now, we are in the final stage of the investigation," joint commissioner of police, crime, Sadanand Date said.

He added that assertions made out in the FIR of the painting theft complaint filed by Sheetal, have not been corroborated so far in the investigation. "We are waiting for certain clarifications from the complainant on material aspect of the investigation," Date said.

Sheetal had accused her childhood friend and transport magnate, Arif Patel of stealing paintings she had kept in two apartments in Bandra and Khar, owned by one of Patel's friends. In a complaint filed with the Gamdevi police, Sheetal had accused Patel of moving all the paintings out of the two apartments and replacing them with fakes.

Apart from Patel, Sheetal has named Yasmin MY, the owner of the two apartments where the paintings were kept, and Farukh Wadia, Patel's employee, in the complaint.

