



AiA Art News-service



Police arrest authenticators, auction staff in counterfeit art case

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BEIJING, Jan. 18 (Xinhua) -- Chinese police have arrested 24 suspects, including art authentication and auction personnel, in a case involving the production and sale of counterfeit copies of artworks by well known Chinese painters and calligraphers.

Police in Zunyi, southwestern Guizhou Province, have cracked three art fraud rings and seized 1,165 counterfeit works and more than 26 million yuan (about 4 million U.S. dollars), according to a statement issued Thursday.

The network covered the production, authentication, brokerage and auction of counterfeit copies of works by prestigious Chinese painters and calligraphers including Xu Beihong, Qi Baishi, Fan Zeng, and Qi Gong.

Some professional art authenticators had allegedly provided fake certificates of authentication and, with the involvement of auction company personnel, some of the counterfeits had been sold at auction.

A suspect surnamed Wang was found to have faked over 300 artworks, of which 87 had been sold via auction for more than 60 million yuan.

The statement criticized auction companies for failing to carry out strict authentication procedures, which allowed the counterfeit works to enter the market.

It said the production and sale of counterfeits have undermined the order of the Chinese art market and tarnished the image of Chinese paintings and calligraphy internationally.

Further investigation is underway.