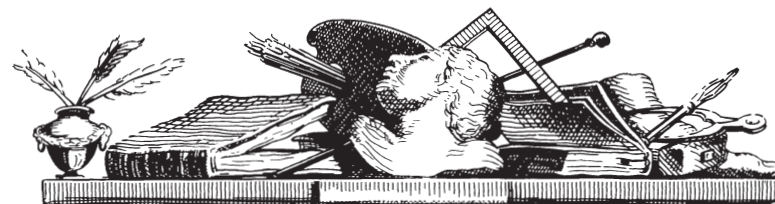


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INSIDE

Time for Italy to reverse its art export laws?

International access to post-war Italian art threatened as 50-year restrictions kick in

ART MARKET

London. This month's auctions in London are packed with an unprecedented number of works by Italian artists from the 1950s and 1960s; the combined number of lots in the Italian sales alone at Sotheby's and Christie's is up by 52% against 2012. Prominently featured are works of Arte Povera (literally "poor art"). The movement, which used everyday materials, is considered one of the 20th century's most significant and has been cited as an influence by artists as diverse as Paul McCarthy, Bruce Nauman, Richard Serra and the YBAs. The term "Arte Povera" was coined by the curator and critic Germano Celant in the magazine *Flash Art* in 1967, but many works predate this, and due to Italy's strict 50-year export rules, many are also about to be caught up in legal restrictions.

The law says that any work of art that is more than 50 years old and made by an artist who has died requires a licence if it is to be exported (temporarily or permanently), even if it has been in Italy for only a short time. The law was passed in 1939 mainly to prevent masterpieces of ancient and Renaissance art from leaving the country, but it now applies to works made before 1964, whether by Italian or foreign artists. Cy Twombly, who is well-represented in Italian collections, is one artist whose works will be affected.



Are works like Luciano Fabro's *Italia Rovesciata*, 1968, soon to be export barred?

Dealers and collectors are rushing to export works from Italy before they fall under the restrictions. "That's why a lot of Italians have been selling now," says Philip Hoffman, the chief executive of the Fine Art Fund, an art investment firm. The number of works by Arte Povera artists (such as Alberto Burri, Alighiero Boetti, Mario Merz and Michelangelo Pistoletto) sold at auction has grown from 35 in 1997 to nearly 300 in 2013.

The rules can also present obstacles for scholars and curators, who are often unable to secure loans or even locate works. "There are plenty of Italian collectors who won't lend their best works

Dealers and collectors are rushing to export works from Italy

for fear of them being 'marked' [as needing a licence] forever," says the collector and art historian Laura Mattioli, who founded the Center for Italian Modern Art in New York last year. The Modern and post-war Italian art collection assembled by her father, Gianni Mattioli, was famously barred from export in 1973 and is now held by the Peggy Guggenheim Collection in Venice.

Even if a collector is willing to lend, the government can prevent important

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8

NEWS IN BRIEF

UNITED STATES >>>

Guggenheim plans New York expansion... again

■ The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum is planning a new space in New York to house its collection and staff. The Collection Center is described as "one efficient, multi-use building" with a "dynamic public-programming component" aimed at New Yorkers. A spokeswoman for the museum said that it was too early to provide further details. The expansion plan comes just over 60 years after the Guggenheim commissioned Frank Lloyd Wright to design its original space (above) and more than a decade after it abandoned a scheme for a second, Frank Gehry-designed museum downtown. Meanwhile, the international competition to find a design for the Helsinki Guggenheim received 1,715 proposals. An 11-strong jury is due to meet next month to shortlist six designs. J.P.



UNITED KINGDOM >>>

V&A East could be vast

■ The Victoria and Albert Museum's (V&A) proposed branch in London's Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, dubbed V&A East, will be 20,000 sq. m in total, according to a planning brief by Boris Johnson, the mayor of London. It will have around 10,000 sq. m of display space. This compares with the 7,900 sq. m of display space arranged over three floors in Tate Modern. If it can raise the required funding, the V&A plans to display parts of its permanent collection, to mount major exhibitions and to provide storage space. The brief says that shows will be presented "in ways that surprise or even shock". V&A East will be a key part of the new cultural quarter, along with a Sadler's Wells dance space, a branch of the University of the Arts London and a yet-to-be-announced "fourth institution", with a University College London building on a nearby site. M.B.



The Olympic Park awaits the V&A

Kensington, we have a problem: launch of cosmonaut show delayed



Soviet hero: the first woman in space

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

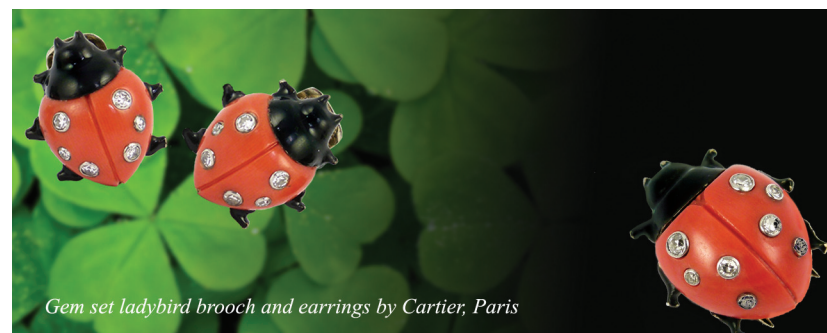
London. Political tensions between Russia and the UK have led to the postponement of "Cosmonauts: Birth of the Space Age", an exhibition at London's Science Museum. Earlier this year, a statement released by the museum described the show as "the principal attraction of the UK-Russia Year

of Culture". It was due to open on 18 November and run until 17 May 2015.

The postponement has not been officially announced, but a spokeswoman for the Science Museum told us: "Due to some logistical challenges involved in borrowing 150 objects from 18 lenders, we have decided to move the opening date for the 'Cosmonauts' exhibition." In fact, the delay is over key loans from Russia. These include the

Vostok-6 module that brought Valentina Tereshkova, the first woman in space, back to earth in 1963. After Russia's annexation of Crimea and the introduction of Western sanctions over the country's support for rebel forces in Ukraine, the Moscow authorities have increased bureaucratic obstacles over loans to London. The "Cosmonauts" show is now expected to open next year.

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NEWS *Continental Europe*

Duchess of Devonshire dies



“Debo”, as she was known to her family and friends, was, until her death, aged 94, on 24 September, the last surviving of the six remarkable Mitford sisters, who were in the public eye in the 1930s and 1940s, often for their political views.

In 1941, the Honourable Deborah Vivien Freeman-Mitford married Lord Andrew Cavendish, who, after the deaths of his brother and father, became the 11th Duke of Devonshire in 1950. His father's death landed the family seats, Chats worth House and Hard wick Hall, and their estates with death duties of £7m. Hardwick was turned over to the National Trust. The duchess—with an army of builders—began (and completed) the regeneration of Chatsworth in an era of punitive taxation for landowners. She wrote many books on Chats worth and took a direct hand in improving the estate.

The Devonshires bought contemporary art, collecting works by artists such as William Nicholson and Jacob Epstein, an interest that their son, the 12th Duke, shares. In 1957, Lucian Freud was commissioned to paint the duchess's portrait (above), and others followed, as Freud became a friend of the family. That Chatsworth survives and thrives is the legacy of the late dowager duchess. *D.L.*

Ten Apostles found behind a bookcase

Works rediscovered in Durham Cathedral could go on show this month—if ownership can be agreed

RELIGIOUS ART

Durham. Ten large paintings of the Apostles have been rediscovered in Durham Cathedral. The works, which were hidden behind a bookcase, were probably looted by the English during the 1702 battle of Cádiz, in the War of the Spanish Succession (1701-14). It is unclear who owns the pictures, but Auckland Castle in Bishop Auckland, near Durham, hopes to borrow them for an exhibition later this month.

The set of Apostles was tracked down by Andrew Beresford, a specialist in Spanish culture at Durham University. He did not know of their existence until he came across an unillustrated article in a Durham journal, published in 1935. Beresford then contacted the cathedral, and says it took staff several weeks to track down the paintings.

Gathering dust

“We found the ten Apostles lurking behind a bookcase, where they had been progressively gathering dust,” Beresford says. A team including Gabriel Sewell (head of collections at Durham Cathedral), Gemma Lewis (deputy curator at Durham Castle) and Christopher Ferguson and Clare Baron (head curator and curatorial assistant at Auckland Castle respectively) got together to research the 17th-century Spanish works. The Apostles appear to have been

brought back to England as plunder by Edward Gregory, the naval chaplain on HMS Torbay, which took part in the battle of Cádiz. The works later passed to his son, a canon at Durham Cathedral, whose widow sold them to the dean and chapter for 42 guineas in 1753. The set was then hung in the cathedral's library.

In the early 19th century, the Apostles were moved to Durham Castle, which is next to the cathedral and was then owned by the bishop of Durham. An inventory from 1836 records them in the castle's great hall, which dates back to the 14th century.

The following year, the bishop handed over Durham Castle to University College, the oldest of Durham University's colleges. The castle was used for

Smoke from the castle's kitchen must explain why the paintings are so darkened by soot and grease

student accommodation, and the donation included some of its contents. The great hall became the refectory, with generations of students eating under the Apostles. Smoke from the heating fires and the nearby kitchen must explain why the paintings are now so darkened by soot and grease.

In 1949, the Apostles were moved out of the great hall, presumably because the students did not like them, and were sent to the Bowes Museum



in Barnard Castle, County Durham. They were immediately put into storage and museum curators do not seem to have studied them.

Out of sight, out of mind

The Apostles returned to Durham in 2001, when the Bowes museum reorganised its storage, and then went to the cathedral. Because there was not enough wall space to hang ten large



photographs are not available. The works are very dirty and badly need cleaning.

Although the works were probably looted in Spain, possibly from a church in El Puerto de Santa María, near Cádiz, there would be little legal basis for a claim after more than 300 years. But does ownership lie with the dean and chapter of Durham Cathedral, which bought them in 1753, or are they the property of Durham University, which took over the castle and some of its contents in 1837? (Durham Castle owns a set of eight Apostles, but this is separate from the rediscovered works.)

Who owns the works?

The ownership of the pictures is still unclear. A spokeswoman for the cathedral told us that “Durham Cathedral owns the paintings and there is no dispute between the cathedral and the university about this”. A few hours later, a spokeswoman for the university said that “the ownership of the paintings is still being clarified”, which suggests that it has not conceded its rights. One option that has been discussed

Time to reverse art export laws?

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

works from travelling. Mattioli says she was only permitted to send nine midtier works to the recent exhibition “Italian Futurism, 1909-44: Reconstructing the Universe” at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in New York. The Museo del Novecento in Milan, which has the world's largest collection of works by Umberto Boccioni, could only lend one. These rules limit the audience for Italian art and misrepresent the contribution of Italian artists, according to Mattioli. “The law is ultimately making Italian art look provincial, which it's not,” she says. It could prove particularly detrimental in the case of Arte Povera, which “was born in dialogue with the US”.

Time running out

Important works on the block this month include Boetti's sculpture *Colonna*, 1968 (est £1.5m-£2m), in the Italian sale at Christie's. In February, Christie's set a record with the sale of 109 Arte Povera works consigned by the collectors Nerio and Marina Fossati. The auction, “Eyes Wide Open”, which made a total of £38.4m (€48.7m), “did so well because the works were less than 50 years old”, says Mariolina Bassetti, the director of post-war and contemporary art at Christie's. Had the sale taken place only a few years later, the works would probably not have been allowed out of the country.

Observers say the restrictions are damaging Italy's art market, which has only a 1% share of the global market,

according to the 2014 *Tefaf Annual Art Market Report*. According to Artprice, it made a total of just \$110m (€85.6m) in 2013. But it could achieve nearly ten times that—around \$1bn—if the restrictions were lifted, Philip Hoffman says.

“Compared with other markets, such as London and Paris, Italy has the most punitive legislation by far,” says Massimo Sterpi, an art law expert and a partner at the firm Jacobacci & Partners. “The Italian auctions market is worth around 3% of the auction market in London alone. This is ridiculous, considering the sheer volume of art in Italy. People should be travelling from the whole world to buy works here,” he says.

Unlike most European countries, Italy has no lower price limit for works that need an export licence. The *Soprintendenze*, regional arms of the ministry of culture, can place permanent blocks on works they deem “national heritage”, but different centres interpret the rules differently. Once they are designated as national heritage, works lose, on average, 70% to 80% of their value, because they can no longer leave Italy, reducing their appeal to foreign buyers. The British and French governments have systems in place to encourage museums to buy export-stopped works at market value and with a deadline, but Italy does not.

“The longer time goes on, the more complicated it will get [for mid-century work]. Every year you have to be more careful,” says Giuseppe Mazzoleni, the founder of the Mazzoleni Gallery in

Arte Povera and Italian avant-garde exhibitions this month

London

Paolo Scheggi
1 OCTOBER-4 NOVEMBER
Robilant + Voena
Post-War Italian Masters
13 OCTOBER-19 DECEMBER
Mazzoleni
Mario Merz
UNTIL 8 NOVEMBER
Pace
Alighiero Boetti: I Colori
14 OCTOBER-13 DECEMBER
Luxembourg & Dayan

New York

A New Visual Dialogue
9 OCTOBER-8 NOVEMBER
De Buck Gallery

Berlin

Arte Povera and Multipli:

Torino 1970-75

UNTIL 1 NOVEMBER
Sprüth Magers
Gianni Piacentino:
Works 1965-2014
UNTIL 1 NOVEMBER
VeneHasen/Werner

Athens

Group show
(Giovanni Anselmo,
Pier Paolo Calzolari,
Jannis Hounellis, Mario
Merz and others)
2 OCTOBER-13 NOVEMBER
Bernier Eliades Gallery

Paris

Turi Simeti
10 OCTOBER-20 DECEMBER
Tornabuoni Art

Turin. He is opening a branch in London on 13 October “to access the international market”.

The pending restrictions might also explain the proliferation of Arte Povera exhibitions, with at least nine international commercial galleries mounting shows this month (see box). But postwar Italian art is also undergoing a scholarly reappraisal. This month, the Guggenheim is opening “Zero: Countdown to Tomorrow, 1950s-60s” (10 October-7 January 2015), the first major museum exhibition in the US devoted

to the Zero group, an international network that prominently features Italian artists. For 2015, the museum is planning the first US retrospective in more than 35 years of the Arte Povera pioneer Alberto Burri.

Pros and cons

A large group of auction houses and dealers, including the Italian branches of Christie's, Sotheby's and Artcurial, are banding together to lobby the government for reform. They argue that their efforts would save Arte Povera

from the fate that has kept work by artists from the Old Master Federico Barocci to the Futurist Fortunato Depero inside the country and little known outside. Over the next year, the group seeks to bring Italy closer in line with France and the UK, extend the age limit on works from 50 to 75 years and introduce a minimum value for works requiring an export licence.

“We need more rigorous and well-established criteria as to what constitutes Italian heritage,” says the lawyer **Giuseppe Calabi** of CBM & Partners, who is representing the group.

Others counsel caution, as laws are needed to keep Italy from losing its rich cultural patrimony, particularly during tough economic times, when the temptation to sell is great. “We do need to keep track of what passes our borders in both directions,” says Luca Massimo Barbero, the associate curator of the Peggy Guggenheim Collection in Venice. “The movement of these works should be made easier without necessarily relaxing the rules.”

Others think the art market is low on the government's priority list. “I don't think politicians are going to be worrying too much about helping the rich to make money out of their art collections,” says Philip Hoffman. For some Italian art experts, however, nothing less than Italy's international reputation is at stake. Laura Mattioli says: “An entire generation of people isn't seeing Italy's most important works.” **Julia Halperin and Ermanno Rivetti**