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Turns Out \$1.5 Million Painting Punched by Boy May Be Fake

Brian Boucher, Thursday, August 27, 2015



Mario Nuzzi, *Composizione con vaso di fiori*, oil on canvas.
Photo via the artnet Auction Price Database.

When a 12-year-old boy tripped and accidentally [punched a hole](#) in a painting this week at an exhibition at Taipei's [Huashan 1914 Creative Park](#), video of the incident went viral.

Questions have now arisen about who created the painting, according to an article in Taiwan's [Apple Daily](#). While initially, the painting was said to be by Italian Renaissance painter [Paolo Porpora](#) (1617-1673), the new report says the painting may, in fact, be by artist [Mario Nuzzi](#) (1603-1673), a contemporary of Porpora. artnet's Price Database shows what appears to be the painting punched by the boy attributed to Nuzzi, titled [Composizione con vaso di fiori](#).

Nuzzi's work failed to find a buyer in May 2012 at the auction house Casa d'Aste Della Rocca, in Turin, Italy, where it carried an estimate of €25,000-30,000 (about \$28,000-34,000 in today's dollars). This, in turn, casts doubt on the painting's supposed \$1.5 million value.

Organizers of the exhibition, "[The Face of Leonardo, Images of a Genius](#)," which gathers 55 paintings ranging from the Italian Renaissance to the 20th century, say that the floral still life is the work of Porpora.

However, area curator Sean Hu has cast doubt on its authenticity.



The painting in question.
Photo: via Focus Taiwan

"There are too many questions," said Hu, of Hu's Art Company, in Taipei, to Agence France Presse. "No one knows if the paintings are genuine or fake."

Hu's [website](#) indicates a number of exhibitions he has organized; his training includes education in mass communication at Fu Jen Catholic University and an MA in art administration from the City University of New York's Fashion Institute of Technology.

If the paintings are genuine, Hu says, why are they not subject to stringent environmental conditions?

"From a professional's perspective, if the paintings are so old and expensive, they should not have been exposed to an environment without constant temperature and humidity," he said.

The head of TST Art of Discovery, which co-organized the show, stands by the attribution.

"Of course [the two paintings] are different," David Sun [told a reporter](#) from the Catholic News Agency (CNA), who indicated that Sun was "clearly exasperated." Sun declined to elaborate but said, "We welcome any visitor who questions the painting to ask the professionals and our art appraiser at the exhibition venue." CNA indicates that by appraiser, he means exhibition curator Andrea Rossi. Rossi has said that since the damage was accidental, and because the painting is insured, the boy's family will not be held liable. Area restorer Leo Tsai is currently at work repairing the damaged canvas.