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Paris Judge Seizes Cranach 'Venus' from Major  
Exhibition of Prince of Liechtenstein's Art Collection

Lorena Muñoz-Alonso, Friday, March 4, 2016



Venus by *Lucas Cranach the Elder* (1531).

Photo: via Wikimedia Commons.

The *Venus* painted by [Lucas Cranach the Elder](#), one of the most important artworks included in the ongoing exhibition showcasing the art collection of the Prince of Liechtenstein in Aix-en-Provence, has been seized by French authorities over authenticity concerns.

The iconic 1531 oil on canvas was seized on Tuesday following the orders of a Paris-based judge in connection with a legal investigation that began in 2015, after an anonymous complaint contested its authenticity, according to Eric Morain, lawyer of the Prince of Liechtenstein, speaking to [AFP](#).

The successful exhibition at the Caumont Centre d'Art, [which has been extended until March 28](#), has thus lost one of its most important artworks. Cranach's *Venus* was so central to the exhibition and collection that it was even used as the cover of the catalog.



Facade of the Hôtel de Caumont in Aix-en-Provence, where Lucas Cranach's Venus was seized.

Photo: Georges Seguin via Wikimedia Commons.

"The painting was acquired in 2013 from a well-known British gallery and has been authenticated by recognized experts, specialists in the work of Cranach," Morain stated.

According to [The Artnewspaper](#), the wooden panel showing a veiled Venus came on the market in 2012. The Colnaghi Gallery in London bought the painting from the manager of an American investment fund for €3.2 million, and "sold it in good faith" to the Prince in 2013 for €7 million.

"The Princely Collections were surprised by this seizure, which was not preceded by any discussion with the investigators, considering the long-standing relationship of the Collection with all major French cultural institutions, to which they have graciously lent hundreds of works, most notably for the Elisabeth Louise Vigée Le Brun [exhibition at the Grand Palais](#)," the lawyer added.

According to the lawyers of the Prince of Liechtenstein, Eric Morain and Rémi Sermier, the Liechtenstein Collection, which is on display in France for the very first time, is a civil party in the case, AFP reports.

The exhibition showcases highlights from the Liechtenstein art collection, the largest private art collection in Europe, and features 40 paintings and watercolors by Old Masters from the 16th to the 19th century, including Peter Paul Rubens, Rembrandt, Raphael, and Claude Joseph Vernet.