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Picasso Painting Recovered in Istanbul May Be Fake

Henri Neuendorf, Tuesday, February 2, 2016



The painting recovered in a bust by Turkish undercover police in Istanbul is said to be a fake.

Photo: STR/AFP/Getty Images

Doubts have been raised over the authenticity of a [Pablo Picasso](#) painting [recovered by Turkish undercover police](#) in an elaborate sting operation in Turkey, and presented to the press in Istanbul on Saturday.

At the press conference, Turkish authorities triumphantly unveiled a canvas purported to be *Woman Dressing Her Hair* (1940) by the legendary Spanish artist. According to Turkish media, the artwork was stolen from an unnamed New York collector's home. On Friday two men were arrested at a café where the transaction was due to be finalized after officers negotiated a price of \$7 million for the disputed artwork.



According to MoMA the original painting is in New York.

Photo: MoMA, New York

However, by Monday morning various sources including the [Art Crime](#) blog expressed doubts over the artwork's authenticity after it was pointed out that the Museum of Modern Art, New York listed the artwork as part of its collection on its [website](#).

In an email to artnet News on Monday afternoon, MoMA director of communications Margaret Doyle clarified "the painting by Picasso in MoMA's collection, *Woman Dressing Her Hair*, is in New York, and is not the canvas recovered by the Turkish police over the weekend," confirming suspicions over the Turkish canvas' authenticity. Indeed, the account offered by Turkish media is contrary to the painting's provenance listed on MoMA's online holdings archive. The artwork was bequeathed to the institution by the prominent collector of modern art Louise Reinhardt Smith shortly after her death in 1995.



The incident illustrates the art market's problems with authentication.

Photo: via Meltystyle.fr.

Since then it was included in various museum shows including "[Picasso & Modern British Art](#)" which traveled to TATE Britain and the National Galleries of Scotland in 2012. It hasn't been in private ownership since it was gifted to the MoMA 21 years ago. The statement was echoed by the Picasso Administration, who are responsible for managing the artist's estate. [AFP](#) reported that the organization said on Monday that the painting seized by Turkish police in Istanbul was "a copy."

The canvas recovered in Turkey has already been sent to the Mimar Sinan Fine Arts University in Istanbul for closer examination and authentication. The findings of the art experts in Istanbul must still be awaited before it can be confirmed that the recovered artwork is in fact a fake.