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Pablo Picasso painting' found in Methil attic



Dominic Currie with the painting he found in his dead mother's suitcase. Picture: Hemedia

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AN artist claims to have discovered a Picasso painting given to his mother by a Russian soldier rolled up in a suitcase in his attic.

Dominic Currie said the cubist portrait had been in the luggage for 55 years and was almost thrown in a skip during spring cleaning.



Pablo Picasso, who died in April 1973. Picture: Getty

The case had belonged to his mother who revealed two years before her death that during the Cold War she fell pregnant to the Russian.

Mr Currie, a pop artist from Methil in Fife, said he dismissed as a fantasy her claim that the soldier gave her a painting and that it was stored in a suitcase.

Now, having finally opened the case, the 58-year-old said he was “stunned” to find the work.

“It was a bombshell,” he said. “We had thought ‘Let’s just get this to the skip, let’s do it’. We opened the case and there was some stuff, toys that I remember, that kind of thing. It was like a time capsule to the 1950s.

It’s like a message from both my parents to me

Dominic Currie

“Then we unrolled it and it was sack cloth with German writing on it.

Inside it there was this old oil cloth underneath and newspapers from the Soviet Union in the 50s.”

He said he then saw the signature in the corner that suggested work by Jack Vettriano may no longer be the most valuable art to come out of the mining town.

In 1998, Mr Currie to learned his real father was Nicolai Vladimirovich, a Russian soldier whom Annette Currie, then aged 19, met in 1955 during a holiday to Poland.



The signature on the painting which appears to say 'Picasso'. Picture: Hemedi

Following their son’s birth the next year, the couple wrote regularly and occasionally reunited when she took trips behind the Iron Curtain.

During one of these rare reunions, Mr Vladimirovich is said to have given her a painting to sell, knowing she would struggle financially as a single parent.

The long-distance relationship was over by the early 1960s, when she met and later married a local man.

Meanwhile Mr Currie, who had been brought up by his grandparents, believed his mother was his sister until the truth emerged in the late 1980s.

When she died in 2000, he thought her tale of the suitcase's contents far-fetched and placed it in his attic in Methil.

He added: "It is in a secure place now. The image is off to Christie's in London and it takes between six and eight weeks to verify and see if they want to scrutinise it further. Hopefully that will be the case.

"Would I have it on the wall? Yes, I probably would. Though I'm more a fan of Matisse."

Mr Currie said he intends to sell it at auction because that is what his parents would have wanted.

He said: "It's a wonderful gift. It's like a message from both of them to me. That's how it feels. It's like, 'Here son, we're going to look after you. It's taken a wee while but we've got there'."

In addition to the canvas, the suitcase contained clothes, handbags, Russian money, travel documents and a photograph of Mr Vladimirovich.

Last month, a 1955 Picasso painting, *Les Femmes d'Alger*, sold at Christie's for £115 million