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Judge Sentences Portland Artist to Jail for Forgery
Scheme

Sarah Cascone, Wednesday, February 17, 2016



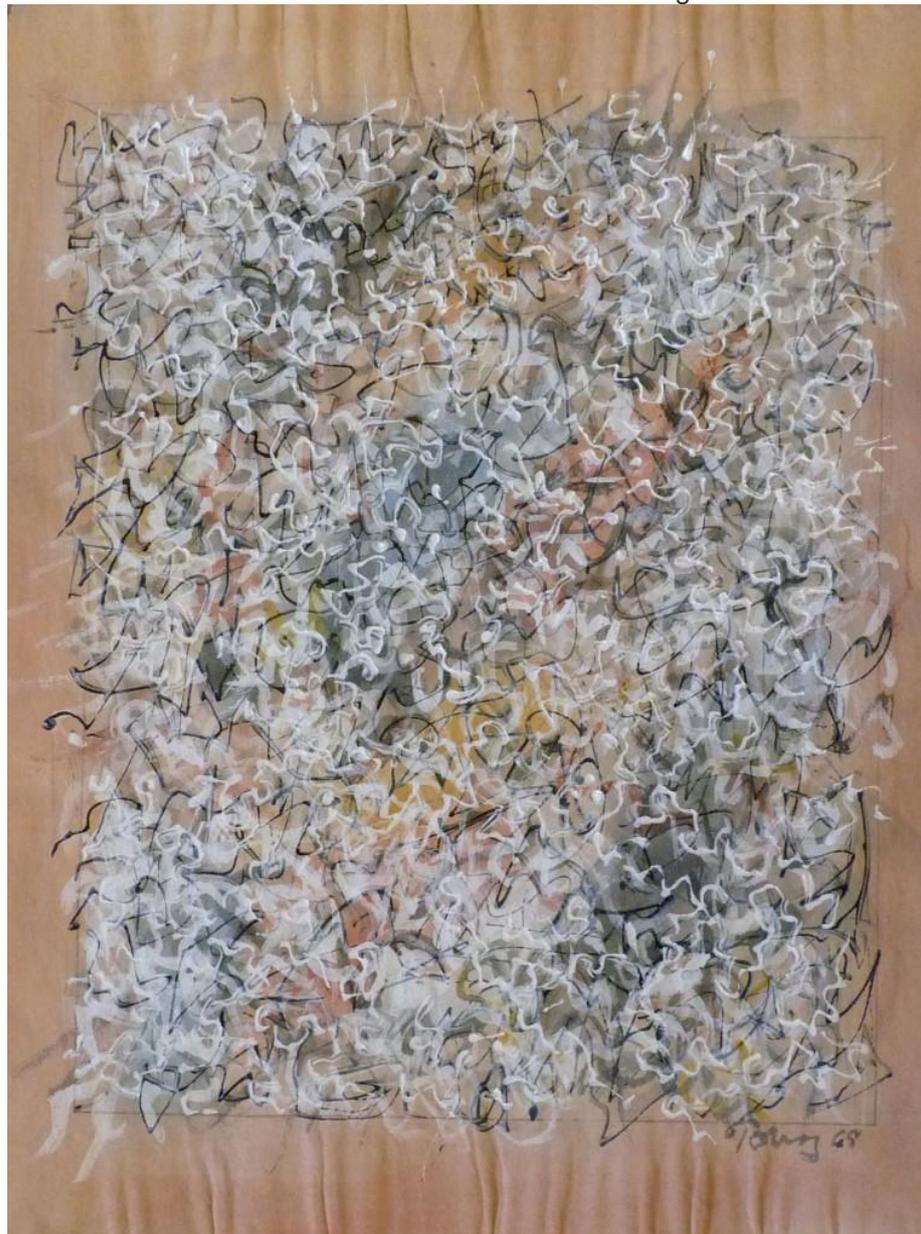
Lawrence Ulvi.

Photo: Multnomah County Sheriff's Office.

Lawrence H. Ulvi, a Portland, Oregon, painter and photographer, received a sentence of a year and a day in federal prison after he was convicted of fraud for selling forged paintings to at least 12 victims. The maximum sentence for the crime was 20 years.

Unlike [Glafira Rosales](#) of the [now-notorious Knoedler forgery scandal](#), Ulvi, 75, played a smaller game, forging paintings not by the [Abstract Expressionist greats](#) by lesser-known but respected artists of the Northwest School movement such as [Mark Tobey](#), [Morris Graves](#), and [Kenneth Callahan](#).

Since 2008, Ulvi made \$66,232 from his scam, according to the [Oregonian](#), passing off his own work as that of other artists to dealers in California and Oregon.



The fake Tobey painting that Larry Ulvi sold to a Portland art gallery.

Photo: Mark Humpal Fine Art.

Alison M. Clark, Ulvi's lawyer, argued against a prison term, citing her client's poor health and the lack of damage caused by his crimes. "This was a flim-flam and a fraud," she told Judge Robert E. Jones, as reported by the [Oregonian](#), "but it didn't create enough of a financial harm."

Assistant US attorney Scott Erik Asphaug pointed to the larger picture in a sentencing memo, claiming that Ulvi's actions stole "a confidence in the authenticity of works by these artists in the art marketplace."

[Ulvi was arrested](#) and indicted in March of 2015, following an FBI investigation.

The [Committee Mark Tobey](#) initially signed an authentication letter for one of Ulvi's fakes based on a digital photograph of the work, but when the unsuspecting buyer showed the committee the original, Tobey expert Heiner Hachmeister quickly saw that the painting wasn't real.

"He has completely destroyed for generations the authenticity of one man's work," wrote Asphaug of Ulvi's Tobey forgeries.

Judge Jones noted that he hoped Ulvi would be able to paint behind bars. "They would welcome your talent," he said. "You can keep your brushes and stuff."