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A Stolen Painting by Signac, Worth More Than \$1 Million, Is Recovered in Ukraine

Officials are investigating whether the same gang suspected of stealing the painting by Paul Signac could be involved in further art crimes.

Kate Brown, April 24, 2019



A Ukrainian police officer guards the painting "Port de la Rochelle" (1915) by French artist Paul Signac. Photo by Sergei Supinsky/ AFP/Getty Images.

Ukrainian police have recovered an oil painting by the French Pointillist painter Paul Signac that was stolen from a French museum last year. The 1915 painting, which is valued at €1.5 million (\$1.68 million), was cut from its frame during a theft at the Museum of Fine Arts in the northeastern city of Nancy in France last May.

Police discovered the painting Signac's *La Rochelle*, which depicts boats entering the French port, in the Kiev home of a Ukrainian man who is wanted on suspicion of murdering a jeweler. All suspects related to the theft have been detained, according to a report in AFP. Officials confirmed that several other works of art have been discovered.

Signac's painting will be returned to the museum in France at the end of the investigation, according to Ukraine's interior minister Arsen Avakov. He unveiled the recovered work of art accompanied by the French ambassador to Kiev, Isabelle Dumont.

"We received information about a group of people looking for buyers for paintings stolen in Europe last year," said police official Sergiy Tykhonov according to Le Monde.

A video presented by the police at the event in Kiev on April 23 shows the alleged thief confessing that the work was "stolen only because it was very simple," *Monopol* reports. In the video, the suspect also advised France to check its museum security measures.

Ukrainian officials said they are working with Austrian authorities to investigate whether the same gang was involved in the theft in Vienna of a painting by Pierre-Auguste Renoir. artnet News reached out to the Dorotheum to confirm if it is the landscape study by Renoir that was stolen from the auction house last fall but did not hear an answer by publishing time.