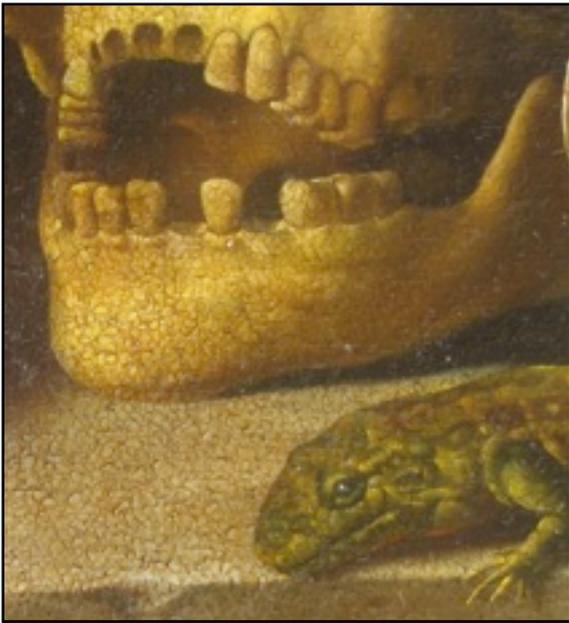


NEWSFLASH

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IS IT A FAKE?

During the Roman Empire, a market arose for ancient Greek relics and sculptures. As demand often outstripped supply, copies started to be made - and the fake was born. This trade continues to today, so much so that a plethora of famous names come to mind such as John Myatt, Tom Keating and van Meegreun. These are just the tip of the iceberg. Sometimes the faker's ego overwhelms common sense and he eventually lets the cat out of the bag.



Old Master paintings appear to be the easiest target as there are so many varied types and schools, as well as techniques. The most obvious thing to suggest a painting is old would be that it has a series of naturally-forming cracks. Certain periods and schools produce a particular pattern of cracks and examining crack patterns is one way to check the age of a work of art. Although it's not an exact science, the two examples below indicate quite clearly what is right and what is wrong.

The Bouts, Madonna & Child (below) has a typical crack pattern of the 16th Century where the paint has dried, separated into a "crazy paving" of open, shrunken paint cracks. The Momenti

Mori (above) has a quite different type of cracking (where regularly one edge of each plate of paint is raised). I believe the method for producing these cracks would have been to have excessively dried, or baked, the painting and then in it's brittle state to roll or bend the paint causing the paint to break up, making the islands of paint rise up.

This has nothing to do with paint drying and separating and is all to do with physical interference. The cracks have then been aged with a stain and a discoloured varnishes added. Emptying the vacuum cleaner on it can enhance it's aged appearance.

Further proof could be sought by analysing the various pigments and materials used in the makeup of the object as these can be dated.



Forgeries and Fakes are among the many examples of paintings analysed and dealt with at Simon Gillespie Studio. We offer a completely bespoke service and with 25 years of experience we can provide:

- ❖ Advice on conservation & restoration.
- ❖ Preparation of simple or in-depth condition reports.
- ❖ Restoration and conservation treatment, including on-site.
- ❖ Preparation of treatment reports (which can include technical analysis and research) together with digital images of “before”, “after” and “in progress.”
- ❖ Advice on hanging, framing and lighting.
- ❖ Advice and assistance with insurance valuations.
- ❖ Advice and assistance with transport, shipping and storage.
- ❖ Advice and in-situ surveys of works of art prior to purchase.