

# AUTHENTICATION IN ART

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## Art forger Eric Hebborn collection sells thousands



This sketch, based on a Michelangelo piece, fetched £2,200

**A collection of art by a master forger whose work fooled dealers and galleries around the world has been sold at auction for more than £50,000.**

Eric Hebborn's meticulous pieces were hailed as authentic and stylistically brilliant by art historians.

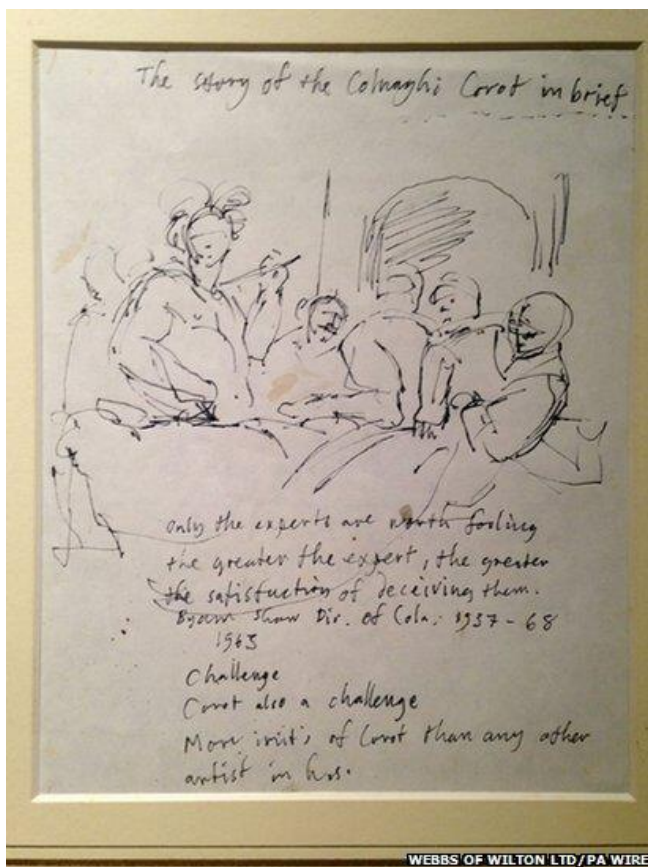
Experts now believe many "Old Masters" hanging in renowned collections are in fact undetected Hebborn works.

Hamish McFall, director at Webbs of Wilton, in Wiltshire, said the interest in the auction was "phenomenal".

### 'Out of the closet'

He said: "We had over 255 online bidders, not for each painting but during the course of the collection of his. There were between 50 and 80 people in the auction room at any one time.

"People who bought a particular sketch will now try to find if there is something in a museum or gallery which relates to that sketch.



A total of 234 pieces were up for auction

"Obviously, if they're able to trace it then the value of the piece increases. There will be people looking around in the next two to three years and I think all kinds of things will come out of the closet."

Hebborn, a Londoner, died in Rome in January 1996 and a collection of his drawings was retrieved from his home in Italy.

Hundreds of enthusiasts placed bids for the 234 pieces, in ink, crayon and watercolour.

One sanguine drawing, *After A Design By Michelangelo*, was expected to fetch up to £120 but instead sold for £2,200.

Hebborn's modern drawing manual, *The Language Of Line*, complete with pencil corrections and edits, sold for more than £3,000. In total, the collection fetched £51,000.

Mr McFall said the level of interest in the collection was "about five times more than I would have expected".

"We are just a small auction house near Salisbury," he added. "It is phenomenal."