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AiA Art News-service

TIMES
HERALD-
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Local art dealer helps in forgery arrest

By [Amanda Spadaro](#)



An Arizona man flew into Stewart's Airport believing he was going to collect a check for nearly \$300,000, state troopers said. Instead, he was arrested

and charged with two felonies for allegedly selling forged artwork to a Wallkill dealer.

An art auction house dealer called State Police in November after discovering he may have sold forged Tom Wesselmann and Andy Warhol artwork. The dealer, who police did not identify, said he had bought the artwork from Gerrell Roberts, 39, of Buckeye, Ariz. Roberts allegedly told the dealer the work was part of his family's collection.

Those pieces were then sold to a collector in Connecticut who had the pieces appraised and discovered the Wesselmann piece was forged, State Police said. The Warhold piece is still being examined.

Police said this was not the first time Roberts had sold art to the Wallkill dealer. Previously he had sold a Jean-Michael Basquiat "The Red King," and a Moise Kisling, "Sophie." Both of those pieces have since been determined to be forgeries.

Roberts was charged with grand larceny and attempted grand larceny. He was arraigned in Wallkill town court and sent to Orange County jail on \$90,000 bail or \$200,000 bond.