

Evidence of fake paintings Altink missing

From our reporter JOS Slats

AMSTERDAM - The Amsterdam police investigation of an alleged forgery affair with paintings of the Groningen-Plow Painter Altink (1885-1971) has failed. The Forensic Laboratory has failed to demonstrate that seized the last paintings are not painted by Altink. The suspect, an artist from Beilen, now has the attorney been told that the case was dropped against him. The public prosecutor in Amsterdam appears to have misjudged ugly on the matter. The attending officer is certainly put quite the wrong way through the crowd art connoisseurs who shouted in unison that the paintings were fake. Some even claimed that the paint so to speak was still wet.

Cor van L [REDACTED] the alleged creator and disseminator of the work, has two difficult years behind. During 1990 and 1991 he offered at various auction houses in the Netherlands twenty canvases to his Altink collection. With the profits he hoped to fund the rebuilding of his farm.

First, there was not a cloud in the sky. Modern art experts at auction houses, including renowned institutions such as Christie's and Sotheby's, praised the quality of the work offered. Many Altink given a prominent place in the auction catalogs, in one case in

full color on the cover. This presentation did not miss its effect; the Altink went during the year increasing by hand prices.

On May 16 1991 there was a sudden change in the art as favorable climate surrounding the collection of Beilen. A North Dutch art dealer who attended the open day of the Christie's auction house, three thought exhibited Altink recognized as forgeries. Christie's, as the death of a riot, the lot numbers immediately deleted from the auction program. When Sotheby's, where Van L [REDACTED] had handed some towels, became aware North Holland dealer the press taken on the track had put a possible extensive adulteration affair, were again the suspect Altink from sale. 'Fake Virus infected art world,' reported The Telegraph a few days later. The following Monday was auctioneer and television personality Jan Pieter Glerum also not convinced of the authenticity of the work submitted by Cor van L [REDACTED] "Ladies and gentlemen, all of you obviously have read the newspaper. You understand that our two Altink be withdrawn. They are false." The panic knock-on effect, then took place also in the reverse direction. Retroactive also began to doubt other auction houses to the authenticity of the earlier traded Altink.

Sotheby's engaged the police who finally last summer began an investigation. Van L [REDACTED] was arrested and transferred for questioning to Amsterdam, where he stuck a few days at the office. In his house in Beilen police took some suspect Altink up work plus the signature of the artist himself accused in connection with comparative handwriting examination.

Experts from the Forensic Laboratory were provided with seven paintings attributed to Altink and went looking for a possible anachronism between the materials used and the time when the paintings were created according to the date. Especially the oldest cloth (1942) lent itself to this research, because after World War II with the advent of synthetic fibers major changes have occurred in the composition of paint. The discovery of synthetic fibers in the original paint a painting for 1945 would indicate a backdating.

Forensic Laboratory examined eight slithers of paint from the painting *Country road with some farms and horses* and found that they contain in all cases, fibers of animal or vegetable nature. In the canvas *Mountain Landscape with Sun* (dated 1954), the researchers found an acrylic fiber to. "Now, according to our information acrylic fiber made by DuPont on the market since 1950, so the presence of this fiber can not point to a backdating" says the final report of the Forensic Laboratory.

The other, undated paintings have not been studied in this way, because they can be made in principle in the year that Altink. "The time between now and 1972, we believe too short to conduct said investigation."

Those claims fell for the prosecution the bottom of the criminal investigation, which prosecutor mr. L. Dun nothing remained but to dismiss the case. Van L [REDACTED] is still pretty shaken by the affair. "Sins I recently again only able to paint itself." His new work, he says, visibly affected by the events of the past two years. "It has become much more aggressive, expressive too. In that respect, it is all at least have somewhere been good. "