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French Art Dealer Gailord Bovrisse Slapped with
\$800,000 Judgment over Fake Chagalls

Brian Boucher, Wednesday, August 26, 2015



French art dealer Gailord Bovrisse, right.
Photo: Facebook.

[Opera Gallery](#) and Najell Investments have won an \$800,000 judgment against French art dealer Gailord Bovrisse and his New York business, Golden Trade Fine Art, over two fake [Marc Chagall](#) paintings. The ruling, which partially granted plaintiffs' motion for summary judgment, was issued July 28 in the Central District of California, U.S. District Court and includes a determination of breach of contract against Bovrisse.

A July 27 complaint filed in California indicates that the plaintiffs are seeking \$2.4 million in addition to lawyers' fees.

Opera, which has a dozen locations worldwide from New York to Hong Kong (and offers works by artists including [Pierre Bonnard](#), [Pablo Picasso](#), and [Andy Warhol](#)), agreed in July 2014 to pay Bovrisse \$400,000 for Chagall's *L'ane musicien à Saint-Paul*. Cyprus-based art investment firm Najell agreed to purchase Chagall's *Le Peintre au Chevalet à Saint-Paul de Vence* for the same price.

The buyers wired the funds, but in September, Bovrisse informed them that the paintings were fakes. Though Opera and Najell requested their money back, "Golden Trade has since admitted that it does not intend to return the funds," according to court papers, which go on to indicate that the defendant did not respond to the plaintiffs' requests for information and that Bovrisse "failed to appear at his deposition."

Bovrisse further admitted that he didn't have sufficient evidence of the paintings' authenticity, according to court records, and that he "failed to conduct due diligence."

"Our information indicated that he was living in Beverly Hills, and that after he got our clients' money, he ran out and paid cash for a \$100,000 Porsche," said Opera and Najell's counsel, Los Angeles art lawyer David P. Steiner, in a phone interview with artnet News. "We imagine he cleared out his accounts and is now overseas, plying his trade with others."

Steiner told artnet News that the case is continuing against other related defendants. Court records indicate that summons have been served to Nathalie A. Biju-Duval and the New York law firm Rubin Associates, which court papers indicate represent Bovrisse. A complaint filed in July indicates that contrary to her own statements on letterhead and LinkedIn, Biju-Duval is not a lawyer.

The last time Bovrisse popped up in the art press is 2012, when he was director of Brussels gallery Pure Fine Arts, exhibiting at that city's Fotofever art fair. He was

having such a good fair, he told [Art in America](#), that "some of my colleagues were getting jealous because of all my red dots."

At the time, he was selling photographs by [Irving Penn](#) and [Jean-Daniel Lorieux](#), according to that report, which also indicated that the gallery had controversially rented gallery space at the Palais des [Beaux Arts](#) museum that year to show work by Lorieux.

"Collectors could buy works in the museum on the opening night," the dealer told [Art in America](#).

An email to Pure Fine Arts, whose website is not functional, bounced back; a call to a Belgian cell phone number associated with the business was not answered. The gallery's Twitter, before going silent in 2013, tweeted links to [masterpieceartcollection.net](#), which is also inactive.

"My clients are serious people," Steiner told artnet News, "and they will go after Bovrisse and his associates until they get every penny that is due them."

The court denied the plaintiffs' summary judgment motion with respect to their claims for negligent misrepresentation and for violation of a Section 496(a) of California's penal code.