



‘Rothko’ painting bought for \$7.2M was a fake painted in a garage, purchaser says in lawsuit

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By Martha Neil

A Las Vegas casino operator who says he paid \$7.2 million for a work of art he was assured had been painted by famed abstract expressionist Mark Rothko is now suing to try to get his money back.

Frank J. Fertitta III contends in his Tuesday filing that the untitled "Rothko" painting actually was one of dozens of fakes painted in a garage in Queens, N.Y., by a Chinese immigrant, reports the New York Times' ArtsBeat blog.

Those named as defendants in the Manhattan federal court lawsuit include dealer Glafira Rosales of Long Island, who supplied fakes to others and has pleaded guilty to fraud charges; a former New York art gallery known as Knoedler & Company, and its owner and former director; and a Swiss museum curator and art historian who allegedly authenticated the "Rothko" and was paid a \$300,000 fee by Knoedler. The museum curator could not be reached by the Times for comment. The Knoedler owner and director have said there was no reason for them to believe the paintings supplied by Rosales were fakes at the time of the 2008 sale to Fertitta.