

## AUTHENTICATION IN ART

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## Art forgery trial in Finland ends with prison sentences

ARTS



A court in Helsinki on Wednesday sentenced those who were involved in a high-profile art forgery trial.

The owner of Galerie Vision was given a five year sentence and her spouse four years. One of their assistants got three years.

For five years, Galerie Vision in Helsinki had been the center of operations for extensive sales of forged art. The most expensive

forgery was sold as a painting by the French artist Fernard Leger (1881-1955) at 2.2 million euros (2.5 million US dollars).

Prosecutor Pertti Kononen told national broadcaster Yle that the verdict sent the right message: "to be more careful in purchasing art".

The court also awarded some 13 million euros (14.75 million US dollars) compensation. The court did not order the convicted to be detained at this stage as it is possible the cases will go to the appeals court.

Some of the Leger forgeries are still missing. The police would have preferred the works got confiscated as it is possible they would be used in future transactions.

Leading Finnish art dealerships, Bukowski and Hagelstam, have assured that measures have since been taken to avoid selling forgeries in the future. Former employees of both houses were among the accused, but the charges were dropped and the Galrie Vision itself was declared bankrupt in mid-October this year